

A Curriculum Audit™
of the
Manchester School District
Manchester, New Hampshire



Kindergarteners busy at the computer at Hallsville Elementary



International Curriculum Management Audit Center
Phi Delta Kappa International
Eighth and Union
Bloomington, Indiana 47404

June 2013

**A Curriculum Audit™
of the
MANCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT
Manchester, New Hampshire**

**Conducted Under the Auspices of
International Curriculum Management Audit Center
Phi Delta Kappa International
PO Box 7888
Bloomington, IN 47407-7888**

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Curriculum Management Systems, Inc.
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A Curriculum Audit™
of the
Manchester School District
Manchester, New Hampshire

I. INTRODUCTION

This document constitutes the final report of a Curriculum Audit™ of the Manchester School District. The audit was commissioned by the Manchester School District Board of Education/Governing Authority within the scope of its policy-making authority. It was conducted during the time period of March 18-21, 2013. Document analysis was performed off site, as was the detailed analysis of findings and site visit data.

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

Background

The Manchester School District is located in Hillsborough County along the banks of the Merrimack River 53 miles north of Boston. Today, with a population of more than 109,000, Manchester is the largest city in Northern New England and the largest school district in the state. Six colleges and universities and several technology and manufacturing firms are located in Manchester.

The school district is comprised of 15,103 Pre-K-12 students at 22 school sites. The district has 14 elementary schools that serve students in grades Pre-K-5, four middle schools for students in grades 6-8, three high schools for grades 9-12, and a technology high school. A regional vocational/technical school is also located within the district. High school students from the towns of Auburn, Candia, and Hooksett attend schools in Manchester.

Student Enrollment

Exhibit 0.1 shows the district enrollment from 2003-04 to 2012-13.

Exhibit 0.1
Student Enrollment History
Manchester School District
2003-04 to 2012-13

School Year	Student Enrollment	Change from Previous Year
2003-04	17,655	
2004-05	17,737	+82
2005-06	17,511	-226
2006-07	17,154	-357
2007-08	16,309	-845
2008-09	15,992	-317
2009-10	15,813	-179
2010-11	15,732	-81
2011-12	15,536	-196
2012-13	15,103	-433
<i>Source: New Hampshire Department of Education Fall Enrollments and District document</i>		

Exhibit 0.1 indicates the following:

- Enrollment has steadily declined since 2004-05, and has decreased by 2,552 students since 2003-04.
- The only increase in students was in 2004-05 with the addition of 82 students over the previous year.
- The largest decrease was in 2007-08 with 845 fewer students than the year before.

Exhibit 0.2 presents the enrollment history and projected enrollment in a graphic format.

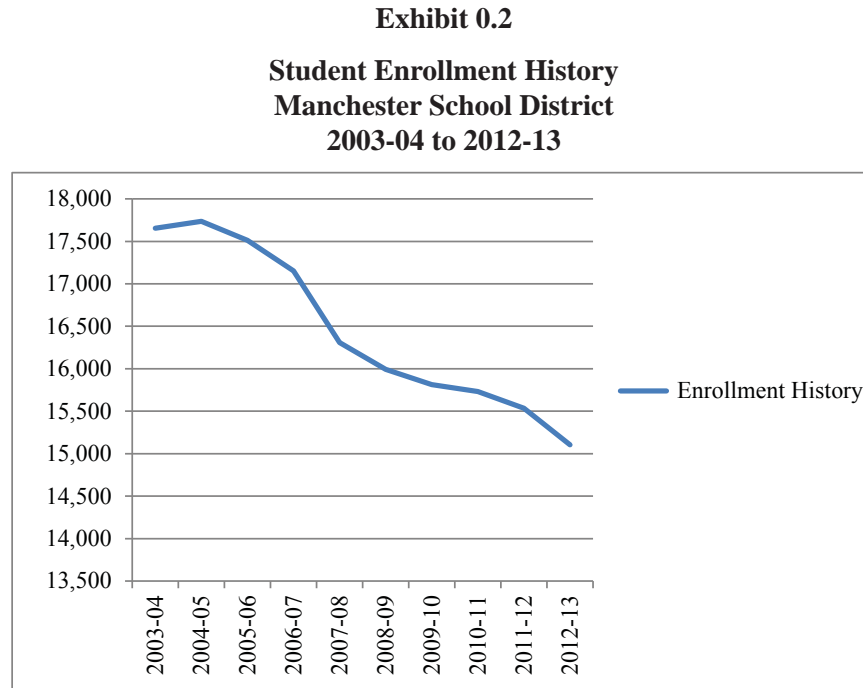


Exhibit 0.3 shows projected enrollments for the next eight years.

Exhibit 0.3
Student Enrollment Projections
Manchester School District
2013-14 to 2020-21

School Year	Projected Enrollment	Change from Previous Year
2013-14	15,367	
2014-15	15,391	+24
2015-16	15,367	-24
2016-17	15,372	+5
2017-18	15,403	+31
2018-19	15,493	+90
2019-20	15,625	+132
2020-21	15,678	+53

Source: Manchester School District: School Capacity and Redistricting 2/9/11

Exhibit 0.3 indicates the following:

- Student enrollments are projected to slightly increase each year from 2016-17 to 2020-21 with an increase of 311 students over the eight-year period from 2013-14 to 2020-21.
- The only decrease is expected in 2015-16 with a projected loss of 24 students.
- The largest increase is projected for 2019-20 with the addition of 132 students.

Exhibit 0.4 presents projected enrollments in a graphic format.

Exhibit 0.4

Student Enrollment Projections Manchester School District 2013-14 to 2020-21

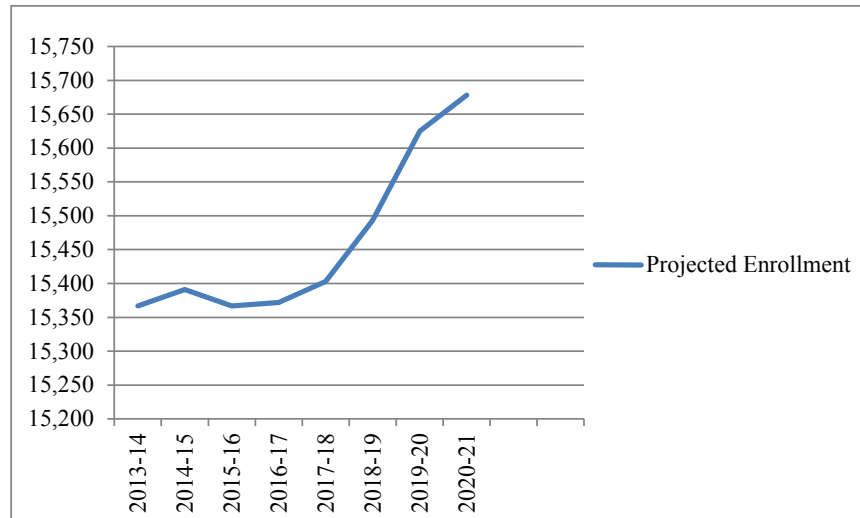


Exhibit 0.5 lists the district elementary schools and their current student enrollments.

Exhibit 0.5

Student Enrollment by Elementary School Manchester School District March 2013

School	Enrollment
Bakersville Elementary	395
Beech Street School & Community Center	578
Gossler Park Elementary	403
Green Acres Elementary	569
Hallsville Elementary	305
Highland-Goffe's Falls Elementary	506
Jewett Street Elementary	456
McDonough Elementary	552
Northwest Elementary	656
Parker-Varney Elementary	529
Smyth Road Elementary	403
Webster Elementary	465
Weston Elementary	579
Wilson School & Community Center	433
Total Elementary Enrollment	6,829
<i>Source: District Document 2/1/13</i>	

Exhibit 0.6 shows the district middle and high schools and their enrollments.

Exhibit 0.6

**Student Enrollment by Secondary School
Manchester School District
March 2013**

School	Enrollment
Hillside Middle School	817
Mc Laughlin Middle School	801
Middle School at Parkside	671
Southside Middle School	765
Total Middle School Enrollment	3,054
Manchester Central High School	2,116
Manchester High School West	1,172
Manchester Memorial High School	1,849
Manchester School of Technology High School	83
Total Secondary Enrollment	5,220
Total District Enrollment	15,103
<i>Source: District Document 2/1/13</i>	

Exhibit 0.7 shows the ethnic distribution of students for the past five years.

Exhibit 0.7

**Ethnic Distribution of Student Population by Percentage
Manchester School District
2008-09 to 2012-13**

Year	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian or Pacific Is.	Multi-Race	Am. Indian or Alaskan
2008-09	74.3	13.0	8.5	3.3	0.4	0.6
2009-10	72.8	13.8	8.7	3.9	0.4	0.5
2010-11	69.0	13.4	8.1	4.3	4.6	0.5
2011-12	67.9	13.8	8.1	4.9	4.9	0.4
2012-13	66.2	17.0	8.0	4.9	3.4	0.4
<i>Source: New Hampshire Department of Education District Profiles and District Document</i>						

Exhibit 0.7 indicates the following:

- The White student population decreased by 8.1 percentage points and the Black student population decreased by 0.5 percentage points over the five-year period.
- The Hispanic student enrollment increased by four percentage points and the Asian/Pacific Islander population increased by 1.6 percentage points over the time period.
- The percentage of American Indian/Alaskan students has slightly increased.
- The Multi-Race designation in the state profiles changed from “Unknown” after 2009-10, which may contribute to the fluctuation in student percentages.

Exhibit 0.8 presents student ethnicity trends in a graphic format.

Exhibit 0.8
Student Ethnicity Trends
Manchester School District
2008 -09 to 2012-13

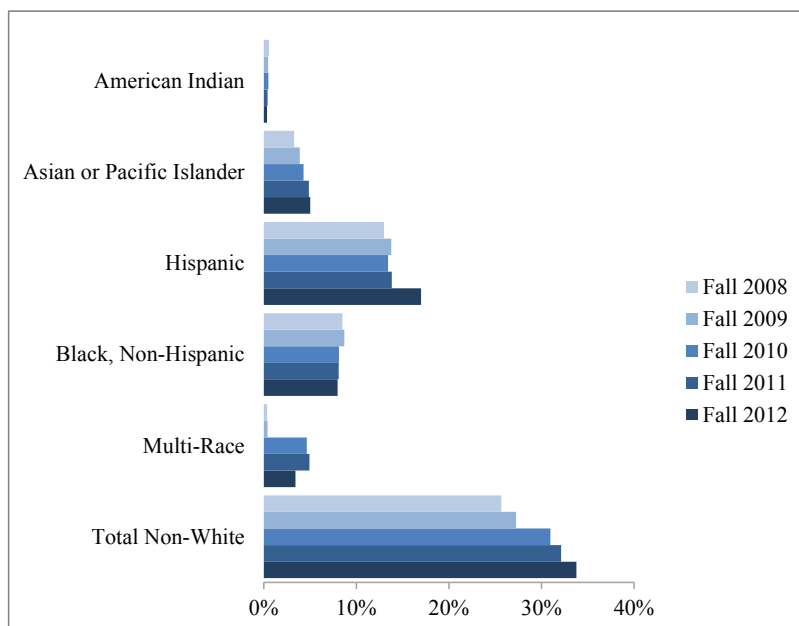


Exhibit 0.8 shows that over the past five years, the total non-White student population has increased from approximately one-fourth of the district's students to roughly one-third.

Exhibit 0.9 presents additional student demographic information.

Exhibit 0.9
Student Demographics in Percentages
Manchester School District
2005-06 to 2012-13

Year	Economically Disadvantaged	Special Education	Limited English Proficient
2005-06	31.0	14.8	6.7
2006-07	33.3	15.4	5.5
2007-08	36.3	15.8	5.8
2008-09	39.9	16.0	9.5
2009-10	39.0	16.5	9.6
2010-11	45.7	17.4	11.0
2011-12	47.5	n/a	10.7
2012-13	48.9	20.3	13.0

Source: New Hampshire Department of Education District Profiles and District Document

Exhibit 0.9 shows the following:

- The percentage of economically disadvantaged students has increased by 17.9 percentage points over the past eight years.
- The percentage of special education students has increased by 5.5 percentage points since 2005-06.
- The percentage of English Language Learners has increased by 6.3 percentage points over the time span.

Governance Structure

The Manchester School District is governed by a 15-member Board of School Committee (BOSC) that is elected every two years. Members represent each of 12 wards, plus two members serve at-large. The Mayor serves as chairperson of the board. Exhibit 0.10 lists the current board members and the year they were elected on the board.

Exhibit 0.10

Members of the Board of School Committee Manchester School District March 2013

Board Member	Year Elected
Mayor Theodore Gatsas, Chairman	2010
David Gelinas, Vice Chair	2004; 2010
Sarah Ambrogi	2010
Debra Langton	2006
Christopher Stewart	2012
Roy Shoults	2012
Ted Rokas	2012
Donna Soucy	2006
Erika Connors	2012
Arthur Beaudry	2006
John Avard	2008
Jason Cooper	2012
Roger Beauchamp	2010
Kathy Staub	2012
David Wihby	2012

The Manchester School District has had seven superintendents in the last 40 years. Exhibit 0.11 lists the district's superintendents since 1985.

Exhibit 0.11

Superintendents and Years of Service Manchester School District 2000-Present

Superintendent	Years of Service
Thomas Brennan, Jr.	2008-present
Michael Ludwell	2002-2007
Norman Tanguay	1997-2002
Leonard Bernard	1994-1997
Eugene Ross	1987-1994
Richard Henderson	1985-1987
Henry McLaughlin	1970-1985
<i>Source: http://www.mansd.org/about/msd-history</i>	

The Vision of the Manchester School District is:

To provide safe, healthy, nurturing, and respectful environments in which all students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to become lifelong learners as well as positive and productive citizens. The success of our schools can only be achieved through collaboration and interdependence with the community. The District is committed to utilizing all resources toward this exciting challenge.

The Mission of the Manchester School District is:

Through the involvement of our families, educators, and the community, the Manchester School District provides a safe, supportive, respectful, and engaging learning environment which has high expectations for student achievement and embraces diversity. As a result, each student is prepared to be a responsible citizen, lifelong learner, and contributing member of society.



Mural of an early fourth grade class at Hallsville Elementary

Audit Background and Scope of Work

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

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

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

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

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

In some cases, ancillary findings in a Curriculum 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 (NASSP); Association for the Advancement of International Education (AAIE); American Educational Research Association (AERA); National School Boards Association (NSBA); and the National Governors Association (NGA).

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

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

The curriculum auditors in this audit included the following individuals:

- Judy Birmingham, Ph.D., Senior Lead Auditor; Educational Consultant; Naples, Florida
- Larry Hunt, CAS, Auditor; Data Coordinator for Onondaga-Cortland-Madison Board of Cooperative Educational Services; Syracuse, New York
- David Lutkemeier, Ed.D., Auditor; Educational Consultant; Vero Beach, Florida
- Sarah Mitchell, Ed.D., Auditor; Director of Secondary Education for Frontier Regional and Union #38 Schools; Greenfield, Massachusetts

Biographical information about the auditors is found in the appendix.

System Purpose for Conducting the Audit

The Manchester School District Board of School Committee undertook the Curriculum Audit as a source of direction as it develops a long-range strategic plan.

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 overall quality of the organization in accomplishing its purposes are examined in order to “close the loop” in curriculum and instructional improvement.

II. METHODOLOGY

The Model for the Curriculum 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.

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

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

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

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

Standards for the Auditors

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

Technical Expertise

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

The Manchester School District 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: Wisconsin, Minnesota, Arizona, California, Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio.

The Principle of Independence

None of the Curriculum Audit™ Team members had any vested interest in the findings or recommendations of the Manchester School District Curriculum Audit™. None of the auditors has or had any working relationship with the individuals who occupied top or middle management positions in the Manchester School District, nor with any of the past or current members of the Manchester School District 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 PDK-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

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

The Principle of Full Disclosure

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

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

“Some school principals said that ... ”

“Many teachers expressed concern that ... ”

“There was widespread comment about ... ”

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

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

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

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

Interviewed Representatives of the Manchester School District

Superintendent	Board of School Committee Members
District Administrators	Coordinators and Facilitators
Principals	Parents
Assistant Principals	Teachers
Community Members	

Approximately 90 individuals were interviewed during the site visit phase of the audit. An additional 239 teachers responded to an audit survey.

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.

The major sources of data for the Manchester School District Curriculum Audit™ were:

Documents

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

Interviews

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

Site Visits

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

Standards for the Curriculum Audit™

The PDK-CMSi Curriculum Audit™ used five standards against which to compare, verify, and comment upon the Manchester School District'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™.

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

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

The five standards employed in the PDK-CMSi Curriculum Audit™ in Manchester School District 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 uses the results from district-designed or -adopted assessments to adjust, improve, or terminate ineffective practices or programs.
5. The school district has improved productivity.

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

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

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

III. FINDINGS

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

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

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

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

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

What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Manchester School District:

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

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

Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Manchester School District:

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

The control standard of the audit provides the parameters for the remaining standards. In American education, the fundamental control of the public education system rests with the local school board. This places the responsibility for the schools in the hands of the people in the community. The school board exercises its control function through the development and oversight of policies.

The auditors found that the Manchester School District board policies are inadequate to provide for a sound system of curriculum management and control. A number of necessary policies are lacking and others are outdated or too general to provide direction and consistency for the educational program and district operations.

Elements of planning take place at all levels of the district, but district, school, and department planning efforts are not sufficiently connected and coordinated to drive district goals and priorities. A strategic planning process was underway at the time of the audit visit, but a plan has not yet been developed. District and school improvement plans have been developed, but they do not currently provide focus for district initiatives and general operations. District technology and professional development plans have been written, but comprehensive plans are lacking in the areas of curriculum management, student and program assessment, facilities, and budgeting.

The table of organization does not meet all principles of sound organizational management. The auditors noted issues related to span of control, logical grouping of functions, scalar relationships, and full inclusion. Job descriptions are available for almost all positions depicted on the table of organization, but they do not completely meet the audit standards for adequacy. Job descriptions for several key positions lack linkage to the educational program or require the use of data in decision making.

The auditors found that the school system has experienced several years of Board of School Committee disharmony that has compromised the board's ability to provide clear direction and focus for the management and operation of the school district. The board structure, board functioning, and dissonance among board members and with administrative staff have contributed to negative stakeholder perceptions.

Finding 1.1: Board policies are inadequate to provide a framework for local curriculum management and quality control.

Educational policy development is one of the most important functions of a board of education. This is the principal process by which the board discharges its responsibilities for control and focus of the school system. Well-written policies establish focus, criteria, and parameters for decision making and standardized practice across a variety of settings. They create consistency throughout the school district and provide a means to manage innovation.

To effectively guide decisions at all levels of the organization, a school district's policies need to be directive and specific as to philosophy, intent, and required actions. When policies are absent or nonspecific, there is a lack of guidance for the board, administrators, and teachers. Then the content and quality of educational decisions are left to the discretion of individuals, and outcomes may not reflect the board's intent.

The auditors reviewed the Manchester School District Board of School Committee (BOSC) policies and employee job descriptions and conducted interviews with board members, parents, district and school administrators, and teachers to determine the status of policy development and implementation within the school system.

The district does not belong to the State School Boards Association and develops its own policies. The policies are available online. Policies are reviewed periodically, but the auditors were not provided with a regular schedule of policy review. Overall, the auditors rated the district's board policies as lacking in sufficient specificity to provide a basis for sound local control of the curriculum. The district's job descriptions, which are considered as board policies, provide additional direction relative to curriculum management functions, but they do not meet audit standards (see [Finding 1.3](#)).

The following board policies reference policy and administrative regulations development and implementation:

- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 109: Board-Superintendent Relationship* states that policy-making is the primary function of the board and execution of the policies is the primary function of the superintendent.
- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 119: Board Policy Process* requires policies to be based upon and interpreted within the context of New Hampshire laws, administrative rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, and all other regulatory agencies within local, county, state, and federal levels of government.
- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 120: Policy Development System* endorses the policy development, codification, and dissemination system of the National School Boards Association. The superintendent is to designate administrative staff to maintain the board's policy reference files, to draft policy proposals as instructed by the board and/or superintendent, to maintain the board policy manual,

and to serve as liaison between the board, the New Hampshire School Boards Association, the State Board of Education, and other sources of policy research information.

- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 101: School Board Policies and Administrative Procedures* states that the policies of the board shall be comprised of the following:
 1. The policies contained in the board policy manual,
 2. The contents of administrative job descriptions adopted by the board,
 3. All formal student handbooks, and
 4. All formal employee handbooks.

This policy also describes the procedure for making an exception to board policy.

- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 102.1: Substantive Duties* lists the areas for which the board shall adopt policies, such as facilities, transportation, and budget.
- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 109: Policy Implementation* delegates administration of the district to the superintendent “who shall carry out his/her administrative functions in accordance with the policies adopted by the Board.”
- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 110: Development of Regulations* directs the superintendent to develop appropriate regulations to implement board policies.
- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 111: Board Review of Regulations* directs the superintendent to submit written procedures to the board as information items that do not require board approval.
- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 122: Policy Dissemination* requires the superintendent to establish an orderly plan for making board policies and administrative regulations accessible to district employees, members of the Board of School Committee, and citizens in the community.

As noted above, no board policy requires systematic review of all policies.

The following job descriptions reference responsibilities for policy development or implementation:

- Superintendent of Schools – Ensures that BOSC decisions, policies, and procedures are implemented and adhered to.
- Assistant Superintendent for Student Services – Prepares drafts of needed BOSC policies, administrative rules, and status reports for superintendent’s review and action and conducts staff meetings as needed to interpret changes in BOSC policy or administrative rules.
- Director of Information Technology – Develops policies and procedures designed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of departmental operations and to address technology needs within the school district.
- Business Administrator - Conducts staff meetings as needed to interpret changes in BOSC policy or administrative rules.
- Teacher – Assists administration in implementing all policies and/or rules and regulations of the school and Board of School Committee governing student life and conduct.

Exhibit 1.1.1 lists the curriculum management-related board policies reviewed by the auditors.

Exhibit 1.1.1
Board Policies Reviewed
Manchester School District
March 2013

Policy	Title	Approval/ Update
Administration		
Administration 100	Administration Goals	1/8/01
Administration 101	School Superintendent	1/8/01
Administration 102	Appointment of Superintendent	1/8/01
Administration 104	Evaluation of Superintendent	1/8/01
Administration 105	Line and Staff Relations	1/8/01
Administration 106	School Building Administration	1/8/01
Administration 107	School Principals	1/8/01
Administration 108	Building Principal(s) Evaluation	1/8/01
Administration 109	Policy Implementation	1/8/01
Administration 110	Development of Regulations	1/8/01
Administration 111	Board Review of Regulations	1/8/01
Administration 113	Accessibility of Policies	1/8/01
Administration 114	Approval of Handbook and Directives	1/8/01
Administration 117	Diversity Policy	12/10/07
Administration 200	Facilities Projections	12/11/00
Administration 201	Facilities: Educational Specifications	12/11/00
Administration 209	Indoor Air Quality	1/10/11
Agency		
Agency 100	Inter-Organizational Relations	4/8/02
Agency 101	Relations with Education Research Agencies	3/11/02
Agency 103	Alternative Methods for Completing High School Graduation Requirements – Awarding College and University Credits	11/13/01
Board of School Committee (BOSC)		
BOSC 100	School Board Operational Goals	7/8/02
BOSC 101	School Board Policies and Administrative Procedures	6/9/08
BOSC 102	Board Member Authority	7/8/02
BOSC 102.1	Substantive Duties	2/11/02
BOSC 109	Board-Superintendent Relationship	7/8/02
BOSC 119	Board Policy Process	10/18/99
BOSC 120	Policy Development System	10/18/99
BOSC 122	Policy Dissemination	7/8/02
BOSC 132	Advisory Committee Policy	11/14/05
Code of Conduct		
Code of Conduct	Student Code of Conduct	6/14/10
Community		
Community 100	Community Involvement in Decision-Making	1/14/02
Community 101	Public Information Program	1/14/02
Community 102	Public Information Dissemination	1/14/02
Community 103	Public Concerns and Complaints	12/12/11

Exhibit 1.1.1 (continued)
Board Policies Reviewed
Manchester School District
March 2013

Policy	Title	Approval/ Update
Fiscal Management		
Fiscal 100	Fiscal Management Goals/Priority Objectives	4/10/00
Fiscal 101	Annual Budget	4/10/00
Fiscal 102	Fiscal Year	4/10/00
Fiscal 103	Budget Planning, Preparation, and Schedules	4/10/00
Fiscal 104	Budget Implementation	4/10/00
Fiscal 106	Funding Proposals, Grants, and Special Projects	4/10/00
Fiscal 107	Funds from Local Taxes	4/10/00
Fiscal 112	Fiscal Accounting and Reporting	4/10/00
Fiscal 114	Audits/Financial Monitoring	4/10/00
Fiscal 115	Purchasing	4/10/00
Fiscal 127	Gifts/Donations	9/14/09
Fiscal 127R	Gifts/Donations Regulations	9/14/09
Foundations		
Foundations 102	Nondiscrimination	4/10/00
Foundations 103	Open Hiring/Equal Opportunity Employment	4/10/00
Instruction		
Instruction 101	Academic Freedom	8/13/01
Instruction 104	Curriculum Development	7/9/01
Instruction 105	Curriculum Adoption	7/9/01
Instruction 106	Physical Education	5/14/01
Instruction 107	Character and Citizenship Education	3/11/02
Instruction 108	Teaching About Religion	7/9/01
Instruction 109	Teaching About Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco	5/14/01
Instruction 110	HIV/Aids Policy	11/12/02
Instruction 111	Meeting the Needs of Students with Different Talents	5/14/01
Instruction 112	Programs for Students with Disabilities	5/14/01
Instruction 114	Summer School Program	6/14/04
Instruction 115	Equity in Determining Grade Placement and Credit	7/9/12
Instruction 117	Promotion and Retention Policy	6/14/10
Instruction 117R	Appendix: Retention Procedure	6/14/10
Instruction 118	Instructional Materials	5/13/09
Instruction 118R	Appendix: Guidelines for Selection of Instructional Materials	5/13/09
Instruction 118.1	Use of Videos/DVDs/Supplemental Electronic Resources	8/9/10
Instruction 118.1R	Use of Videos/DVDs/Supplemental Electronic Resources Regulations	8/9/10
Instruction 122	Field Trips and Approved Excursions	11/22/10
Instruction 122R	Appendix: Field Trips and Approved Excursions Regulations	11/22/10
Instruction 123	Vacation Tours/Trips	5/14/01
Instruction 125	Middle and High School Grading System	7/9/01
Instruction 126	Homework	1/8/01
Instruction 127	High School Promotion Requirements	5/14/12
Instruction 128	Twenty Credits for Graduation	9/24/12

Exhibit 1.1.1 (continued)
Board Policies Reviewed
Manchester School District
March 2013

Policy	Title	Approval/Update
Instruction 128.1	Interdisciplinary Credit to Meet Graduation Requirements	9/24/12
Instruction 128.2	Eligibility for Certificate of Completion or Modified Curriculum Diploma	11/13/12
Instruction 130	Early Graduation	6/14/04
Instruction 131	Alternative Methods for Completing High School Graduation	11/13/01
Instruction 131.1	Alternative Credit Options	4/8/09
Instruction 131.2	Extended Learning Opportunities	4/8/09
Instruction 131.3	Online/Virtual Education	4/8/09
Instruction 135	Evaluation of Instructional Programs	4/16/01
Instruction 141	Prior Program Approval	8/13/01
Instruction 142	Intranet/Internet Responsible Use Policy	5/14/12
Instruction 143	Student Evaluation for Specific Learning Disability	5/10/10
Instruction 143R	Appendix: Regulations for Student Evaluations for Specific Learning Disabilities	5/10/10
Instruction 145	Exceptions to the Use of Specific Course Materials	10/9/12
Instruction 147:1.1	Computing Devices in Manchester Schools	9/13/12
Instruction 148	Web Tools and Social Media	10/9/12
Personnel		
Personnel 100	Personnel Goals/Priority Objectives	3/11/02
Personnel 100.1	Staff Selection and Hiring Process	9/27/10
Personnel 101	Open Hiring/Equal Opportunity Employment	4/10/00
Personnel 101.1	Nondiscrimination	4/10/00
Personnel 102	Sexual Discrimination and Harassment	11/12/02
Personnel 115	Recruitment of Administrative Staff	3/11/02
Personnel 118	Professional Staff Orientation and Training	3/11/02
Personnel 119	Professional Staff Development Opportunities	3/11/02
Personnel 123	Evaluation of Professional Staff	3/11/02
Students		
Students 100	Sexual Discrimination and Harassment	11/12/02
Students 101	Compulsory Attendance Age	3/8/10
Students 101.1	Attendance Policy	9/24/12
Students 105.1	Homeless Students	12/14/09
Students 108	Student Absences	1/8/01
Students 112	Student Rights and Responsibilities	12/10/01
Students 113	Student Due Process Rights	6/14/10
Students 114	Student Involvement in Decision-Making	11/10/01
Students 116	Student Conduct	12/10/01
Students 118	Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Policy – Bullying	12/13/10
Students 120	Student Conduct in School/Safe School Zone	11/12/02
Students 129	Unauthorized Communication Devices	9/14/12
Students 134	Student Fund-Raising Activities	12/10/01

Exhibit 1.1.1 indicates that the 110 board policies reviewed were dated from 1999 through 2012.

- Seventy-one (71) policies, or 64.5 percent, were approved or updated between 1999 and 2002.

- Four policies, or 3.6 percent, were approved or updated between 2003 and 2007.
- Thirty-five (35) policies, or 31.8 percent, were approved or updated between 2008 and 2012.

The auditors analyzed the policies listed in [Exhibit 1.1.1](#) to determine congruence with audit standards for curriculum management. Twenty-six (26) criteria are organized into five categories: control, direction, connectivity and equity, feedback, and productivity. In order for policies within each standard to be characterized as adequate, they must receive 70 percent or more of the points allocated to the criterion.

Standard One Board Policies: Control

Audit [Standard One](#) states the expectation that a school system is able to demonstrate control of resources, programs, and personnel. Control is, in part, provided by board policies that establish an operational framework for management that permits accountability. The criteria and the auditors' ratings of board policies relative to control are displayed in [Exhibit 1.1.2](#).

Exhibit 1.1.2

Auditors' Analysis of Board Policies On Audit Standard One to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy Manchester School District March 2013

Standard One—Provides for Control: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Audit Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Auditors' Rating
1.1 A taught and assessed curriculum that is aligned to the district written curriculum		
• Requires the taught and assessed curriculum to be aligned to the district’s written curriculum	Instruction 104	1
• Addresses the alignment of the district’s written curriculum with state and national standards for all subject areas and grades (includes electives)		0
• Directs the district’s written curriculum documents to be more rigorous than state and national standards, to facilitate deep alignment in all three dimensions with current and future high-stakes tests		0
1.2 Philosophical statements of the district instructional approach		
• Has a general philosophical statement of curriculum approach, such as standards-based, competency-based, outcome-based, etc.	Instruction 104	0
• Directs adherence to mastery learning practices for all content areas and grades involved in local, state, and national accountability		0
• Directs adherence to mastery learning practices for all grade levels and content areas, including electives		0
1.3 Board adoption of the written curriculum		
• Requires the annual review of new or revised written curriculum prior to its adoption	Instruction 105	1
• Directs the annual adoption of new or revised written curriculum for all grade levels and content areas		0
• Directs the periodic review of all curriculum on a planned cycle over several years		0
1.4 Accountability for the design and delivery of the district curriculum through roles and responsibilities		
• Directs job descriptions to include accountability for the design and delivery of the aligned curriculum		0
• Links professional appraisal processes with specific accountability functions in the job descriptions of central office administrators, building administrators, and regular classroom teachers		0
• Directs professional appraisal processes to evaluate all staff in terms of gains in student achievement		0

Exhibit 1.1.2 (continued) Auditors' Analysis of Board Policies On Audit Standard One to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy Manchester School District March 2013		
Standard One—Provides for Control: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Audit Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Auditors' Rating
1.5 Long-range, system-wide planning		
• As part of the district planning process, policy requires that the superintendent and staff think collectively about the future and that the discussion take some tangible form (This allows for flexibility without prescribing a particular template)	BOSC 100 BOSC 102.1	0
• Requires the development of a system-wide, long-range plan that is updated annually; incorporates system-wide student achievement targets; and is evaluated using both formative and summative measures		1
• Expects school improvement plans to be congruent with the district long-range plan, to incorporate system-wide student achievement targets, and to be evaluated using both formative and summative measures		0
1.6 Functional decision-making structure		
• Expects an organizational chart that is annually reviewed, presented to the board, and approved by the superintendent	Administration 100	0
• Requires that job descriptions for each person listed on the organizational chart be present and updated regularly to ensure that all audit criteria, such as span of control, logical grouping of functions, etc., are met	Administration 108	1
• Directs and specifies the processes for the formation of decision-making bodies (e.g., cabinet, task forces, committees) in terms of their composition and decision-making responsibilities, to ensure consistency, non-duplication of tasks, and product requirements		0
Standard One Rating (number of points for the six criteria with a possibility of 18)		4
Percentage of Adequacy (points divided by the number of possible points—18)		22.2%
Note: One point was awarded for every characteristic met under each criterion for a maximum of three points. No points are awarded when policies fail to meet any characteristics.		

Exhibit 1.1.2 indicates that board policies that provide for control received a rating of 4 out of 18 possible points, or 22.2 percent, and are, therefore inadequate to establish an operational framework for the district.

The following presents information about the auditors' ratings:

Criterion 1.1: A taught and assessed curriculum that is aligned to the district written curriculum

Board policies are silent in regard to the expectation that the taught and assessed curricula are to be aligned with the district's written curriculum. Alignment to state and national standards is also not addressed in policy. However, the job description for the Language Arts Integration Specialist refers to an assessment plan for language arts "consistent with the curriculum and New Hampshire standards." The job description for the Literacy/Math Intervention Teacher calls for helping teachers "align district standards with effective instruction and assessments." One point is assigned to this criterion.

Criterion 1.2: Philosophical statements of the district instructional approach

Board policies lack direction relative to a philosophical approach to curriculum, so no points are awarded to this criterion (see [Finding 2.1](#)).

Criterion 1.3: Board adoption of the written curriculum

Board Policy Instruction 105: Curriculum Adoption requires board adoption of curriculum following a presentation by the administration to the board Curriculum and Instruction Committee. One point is assigned to this criterion. However, board policies do not reference written curriculum for all grade levels and content areas or direct a cycle of periodic curriculum review.

Criterion 1.4: Accountability for the design and delivery of the district curriculum through roles and responsibilities

Board policies do not direct that curriculum accountability be included in job descriptions or appraisal processes. No points are award to this criterion.

Criterion 1.5: Long-range, system-wide planning

Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 100: School Board Operational Goals requires the board to annually develop goals and objectives that may include structure, vision, accountability, and advocacy. *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 102.1: Substantive Duties* states that the board of education, in consultation with the superintendent, shall develop long-range plans and identify measurable and attainable short-term objectives (see [Finding 1.2](#)). Educational programs that reflect the goals and objectives are to be developed, reviewed by the board, and results reported to the community. Specific methods of evaluation are not described, nor is school improvement planning referenced in policy. One point is assigned to this criterion.

Criterion 1.6: Functional decision-making structure

Board policy is silent concerning the table of organization (see [Finding 1.3](#)). *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 100: Administration Goals* references “providing opportunities for collaborative decision-making with staff, students, parents, and members of the community,” and *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 108: School Building Administration* states that principals are to implement “a site based management model.” However, specific processes and procedures to guide the work of decision-making bodies are absent.

The Director of Human Resources’ job description requires maintaining up-to-date job descriptions for all employees but does not require specific components other than that the position’s supervisor be included. One point is awarded to this criterion.

The Manchester Board of School Committee policies are missing or lack sufficient specificity to provide an operational framework for organizational control and accountability.

Standard Two Board Policies: Direction

Audit [Standard Two](#) expects that a school system has established clear direction through a valid and measurable set of objectives for students. The criteria and the auditors’ ratings of board policies relative to direction are displayed in [Exhibit 1.1.3](#).

Exhibit 1.1.3

Auditors' Analysis of Board Policies On Audit Standard Two to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy Manchester School District March 2013

Standard Two—Provides for Direction: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Audit Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Auditors' Rating
2.1 Written curriculum with aligned, criterion-referenced formative assessments for all subject areas at all grade levels		
• Requires enough specificity so that all teachers can consistently describe how students will demonstrate mastery of the intended objective	Instruction 131.2	0
• Requires formative assessment instruments that align to specific curriculum objectives		0
• Directs that suggestions be provided to teachers for differentiating curriculum to meet students' needs as diagnosed by formative assessments		0
2.2 Periodic review/update of the curriculum and aligned resources and assessments		
• Requires the development of procedures to both formatively and summatively review the written curriculum for all grade levels and content areas	Instruction 104, 118	0
• Requires the annual review of test banks, benchmark assessments, and other assessment instruments for alignment with the district or state accountability system		0
• Evaluates assessment instruments for alignment to the district curriculum in all three dimensions: content, context, and cognitive type		0
2.3 Textbook/resource alignment to curriculum and assessment		
• Requires textbooks/resources to be regularly reviewed and the resource revision/ adoption cycle to align with the curriculum revision cycle	Instruction 118, 118.1, 118.R	1
• Directs review of all new instructional resource materials for content, context, and cognitive type alignment to the district curriculum and assessment		0
• Directs district staff to identify discrete areas where alignment is missing and provide teachers with supplementary materials to address gaps in alignment (missing content, inadequate contexts, etc.)		0
2.4 Content area emphasis		
• Directs the yearly identification of subject areas that require additional emphasis based on a review of assessment results	Administration 100	0
• Within subject areas, requires identification by administration of specific objectives, contexts, cognitive types, and instructional practices to receive budgetary support	Personnel 100, 118, 119, 128	0
• Requires focused professional development and coaching to support the instructional delivery of the identified priorities within the content areas		1
2.5 Program integration and alignment to the district's written curriculum		
• Directs that all subject-related (e.g., reading, Title I) and school-wide (e.g., tutoring, DARE, AVID) programs be reviewed for alignment to the written and assessed curriculum	BOSC 102.1 Instruction 135, 141	0
• Requires written procedures for both formative and summative evaluation of all new subject-related and school-wide programs before submission to the board for approval		0
• Directs administrative staff to prepare annual recommendations for subject-related and school-wide program revision, expansion, or termination based on student achievement		1
Standard Two Rating (number of points for the five criteria with a possibility of 15)		3
Percentage of Adequacy (points divided by the number of possible points—15)		20%
Note: One point was awarded for every characteristic met under each criterion for a maximum of three points. No points are awarded when policies fail to meet any characteristics.		

Exhibit 1.1.3 shows that board policies that provide for direction received a rating of 3 out of 15 possible points, or 20 percent adequacy, and are considered inadequate to provide clear curriculum guidance for the district.

The following presents information about the auditors' analysis.

Criterion 2.1: Written curriculum with aligned, criterion-referenced formative assessments for all subjects at all grade levels

Board policy is silent regarding elements to be included in the written curriculum, such as formative assessments aligned to objectives or suggestions for differentiating curriculum. The job descriptions of the Language Arts Integration Specialist and the Math Curriculum Specialist refer to language arts and math assessments aligned to the curriculum, but formative assessments are not required for all subjects at all grade levels (see Finding 2.3).

Direction for providing suggestions to teachers for differentiating curriculum to meet student needs is lacking. *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 131.2: Extended Learning Opportunities* describes extended learning opportunities as a means of meeting diverse instructional needs of students "with different talents, interest, and development." However, these opportunities are intended for "situations where regular classrooms are not practical or effective." No points are assigned to this criterion.

Criterion 2.2: Provides periodic review of the curriculum and aligned resources and assessments

Policy does not require periodic review of the curriculum or alignment of assessments with the district or state accountability system (except in the above mentioned job descriptions). No points are awarded to this criterion.

Criterion 2.3: Textbook/resource alignment to curriculum and assessment

Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 118: Instructional Materials states that "basic instructional course material" in the core areas should be reviewed at intervals not exceeding five years. However, the policy does not require that resource adoption should align with a curriculum revision cycle or that resources need to be aligned to district curriculum and assessment in content, context, and cognitive type. One point is assigned to this criterion.

Criterion 2.4: Content area emphasis

Board policy does not address the use of assessment results to identify subject areas that need additional emphasis and/or budgetary support. *Board of School Committee Personnel Policy 119: Professional Staff Development Opportunities* directs the superintendent or designee to provide appropriate staff development so that "staff members become knowledgeable about new developments and changes in their specialized fields and shall utilize any new and/or improved methods in their work." One point is given to this criterion.

Criterion 2.5: Program integration and alignment to the curriculum

Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 141: Prior Program Approval states that the board needs to approve all new programs "that constitute a major variation or might be considered experimental in nature." *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 135: Evaluation of Instructional Programs* directs that instructional programs be evaluated "with regard to the effectiveness of programs on student achievement," with results reported to the board. Board policy does not require that supplemental programs be reviewed for alignment to the written and assessed curriculum. One point is assigned to this criterion.

Standard Three Board Policies: Connectivity and Equity

Audit Standard Three expects a school district to have documents/sources that reveal internal connections among different levels of the system, predictable consistency for content delineation within the curriculum, and equality and equity of curriculum/course access and opportunity. Other indicators include allocation of resources to areas of greatest need, professional development to enhance curricular design and delivery, and a curriculum that is monitored by supervisory personnel.

The criteria and the auditors' ratings of board policies relative to connectivity and equity are displayed in Exhibit 1.1.4.

Exhibit 1.1.4

Auditors' Analysis of Board Policies On Audit Standard Three to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy Manchester School District March 2013

Standard Three—Provides for Connectivity and Equity: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Audit Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Auditors' Rating
3.1 Predictability of written curriculum from one grade and/or instructional level to another		
• Requires the vertical articulation and horizontal coordination of the curriculum within schools	Administration 105	0
• Requires vertical articulation across grade levels and horizontal coordination among schools at a given level for all content areas	Instruction 118	1
• Directs the identification of prerequisite skills and their placement in the written curriculum at the appropriate grade/instructional level		0
3.2 Training for staff in the delivery of the curriculum		
• Directs the development and implementation of a district professional development plan, focused on effective curriculum delivery, that is congruent with the district long-range plan and annual goal priorities	Administration 100, Personnel 100,118,119	1
• Requires a process whereby staff are coached over time in the implementation of professional development initiatives		1
• Directs the regular evaluation of the impact of professional development on student achievement, using both formative and summative measures		0
3.3 Delivery of the adopted district curriculum		
• Requires all staff to deliver the curriculum as approved by the board	Instruction 135	1
• Requires building principals and all central office staff with curriculum responsibilities to review disaggregated assessment results and identify areas where curriculum delivery may be ineffective		0
• Requires an annual report for the board regarding the status of curriculum delivery		1
3.4 Monitoring the delivery of the district curriculum		
• Directs building principals to develop and implement a plan to monitor the delivery of the district curriculum on a weekly basis		0
• Directs central office curricular staff to assist the principal in monitoring the delivery of the district curriculum		0
• Requires periodic school and classroom data-gathering reports from administrators detailing the status of the delivery of the curriculum across the district, with recommendations for the creation of professional development activities or curricular revisions		0
3.5 Equitable student access to the curriculum, instructional resources, and learning environment		
• Requires equal student access to the curriculum, appropriate instructional materials for a variety of learning levels and modes, and appropriate facilities to support the learning environment necessary to deliver the district curriculum	Foundations 102; Personnel 101.1	1
• Directs the development of procedures for fast-tracking students who lack sufficient prerequisite skills for courses such as AP, honors, etc., but need more challenging content		0
• Requires an annual review of equity data (such as access, racial isolation, rigor), the subsequent reporting to the board of those data, and the development of a plan for correcting equity issues		0
Standard Three Rating (number of points for the five criteria with a possibility of 15)		6
Percentage of Adequacy (points divided by the number of possible points—15)		40%
Note: One point was awarded for every characteristic met under each criterion for a maximum of three points. No points are awarded when policies fail to meet any characteristics.		

Exhibit 1.1.4 indicates that board policies relative to audit Standard Three received 6 out of 15 possible points, or 40 percent, and are inadequate to provide for connectivity and equity.

Details about the auditors' analysis are provided below.

Criterion 3.1: Predictability of the written curriculum

Board of School Committee Administration Policy 105: Line and Staff Relations assigns to the superintendent the responsibility for “overseeing the pattern and sequence of educational experiences provided for students from Pre-kindergarten through grade 12.” *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 118: Instructional Materials* states that instructional materials must be sequential and compatible with previous and future offerings. While these policies reference vertical articulation, they do not require horizontal coordination or the identification of prerequisite skills. One point is assigned to this criterion.

Criterion 3.2: Training for staff in the delivery of the curriculum

Board policies have the expectation that professional development will be provided for new teachers and for staff members who will experience changes in their subject areas, but the policies do not reference a staff development plan (see Finding 3.1).

However, a number of job descriptions assign responsibilities for developing a staff development plan and for training in curriculum delivery (see Finding 1.3). The job description for the Director of Federal Projects/Professional Development lists as a responsibility of this position: “Oversee the development and implementation of the Manchester School District’s Professional Development Master Plan . . . for district-wide coordination of curriculum, professional development, and assessment.” The Language Arts Integration Specialist and the Math Curriculum Specialists are to coordinate Professional Development Implementation Plans for their subject areas.

Ongoing coaching for teachers and administrators is to be provided by the Math and Language Arts Curriculum Specialists, including the use of assessment data. School-based Literacy/Math Intervention Teachers are to model and observe lessons and provide feedback and to “help teachers apply professional development activities to classroom instruction.”

Evaluation of the impact of staff development efforts on student achievement is not an expectation. Two points are awarded to this criterion.

Criterion 3.3: Delivery of the adopted district curriculum

Board policy does not specifically require teachers to teach the board adopted curriculum, although the teacher’s job description states that the teacher is to “Guide the learning process toward the achievement of curriculum goals.”

Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 135: Evaluation of Instructional Programs references the evaluation of instructional programs and expects reports to the board relative to the effectiveness of programs on student achievement (see Finding 4.4). Two points are given to this criterion.

Criterion 3.4: Monitoring the delivery of the curriculum

Board policy and job descriptions are silent in regard to administrative monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum in the classroom (see Finding 3.3). No points are assigned to this criterion.

Criterion 3.5: Equitable student access to curriculum, instructional resources, and learning environment

Board of School Committee Foundations Policy 102: Nondiscrimination and *Board Policy Personnel 101.1: Nondiscrimination* require equal access to “any educational program or activity in the Manchester School District” (see Finding 3.4). Policies do not reference procedures for fast-tracking students who lack the prerequisite skills for advanced courses but need more challenging content, or require an annual review of equity data. One point is given for this criterion.

Standard Four Board Policies: Feedback

A school district meeting audit Standard Four has a comprehensive assessment system that provides information for decision making at the classroom, campus, system, and board levels. The criteria and the auditors' ratings of board policies relative to assessment are displayed in Exhibit 1.1.5.

Exhibit 1.1.5

**Auditors' Analysis of Board Policies
On Audit Standard Four to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Standard Four—Provides for Feedback: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Audit Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulation	Auditors' Rating
4.1 A student assessment process		
• Requires the development and implementation of a district student assessment process that goes beyond the state accountability assessment system and includes both formative and summative measures		1
• Requires the development and implementation of a district student assessment process that is differentiated to address variations in student achievement (both above and below grade level) and includes both formative and summative assessment measures		0
• Requires assessment instruments to be more rigorous in content, context, and cognitive type than external, high stakes assessments		0
4.2 A program assessment process		
• Directs the development and implementation of a district program evaluation process	BOSC 102.1 Instruction 135	1
• Requires each proposed program to have an evaluation process (The process includes both formative and summative evaluations) before that program is adopted and implemented		0
• Directs the program assessment process to link with district planning initiatives, including site improvement plans and the strategic/long-range plan		0
4.3 Use of data from assessments to determine program and curriculum effectiveness and efficiency		
• Requires the disaggregation of assessment data at the school, classroom, student subgroup, and student level to determine program and curriculum effectiveness and efficiency		1
• Requires classroom teachers to track and document individual student mastery in core content areas		0
• Requires the development of modifications to the curriculum and/or programs as needed in response to disaggregated assessment data to bring about effectiveness and efficiency		1
4.4 Reports to the board about program effectiveness		
• Requires yearly reports to the board regarding program effectiveness for all new programs for the first three years of operation	BOSC 102.1	1
• Requires reports to the board every three years for long-term programs		0
• Requires summative reports to the board every five years for all content areas before any curriculum revisions or major materials acquisition, with the reports delivered prior to the curricular adoption cycle		0
Standard Four Rating (number of points for the four criteria with a possibility of 12)		5
Percentage of Adequacy (points divided by the number of possible points—12)		41.7%
Note: One point was awarded for every characteristic met under each criterion for a maximum of three points. No points are awarded when policies fail to meet any characteristics.		

Exhibit 1.1.5 shows that board policies relative to audit Standard Four received five out of 12 possible points, or 41.7 percent adequacy. Board policies are inadequate to provide direction for assessment and feedback.

The following presents information about the auditors' ratings.

Criterion 4.1: A student assessment process

Board policies do not address a student assessment process (see Finding 4.1). However, the job descriptions of the Language Arts Integration Specialist and the Math Curriculum Specialist assign the responsibility of facilitating the design and development of a comprehensive assessment plan for their subject areas. One point is awarded for this criterion.

Criterion 4.2: A program assessment process

Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 135: Evaluation of Instructional Programs requires the evaluation of instructional programs. *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 102.1: Substantive Duties* requires the implementation of educational programs designed to reflect district goals and objectives, review of the programs, and reports to the community on the results. Board policies do not clearly specify a formative and summative program evaluation process. The Data Analyst's job description lists the following as a core function: "The analysis and use of data to improve student achievement, inform instruction, and monitor progress toward goals." The District Grant Writer and Evaluator is to "Direct an ongoing program of evaluation for all existing federal, state, and private grants." One point is given to this criterion.

Criterion 4.3: Use of data from assessment to determine program/curriculum effectiveness and efficiency

Board policies do not provide guidance for the use of data from assessments (see Finding 4.4). The Data Analyst's job description does not specifically reference disaggregated data, but assigns the following responsibilities relative to the use of data: "Analyze student performance data and use the data in setting measurable goals, designing interventions, evaluating interventions, and driving instructional and programmatic decisions." The District Grant Writer and Evaluator position is to "direct an ongoing program of evaluation for all existing federal, state, and private grants." The Language Arts Integration Specialist and Math Specialist are to communicate assessment information to school principals and assist them in using the data to inform instructional practice within the school.

Discussions are to take place relative to school and district data that will be used to inform instructional, budgetary, and professional development decisions. Two points are awarded for this criterion.

Criterion 4.4: Reports to the board about program effectiveness

Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 102.1: Substantive Duties requires reports to the board regarding program effectiveness, but policy does not specify how often the reports are to take place. The job description of the District Grant Writer and Evaluator includes the responsibility for preparing an annual report summarizing the evaluations of federally funded programs "newly completely, those under way, and the import of those being planned." One point is assigned to this criterion.

Standard Five Board Policies: Productivity

A school district meeting audit Standard Five is able to consistently demonstrate improved student outcomes even when faced with diminished resources. The criteria and the auditors' ratings of board policies relative to productivity are displayed in Exhibit 1.1.6.

Exhibit 1.1.6

Auditors' Analysis of Board Policy and Administrative Regulations on Audit Standard Five to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy Manchester School District March 2013

Standard Five—Provides for Productivity: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Audit Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Auditors' Rating
5.1 Program-centered budgeting		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Directs development of a budget process that requires program evaluation, identification of specific measurable program goals before the budget process begins, and documented costs to ensure that expenditures are aligned within revenues and cost-benefit analysis is facilitated	Fiscal 100, 102	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Requires adherence to a program-centered budgeting process that includes incremental budgeting based on different program types, delivery, and quality for all curriculum areas (The process provides evidence of tangible connections between allocations and anticipated program outcomes or accomplishments.)		0
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Directs full implementation of a program-centered budgeting process that includes incremental funding possibilities, a process for evaluating options, and the use of program evaluation data linked to budget allocations (This process enables program budget decisions to be based upon documented results and performance.)		0
5.2 Resource allocation tied to curriculum priorities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Requires a budget that allocates resources according to documented needs, assessment data, and established district curriculum and program goals and priorities	Fiscal 100, 102	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Requires a budget that may be multi-year in nature, provides ongoing support for curriculum and program priorities, and connects costs with program expectations and data-based needs		0
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Directs a budget that provides resources needed to achieve system priorities over time and demonstrates the need for resources based on measurable results and/or performance of programs and activities		0
5.3 Environment to support curriculum delivery		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Directs facilities that enable teachers to work in an environment that supports adequate delivery of the curriculum	Administration 201, BOSC 102.1	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Directs consideration of multi-year facilities planning efforts to adequately support the district curriculum and program priorities		0
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Directs facilities planning linked to future curriculum and instructional trends and to the teaching-learning environment incorporated in the documented system mission and vision statements		0
5.4 Support systems focused on curriculum design and delivery		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides a clear connection between district support services and the achievement of the district curriculum design and delivery, and evidence of optimization within the system		0
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Requires formative and summative evaluation practices for each support service to provide data for improving these services and documented evidence of improvement over time		0
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Requires periodic reports to the board with recommendations for continuing, revising, and/or developing new support services to enhance fulfillment of the mission, including needs-based data		0

Exhibit 1.1.6 (continued)		
Auditors’ Analysis of Board Policy and Administrative Regulations on Audit Standard Five to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy Manchester School District March 2013		
Standard Five—Provides for Productivity: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Audit Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Auditors’ Rating
5.5 Data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning		
• Directs the development of specific requirements for data analysis that lead to improved student learning for the core curriculum areas and electives		0
• Directs the development of specific requirements for data analysis that lead to improved student learning for all curriculum areas and grade levels (including electives)		0
• Directs the development of specific requirements for data analysis that lead to improved student learning for all operations of the district		0
5.6 Change processes for long-term institutionalization of district priority goals		
• Requires the identification of strategies, grounded in documented assessment of program success or efficacy, to be used by the district to ensure long-term institutionalization of change		0
• Directs the development of school improvement plans that address the use of specific change strategies at the building level to ensure the institutionalization of change and improved results or performance		0
• Directs that all district, department, and program plans incorporate procedures for change strategies to ensure the institutionalization of change for improvement and include procedures with formative and summative practices that provide data about change implementation and effectiveness		0
Standard Five Rating (number of points for the six criteria with a possibility of 18)		1
Percentage of Adequacy (points divided by the number of possible points—18)		5.6%
Note: One point was awarded for every characteristic met under each criterion for a maximum of three points. No points are awarded when policies fail to meet any characteristics.		

Exhibit 1.1.6 shows that board policies relative to audit Standard Five received 1 out of 18 possible points, or 11.1 percent, and are inadequate to provide for improved productivity.

Details about the auditors' analysis are provided below.

Criterion 5.1: Program-centered budgeting

Board of School Committee Fiscal Policy 100: Fiscal Management Goals/Priority Objectives and *Board of School Committee Fiscal Policy 101: Annual Budget* acknowledge that effective fiscal management is necessary to achieve the district's educational goals and priorities and "thorough advance planning" is essential. However, policies do not reference program evaluation, documented costs, incremental funding, or a process for evaluating options (see Finding 5.1). No points are given for this criterion.

Criterion 5.2: Resource allocation tied to curriculum priorities

Fiscal Policies 100 and *102* link budgeting to district goals and instructional needs, but they do not address the use of assessment data or ongoing financial support for priorities over time. No points are given to this criterion.

Criterion 5.3: Environment to support curriculum delivery

Board of School Committee Administration Policy 201: Facilities: Educational Specifications states that new construction and major additions to facilities should include specifications based on "proposed curriculum and the teaching methods and techniques to be employed" (see Finding 5.3). One point is assigned to this criterion.

Criterion 5.4: Support systems focused on curriculum design, deployment, and delivery

Board policies do not provide linkage between support services and the district mission and goals, require formative and summative evaluation of each support service, or expect evidence of improvement over time. No points are assigned to this criterion.

Criterion 5.5: Data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning

Board policies do not require data-driven decisions in all areas of the curriculum or for all operations of the district (see [Finding 4.4](#)). No points are given to this criterion.

Criterion 5.6: Change processes for long-term institutionalization of district goals

Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate in that the policies do not provide guidance for long-term change.

[Exhibit 1.1.7](#) shows the ratings for board policies relative to each of the five audit standards and an overall percentage of board policy adequacy.

Exhibit 1.1.7

**Summary Ratings of the Auditors' Analysis of Board Policy
To Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Standard	Number of Criteria	Number of Possible Points	Points Given	Percentage of Points Relative to 70% Standard for Adequacy
One	6	18	4	22.2
Two	5	15	3	20.0
Three	5	15	6	40.0
Four	4	12	5	41.7
Five	6	18	1	5.6
Overall Rating For All Criteria	26	78	19	24.4%

[Exhibit 1.1.7](#) shows that district board policies received 20 out of a possible 78 points, or 24.4 percent adequacy. An overall score of 55 points, or 70 percent, is required for policies to be considered adequate to provide direction for effective curriculum management and other district functions. As can be noted,

- [Standard Four](#) policies, which provide for data to be used at all levels of the district, received the highest score, with 41.7 percent adequacy.
- [Standard Three](#) policies, which provide for connectivity and equity/equality, received the second highest score, with 40 percent adequacy.
- [Standard Five](#) policies, which provide for productivity, received the lowest rating, with 5.6 percent adequacy.

After reviewing the board policies, the auditors conducted interviews with board members and district personnel regarding the implementation of board policies. The interviews indicated that a lack of focus on the implementation of policies has resulted in inconsistencies in the implementation of the educational program. The following are representative comments:

- “Just because something is written in board policy, it doesn’t mean it happens that way.” (Board Member)
- “Implementation of board policies is not consistent across the district.” (Board Member)

- “We review policies as needed and are reactive.” (Administrator)

Summary

In summary, current board policies are inadequate to provide the direction and quality control needed for sound curriculum management. Many key areas relative to the educational program are not addressed in board policy. Numerous policies are too general to provide direction and consistency in the district’s curriculum management efforts. However, a number of employee job descriptions provide some guidance for decision making.

Finding 1.2: District and school improvement planning takes place, but these plans do not guide all district functions or provide clear direction for system-wide change. A long-term strategic planning process was under way at the time of the audit site visit.

Planning is the process by which district leaders envision the future of the school system and develop the necessary procedures and operations needed to achieve that future. The planning function charts the course for progress to a desired future state. Multiple data sources are used to make decisions with a clear future goal in mind. Embedded in this planning process is the ability to modify and adjust direction based upon student needs, new legislation, or changes in the community.

To determine the status of planning in the Manchester School District, the auditors reviewed board policies, board goals, the District Improvement Plan, school improvement plans, the Professional Development Master Plan, the Education Technology Plan, and other planning documents provided by district personnel. Interviews were conducted with board members, administrators, teachers, other staff, and community members.

The Manchester School District was undergoing a period of transition at the time of the audit visit. A superintendent search, a board-initiated strategic planning process, the budget development process, and teacher contract negotiations were all taking place.

Current planning efforts are not well-articulated across the district and do not provide focus and coordination for district goals and priorities. However, some components of effective planning are found in the District Improvement Plan, school improvement plans, professional development, and technology plans (see [Findings 3.1](#) and [5.4](#)). Additional planning efforts were noted in documents pertaining to curriculum management, assessment, facilities, and budgeting, but these areas do not have comprehensive plans (see [Findings 2.1](#), [4.1](#), [5.1](#), and [5.3](#)).

[Exhibit 1.2.1](#) lists the planning documents provided by district staff and reviewed by the auditors:

Exhibit 1.2.1

Planning Documents Reviewed by the Auditors Manchester School District March 2013

Document	Date
Board of School Committee Policies	1999-2012
Job Descriptions	1998-2012
Manchester School District Vision and Mission Statements	undated
2011-2012 District Improvement Plan Progress Report and 2012-2013 Action Plan	6/29/12
Corrective Action Plans for Northwest, Beech Street, Henry Wilson, and Hallsville Elementary Schools	12/18/12
Proposed Strategies and Activities for 2011-2012	6/22/11
Strategic Plan Overview and Timeline	1/30/13
Strategic Plan Staff and Community Survey Results	3/14/13
Manchester Board of School Sub-Committee on Strategic Planning Meeting Minutes	7/24/12– 12/4/12
Manchester School District Professional Development Master Plan	2011-16

Exhibit 1.2.1 (continued)
Planning Documents Reviewed by the Auditors
Manchester School District
March 2013

Document	Date
Maximizing Educational Opportunities	11/13/12
Manchester School District Redistricting Proposal	1/28/13
Manchester School District School Capacity and Redistricting	2/9/11
New Hampshire Department of Education School Approval Site Visit Report Summary	April 2012
School Approval Site Visit Report Manchester Memorial High School	4/4/12
School Approval Site Visit Report Program Alternative to Secondary Schools (PASS)	4/4/12
School Approval Site Visit Report Southside Middle School	4/11/12
School Approval Site Visit Report Jewett Elementary School	4/17/12
School Approval Site Visit Report Highland Goffe's Falls School	4/19/12
Title I School Improvement Plans for Bakersville and Beech Street Elementaries	2011-12
Title I School Improvement Grant Action Plans for Gossler Park and Parker Varney Elementaries and Parkside and Southside Middle Schools	2012-13
Manchester School District Education Technology Plan	7/1/10 – 6/30/13
Manchester School District Technology Plan Progress	1/24/13
Manchester School District Professional Development Master Plan – 2011-16	6/13/12
MSD Technology Strategic Plan Executive Summary and Technology Bond Narrative	3/13/13
Self-Study Survey Results for Manchester High School Central for New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. Commission on Public Secondary Schools	1/10/12
Five-Year Progress Report of Manchester High School West for New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. Commission on Public Secondary Schools	4/21/09
Five-Year Progress Report of Manchester High School Central for New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. Commission on Public Secondary Schools	8/29/08
2011-12 School Improvement Progress Report and 2012-13 Action Plan for Manchester Memorial High School	April 2012
School Match Audit of Educational Effectiveness	4/20/00 - 5/15/00
Collaborative Review of English Language Learner Services Program – WestEd	August 2010

The following board policies reference short- and long-term planning at the district level:

- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 100: School Board Operational Goals* states that the board is to formulate annual goals and objectives. At the end of each fiscal year the board is to “reflect on the degree to which the goals and objectives have been accomplished by conducting a Board self-evaluation and engaging in Board development activities.”
- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 102.1: Substantive Duties* requires the board to “determine the educational goals of the district, develop long-range plans, and identify measurable and attainable short-term objectives.”

As noted above, board policies require district planning, but they do not address school and department improvement planning.

The following job descriptions include planning responsibilities:

- **Superintendent:** Directs the development, implementation, and management of the District Education Improvement Plan (DEIP) and the recommendation of a program of studies suitable to the needs of the schools and community in accordance with BOSC policies, state statutes, and the New Hampshire Board of Education regulations.

- Director of Information Technology: Directs the strategic planning, policy development, data collection, and reporting activities of the school district.
- Director of Federal Projects/Professional Development: Oversees the development and implementation of the District Professional Development Master Plan.
- Mathematics Curriculum Specialist: Facilitates the design and development of a comprehensive assessment plan for mathematics consistent with the curriculum and the Common Core Standards.
- Language Arts Integration Specialist: Facilitates the design and development of a comprehensive assessment plan for language arts consistent with the curriculum and the New Hampshire Standards.

The auditors noted that principals' job descriptions are silent relative to school improvement planning.

While several board policies and job descriptions include expectations for planning, they are inadequate in providing specific direction for comprehensive district-wide and school improvement planning (see [Findings 1.1](#) and [1.3](#)).

Three levels of analysis are used to assess the quality of planning in a school district:

1. Level 1: Quality of Planning Design, Deployment, and Delivery – This analysis focuses on the district planning process as a whole.
2. Level 2: Quality of District-wide plan – The district's primary planning document is analyzed.
3. Level 3: Quality of School and System-wide Improvement Plans

The following definitions are used:

- Design – Developing the format of a goal, project, or product; conceiving or inventing.
- Deployment – Taking strategic advance actions to prepare and bring a goal or objective to action (e.g., staff development, coaching, mentoring); setting up, installing.
- Delivery – Carrying out a goal, project, or product; using a function, process, or product.

The following details the auditors' findings relative to the three levels of analysis:

Level I: Quality of Planning Design, Deployment, and Delivery

Eight characteristics are used to determine the quality of planning design, deployment, and delivery throughout the district. For Level I to be considered adequate, six of the eight characteristics must be determined to be fully adequate. [Exhibit 1.2.2](#) lists the characteristics and the auditors' ratings.

Exhibit 1.2.2

Level I: Characteristics of Quality Planning Audit Criteria— Design, Deployment, and Delivery Manchester School District March 2013

There is evidence that...	Auditors' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Policy Expectations: The governing board has placed into policy the expectation that the superintendent and staff collectively discuss the future and that this thinking should take some tangible form without prescribing a particular template, allowing for flexibility as needed.	X	
2. Vision/Direction: Leadership has implicit or explicit vision of the general direction in which the organization is going for improvement purposes. That vision emerges from having considered future changes in the organizational context.		X
3. Data-driven: Data influence the planning and system directions/initiatives.		X

Exhibit 1.2.2 (continued) Level I: Characteristics of Quality Planning Audit Criteria— Design, Deployment, and Delivery Manchester School District March 2013		
There is evidence that...	Auditors' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
4. Budget Timing: Budget planning for change is done in concert with other planning, with goals and actions from those plans driving the budget planning.		X
5. Day-to-day Decisions: Leadership makes day-to-day decisions regarding the implicit or explicit direction of the system and facilitates movement toward the planned direction.		X
6. Emergent/Fluid Planning: Leadership is able to adjust discrepancies between current status and desired status, facilitates movement toward the desired status, and is fluid in planning efforts (emergent in nature).		X
7. Deliberate Articulated Actions: Staff are involved in a purposeful way through such efforts as school/unit improvement planning, professional development councils, and district task forces that are congruent with the articulated direction of the system or system initiatives.	Partial	
8. Aligned Professional Development: Professional development endeavors are aligned to system planning goals and initiatives.	Partial	
Total	1	7
Percentage of Adequacy	12.5%	

The auditors found that a strategic planning process was initiated in November of 2012, and at the time of the audit site visit, a comprehensive district-wide plan had not yet been completed. Exhibit 1.2.2 indicates that one of the eight district-wide planning characteristics was rated as adequate, two characteristics were partially adequate (and are, therefore, inadequate), and five were considered inadequate. Therefore, the Manchester School District does not meet the audit standard for quality district-wide planning. The following provides further information about the auditors' assessment of Level I criteria.

Characteristic One: Policy Expectations (Adequate)

This characteristic was met. As noted above, the Manchester BOSC board policies provide direction for the development and implementation of annual district goals and objectives and for a long-range plan. Job descriptions assign the superintendent the responsibility for developing the District Improvement Plan and the Director of Federal Projects/Staff Development the task of developing a professional development plan. The Director of Technology is assigned to lead strategic planning efforts. However, board policies and job descriptions are silent relative to school improvement planning.

Characteristic Two: Vision/Direction (Inadequate)

This characteristic is rated as inadequate. District leadership has not provided explicit direction as to where the organization needs to go to improve the educational program. An ongoing goal of the District Improvement Plan has been to improve communication with staff members, parents/guardians, and community members. This continues to be a concern, as indicated by the following representative comments made during interviews:

- "It's hard to know what the district vision is. I sometimes wonder if I am going in the right direction." (Administrator)
- "We need a simple mission that everyone understands and works toward; now we're all sort of private contractors." (Teacher)
- "We need an overall vision and a plan for improving student achievement." (Administrator)

- “There is a lack of vision both in the city and the school district.” (Board Member)
- “We get a lot of ‘Fix it. I don’t care how you do it, just do it.’” (Administrator)

Characteristic Three: Data-driven (Inadequate)

This characteristic was not met. District and school improvement plans do not indicate that multiple sources of data were reviewed in plan development. The use of data in school improvement planning and in teaching is emerging, but is not yet systemic (see [Findings 2.3, 4.4, and 5.4](#)). An exception is in the Professional Development Master Plan, which states that in developing Individual Plans, educators are to review and analyze student achievement data from state and/or district assessments, classroom formative and/or summative assessments, student portfolios and/or student work, and student data profiles (see [Finding 3.1](#)).

Characteristic Four: Budget Timing (Inadequate)

This characteristic was not met. *Board of School Committee Fiscal Policy 100: Fiscal Management Goals/Priority Objectives* states that the board recognizes the importance of fiscal management in achieving the goals of the educational plan of the district: “The district fiscal management plan seeks to engage in thorough advance planning to develop budgets and guide expenditures to achieve the greatest educational returns and the greatest contributions to the educational program.” Some district plans, most school improvement plans, and the Technology Plan contain general information about sources and amounts of program funds, but interviews and documents reviewed by the auditors did not indicate that the budget process has been adequately linked to district planning and curricular priorities (see [Finding 5.1](#)).

Characteristic Five: Day-to-day Decisions (Inadequate)

This characteristic is inadequate. District leadership’s day-to-day decision making is often reactive to the BOSOC’s ongoing requests for information (see [Finding 1.4](#)). In addition, responsibilities for decisions that are to be made centrally and those that are school-based have not been clearly defined (see [Finding 3.4](#)). Decisions made at individual schools are often not aligned across the district.

Characteristic Six: Emergent/Fluid Planning (Inadequate)

This characteristic was not met. Both the District Improvement Plan and the Professional Development Master Plan state that the District Leadership Team is to monitor progress towards district goals and revise as appropriate. The auditors were told that the District Leadership Team no longer monitored plan progress, and they found no evidence that indicated changes to the district plan were incorporated into the planning document. During interviews school-based personnel indicated that emergent, informal planning takes place relative to some building initiatives, but revisiting planning documents throughout the year and informally making appropriate changes was not referenced.

Characteristic Seven: Deliberate, Articulated Actions (Partially Adequate)

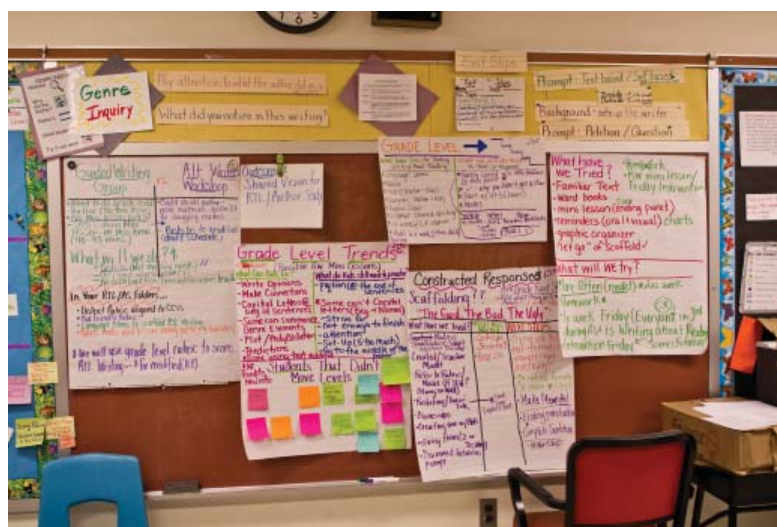
This characteristic was partially met and is inadequate. Interviews with district and school staff members indicated that board members, staff members, parents, and community members serve on various sub-committees, the Strategic Planning Committee, school improvement committees, professional learning communities, professional development committees, and various other task forces. Many activities are taking place, but not all are linked to district and/or school improvement plans or are aligned district-wide (see [Finding 2.4](#)).

Characteristic Eight: Aligned Professional Development (Partially Adequate)

This characteristic was partially met and is, therefore, inadequate. A comprehensive district-wide Professional Development Master Plan was developed, but it does not provide coordination and consistency to staff development efforts across the district. However, district-wide professional development has been minimal with offerings largely site-based (see [Finding 3.1](#)). Most school staff development efforts are aligned with school goals, but topics and degrees of implementation vary considerably across school sites. The following were representative comments made during interviews relative to the lack of coordinated district-wide professional development:

- “We need more coordination. We have a DINI (District in Needs of Improvement Plan) and SIPs (School Improvement Plans) and none of it fits together.” (Administrator)
- “The district does not provide high quality training for all teachers.” (Teacher)
- “I’d like the district (staff) to be the ones to take charge. They should set the plan and set the tone. Instead it’s: ‘The Common Core is here and you deal with it.’” (Administrator)
- “We are scrambling to come up with our own (school-based staff development for the Common Core).” (Administrator)
- “I don’t see anything working together from the elementary on up.” (Administrator)

Overall, the auditors found evidence that planning takes place within the district. However, interviews indicated that many plans are written for compliance purposes and district and/or school improvement plans are not the driving force in decision making. A strategic planning process is currently underway, but at the time of the audit site visit, a coordinated approach to the implementation of initiatives is not yet in place.



Curriculum and instruction topics were on the agenda for teacher planning at Beech Street Elementary

Level II: Quality of District-wide Plan

The second level of analysis examines the adequacy of the district-wide plan to provide direction for system change. As noted above, a year-long, long-range planning process had been initiated at the time of the audit site visit, but a plan has not yet developed.

The Manchester School District has been identified as a District in Need of Improvement (DINI) for failure to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals in reading and mathematics. The *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* legislation requires districts identified for improvement to develop a corrective action plan that contains goals and strategies for helping students reach performance targets. The following elements are to be included in the plan:

- Annual measurable performance objectives for students performing below proficiency;
- A description of how student progress will be monitored at regular intervals, including a description of the local assessments to be used and with what frequency;
- A description of priority issues (no more than 3-5) identified or reaffirmed through a strategic mapping process conducted in partnership with an external provider. Strategies to increase the likelihood of improved student achievement need to be identified along with a timetable; and
- A description of how the use of federal funding received for the following programs is directed or redirected to align with the corrective action steps:

- Title I, Part A funds for professional development;
- Title II, Part A; school and district improvement funding;
- Title II, Part A;
- Title III funding for ELL students'; and
- Special Education funding.

The auditors found that most of these elements were included in the District Improvement Plan except for a description of the uses of federal funding.

The Manchester School District Improvement Plan (2012-13) was used for district-wide plan analysis since the strategic plan has not yet been completed.

Exhibit 1.2.3 lists the Curriculum Audit™ characteristics of a quality district planning document and the auditors' assessment of adequacy. If the plan meets five of the seven characteristics, the audit criterion for adequacy has been met.

Exhibit 1.2.3

Level II: Characteristics of District-wide Plan Quality for Design, Deployment, and Delivery Manchester School District March 2013

Characteristics	Auditors' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Reasonable and Clear: The plan is reasonable; it has a feasible number of goals and objectives for the resources (financial, time, people) available. Moreover, the goals and objectives are clear and measurable.	Partial	
2. Emergent/Fluid: The plan allows for emergent thinking, trends, and changes that impact the system both internally and externally.		X
3. Change Strategies: The plan incorporates and focuses on those action strategies/interventions that are built around effective change strategies (e.g., capacity building of appropriate staff).	X	
4. Deployment Strategies: The plan clearly delineates strategies to be used to support deploying the steps and tasks outlined in the plan (e.g., orientation to the change, staff development on the proficiencies needed to bring about the change, communication regarding planned change).		X
5. Integration of Goals and Actions: All goals and actions in the plan are interrelated and congruent with one another.	X	
6. Evaluation Plan and Implementation: There is a written plan to evaluate whether the objectives of the plan have been met (not to evaluate whether or not the activities have taken place). Evaluation components of plans are actions to be implemented; plans are evaluated for their effects or results, and they are then modified as needed. There is both frequent formative evaluation and annual summative evaluation, so that plans are revised as needed.		X
7. Monitoring: Systems are in place and are being implemented for assessing the status of activities, analyzing the results, and reporting the outcomes that take place as the plan is designed and implemented.		X
Total	2	5
Percentage of Adequacy	28.6%	

Exhibit 1.2.3 indicates that two of the characteristics were rated as adequate, one was rated as partially adequate, and four characteristics were considered inadequate. Therefore, the design of the District Improvement Plan does not meet the audit standard for plan quality.

Analysis of the District Improvement Plan using the seven audit characteristics revealed the following:

Characteristic One: Reasonable and Clear (Partially Adequate)

This characteristic was partially met and is, therefore, inadequate. The Manchester School District Improvement Plan (2012-13) includes two major goals: 1) Develop district-wide consistency in the delivery of standards-based curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention to support individual students' growth towards proficiency; and 2) Develop and implement effective and timely communication processes that will increase collective ownership among district leadership, faculty/staff members, parents/guardians, students, and community members to provide an environment that is conducive to improved student achievement. Goal #1 has four corresponding objectives and five activities. Goal #2 has one objective and three activities.

The plan has a reasonable number of objectives and activities. However, a number of the objectives and measurements of progress lack specificity. For example, the activity, "Implement the curriculum review cycle" does not identify the curriculum areas to be reviewed or the behaviors that constitute "a review." The evidence to assess effectiveness of this activity is listed as "Primary" (Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction) will be responsible for periodic and final review of completed content area review and revisions. This statement does not indicate the elements that a "completed content area" is to include.

Characteristic Two: Emergent/Fluid (Inadequate)

This characteristic was considered inadequate. The opportunity for emergent planning was written into the District Improvement Plan with regularly scheduled District Leadership Team meetings to monitor and adjust the plan as needed. As noted above, District Leadership Team oversight of the plan has been discontinued and no documentation was evident to identify emergent needs and to adjust the plan.

Characteristic Three: Change Strategies (Adequate)

This characteristic was rated as adequate. The District Improvement Plan and the narrative response to the previous year's improvement plan referenced building capacity in administrators and teachers in curricular and instructional practices. Examples of such strategies include the following:

- Using the District Data Analyst to train educators on the use of data in decision making;
- Hiring an English Language Learners Coordinator to work with staff on curriculum development and best practices;
- Providing professional development at the building level in English/language arts and mathematics;
- Developing an Educator Effectiveness Plan that includes a student growth component; and,
- Utilizing training in Professional Learning Communities to increase effectiveness of school PLCs.

Characteristic Four: Deployment Strategies (Inadequate)

This characteristic was not met. An important aspect of the successful deployment of a district plan is orienting staff members to the change and keeping the plan front and center of all efforts throughout the district. Clear, consistent, and focused messages to the staff identify the key changes; what issues they are intended to address; how, by whom, and when they should be addressed; what support and monitoring will be provided; and how progress will be evaluated.

Most staff members are aware of the district goals, but the District Improvement Plan has not provided focus for efforts taking place across the district. During interviews district and school-based staff members did not cite the District Improvement Plan as providing direction for key priorities. As noted above, the auditors were told that communication from district leadership was either absent, confusing, or not clearly focused. As an

administrator stated, “The District Improvement Plan has two goals. The school improvement plans are written off that. Everyone knows those two goals, but I don’t know to what extent they drive decision making.”

Characteristic Five: Integration of Goals and Actions (Adequate)

This characteristic is adequate. The strategies, objectives, and activities listed for each long-range goal are generally congruent with the goal.

Characteristic Six: Evaluation Plan and Implementation (Inadequate)

This characteristic is considered inadequate. As noted in Characteristic One, evaluation measures are described in broad terms such as “review,” “monitor,” and “provide information” rather than in terms of specific student assessment results, parent and teacher surveys, completion and dropout rates, and student retention rates. Several evaluation measures referenced activities completed rather than actions evaluated for effects or results, such as documentation of attendance at professional development offerings.

Characteristic Seven: Monitoring (Inadequate)

This criterion was not met. Each activity on the plan has corresponding “Oversight” and “Implementation” columns that list the position that has primary responsibility for monitoring the activity along with other staff members that have related responsibilities. However, the plan lacks a systematic monitoring process that includes measurable goals and regular benchmarks to help determine progress toward the goals and objectives. Interviews indicated that the District Leadership Team was to monitor progress toward goals, but that no longer occurs.

The District Improvement Plan provides some direction for the system, but it currently functions as a transitional document that complies with a state mandate and lays some groundwork for the strategic planning process currently under way. A coordinated approach to the implementation of initiatives is not evident at this time.

Level III: Quality of Department and School Improvement Plans

The third level of analysis examines school and department improvement plans. A clear and comprehensive school improvement or department planning document that is linked to district long-range goals focuses the school community and other district departments on the attainment of district goals and priorities.

The auditors reviewed board policies, various school improvement planning documents, the Professional Development Master Plan, the Technology Plan, and related planning documents. They interviewed teachers, principals, and central office staff regarding school and department planning in the Manchester School District.

The auditors found that most schools have some type of improvement plan. Schools in Need of Improvement (SINI) Corrective Action Plans, Title I School Improvement Grant Action Plans, and Non-Title I Improvement Plans were among the types of plans developed at certain school sites. The high schools are involved with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Public Secondary Schools accreditation process, which includes self study, a school plan, and a progress report. School personnel indicated that these plans were often not well known to all school staff members and varied in their usefulness in providing direction for school initiatives. The Technology Plan and Professional Development Master Plan were also analyzed.

Eight characteristics are used in Level III analysis to determine the quality of school and department improvement plans throughout the district. [Exhibit 1.2.4](#) lists the characteristics along with the auditors’ assessment of their implementation. To meet the audit standard, six of the eight characteristics must be rated as adequate.

Exhibit 1.2.4

Level III: Characteristics of Department and School Improvement Plan Quality for Design, Deployment, and Delivery Manchester School District March 2013

Characteristics	Auditors' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Congruence and Connectivity: Goals and actions are derived from, explicitly linked to, and congruent with the district plan's goals, objectives, and priorities.	Partial	
2. Reasonable and Clear: The plan is reasonable; it has a feasible number of goals and objectives for the resources available (finances, time, people). The goals and objectives of the plan are clear and measurable.	Partial	
3. Emergent/Fluid: The plan allows for emergent thinking, trends, and changes that impact the system both internally and externally.	X	
4. Change Strategies: The plan incorporates and focuses on those action strategies/interventions that are built around effective change strategies (e.g., capacity building of appropriate staff).	X	
5. Deployment Strategies: The plan clearly delineates strategies to be used to support deploying the steps and tasks outlined in the plan (e.g., orientation to the change, staff development on the proficiencies needed to bring about the change, communication regarding planned change).		X
6. Integration of Goals and Actions: All goals and actions in the plan are interrelated and congruent with one another.	X	
7. Evaluation Plan and Implementation: There is a written plan to evaluate whether the objectives of the plan have been met (not to evaluate whether or not the activities have taken place). Evaluation components of plans are actions to be implemented; plans are evaluated for their effects or results and modified as needed. There is both frequent formative evaluation and summative evaluation, so that plans are revised as needed.	Partial	
8. Monitoring: Systems are in place and are being implemented for assessing the status of activities, analyzing the results, and reporting outcomes that take place as the plan is designed and implemented.	Partial	
Total	3	5
Percentage of Adequacy	37.5%	

Exhibit 1.2.4 indicates that three of the characteristics were rated as adequate, three characteristics were partially adequate, and two characteristics were considered inadequate. Therefore, the design of the school improvement plans and the technology and staff development plans does not meet audit standards for school and department planning.

Analysis of school improvement plans, the District Technology Plan, and the Professional Development Master Plan using the eight characteristics revealed the following:

Characteristic One: Congruence and Connectivity (Partially Adequate)

This characteristic was partially met and is, therefore, inadequate. Planning efforts show limited linkage between system-level and site plans. Most school improvement plans do not explicitly reference the goals of the District Improvement Plan, although school objectives and activities are generally congruent with it. School plans are also not linked to the district Technology and Professional Development Plans, although most school plans list staff development activities and some list technology goals.

The Professional Development Master Plan states that individual educators need to review district and school improvement goals as they develop their Individual Three-year Professional Development Plans. The District Technology Plan references district goals. The District Improvement Plan references the Elementary Literacy Plan.

Characteristic Two: Reasonableness and Clarity (Partially Adequate)

This characteristic was partially met. School plans generally included a reasonable number of goals and activities. The number of goals ranged from one to six and the number of corresponding activities ranged from five to 31 in the plans reviewed. Some school plans contained goals that are measurable such as, “We will increase student attendance to 90 percent.” School plans also contained goals whose impact is not easily measured such as, “Provide staff development for teachers in area of assessment.”

Many of the activities listed are actions that occur as part of regular school operations, and large numbers of these in a plan may divert attention from the activities that would most impact school improvement. For example, the strategies “Conduct ELL training for 15 classroom teachers on the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol and develop lesson and unit plans” and “During PLCs and Student Study Team meetings, teachers will analyze student data after each assessment and align instruction based on the data” have the potential to be powerful interventions if carefully deployed, monitored, and followed through. However, activities such as “Continue PTG meetings” and “Recruit stakeholders to serve on an extended day committee” may be useful, but, as written, are activities that would normally occur in the daily operation of a school.

The Technology Plan included six broad goals with four to six objectives under each. Since the Technology Plan is a three-year plan, the objectives and strategies could reasonably be implemented if funding were available.

The Professional Development Master Plan does not include goals for district-wide professional development, but rather outlines procedures for staff development planning for individual educators (see [Finding 3.1](#)).

Characteristic Three: Emergent/Fluid (Adequate)

This characteristic was considered adequate. School plans can be revised or activities modified by School Leadership Teams as needed. The Technology Plan is revised annually. Mid-course corrections and possible modifications are to be communicated to the District Technology Committee. In addition, the Manchester School District Technology Plan Progress Report (January 2013) and the MSD Technology Strategic Plan Executive Summary and Technology Bond Narrative (March 2013) provide updates on progress towards technology goals.

Characteristic Four: Change Strategies (Adequate)

This characteristic was adequate. During interviews the auditors were told that Professional Learning Communities were being implemented at most schools. Almost all school plans referenced activities for PLCs, topics to be examined, and types of data to be analyzed. Other change strategies described in school plans included ongoing modeling and coaching of instructional strategies and the use of school data teams to help analyze achievement data (see [Finding 3.3](#)).

The Technology Plan acknowledges that improving teacher technology literacy and embedding technology across all academic areas requires the implementation of long-term change strategies such as ongoing professional development, job embedded learning, and collaboration with peers.

Characteristic Five: Deployment Strategies (Inadequate)

This characteristic is inadequate. Staff development topics were listed in all plans, except for the Professional Development Master Plan, but references to actions that fully support change (such as orientation to the change, ongoing capacity building of staff, communication regarding the change) were lacking in school plans. Comments made by teachers on the teacher survey indicated a lack of effective deployment strategies at some schools.

- “I have not seen it (school plan) this year.”

- “We never discuss this.”
- “Every year means a new initiative. It is difficult to start, stop, and start on some other plan.”
- “There is no continuity or way to really know whether an initiative/improvement is working.”

Characteristic Six: Integration of Goals and Actions (Adequate)

This characteristic was rated as adequate. Actions listed in school plans and the Technology Plan are generally integrated with plan goals.

Characteristic Seven: Evaluation Plan and Implementation (Partially Adequate)

This characteristic was rated as inadequate. Most school plans listed some type of formative and summative evaluation measures. However, formative evaluation components often described whether an activity had taken place rather than its impact on school improvement. Items such as meeting dates, agendas, sign in sheets, and lesson plans were often listed as evidence demonstrating success.

Title I School Improvement Plans/ Progress Reports included a narrative component in which evidence of progress toward goals was more specifically described. Summative evaluations listed included running record scores, sub-group performance on NECAP assessments, district trimester assessments, classroom walk-through data, and surveys.

Characteristic Eight: Monitoring (Partially Adequate)

Systems are not in place at all schools for analyzing the results of plan activities and modifying the plans as appropriate to promote system-wide change. Title I plans and the Technology Plan include a listing of the tasks, timeline, and designated person(s) who will monitor that item. Monitoring activities listed in some of the school plans included classroom walk-throughs, lesson plan review, observations, and feedback. Several schools have Leadership Teams responsible for monitoring progress toward goals. The District Technology Committee semiannually monitors progress toward goals on the Technology Plan. Individuals designated for monitoring certain activities on the plan are to report back and assist with making recommendations and mid-course corrections.

In summary, the auditors found that school improvement plans have been written and provide some direction for school improvement efforts. However, the plans have different formats and components and vary widely in providing the focus on district priorities and the clear direction for which they are intended. Numerous decisions are made at the individual school level and are not aligned across the district.

The Technology Plan includes many components of effective planning but does not meet audit criteria in some areas (see [Finding 5.4](#)). The Professional Development Master Plan provides procedures for educator recertification, but it doesn't provide for district-wide professional development (see [Finding 3.1](#)).

Evidence of planning was noted in the areas of curriculum management, student assessment and program evaluation, and facilities, but these functions operate in the absence of comprehensive plans.

Summary

The auditors found that elements of planning take place at all levels of the district, but planning efforts are not well-articulated or connected between the district, department, and school levels to provide direction for system-wide change. Comprehensive plans are absent in key areas such as curriculum management, student assessment and program evaluation, budgeting, and facilities. Work is currently under way on a long-term strategic plan.

Finding 1.3: The table of organization does not meet audit criteria for sound organizational design. Job descriptions are inadequate to provide employees with clear specifications of responsibilities and relationships relative to curriculum management.

Administrative role relationships are important to an educational organization in the productive grouping and management of its tasks and functions. The absence of this grouping results in the loss of an economy of

scale in the deployment of administrative resources. A functional and accurate delineation of administrative relationships is generally depicted in graphic form and is called the table of organization.

The auditors reviewed board policies, board minutes, the table of organization, and job descriptions provided by Manchester School district personnel. The auditors also interviewed board members, district and school administrators, and other staff members regarding the table of organization.

Table of Organization

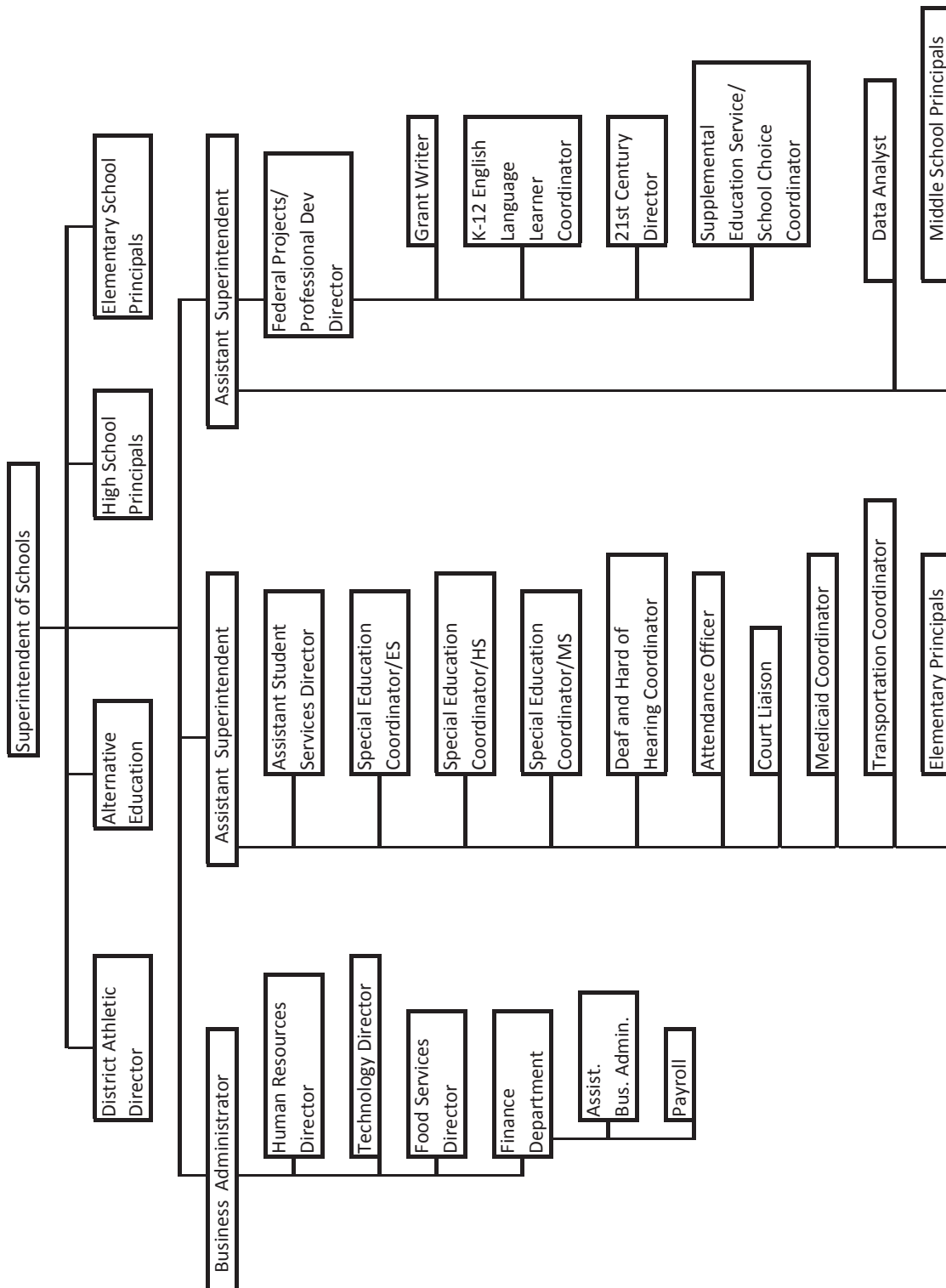
The auditors found that the table of organization does not meet audit principles for sound organizational design. The need for improving communication among different levels of the organization, with the Board of School Committee, with parents, and with community agencies has been a long-standing issue within the district and has been a major goal of District Improvement Plans for the past five years (see [Findings 1.2](#) and [1.4](#)). The auditors found that the current staffing pattern does not support the delivery of a well-articulated preschool through grade 12 educational program. In addition, numerous comments were made during interviews with district stakeholders that staffing is inadequate to provide for district-wide coordination of curriculum management functions and data-based decision making (see [Findings 2.1, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, and 4.4](#)).

Board of School Committee Administration Policy 105: Line and Staff Relations references the table of organization in stating, “Responsibility shall flow simply and clearly from support staff, teachers, principals, assistant superintendents, central administrative staff, and the Superintendent to the School Board.”

However, policy does not provide direction for an organizational chart that is to be reviewed annually and presented to the board. The superintendent’s job description does not assign responsibility for the organization of the school district.

Exhibit 1.3.1 displays the table of organization in place at the time of the audit site visit.

Exhibit 1.3.1
Table of Organization
Manchester School District
March 2013



The auditors used six principles of sound organizational management to analyze the district's table of organization. These principles are presented in [Exhibit 1.3.2](#).

Exhibit 1.3.2

Principles of Sound Organizational Management

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

The auditors' assessment of the table of organization based on the audit principles is provided below:

Span of Control: A large span of control makes a supervisor less accessible to the individuals he/she is responsible for mentoring and monitoring. The superintendent's span of control is 29, which greatly exceeds the audit recommended maximum of 12 subordinates. The span includes two Assistant Superintendents, a Business Administrator, four high school principals, five elementary principals, the Alternative Education Director, the Athletic Director, and 15 Board of School Committee members. Board members, who do not report to the superintendent, are included in this count because of the amount of time the superintendent needs to spend communicating with them.

The span of control for the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction is 14; for the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services it is 13; and for the Business Administrator it is five.

Chain of Command: The table of organization indicates a clear chain of command for the positions on the organizational chart.

Logical Grouping of Functions: In a district the size of Manchester, the organization and supervision of schools by levels (elementary, middle, and high school) does not support seamless curriculum and student services delivery, preschool through grade 12. In addition, the absence of effective and consistent district-wide, data-based decision making is noted throughout this audit report, but only a half-time Data Analyst position is listed on the table of organization (see [Findings 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.3, and 5.1](#)).

In addition, the Transportation Coordinator position has duties that would be more logically grouped with Business Operations.

Separation of Line and Staff Functions: The table of organization generally meets the principle of line and staff separation.

Scalar Relationships: An issue with scalar relationships on the district table of organization is that principals, the Athletic Director, and Alternative Education Directors that report to the superintendent are placed above the more senior Assistant Superintendents.

Full Inclusion: The table of organization does not include teachers, assistant principals, and the language arts and mathematics specialists.

During interviews stakeholders related their perceptions and experiences with the relationships depicted on the table of organization. The following are typical comments:

- “We need more capacity in the district office. You need a foundation at the top to lead.” (Parent)
- “We lack curriculum personnel to facilitate curriculum development. There is no curriculum coordinator.” (Administrator)
- “The lack of personnel around curriculum and instruction is a major issue.” (Administrator)
- “A lot of good things get started and then there’s no follow-through. There used to be curriculum specialists that were helpful and now they’re gone.” (Teacher)
- “The building administrator can’t be the curriculum specialist for all subjects.” (Teacher)
- “There’s really no cohesion curriculum-wide – no bridges.” (Teacher)

Summary

In summary, the auditors found that the table of organization for the Manchester School District does not adhere to the audit criteria for span of control, logical grouping of functions, scalar relationships, and full inclusion. The current pattern for the organization and supervision of schools and student services by levels does not support the articulation of the educational program. Many stakeholders interviewed were of the opinion that district staffing does not adequately support the design and delivery of the curriculum.

Job Descriptions

Job descriptions define the roles and responsibilities of individuals within an organization. Quality job descriptions provide employees with clear direction as to how they contribute to and function within the organization. Job descriptions need to be accurate, current, and reflected in the daily actions and duties of employees. Because a school district’s primary purpose is the education of its students, nearly all job descriptions need to reflect some linkage to the design and delivery of the educational program.

To determine the quality of job descriptions, the auditors analyzed 61 job descriptions relative to curriculum management that were presented by district personnel. The auditors also reviewed board policies and other documents to determine district expectations for job descriptions. In addition, the auditors interviewed school-based and district-level employees about their duties and responsibilities and reporting structure.

Overall, the auditors found job descriptions inadequate to provide clear specifications of job responsibilities relative to curriculum management and support of the educational program. Board policy requires job descriptions for all employees. The job descriptions were available for nearly all of the positions depicted on the table of organization. However, the job descriptions lack sufficient direction for curriculum management functions, school improvement planning, and data-based decision making (see [Findings 1.1](#), [1.2](#), [1.4](#), [3.4](#), and [4.4](#)).

The following board policies reference expectations for job descriptions:

- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 101: School Board Policies and Administrative Procedures* states that the contents of administrative job descriptions adopted by the board constitute board policy.
- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 105: Line and Staff Relations* requires each staff member to be informed to whom s/he is responsible and, whenever feasible, each staff member should have only one immediate supervisor for any one function.
- The job description for the Director of Human Resources assigns to this position the responsibility for maintaining “up-to-date descriptions for all employee classifications.”

The documents listed above require job descriptions for all employees, and these job descriptions constitute board policy.

The job descriptions analyzed by the auditors are presented in [Exhibit 1.3.3](#).

Exhibit 1.3.3
Job Descriptions Analyzed for Quality
Manchester School District
March 2013

Job Description	Date
Superintendent	8/10
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	8/10
Assistant Superintendent for Student Services	2/11
Elementary School Principal	5/12
Middle School Principal	5/12
High School Principal	5/12
Assistant Principal	5/12
Assistant Principal for Student Services	5/12
Assistant Principal – Part Time	5/12
Accounting Supervisor	10/06
Accountant	6/98
Business Manager	5/06
Assistant Business Administrator	10/06
Assistant Director of Student Services	5/11
Attendance Coordinator	6/05
Benefits Coordinator	10/06
Coordinator, Computer Help Desk	6/09
Coordinator, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program	undated
Coordinator, English Learners	8/11
Coordinator, Human Resources	1/08
Coordinator, Special Education – Preschool	5/11
Coordinator, Special Education - Elementary Schools	5/11
Coordinator, Special Education - Middle Schools	5/11
Coordinator, Special Education - High Schools	5/11
Site Coordinator, Twenty-First Century Learning	5/09
Coordinator, Transportation	9/08
Court Liaison – Student Services	7/11
Data Analyst	12/09
Credit Recovery Instructor	11/11
Director, Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers Project	9/05
Director, Athletics	undated
Director, Federal Projects/Professional Development	7/12
Director, Food and Nutrition Services	8/08
Director, Human Resources	8/11
Director of Information Technology	3/11
District Grant Writer and Evaluator	undated
District Homeless Liaison	5/11
Guidance Counselor	6/06
Interpreter/Tutor and American Sign Language Specialist - Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program	9/08

Exhibit 1.3.3 (continued) Job Descriptions Analyzed for Quality Manchester School District March 2013	
Job Description	Date
Interpreter/Tutor Blind and Visually Impaired	5/11
Library Media Generalist	undated
Occupational Preparation Instructor	undated
Occupational Therapist	5/11
Out of District Placement Monitor	undated
Paraprofessional	2/03
Reading Specialist – Non Title I	7/12
Reading Specialist – Title I Reading Specialist	7/12
School Psychologist	5/11
Social Worker	9/10
Social Worker, Refugee Education Liaison	7/05
SPED Bilingual Evaluator	undated
Speech, Hearing and Language Pathologist/Specialist	5/11
Student Assistance Program Coordinator	2/09
Teacher	undated
Teacher – Language Arts Curriculum Specialist	7/11
Teacher – Language Arts Integration Specialist	2011
Teacher – Literacy/Math Intervention	7/09
Teacher – Math Curriculum Specialist	8/12
Teacher – Technology Integration Specialist	7/08
Title I Home/School Coordinator	undated
Title I Instructor	12/12

Exhibit 1.3.3 indicates that approximately 70 percent of the job descriptions were created within the last five years. Fifteen (15) percent were 6 to 10 years old, and 15 percent were undated.

Auditors evaluated each job description on four indicators. For a job description to be considered strong, at least 70 percent of the district's job descriptions must be rated as adequate or strong on each of four criteria to meet the audit standard. The four are:

- Qualifications;
- Links to the chain of command—a statement identifying the supervisor and a statement identifying any positions supervised by the incumbent;
- Responsibilities/functions/duties of the job; and
- Relationship to the curriculum where relevant.

The auditors used five possible ratings on the four indicators above. The ratings are shown in Exhibit 1.3.4.

Exhibit 1.3.4**Curriculum Audit Criteria for Rating Job Descriptions**

Rating	Explanation
Missing	No statement made.
Inadequate	A statement made, but is incomplete and missing sufficient detail.
Adequate	A more or less complete statement usually missing curricular linkages or sufficient detail regarding curricular linkages/alignment.
Strong	A clear and complete statement, including linkages to curriculum where appropriate or, if not appropriate, otherwise quite complete.
Exemplary	A clear, complete statement with inclusive linkages to curriculum indicated in exemplary scope and depth.

The auditors' assessment of the job descriptions is shown in Exhibit 1.3.5.

Exhibit 1.3.5

**Auditors' Assessment of Job Descriptions
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Title	Qualifications	Chain of Command	Responsibilities	Curricular Linkages
Superintendent	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	Adequate	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Assistant Superintendent for Student Services	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Elementary Principal	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Middle School Principal	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
High School Principal	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Assistant Principal	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Assistant Principal for Student Services	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Assistant Principal – Part Time	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Accounting Supervisor	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Accountant	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Business Administrator	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Assistant Business Administrator	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Assistant Director of Student Services	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Attendance Coordinator	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Coordinator, Computer Help Desk	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Coordinator, Deaf/Hard of Hearing	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Coordinator, English Learners	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Coordinator, Human Resources	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Coordinator, Special Education –Preschool	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Coordinator, Special Education – Elementary Schools	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Missing
Coordinator, Special Education – Middle Schools	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Missing
Coordinator, Special Education – High Schools	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Coordinator, Twenty-First Century Community Learning Center	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Coordinator, Transportation	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Court Liaison – Student Services	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Credit Recovery Instructor	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Data Analyst	Adequate	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Director, Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers	Adequate	Adequate	Strong	Strong

Exhibit 1.3.5 (continued)
Auditors' Assessment of Job Descriptions
Manchester School District
March 2013

Title	Qualifications	Chain of Command	Responsibilities	Curricular Linkages
Director, Athletics	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Missing
Director, Federal Projects/Professional Development	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Director, Food and Nutrition Services	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Missing
Director, Human Resources	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Missing
Director, Information Technology	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Missing
District Grant Writer and Evaluator	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
District Homeless Liaison	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Guidance Counselor	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Interpreter/Tutor and American Sign Language Specialist	Strong	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Interpreter/Tutor, Blind and Visually Impaired	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Library Media Generalist	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Occupational Preparation Instructor	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Occupational Therapist	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Missing
Out of District Placement Monitor	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Paraprofessional	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Reading Specialist – Non-Title I	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
School Psychologist	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Missing
Social Worker	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Social Worker – Refugee Education Liaison	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
SPED Bilingual Evaluator	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Speech, Hearing, and Language Pathologist/Specialist	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Missing
Student Assistance Program Coordinator	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Teacher – Math Curriculum Specialist	Strong	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Teacher – Technology Integration Specialist	Strong	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Teacher, Language Arts Curriculum Specialist	Strong	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Teacher, Language Arts Integration Specialist	Strong	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Teacher, Literacy/Math Intervention	Strong	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Title I Certified Instructor	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Title I Home/School Coordinator	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Missing
Title I Reading Specialist	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate

The ratings in Exhibit 1.3.5 are summarized as follows:

- Thirty-six (36), or 59 percent, of the job descriptions were rated adequate or strong on all four indicators, falling short of the 70 percent audit standard for adequacy.
- All but one job description, or 98.4 percent, were rated adequate or strong on Qualifications.
- Five job descriptions, or 8.2 percent, were rated inadequate in the area of Chain of Command.
- Thirty-eight (38), or 62.3 percent, were rated adequate or strong on Responsibilities.
- Thirty-eight (38) job descriptions, or 62.3 percent, were rated adequate or strong on Curricular Linkages.

Additionally, the auditors made the following observations regarding the job descriptions.

Qualifications: Almost all of the job descriptions are sufficiently specific to provide a hiring official or candidate with a clear picture of the education, experience, and training required for the position. The Interpreter/Tutor and

American Sign Language Specialist's job description is particularly strong in its description of Qualifications. However, the Interpreter/Tutor for the Blind and Visually Impaired's job description lists teaching Braille as a Responsibility of the position, but skill or training in Braille is not included as a Qualification.

Chain of Command: Job descriptions for the Assistant Principals, the Title I Home/School Coordinators, and the Credit Recovery Instructor identify more than one supervisor, which is contrary to *Board of School Committee's Administration Policy 105: Line and Staff Relations*. For example, the Assistant Principals report to the Building Principal but also to "other personnel as designated by the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, and appropriate Central Office Administrators."

Responsibilities: Principals and assistant principals are not directed to analyze student performance data and use it in developing school improvement plans and in monitoring the delivery of the curriculum in the classroom. The Business Administrator's job description does not include responsibilities for data-driven decision making or require linkage of the budget process with district improvement planning. The other job descriptions rated as inadequate in this area are not sufficiently connected to the educational program.

Curricular Linkages: Many of the job descriptions rated as inadequate lack directives for generating improvement in student learning. The Principal's job description does not mention school improvement planning; student achievement; monitoring of instruction for the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum; or the using assessment data to improve student learning. The Classroom Teacher's job description does not list expectations for the use of student assessment data to inform lesson planning, nor does it describe expected teaching strategies such as differentiation of instruction or student engagement mentioned in other district documents.

The job descriptions of several key support staff positions, such as the Directors of Human Resources, Transportation, and Food Services, are not clearly linked to their supporting role in the overall educational program.

Summary

Board policy requires job descriptions for all employees, and the auditors found that job descriptions were available for most positions on the table of organization. Most of the job descriptions are current and follow a consistent design, but only 59 percent satisfy the minimum audit criteria for adequacy. Instructional leadership and school improvement planning responsibilities are inadequate for several key positions.

Finding 1.4: Board of School Committee disharmony has compromised the board's ability to provide clear direction and focus for the management and operation of the school district.

In public school districts the governance function is jointly vested in the board of education and the superintendent. Through public vote, the community entrusts the board with the responsibility of setting policy and making decisions about the education of its students. The board, in turn, selects a superintendent to serve as the chief executive officer of the community's schools and to implement operations of the schools. Strained relationships among those responsible for the governance function weaken the cohesiveness of the district and may lead to a loss of public confidence in the district's management. In addition, optimal organizational performance is hindered when board and management roles become entangled as a result of board members exercising management responsibilities.

The auditors reviewed Board of School Committee (BOSC) policies, board meeting minutes, video recordings of board meetings, board sub-committee minutes, a teacher survey, the Strategic Plan survey, and documents relative to board functioning. Interviews were conducted with board members, administrators, teachers, other staff members, and community members. When these sources are considered collectively, issues regarding governance of the Manchester School District warrant discussion.

The auditors found that the board structure, board functioning, and dissonance among board members and with the administrative staff hinder the board's ability to provide clear direction for management and operation of the school district. The auditors found that only 26 percent of board policies are sufficiently written to provide a framework for local curriculum management and quality control (see [Finding 1.1](#)). The District Improvement

Plan has not exhibited sufficient progress toward its ongoing goals over the past several years (see [Finding 1.2](#)). Student performance continues below state averages and is not showing a steady pattern of improvement (see [Finding 4.3](#)).

Nearly all persons interviewed expressed perceptions that board functioning hinders the district's ability to accomplish its goals. Almost 35 percent of district stakeholders that responded to the Strategic Plan survey indicated that "improving governance and leadership by the Mayor, Superintendent, and School Board" were among the greatest challenges currently facing the school district.

The following Board of School Committee policies reference board governance and operations.

- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 109: Board-Superintendent Relationship* states, "The Board believes that policy-making is a primary function of the School Board and that the execution of those policies is the primary function of the Superintendent. Delegation by the Board of its executive powers to the Superintendent provides freedom for the Superintendent to manage the schools within the Board's policies and frees the Board to devote its time to policy-making and appraisal functions."
- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 109: Policy Implementation* lists the expectation that the administration of the district shall be delegated to the superintendent, who shall carry out his/her administrative functions in accordance with board policies: "The execution of all decisions made by the Board concerning the internal operation of the school system shall be delegated to the Superintendent."
- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 119: Board Policy Process* states that the board considers policy development its chief function, along with providing resources such as personnel, buildings, materials, and equipment for the effective operation of its schools.
- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 105: Line and Staff Relations* states the following: "Each employee in the district shall be responsible to the Board through the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendents, central administration staff, and their respective school principal. All personnel shall refer matters requiring administrative action to the administrator immediately in charge of the area in which the problem occurs."
- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 102: Board Member Authority* states the following: "All powers of the Board lie in its action as a corporate body. Individual board members may not exercise authority over district affairs. An individual board member, including the chairperson, has power only when the Board, by vote, has delegated authority to him or her."
- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 124: New Board Member Orientation* requires: "Board and staff members shall make every feasible effort to assist any new member to become fully informed about the Board's functions, policies, and procedures. A special workshop shall be convened for the primary purpose of orienting a new member to his or her responsibilities, to the Board's method of operating and to district policies and procedures."
- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 132: Advisory Committees* states, "The role of advisory committees shall be limited to reviewing school programs and making recommendations the committees deem advisable."

As noted, board policies delineate policy making as a board role and management functions as an administrative role. The policies also describe line and staff relationships and define individual board member's actions.

Structural Issues

During interviews individuals cited issues relative to board structure that contribute to ineffective and inefficient system management. They include the following:

- **Size of the Board** – Persons interviewed commented that a 15-member board becomes an unwieldy decision-making body and a challenge in achieving consensus. The following are representative comments:

- “Issues are to be fully vetted at sub-committee meetings. With the size of the board and its contentiousness, the issues are re-argued at the full board meeting and the meetings go on and on.” (Board Member)
- “Some board members want to do things their way and that’s it – no compromising.” (Teacher)
- Board Elections – Board members are elected for two-year terms. Comments were made that having only two-year terms with all board positions up for election/reelection at one time compromises board stability. During interviews the auditors learned that after the last board election, half of the board members were new, but no training was provided to them relative to the responsibilities of their position. This is in violation of *BOSC Policy 124: New Board Member Orientation*, noted above, which requires training for new board members.
- Board Sub-committees– The BOSC currently has seven sub-committees that include the following: Athletics, Buildings and Sites, Coordination, Curriculum and Instruction, Finance, Instructional Technology, and Student Conduct. Perceptions about the number of sub-committees and their operating procedures included the following:
 - “The numerous board sub-committees slow down our ability to get things done.” (Administrator)
 - “Sometimes we have to go through multiple sub-committees to get something approved. This takes too long. We almost lost a grant because of the time delay.” (Administrator)
 - “It took us 14-18 months to give the district an asset worth \$90,000 because of the bureaucracy.” (Community Member)
 - “I have no idea why certain sub-committees exist.” (Administrator)
- Mayor/Board Chairperson Dual Role –Several individuals speculated that the dual Mayor/Board Chairperson role may present a potential conflict of interest.

Board Practices, Procedures, and Roles

Numerous comments were made during interviews about board member negativity at board meetings.

- “Some board members are mean-spirited. They like to play ‘gotcha’ with administrators. It’s so counterproductive.” (Board Member)
- “Some board members set people up for failure.” (Administrator)
- “Staff members are afraid to say a lot because the board will shoot you in the back. People who were doing good work have left the district.” (Administrator)
- “Board negativity has caused competent staff members to leave.” (Board Member)
- “We are getting more resignations each year of talented educators. People are sick of the board dysfunction.” (Teacher)
- “Sometimes I feel beat up after board meetings.” (Board Member)
- People come into board meetings and it’s like a firing squad. You can watch them get crushed.” (Teacher)
- “The board is dysfunctional. Some members like to play to the TV camera.” (Board Member)
- “Board meetings are like a reality show.” (Administrator)

Individuals commented that, in some cases, issues that should be addressed by the board are overlooked. Representative comments included the following:

- “They don’t talk about student achievement; they talk about class size.” (Administrator)
- “We’re not dealing with big picture issues. We just keep putting out fires.” (Board Member)

- “BOSC meetings don’t talk about curriculum and instruction. They talk about ancient history and irrelevant issues.” (Administrator)
- “Every board meeting starts with a list of things they (board members) expect to have. Lots of it doesn’t have anything to do with teaching and learning.” (Administrator)

Other comments were made about instances of board micro-management.

- “Board dynamics are definitely an issue. We need more definitive lines on what is the role of the board and of the superintendent.”(Board Member)
- “The over micro-management of some board members is distracting.” (Administrator)
- “The board has micro-managed every superintendent I have worked with.” (Teacher)
- “The board hires people to do their job, but then second guesses the person or changes their efforts.” (Teacher)

Several individuals stated concerns about the board involvement with issues that should have been brought to the staff members’ immediate supervisors, as noted in *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 105*:

- “Sometimes certain board members think their job is protection of teachers. This causes teachers, and sometimes principals, to go directly to a board member rather than to their supervisor to resolve an issue.” (Board Member)
- “An ELL handbook was written and a few teachers went to the board (with complaints) and now the handbook is on hold.” (Administrator)
- “Another board member said to me, ‘If (Teacher X) doesn’t get everything she wants, I am going to vote no on this issue.’” (Board Member)
- “After the high school principals worked for four months on (revising) the Program of Studies, a teacher complained to the board that a certain course was removed, so the board put it back in.” (Administrator)

During the past several years, relationships among board members and between the board and administrative staff members have been strained. On occasions board members circumvented the chain of command described in *BOSC Administration Policy 105* and intervened to make, negate, or alter administrative decisions. These behaviors disrupt harmonious and effective supervisory relationships and create a pattern of patronage. A large portion of the persons interviewed stated the perception that the board has not provided adequate leadership and direction for the school district.

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

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

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

What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Manchester School District:

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

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

Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Manchester School District:

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

The auditors found that curriculum management planning is inadequate to provide system-wide guidance for curriculum development and implementation in the Manchester School District. Several board policies reference curriculum design and delivery, but they are not specific or comprehensive enough to address all the functions that are necessary in managing the design, development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and revision of the written curriculum.

The overall scope, or written coverage, of the written curriculum is inadequate to provide for quality control and consistency in the delivery of the curriculum. In addition, the quality of the documents varies across schools and content areas, and usage is inconsistent. Nearly all curriculum documents were rated as inadequate to effectively guide instruction, to align teaching and assessment with the intended curriculum, and to provide rigor and challenge in the educational program.

The auditors found that a number of programs and interventions have been added to the curriculum to address a variety of student needs. However, the programs are not systematically designed, implemented, and evaluated to provide alignment with the curriculum and district priorities and for long-term sustainability.

Finding 2.1: Curriculum management planning in the Manchester School District is inadequate to direct the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and revision of curriculum.

A school district with a strong curriculum management system has a written plan that facilitates the design and delivery of the curriculum. The plan directs the stages of development and review and assigns responsibility for design and delivery to district and school staff members. The plan provides processes for curriculum development, adoption, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and revision for all courses of study. A comprehensive curriculum management plan provides for system accountability and quality control.

To determine the quality and effectiveness of curriculum management in the Manchester School District, the auditors examined documents and plans provided by district officials; reviewed board policies, administrative regulations, and job descriptions; visited classrooms in 22 schools; interviewed key district stakeholders; and administered an informal survey to teachers.

Overall, several components of curriculum management planning were found in board policies and job descriptions, but a comprehensive written curriculum management plan was not presented to the auditors.

The key curriculum-related documents and other sources reviewed by auditors for this finding are listed in [Exhibit 2.1.1](#).

Exhibit 2.1.1

**Curriculum Planning Documents Reviewed by Auditors
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Document	Date
Manchester School District Vision and Mission Statements	undated
Board of School Committee Policies and Procedures	various
Manchester School District Website	N/A
Manchester School District Job Descriptions	various
Manchester School District Professional Development Master Plan	2011-2016
Manchester School District Education Technology Plan	2010-2013
Manchester School District Assessment Calendar	2011
District Improvement Progress Report and 2012 – 13 Action Plan	2012-13

In the absence of specific planning documents dedicated to managing the design, delivery, evaluation, and revision of curriculum, auditors reviewed board policies and other materials described in [Exhibit 2.1.1](#) for characteristics of quality curriculum management planning. Some components of curriculum planning were found in board policies and job descriptions (see [Findings 1.2](#) and [1.3](#)).

The audit uses 15 characteristics when evaluating a school district's curriculum management plan. These characteristics are described in [Exhibit 2.1.2](#) and are accompanied by the auditors' analysis of adequacy for the Manchester School District. A detailed discussion focused on each characteristic with references to any examples of the characteristic found in district documents follows [Exhibit 2.1.2](#).

Exhibit 2.1.2

Curriculum Management Planning Characteristics and Auditors' Assessment of District Approach Manchester School District March 2013

Characteristics:	Auditors' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Describes the philosophical framework for the design of the curriculum, including such directives as standards-based, results-based, or competency-based; the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum; and the approaches used in delivering the curriculum.	X	
2. Identifies the timing, scope, and procedures for a periodic cycle of review of curriculum in all subject areas and at all grade levels.	Partial	
3. Defines and directs the stages of curriculum development.		X
4. Specifies the roles and responsibilities of the board, central office staff members, and school-based staff members in the design and delivery of curriculum.	X	
5. Presents the format and components of all curriculum, assessments, and instructional guide documents.		X
6. Directs how state and national standards will be considered in the curriculum. This includes whether or not to use a backloaded approach, in which the curriculum is derived from high-stakes tested learnings (topological and/or deep alignment), and/or a frontloaded approach, which derives the curriculum from national, state, or local learnings.	Partial	
7. Requires for every content area a focused set of precise student objectives/student expectations and standards that are reasonable in number so the student has adequate time to master the content.		X
8. Directs that curriculum documents not only specify the content of the student objectives/student expectations, but also include multiple contexts and cognitive types.		X
9. Specifies the overall beliefs and procedures governing the assessment of curriculum effectiveness. This includes curriculum-based diagnostic assessments and rubrics (as needed). Such assessments direct instructional decisions regarding student progress in mastering prerequisite concepts, skills, knowledge, and long-term mastery of the learning.	Partial	
10. Directs curriculum to be designed so that it supports teachers' differentiation of instructional approaches and selection of student objectives at the right level of difficulty. This ensures that those students who need prerequisite concepts, knowledge, and skills are moved ahead at an accelerated pace, and that students who have already mastered the objectives are also moved ahead at a challenging pace.	Partial	
11. Describes the procedures teachers and administrators will follow in using assessment data to strengthen written curriculum and instructional decision making.		X
12. Outlines procedures for conducting formative and summative evaluations of programs and their corresponding curriculum content.		X
13. Requires the design of a comprehensive staff development program linked to curriculum design and its delivery.		X
14. Presents procedures for monitoring the delivery of curriculum.		X
15. Establishes a communication plan for the process of curriculum design and delivery.		X
Total	2	13
Percentage of Adequacy	13.3%	

A district's approach to curriculum management is considered to be adequate if it meets 11, or 73 percent, of the 15 characteristics. Exhibit 2.1.2 shows that the district's documents and approaches met 2 of the 15 characteristics, partially met four characteristics (and are therefore considered inadequate), and did not meet nine characteristics. Therefore the district's approach to curriculum management planning is inadequate to provide a comprehensive approach to the design, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of the curriculum.

A detailed discussion of each characteristic follows:

Characteristic One: Philosophical Framework (Adequate)

Auditors rated this criterion as adequate. Although board policies are silent relative to a curriculum philosophy (see Finding 1.1), the 2011–12 District Improvement Progress Report and 2012–13 Action Plan references a standards-based curriculum. The plan includes the following goal: “To develop district-wide consistency in the delivery of standards-based curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention to support individual students’ growth towards proficiency.” A corresponding strategy is that “All curriculum and assessments will be aligned across grade levels, school buildings, and with district and state standards.”

Board policy provides some general statements relative to approaches to be used in delivering the curriculum in the classroom. *BOSC Instruction Policy 104: Curriculum Development* states that district personnel are to develop a curriculum “that strives to provide a wide variety of approaches to instruction . . .” *BOSC Instruction Policy 118.1: Curriculum Development* states, “Student engagement, rather than passive modes of instruction, is more beneficial to students.”

Characteristic Two: Periodic Curriculum Review (Partially Adequate)

This characteristic was partially met and is therefore inadequate. Board policy addresses a cycle of review for resource materials in the four core content areas in *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 118: Instructional Materials*: “Basic instructional course material in the fundamental skill areas of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies should be reviewed at intervals not exceeding five (5) years.” While this policy describes a review cycle for resources for the core content areas, it does not direct a review of both curriculum documents and resources for all subject areas and grade levels.

An activity listed in the 2012-13 District Improvement Plan was “To implement the curriculum review cycle (as developed in 2005).” However, during interviews the auditors learned that this has not taken place. Staff comments following:

- “We used to have a cycle of [curriculum] review, but because of budget cuts that had to go.” (Administrator)
- “The curriculum review cycle is on hold.” (Administrator)

Characteristic Three: Stages of Curriculum Development (Inadequate)

This characteristic was rated as inadequate. The auditors did not find a written description of the steps to be followed during curriculum development.

Characteristic Four: Roles and Responsibilities (Adequate)

This characteristic was met. Board policy and job descriptions assign a number of duties related to curriculum management (see Finding 1.3). *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 104: Curriculum Development* states, “The Superintendent and/or his/her designee will guide curriculum development for the school district. Curriculum committees will be established for curriculum development, curriculum revision, and the selection of new instructional materials.” The policy continues, “It is expected that all teachers and administrators will make contributions to curriculum development. The Board will encourage and support the professional staff in its efforts to investigate and develop new curricular ideas.”

Job descriptions describe the following curriculum-related responsibilities:

- Superintendent: “Responsibility for development, implementation, and maintenance of curriculum design and development...”

- Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction: “Provides leadership for curriculum and assessment development and implementation...”
 - “Ensures the district/school educational objectives are aligned to state frameworks and to instructional practices that yields the highest standards of student achievement...”
 - “... improves the content, sequence and outcomes of the teaching/learning process; directs instructional and curriculum services to meet students’ needs; and plans, implements and evaluates instructional programs with teachers and principals including learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques.”
 - “Collaborates with appropriate staff to develop, maintain, and revise curriculum based on systematic review and analysis.”
- Assistant Superintendent for Student Services: “Works with the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction in the development, implementation and refinement of the general and special education of curriculum of instruction...”
- Assistant Principal: “Assist the principal in the development and implementation of the curriculum.”
- Assistant Principal for Student Services: “Assist the principal in the development and implementation of the curriculum.”
- High School Principal: “Assist in the development of the curriculum and be responsible for its implementation and evaluation.”
- Data Analyst: “Use student performance data to assist staff in designing interventions.”
- Teacher: “Guide the learning process toward the achievement of curriculum goals, and in harmony with these goals, establish clear objectives for all lessons, units, and projects, to communicate these objectives to students.”
- Reading Specialist: “Participate in the establishment, development, and implementation of developmental reading programs...”
- Teacher – Literacy/Math Intervention: “Help teachers align district standards with effective instruction and assessments.”
- Certified Instructor – Credit Recovery: “Follow the assigned curriculum and procedures established to achieve the program objectives.”
- Title I Certified Instructors: “Follow the assigned curriculum and procedures established to achieve the project objectives.”

Characteristic Five: Format and Components of Curriculum Guides (Inadequate)

This characteristic was rated as inadequate. Characteristic Five expects the format and components of all curriculum, assessments, and instructional guide documents to be clearly described. By defining the structural components of curriculum documents, the district ensures that there is continuity in the presentation of curriculum between departments and grade levels. The auditors were not presented with any documents that clearly defined what the written curriculum should look like or what components need to be included.

Characteristic Six: Inclusion of State and National Standards (Partially Adequate)

This characteristic was partially met and is therefore considered inadequate. As noted in Characteristic One above, state standards are mentioned in the District Improvement Plan. The district website also references state standards under Curriculum as follows: “The Manchester School District’s curriculum is rigorous and standards-based, designed to meet the needs of diverse learners.” However, this characteristic lacks documentation that describes whether or not to use a backloaded approach, in which the curriculum is designed using the high-stakes test and working backwards to define objectives, and/or a frontloaded approach in which objectives are derived from national, state, or local learnings.

Characteristic Seven: Reasonable Number of Student Objectives (Inadequate)

This characteristic was not met. The auditors did not find any reference to pacing or how state standards should be prioritized so that students are given the appropriate amount of time to master the most critical standards.

Characteristic Eight: Curriculum Specifies Multiple Contexts and Cognitive Types (Inadequate)

This characteristic was rated as inadequate. Characteristic Eight directs that curriculum documents not only specify the content of the student objectives/expectations, but also includes multiple contexts (formats) and cognitive types. The curriculum must not only specify what students are expected to learn, but how they will demonstrate mastery, and at what cognitive level. The three components, the content, context, and cognitive type are considered as dimensions of alignment between the written, taught, and tested curriculum.

The auditors were not presented with any documents that require the curriculum to address content, cognitive types, and the context of student objectives. Only general references to “active engagement” or “multiple approaches to instruction” were found in board policy.

Characteristic Nine: Evaluation of Curriculum Effectiveness (Partially Adequate)

This characteristic was partially met and is inadequate. To be rated as adequate, Characteristic Nine requires specific statements of the beliefs and procedures governing the assessment of curriculum effectiveness. These could include curriculum-based diagnostic assessments and rubrics to evaluate curriculum effectiveness. Such assessments direct instructional decisions regarding student progress in mastering prerequisite concepts, skills, knowledge, and long-term mastery of the learning.

Board policy and job descriptions provide only general statements relative to curriculum review and evaluation (see [Finding 4.1](#)). *BOSC Instruction Policy 135: Evaluation of Instructional Programs* states that the superintendent or designee is responsible for reporting to the board “with regard to the effectiveness of programs on student achievement.” As noted in Characteristic Four, The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction’s job description lists responsibilities for revision of the curriculum “based on systematic review and analysis” and “evaluates instructional programs with teachers and principals including learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques.”

Characteristic Ten: Differentiated Instructional Approaches (Partially Adequate)

This characteristic was partially met and is inadequate. Board policies indicate the intent to provide an educational program that meets the varying talents, interests, and skills of the student body.

- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 100: Administration Goals* states that the administration shall “ensure that differing needs and talents of students are considered when planning educational programs.”
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 111: Meeting the Instructional Needs of Students with Different Talents* states, “At all levels, individual differences in student performance, learning rate, and style shall be identified and appropriately addressed.”
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 118: Instructional Material* states that instructional materials should “be matched to the appropriate skill levels of students.”

However, the auditors did not find a definition in district documents that describes how differentiation should be designed or delivered in the curriculum (see [Finding 3.2](#)).

Differentiation allows teachers to meet the needs of students by varying the content, process, products, or learning environment. Characteristic Ten directs that curriculum be designed to support teachers’ differentiation of instructional approaches and selection of student objectives at the right level of difficulty. This provides for students who have not mastered prerequisite skills, objectives, or knowledge to move along at an accelerated pace in order to catch up to their peers. It also provides for students who have already mastered the content to move forward with more advanced or challenging content.

Characteristics Eleven: Use of Assessment Data in Instructional Decision Making (Inadequate)

This characteristic is inadequate. Characteristic Eleven needs to describe the procedures teachers and administrators will follow in using assessment data to strengthen written curriculum and instruction. The auditors did not find documentation that outlined procedures for teachers and administrators to follow in using assessment data in decision making (see [Finding 4.4](#)).

Characteristic Twelve: Program Evaluation (Inadequate)

This characteristic is not met. Characteristic Twelve requires procedures for conducting formative and summative evaluations of programs and their corresponding curriculum content. As noted in Characteristic nine, *BOSC Instruction Policy 135* directs the superintendent to evaluate and report on program effectiveness, but no specific procedures are outlined regarding formative and summative evaluations of the curriculum content (see [Finding 1.4](#)).

Characteristic Thirteen: Design of a Comprehensive Staff Development Program Linked to Curriculum (Inadequate)

This characteristic is not met. Characteristic Thirteen requires the design of a comprehensive staff development program linked to curriculum design and delivery. Several board policies reference professional development. *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 100: Administration Goals* states that a major goal of administration shall be “to provide opportunities to keep abreast of current educational trends” and “to establish staff development programs which support instruction and student achievement.” *Board of School Committee Personnel Policy: 119 Professional Staff Development Opportunities* states, “A program of in-service training shall be established to provide an opportunity for the continuous professional and technical growth of the professional staff. Staff members shall become knowledgeable about new developments and changes in their specialized fields, and shall utilize any new and/or improved methods in their work. It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent or his/her designee to implement appropriate staff development training and activities.”

However, the policies do not specifically describe how the professional development program should support the design and delivery of curriculum (see [Finding 3.1](#)).

Characteristic Fourteen: Procedures for Monitoring Curriculum Delivery (Inadequate)

This characteristic is rated as inadequate. Characteristic Fourteen expects documentation of specific procedures for monitoring the delivery of curriculum. Curriculum delivery, in order to ensure student achievement, is the core business of schools; this process must be monitored to make certain that progress is being made in delivering the curriculum effectively and with the intended result: improved student learning.

The auditors did not find a district-wide procedure for monitoring the delivery of curriculum. Some of the school improvement plans focused on instructional leadership and the implementation of walk-throughs to monitor curriculum and instruction, but no district-wide approach to monitoring was presented (see [Finding 3.3](#)).

Characteristic Fifteen: Communication Plan for Curriculum Design and Delivery (Inadequate)

The auditors were not presented with a clearly established communication plan for the process of curriculum design and delivery.

In interviews staff members acknowledged the need for district-wide curriculum management planning:

- “[We need to improve] communication, both horizontally and vertically.” (Board Member)
- “We [the district] should all be on the same page.” (Administrator)
- “I don’t see anything working together, from elementary to middle school.” (Administrator)
- “[We need] consistency and communication between schools.” (Teacher)
- “We don’t have a clear articulated plan on curriculum; we had plans but because of the budget we started cutting back.” (Administrator)

Interviews with staff also described the challenges in the assignment of roles and communication of the curriculum design and development process:

- “[Alignment with the Common Core] that’s something that wasn’t done at the district level, so we had to do it at the school level.” (Administrator)
- “I’d like the district to be the ones to take charge. They should set the plan and set the tone. Instead it is: ‘The Common Core is here and you deal with it.’ I think it needs to start at the top and it’s not.” (Teacher)
- “We are scrambling to come up with our own [in relationship to the Common Core].” (Administrator)
- “We need someone with specialized training. Principals have been given authority in their buildings by default.” (Administrator)



Student enjoying a book at Hallsville Elementary

Summary

The auditors found that the Manchester School District lacks a comprehensive curriculum management plan to direct the design, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of the curriculum. Board policies and supplemental documents do not provide direction for providing quality written curriculum in an organized, consistent manner for all teachers. Overall, the current process of curriculum management planning in the Manchester School District is inadequate when measured against audit criteria.

Finding 2.2: The scope of the written curriculum in core academic areas is adequate at the middle school level and is inadequate at the elementary and high school levels. Overall the scope of the written curriculum is inadequate to direct instruction.

Curriculum documents are the written guides that provide direction for teachers as they plan for classroom instruction. Comprehensive curriculum documents contain objectives for student learning, prerequisite skills that are required prior to learning, instructional resources available to teachers, classroom strategies that describe how to approach key concepts or skills, and assessment methods tied to each objective. When curriculum documents are provided in all grades and subject areas it increases the likelihood that students will have equitable access to the district curriculum. Furthermore, these documents provide for consistency and focus across schools, grades, and courses. When curriculum documents are unavailable or missing components, teachers have to rely on other resources to plan instruction. These resources may or may not be aligned with the system's intended curriculum and may lead to idiosyncratic student access to the district curriculum.

The scope of the written curriculum refers to the extent to which the taught curriculum is covered by written curriculum documents. The scope is considered adequate if 100 percent of the four core content area courses (English/language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science) and 70 percent or more of all of the other courses offered in a system have written curriculum documents. This finding only addresses scope and will describe to what extent written curriculum documents exist for each course offered by the district. The quality of the written curriculum is addressed in [Finding 2.3](#).

The auditors examined the following documents that were provided by district personnel: course selection and registration forms, course descriptions, district and school websites, units of study, and high school competencies. They also reviewed board policies, planning documents, memoranda, and other relevant documents that were presented by district leaders. In addition, the auditors interviewed board members, administrators, and teachers, district stakeholders and administered an informal survey to teachers relative to the scope of the curricula.

Overall, the auditors found that the scope of the written curriculum was adequate in the core areas at the middle school level but inadequate at the elementary and high school levels. No written curriculum was available for the non-core subjects at the elementary and middle school levels. High school non-core classes had 46 percent coverage.

Some of the documents and websites were used to determine the courses currently offered in the district; others were used to determine the scope of the written curriculum. While any one of these documents may not represent a complete curriculum, auditors considered all of the curriculum documents that teachers had available to them as written curriculum. It should be noted that auditors do not consider commercially produced, purchased programs or textbooks as curriculum. These are materials and resources available to teachers to support the written curriculum, not supplant it, so the auditors did not consider these documents when determining scope. In addition, several schools in the district have developed their own pacing guides or curriculum mapping documents aligned with the state or the Common Core standards. The auditors did not consider these documents when determining scope as they do not represent district-developed curriculum guides that are available to all teachers. The documents that were used to determine scope are listed in [Exhibit 2.2.1](#):

Exhibit 2.2.1

**List of Curriculum Documents Reviewed by Auditors
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Document	Date
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	2007
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Biology	2007
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Physical Science & Earth Space Science	2007
Math EM-Units Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	2008
Social Studies Curriculum Units of Study Grades 6, 7, 8	2010
Manchester School District (SAU 37) Secondary Language Arts Curriculum Grades 6-12	2008
Writing Rubric Grades 6-12	Not listed
First Class Email: High School Competencies	Various dates
Math: Content and Skills for Grades 6, 7, 8	2012
LA Curriculum Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Not listed
Writing Rubric Grade K, 1, 2, 3-5	Not listed
Language Arts Middle School Grade 6 Big Ideas	2012-13
Language Arts Middle School Grade 7 Big Ideas	2012-13
Language Arts Middle School Grade 8 Big Ideas	2012-13

The audit team was not presented with any documents that required a written curriculum for every subject and course offered in the Manchester School District (see [Finding 2.1](#)).

The audit expects to find a document for every subject and course that is taught in the district. The following sections describe the scope at each grade level span—elementary, middle, and high school—as well as a summary for the entire district. In addition, a comparative scope analysis was conducted at the high school level in order to provide district leaders with information about its scope as compared to other schools of similar size and demographics.

[Exhibit 2.2.2](#) presents the scope of the written curriculum for grades K-5.

Exhibit 2.2.2

**Scope of Written Curriculum: Grades K-5
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Course	Grade Level Offered						Number of Subjects or Courses Taught	Number of Subjects or Courses With Written Curriculum
	K	1	2	3	4	5		
Math	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Science	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Reading	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Writing	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Social Studies	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	0
Subtotal Core Subject Areas							30	24
Percentage of Subtotal - Scope of Core Subject Areas								80%

Exhibit 2.2.2 (continued) Scope of Written Curriculum: Grades K-5 Manchester School District March 2013								
Course	Grade Level Offered						Number of Subjects or Courses Taught	Number of Subjects or Courses With Written Curriculum
	K	1	2	3	4	5		
Art	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	0
Music	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	0
Physical Education	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	0
Health	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	0
Subtotal Non-core Courses							24	0%
Percentage Subtotal - Non-core Courses							54	24
Percentage of Total Scope of Written Curriculum								44%
Key: X = subjects taught								
Source: District Curriculum Documents as presented to auditors and interviews								

As indicated in Exhibit 2.2.2:

- There are 30 core content area courses offered in grades K-5.
- Twenty-four (24) core content area courses, or 80 percent have a written curriculum. This does not meet the audit standard of 100 percent for core content area courses.
- No written curriculum was presented for non-core courses in grades K-5. This does not meet the audit standard of at least 70 percent for non-core courses.
- A total of 54 courses are offered in grades K-5.
- The overall scope of the written curriculum for grades K-5 is 44 percent.

The scope of the written curriculum in grades K-5 does not meet the audit standard for adequacy.

Exhibit 2.2.3 presents the scope of the written curriculum in grades 6-8.

Exhibit 2.2.3
Scope of the Written Curriculum in Grades 6-8
Manchester School District
March 2013

Course	Grade Level Offered				Number of Courses Taught	Number of Courses With Written Curriculum
	6	7	8	Offered at All Schools		
Social Studies	X	X	X	*	3	3
English Language Arts	X	X	X	*	3	3
Science	X	X	X	*	3	3
Math	X	X	X	*	3	3
Subtotal Core Subject Areas					12	12
Percentage of Core Subject Areas						100%

Exhibit 2.2.3 (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum in Grades 6-8
Manchester School District
March 2013

Course	Grade Level Offered				Number of Courses Taught	Number of Courses With Written Curriculum
	6	7	8	Offered at All Schools		
Art	X	X	X	*	3	0
Chorus	X	X	X	*	3	0
Band	X	X	X	*	3	0
Orchestra	X	X	X	*	3	0
Family and Consumer Sciences	X	X	X	*	3	0
Physical Education	X	X	X	*	3	0
Tech Ed.	X	X	X	*	3	0
Computer Literacy/Keyboarding	X	X	X	*	3	0
Music	X	X	X	*	3	0
Multi Sensory Reading	X	X	X		3	0
Language Arts Essentials	X	X	X		3	0
Stay Program	X	X	X		3	0
Subtotal Non-core Courses					36	0%
Total All Courses					48	12
Percentage of Total Scope of the Written Curriculum						25%
Key: X = course offered; * = course available at all middle schools						
Source: District Curriculum Documents as presented to auditors, interviews						

As indicated in Exhibit 2.2.3:

- There are 12 core content area courses offered in grades 6-8. All 12 have a written curriculum document and therefore meet the 100 percent standard for adequacy.
- No written curriculum was presented for non-core courses in grades 6-8 and therefore does not meet the 70 percent standard for adequacy.
- There are 48 courses offered in grades 6-8.
- The overall scope of the written curriculum for grades 6-8 is 25 percent.

The scope of the written curriculum for grades 6-8 is 25 percent and is inadequate to direct instruction.

The audit team was given access to the First Class Email System, which contained curriculum documents for high school courses. These documents were considered in calculating the scope of the written curriculum as all high school teachers have access to these documents. The use of these documents will be discussed further in Finding 2.3.

Exhibit 2.2.4 presents the scope of the written curriculum for grades 9-12. It lists the title and cumulative number of courses offered, the identified high schools offering the course (noted by an X), whether there is written curriculum (noted by an asterisk *), or whether there is no written curriculum (noted by a double asterisk **).

Exhibit 2.2.4

**Scope of Written Curriculum: Courses and Subjects in Grades 9-12
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Courses Offered Cumulative Count	Course	High Schools				Written Curriculum	
		Central	Memorial	West	Manchester School of Technology	Present	Not Pres.
	English						
1	AP English Lit & Composition	X	X	X			**
2	British Authors (3)(4)	X					**
3	College Composition	X	X	X		*	
4	Contemporary Literature	X		X		*	
5	Creative Writing	X	X			*	
6	English I (1)(2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
7	English II (1)(2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
8	English III (1)(2)(3)(4)	X	X	X			**
9	English IV (1)(2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
10	Fantasy Literature			X		*	
11	Folklore & Mythology (2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
12	Heroes in Literature	X				*	
13	Humanities			X		*	
14	Intellectual Freedom in Literature			X		*	
15	Journalism	X	X	X		*	
16	Literature and Composition			X		*	
17	Literature and Film (2)(3)		X	X		*	
18	Mass Media	X					**
19	Modern Issues (2)(3)	X	X				**
20	Practical Reading (1)(2)	X	X	X			**
21	Shakespeare	X		X		*	
22	Short Fiction	X	X	X		*	
23	Speech			X			**
24	Sports Writing & Literature		X			*	
25	Theater 1			X		*	
26	Theater 2			X		*	
27	Theater 3			X		*	
28	Theater 4			X			**
29	Understanding Yourself	X				*	
30	Video Communications	X					**
31	Women's Literature (2)(3)	X				*	
32	World Literature		X			*	
33	Writing & Communication (2)(3)	X	X				**
34	Writing & Sports Literature	X	X	X			**
35	Writing Workshop (1)(2)(4)	X	X	X		*	
36	20th Century Drama			X		*	
	Mathematics						
37	Algebra I (2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
38	Algebra II & Trigonometry (2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	

Exhibit 2.2.4 (continued)
Scope of Written Curriculum: Courses and Subjects in Grades 9-12
Manchester School District
March 2013

Courses Offered Cumulative Count	Course	High Schools				Written Curriculum	
		Central	Memorial	West	Manchester School of Technology	Present	Not Pres.
	Mathematics (continued)						
39	Algebra Skills 1 (1)(2)	X	X	X		*	
40	Algebra Skills 2	X	X	X		*	
41	Algebra Topics	X	X	X			**
42	AP Calculus	X	X	X			**
43	Business Math (1)(2)	X	X	X			**
44	Calculus	X	X	X		*	
45	Consumer Math		X				**
46	Finite Math	X	X	X		*	
47	Geometry (1)(2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
48	Geometry Skills	X	X	X		*	
49	Introduction to C. Programming		X				**
50	Mathematics 1	X	X	X		*	
51	Mathematics 2	X	X	X		*	
52	Mathematics 3	X	X	X		*	
53	Pre-Calculus (3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
54	Trig. & Analysis of Functions	X	X	X			**
	Science						
55	Advanced Biology	X					**
56	Anatomy & Physiology	X	X	X		*	
57	Astronomy & Space (2)(3)	X		X			**
58	AP Biology	X	X	X			**
59	AP Chemistry	X	X	X			**
60	AP Physics	X	X	X			**
61	Biology (1)(2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
62	Biology 2		X	X			**
63	Biotechnology			X		*	
64	Biotechnology & Genetics (2)(3)	X					**
65	Chemistry (2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
66	Ecology	X		X		*	
67	First Aid	X	X	X		*	
68	Human Anatomy	X					**
69	Physical/Earth/Space Science (1)(2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
70	Physics (2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
	Social Studies						
71	American Civics (1)(2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
72	American Government (2)(3)		X	X		*	
73	American Studies	X					**
74	AP American Government		X				**
75	AP Micro Economics		X				**

Exhibit 2.2.4 (continued)
Scope of Written Curriculum: Courses and Subjects in Grades 9-12
Manchester School District
March 2013

Courses Offered Cumulative Count	Course	High Schools				Written Curriculum	
		Central	Memorial	West	Manchester School of Technology	Present	Not Pres.
	Social Studies (continued)						
76	AP Mod. European History	X					**
77	AP US History	X	X	X			**
78	AP World History Survey	X					**
79	Crime and Justice			X		*	
80	Current Issues			X			**
81	Economics (1)(2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
82	Facing History & Ourselves (2)(3)	X				*	
83	Geography of the Western Hemisphere			X		*	
84	History & Culture of Asia (2)(3)	X					**
85	History of New Hampshire	X	X			*	
86	History of the Middle East (2)(3)	X				*	
87	History of US & East Asian Relations			X			**
88	Law & Ethics (3)(4)	X	X			*	
89	Law (3)(4)			X		*	
90	Lessons of the Vietnam War (2)(3)	X				*	
91	Modern European History		X			*	
92	Modern Middle East History			X		*	
93	Psychology (1)(2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
94	Sociology (2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
95	Street Law		X				**
96	US History (1)(2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
97	World Geography (2)(3)	X		X		*	
98	World History Survey I (1)(2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
	Art						
99	Advertising Arts		X			*	
100	AP Studio Art	X	X	X		*	
101	Art History	X	X	X		*	
102	Computer Graphics I	X	X	X		*	
103	Computer Graphics II	X	X	X		*	
104	Computer Illustration & Design		X				**
105	Cultural Arts & Crafts	X	X	X			**
106	Drawing I	X	X	X		*	
107	Drawing II	X		X		*	
108	Drawing III	X		X			**
109	Foundations of Art	X	X	X		*	
110	Intro to Color Theory			X			**
111	Intro to Art (1)(2)	X	X	X		*	
112	Intro to Basic Drawing	X					**
113	Intro to Illustration	X				*	
114	Introduction to Electronic Arts		X				**

Exhibit 2.2.4 (continued)
Scope of Written Curriculum: Courses and Subjects in Grades 9-12
Manchester School District
March 2013

Courses Offered Cumulative Count	Course	High Schools				Written Curriculum	
		Central	Memorial	West	Manchester School of Technology	Present	Not Pres.
	Art (continued)						
115	Music and Art History	X					**
116	Painting	X	X	X		*	
117	Paper Crafts	X	X	X			**
118	Photography 1	X	X	X		*	
119	Photography 2			X			**
120	Portfolio Preparation		X	X			**
121	Pottery I	X	X	X		*	
122	Pottery II	X	X	X		*	
123	Pottery III			X		*	
124	Sculpture I	X	X	X		*	
125	Sculpture II	X				*	
	Business						
126	Accounting I (2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
127	Accounting II (2)(3)	X	X	X			**
128	Banking & Credit	X					**
129	Business Communications (2)(3)	X	X			*	
130	Business Law	X	X			*	
131	Career & Study Skills (1)(2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
132	Career Exploration (2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
133	Desktop Publishing	X		X		*	
134	Fashion Merchandising (2)(3)	X		X		*	
135	Information, Communication & Technology I (1)(2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
136	Information, Communication & Technology II (1)(2)(3)					*	
137	Introduction to Business	X	X	X			**
138	Keyboard/Comp Dev			X		*	
139	Keyboarding (1)(2)(3)	X	X	X			**
140	Media Presentations			X		*	
141	Marketing I (2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
142	Marketing II (2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
143	Principals of Management		X	X		*	
144	Sales & Marketing	X	X	X		*	
145	Sports & Entertainment Marketing (2)(3)	X		X		*	
	Extended Learning Opportunities						
146	Introduction to Aviation	X					**
147	Virtual Skies		X				**
	Family and Consumer Science						
148	Adaptive Foods			X			**

Exhibit 2.2.4 (continued)
Scope of Written Curriculum: Courses and Subjects in Grades 9-12
Manchester School District
March 2013

Courses Offered Cumulative Count	Course	High Schools				Written Curriculum	
		Central	Memorial	West	Manchester School of Technology	Present	Not Pres.
	Family and Consumer Science (continued)						
149	Adult Roles (1)(2)		X	X			**
150	Bakery & Gourmet Shop	X				*	
151	Baking	X				*	
152	Basic Foods	X				*	
153	Creative Sewing		X			*	
154	Consumer Education			X		*	
155	Foods I (1)(2)		X	X		*	
156	Foods II		X	X		*	
157	Fundamental Foods (2)(3)	X				*	
158	Housing & Interior Design	X		X		*	
159	Infant Care & Child Development	X	X	X		*	
160	Intermediate Foods (1)(2)	X				*	
161	Leathercraft (1)(2)	X				*	
162	Needlework	X				*	
163	Nutrition			X		*	
164	Parenting & Family Issues	X	X	X		*	
165	Regional Foods of the U.S.	X		X		*	
166	Sports Nutrition			X		*	
167	World of Foods	X					**
	Health / PE						
168	Adaptive Physical Education		X	X			**
169	Health Education (1)(2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
170	Physical Education	X	X	X		*	
171	Recreational Basketball	X	X				**
172	Strength & Cond.	X	X	X			**
173	Walking for Fitness	X	X	X			**
174	Yoga		X				**
	Music						
175	Adv. Instrumental Studies	X					**
176	Band (3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
177	Chamber Choir	X	X	X		*	
178	Color Guard & Flag Corps	X		X			**
179	Concert Choir	X	X	X		*	
180	Conducting	X	X				**
181	Ear Training & Sight Reading	X	X			*	
182	Hist. American Contemp. Music	X	X	X		*	
183	Instrumental Music	X					**

Exhibit 2.2.4 (continued)
Scope of Written Curriculum: Courses and Subjects in Grades 9-12
Manchester School District
March 2013

Courses Offered Cumulative Count	Course	High Schools				Written Curriculum	
		Central	Memorial	West	Manchester School of Technology	Present	Not Pres.
	Music (continued)						
184	Jazz Ensemble	X	X	X			**
185	Music and Art History	X					**
186	Music Appreciation 1		X	X		*	
187	Music Appreciation 2		X	X			**
188	Music Theory I	X	X	X		*	
189	Music Theory II	X	X	X		*	
190	Music Theory III	X	X	X		*	
191	Orchestra (3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
192	Piano Keyboard	X		X		*	
193	Central Singers, Memorial Singers, West High Singers	X	X	X		*	
	Technology Education						
194	Adv. Video Production			X		*	
195	Auto Maintenance & Repair	X				*	
196	Comp Animation			X		*	
197	Drafting			X		*	
198	Engineering Drawing			X			**
199	Home Maintenance & Repair	X	X			*	
200	Industrial Technology (1)(2)		X	X		*	
201	Intro to Video Production			X		*	
202	Introduction to Engineering & Design	X	X	X		*	
203	Web Page Design			X		*	
204	Woodworking 1	X	X	X		*	
205	Woodworking 2		X	X			**
206	Robotics			X			**
207	Principals of Engineering			X			**
208	Digital Electronics			X			**
209	Architectural Design			X		*	
	World Languages						
210	American Sign Language 1		X			*	
211	American Sign Language 2		X			*	
212	American Sign Language 3		X			*	
213	American Sign Language 4		X				**
214	AP Latin - Vergil		X				**
215	AP Spanish Lang/Cult		X				**
216	French I (2)(3)	X	X	X			**
217	French II (2)(3)	X	X	X			**
218	French III (2)(3)	X	X	X			**
219	French IV (2)(3)(4)	X	X	X			**

Exhibit 2.2.4 (continued)
Scope of Written Curriculum: Courses and Subjects in Grades 9-12
Manchester School District
March 2013

Courses Offered Cumulative Count	Course	High Schools				Written Curriculum	
		Central	Memorial	West	Manchester School of Technology	Present	Not Pres.
	World Languages (continued)						
220	French V	X	X	X			**
221	German I	X	X	X		*	
222	German II	X	X	X		*	
223	German III	X	X	X		*	
224	German IV	X	X	X			**
225	Latin I	X	X	X		*	
226	Latin II	X	X	X		*	
227	Latin III	X	X	X		*	
228	Latin IV	X		X		*	
229	Spanish for Native Speakers	X	X	X			**
230	Spanish I (2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
231	Spanish II (2)(3)	X	X	X		*	
232	Spanish III (2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
233	Spanish IV (2)(3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
234	Spanish V (3)(4)	X	X	X		*	
	Library Science						
235	Library Science 1		X	X		*	
236	Library Science 2			X		*	
	Naval Science Dept.						
237	Naval Science I			X			**
238	Naval Science II			X			**
239	Naval Science III			X			**
240	Naval Science IV			X			**
	English Language Learners						
241	ELL Amer Govt.			X			**
242	ELL Econ and Personal Fin			X			**
243	ELL I			X		*	
244	ELL II			X		*	
245	ELL Reading Improve			X		*	
246	ELL Study			X			**
247	ELL US History			X			**
	Jobs for NH Graduates						
248	N-H JAGS			X			**
	Special Education Dept.						
249	Res Ser I- LD Program			X			**
250	Physical Science			X			**
251	Res Ser I- Autism Program			X			**
252	Res Ser I- EBD Program			X			**
253	Res Ser I- EH Program			X			**
254	Res Ser I- Sp Needs Prog			X			**

Exhibit 2.2.4 (continued)
Scope of Written Curriculum: Courses and Subjects in Grades 9-12
Manchester School District
March 2013

Courses Offered Cumulative Count	Course	High Schools				Written Curriculum	
		Central	Memorial	West	Manchester School of Technology	Present	Not Pres.
	English Language Learners (continued)						
255	School to Work I			X			**
256	School to Work II			X			**
257	English 1			X			**
258	English 2			X			**
259	English 3			X			**
260	English 4			X			**
261	Civics			X			**
262	Economics			X			**
263	United States History			X			**
264	Biology			X			**
	School of Technology						
265	Academy of Finance I				X		**
266	Academy of Finance II				X		**
267	App Bus Management I				X		**
268	App Bus Management II				X		**
269	Automotive Technology I				X		**
270	Automotive Technology II				X		**
271	Careers in Education I				X		**
272	Careers in Education II				X		**
273	Collision Repair Technology I				X		**
274	Collision Repair Technology II				X		**
275	Cosmetology I				X		**
276	Cosmetology II				X		**
277	Culinary Arts I				X		**
278	Culinary Arts II				X		**
279	Design Communication I				X		**
280	Design Communication II				X		**
281	Electrical Technology I				X		**
282	Electrical Technology II				X		**
283	Explore Career Opportun.				X		**
284	Finance Academy I				X		**
285	Finance Academy II				X		**
286	Graphic Design & Gaming I				X		**
287	Graphic Design & Gaming II				X		**
288	Graphic Printing 1				X		**
289	Graphic Printing 2				X		**
290	Health Sciences & Technology I				X		**
291	Health Sciences & Technology II				X		**
292	HVAC I				X		**
293	HVAC II				X		**

Exhibit 2.2.4 (continued)							
Scope of Written Curriculum: Courses and Subjects in Grades 9-12							
Manchester School District							
March 2013							
Courses Offered Cumulative Count	Course	High Schools				Written Curriculum	
		Central	Memorial	West	Manchester School of Technology	Present	Not Pres.
	School of Technology (continued)						
294	Intro to Carpentry I				X		**
295	Intro to Carpentry II				X		**
296	Intro. to Culinary Arts I				X		**
297	Intro. to Culinary Arts II				X		**
298	Landscaping and Horticulture I				X		**
299	Landscaping and Horticulture II				X		**
300	Manufacturing Tech I				X		**
301	Manufacturing Tech II				X		**
302	Pub Safe/Criminal Just I				X		**
303	Pub Safe/Criminal Just II				X		**
304	Public Safety Law I				X		**
305	Public Safety Law II				X		**
306	Residential Carpentry I				X		**
307	Residential Carpentry II				X		**
308	Residential HVAC 1				X		**
309	Residential HVAC 2				X		**
310	Residential Plumbing HVAC I				X		**
311	Residential Plumbing HVAC II				X		**
312	Sport & Entertainment Marketing I				X		**
313	Sport & Entertainment Marketing II				X		**
314	Video Production I				X		**
315	Video Production II				X		**
316	Young Adult Program				X		**
Subtotal Count, Core Content Areas						63	47
Percent of Subtotal - Scope of Core Content Areas							57%
Total Count, All Content Areas						158	158
Percent of Total - Scope of the Written Curriculum							50%
Key: X = Course Offered, * = Document present, ** = Document not present							
Sources: District Curriculum Documents as presented to auditors, Interviews							

As noted in Exhibit 2.2.4:

- There are 316 course offerings listed in the high school course listings and/or course descriptions.
- Written curriculum, primarily in the form of high school competencies, is available in 158 of the total courses offered.
- The overall scope of the grades 9-12 written curriculum is 50 percent.
- The scope of the written curriculum for the four core subject areas is 57 percent, which does not meet the audit criteria of 100 percent required for adequacy.

- The scope of the written curriculum for the non-core high school courses is 46 percent, which does not meet the audit criteria of 70 percent adequacy.

Exhibit 2.2.5 presents a summary of the scope of the written curriculum for grades 9-12 by subject and content area.

Exhibit 2.2.5
Scope of Written Curriculum by Subject Area: Grades 9 – 12
Manchester School District
March 2013

Content Area	Number of Course Offerings	Offerings with Curriculum Documents	Percent of Offerings with Curriculum Documents
Core Content Areas			
English Language Arts	36	25	65
Mathematics	18	12	67
Science	16	9	56
Social Studies	28	18	64
*English Language Learners	3	0	0
*Special Education	9	0	0
Subtotal Core Content Areas	110	64	58.2%
Non-core Content Areas			
Arts	27	17	63
Business	20	16	80
Extended Learning Opportunities	2	0	0
Family and Consumer Sciences	20	17	85
Health/PE	7	2	29
Music	19	12	63
Technology Education	16	11	69
World Languages	25	15	60
Library Science	2	2	100
Naval Science	4	0	0
**English Language Learners	4	3	75
Jobs for NH Grads	1	0	0
**Special Education	7	0	0
School of Technology	52	0	0
Subtotal Non-core Areas	206	95	46.0%
Total	316	159	50.3%
*SPED and ELL core content area courses ** SPED and ELL non-core content area courses			
<i>Source: District Curriculum Documents</i>			

As noted in Exhibit 2.2.5 :

- Of the core content areas, mathematics has the highest percent of written curriculum documents (67 percent).
- None of the core content areas has 100 percent coverage.
- Forty-six (46) percent of non-core content areas have written curriculum documents, which does not meet the 70 percent requirement for adequacy.
- Overall, 50.3 percent of the total courses offered have a written curriculum document.

None of the core content areas had written curriculum documents for all of their courses. The scope of the written curriculum in grades 9-12 does not meet audit standards for adequacy.

Exhibit 2.2.6 provides a summary of the scope of the written curriculum documents K-12.

Exhibit 2.2.6

Summary of the Scope of the Written Curriculum K-12 Manchester School District March 2013

Grade Levels	Core Areas		Non-core Areas		Total Areas	
	Total Core Offerings	Core Areas with a Written Curriculum	Total Non-core Offerings	Non-core Areas with a Written Curriculum	Total Course Offerings	Total Areas with a Written Curriculum
K-5	30	24	24	0	54	24
6-8	12	12	36	0	48	12
9-12	110	64	206	95	316	159
Total	152	100	266	95	418	195
	Core Areas = 66%		Non-Core Areas = 36%		Total Areas = 46.7%	
Source: District Curriculum Documents, interviews						

As indicated in Exhibit 2.2.6:

- Auditors identified a total of 418 courses offered in grades K-12 in the Manchester School District. Curriculum documents were presented to auditors for 195 core and non-core courses.
- Curriculum documents were presented for 95 of 266, or 36 percent, of non-core courses, which is well below the 70 percent coverage required for adequacy.
- Core area course offerings had curriculum for 100 of 152 courses, or 66 percent, which did not meet the 100 percent audit standard for core content area courses.

Overall, the scope of the written curriculum is inadequate to direct instruction in the Manchester School District.

In addition to reviewing documents and policies, the auditors also conducted interviews with administrators, teachers, and stakeholders to identify opinions and beliefs about the scope of the written curriculum in the Manchester School District. During interviews auditors heard concerns about the limited scope of the written curriculum. The following are representative comments:

- “Right now we don’t have a math curriculum; we have a program, but that’s not a curriculum.” (Administrator)
- “[In] social studies at the elementary we do not have a written curriculum.” (Administrator)
- “At the middle school level the only pacing guides are for ELA and math. We have somewhat of a curriculum, but they are on their own for (the other courses) at this level.” (Administrator)
- “I would like a curriculum for the ELL (English Language Learners) program, both magnet and pullout. ELL students who transfer within the district receive vastly different instructional content due to the lack of ELL curriculum within the district.” (Teacher)
- “No real ELL curriculum for all the ELL levels.” (Teacher)
- “No core curriculum for reading instruction.” (Teacher)

If a school district offers too many courses, district resources may be spread too thin to adequately address the curriculum needs of each course. Conversely, if a district does not offer enough courses, students may not have the opportunity to participate in a diverse educational experience that addresses all of the curriculum goals of

the district. Finding an appropriate balance allows a school district to concentrate finite resources and allow for the design and development of high quality curriculum. Key to this balance is establishing a process that provides for the adoption, monitoring, and elimination of courses and clearly identifies how the addition or elimination of a course will support the curricular goals of the district.

In order to provide Manchester School District leaders with comparative information about the scope of their course offerings, the auditors selected two school districts from New England with similar size and demographics for comparative analysis. Exhibit 2.2.7 provides an overview of the characteristics of all three districts.

Exhibit 2.2.7

Comparison of Manchester School District with Similar Districts Manchester School District March 2013

District Characteristic	Manchester, NH	District A	District B
Enrollment	15,731	15,828	13,547
Number of schools	22	22	24
Classroom teachers (FTE)	1,049	1,066	889
Student: teacher ratio	15	14.8	15.2
ELL and FLEP enrollment*	1,732	2,743	2,707
SPED enrollment**	2,581	2,162	2,218
*English Language Learner (ELL), Formerly Limited English Proficient (FLEP)			
**Special Education			
<i>Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2010-2011 School Year data</i>			

As noted in Exhibit 2.2.7:

- Manchester, District A and District B have total student enrollments within 2,200 students of each other and with a similar numbers of schools: Manchester-22, District A-22, and District B-24.
- Faculty numbers range from a low of 889 (District B) to a high of 1,066 (District A), with Manchester closer to District A at 1,049.
- The student to teacher ratio is approximately 15 for all three schools.
- Manchester has 1,000 fewer ELL/FLEP students as compared to District A and B and 363 (District B) and 419 (District A) more special education students.

Exhibit 2.2.8 presents information on the number of courses that are offered in each district by department.

Exhibit 2.2.8

Manchester Course Counts Compared to Districts of Similar Size
Manchester School District
March 2013

Department or Content Area	Course Count		
	Manchester	District A	District B
English	36	10	12
Math	18	18	13
Science	16	21	15
Social Studies	28	16	17
Arts	27	20	4
Music	19	13	10
Business, FCS, Tech. and Voc. Ed.	108	52	81
World Languages	25	27	21
Special Ed.	16	0	0
ELL	7	23	18
Health PE	7	11	5
Other	9	8	7
Total	316	219	203
Other includes: Extended Learning Opportunities, Library Science, Naval Science.			
Business includes:			
MSD: Business, Technology, School of Technology, Family and Consumer Sciences			
District A: Business, technology and careers, vocational education			
District B: technology, 15 shops at vocational school times, 4 years of shop plus one additional course			
<i>Sources: Manchester School District Documents and Interviews. District A and District B Websites</i>			

As presented in Exhibit 2.2.8

- MSD offered a total of 316 courses, as compared to District A (219) and District B (203).
- For 7 out of 12 departments (58 percent), MSD offers more courses than District A or District B.
- The largest difference in number of course offerings is in the combined Business, Technology, and Vocational Education departments: Manchester - 109, District A - 52, and District B - 81.
- MSD offered three times as many English courses (36) as compared to District A (10) and District B (12).
- MSD offered approximately twice as many social studies courses (28) as compared to District A (16) and District B (17).
- MSD offered a similar number of courses, as compared to District A and District B, in math, science, and world languages.

In addition to examining the course offerings of two other similar districts, the auditors reviewed policies and other relevant documents to determine if there was an established process for adopting, monitoring, and eliminating courses. Two board policies addressed the addition and elimination of curriculum.

- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 105: Curriculum Adoption* states, “It is the policy of the Board that no basic course of study shall be eliminated or new courses added without approval of the Board, nor shall any alteration or reduction of a course of study be made without such approval.” In addition, the policy dictates, “New programs and courses of study shall not be acted upon by the full Board until the meeting following their presentation by the administration at the Curriculum and Instruction Committee.”

- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 104: Curriculum Development* states, “The Superintendent and/or his/her designee will submit recommendations developed by the curriculum committees to the Curriculum and Instruction Committee. These recommendations will be submitted to the Board for its consideration and adoption.”

While these two policies require the approval of the board and the recommendation of the superintendent and/or his/her designee, they do not provide enough specificity to guide the adoption, monitoring, or elimination of courses. The policies do not describe the process for determining how the addition or elimination of a course will support the district curricular goals. In addition to the comparative analysis and policy review, the auditors interviewed stakeholders. There were different viewpoints on the scope of the current course offerings at the high schools. Some individuals interviewed perceived that too many courses are offered in Manchester.

- “[We have these] boutique classes. We have some schools who have some specialized curriculum. Some of them have only half a dozen kids in the class.” (Board Member)
- “Instead of eliminating these courses [that were specialized at each school] we just added them into the regular curriculum.” (Board Member)
- “Everyone has their sacred cows. They have these programs that may or may not be beneficial for students.” (Board Member)
- “I think we offer too much [courses at the high school].” (Administrator)

Others interviewed cited the number of courses offered as a strength of the curriculum.

- “[One of the strengths of our district is the] diverse course offerings.” (Informal Survey)
- “[We need an] increased understanding of the strengths of diversity in course offerings.” (Informal Survey)

In summary, there are no policies or guidelines in place to provide direction for the adoption, monitoring, or elimination of course offerings in the Manchester School District.

Summary

In summary, the scope of the curriculum is inadequate to provide for quality control and consistency in the Manchester School District. The auditors found no policies or regulations that require a written curriculum document for all courses that are offered in the district. While the core content areas at the middle school met the audit standard and were rated as adequate in scope, no other areas met the audit standard. In addition to the lack of written curriculum documents, there is no formal process for the addition, monitoring, or elimination of courses.

Finding 2.3: The written curriculum lacks the specificity and characteristics needed to direct classroom instruction, promote deep alignment, support improved student achievement, and provide a consistent educational program across the district.

The written curriculum is the school system’s way of guiding and directing classroom instruction. Quality guides align the written, taught, and tested curriculum and provide specific, measurable objectives that clearly define mastery. Curriculum documents provide guidance on prerequisite skills, list major instructional tools, and describe classroom strategies. These guides also support differentiated teaching approaches by linking objectives with quality diagnostic assessments and a menu of research-based instructional approaches. Quality curriculum documents allow all students equal access to the educational program by providing for articulation and connectivity from one grade to the next and coordination between grades.

Deep curriculum alignment requires matching of student objectives, classroom instruction, and assessments in content, context, and cognitive level. Where state standards are present, deep alignment also requires a similar match between those standards and local curriculum goals and objectives. The next step requires that the curriculum moves beyond required assessments, or “goes deeper” than required tests.

In order to assess the quality of the Manchester School District curriculum documents, the auditors examined board policies and reviewed all relevant documents presented by district personnel. In addition, the audit team interviewed school board members, administrators, principals, parents, and teachers; visited 22 school campuses; and administered an informal survey to teachers.

Overall, the auditors found that the quality of the written curriculum is inadequate to direct teaching and learning in the district. Board policies and job descriptions provide expectations for the development of curriculum, but guidance is absent as to the format and specific components that curriculum documents should contain (see [Finding 2.1](#)). Job descriptions assign principals the responsibility of developing curriculum, and a number of schools have developed their own curriculum documents. In addition, the district-level documents that are available are not consistently used. The educational program a student experiences varies from school to school across the district (see [Finding 3.4](#)).

The following board policies reference the curriculum:

- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 104: Curriculum Development* states that “curriculum is the foundation of instruction.” The policy “expects that all teachers and administrators will make contributions” to a curriculum “that strives to provide a wide variety of approaches to instruction...”
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 111: Meeting the Instructional Needs of Students with Different Talents* states that “...the educational program shall provide formal studies to meet the general academic needs of all students, opportunities for individual students to develop specific talents and interests, and opportunities to develop the skills necessary to become independent learners.”

No further policy guidance is provided regarding the elements that should be included in the curriculum.

The auditors noted that the New Hampshire Department of Education has mandated the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics for the K-12 educational program. The Common Core Standards were to be implemented this school year. State summative Smarter Balanced Assessments will be administered in 2015. School districts currently need to be making curricular and assessment transitions to these systems. (Further information relative to the Common Core Standards is provided later in this finding.)

The District Improvement Plan for 2012-13 stated that the Common Core Standards would be “rolled out” in the fall of 2012. [Finding 2.1](#) includes comments by district administrators that district-wide training was not provided, so implementation has varied by school.

As described in [Finding 1.2](#), a continuing goal of the District Improvement Plan has been “To develop consistency in the delivery of standards-based curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention to support individual students’ growth toward proficiency.” Strategies to attain this goal are listed as the following:

- All curriculum and assessments will be aligned across grade levels, school buildings, and with district and state standards;
- The district will identify and allocate appropriate and necessary resources to support the district curricula, instruction, assessments, and interventions;
- The district will implement a consistent and coordinated approach to data collection and analysis; and
- The district will develop consistent tools to evaluate teacher effectiveness.

Several school improvement plans described various activities to assist in achieving the district goals.



Strings class practicing at McLaughlin Middle School

Analysis of Curriculum Documents Against Audit Minimum Quality Criteria

Exhibit 2.3.1 lists the 60 K-12 curriculum documents the auditors analyzed for curriculum quality. In addition, 149 competencies for grades 9-12 were examined.

Exhibit 2.3.1

Curriculum Documents Reviewed by Auditors Manchester School District March 2013

Document	Date
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	2007
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Biology	2007
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Physical Science & Earth Space Science	2007
Math EM-Units Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	2008
Math: Grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 Maintaining	Not listed
FY13 K-5 Tri Math Assessment	Not listed
Social Studies Curriculum Units of Study Grades 6, 7, 8	2010
Social Studies: Draft Gr. 6 Learning Goals and Essential Standards	2010
Manchester School District (SAU 37) Secondary Language Arts Curriculum Grades 6-12	2008
Writing Rubric Grades 6-12	Not listed
First Class Email: High School Competencies	Various dates
Math: Content and Skills for Grades 6, 7, 8	2012
LA Curriculum Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Not listed
Writing Rubric Grade K, 1, 2, 3-5	Not listed
ELA: Literacy Framework	Not listed
ELA: Unit of Study K-5	Not listed
ELA: Assessment Schedule	Not listed
ELA: Genre Pacing Guide	Not listed
Language Arts Middle School Grade 6 Big Ideas	2012-13
Language Arts Middle School Grade 7 Big Ideas	2012-13
Language Arts Middle School Grade 8 Big Ideas	2012-13

The curriculum documents presented in [Exhibit 2.3.1](#) were rated using the audit criteria for minimum basic components for guide quality and specificity as shown in [Exhibit 2.3.2](#). In some instances, multiple documents were used to calculate a final score.

Exhibit 2.3.2

Curriculum Management Improvement Model Frame One Analysis: Minimal Basic Components for Curriculum Document Quality and Specificity

Point Value	Criteria
Criterion One: Clarity and Specificity of Objectives	
0	No goals/objectives present
1	Vague delineation of goals/learner outcomes
2	States tasks to be performed or skills to be learned
3	States for each objective the what, when (sequence within course/grade), how actual standard is performed, and amount of time to be spent learning
Criterion Two: Congruity of the Curriculum to the Assessment Process	
0	No assessment approach
1	Some approach of assessment stated
2	States skills, knowledge, and concepts that will be assessed
3	Keys each objective to district and/or state performance assessments
Criterion Three: Delineation of the Prerequisite Essential Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes	
0	No mention of required skill
1	States prior general experience needed
2	States prior general experience needed in specified grade level
3	States specific documented prerequisite or description of discrete skills/concepts required prior to this learning (may be a scope and sequence across grades/courses if Pre-K-12)
Criterion Four: Delineation of the Major Instructional Tools	
0	No mention of textbook or instructional tools/resources
1	Names the basic text/instructional resource(s)
2	Names the basic text/instructional resource(s) and supplementary materials to be used
3	States for each objective the “match” between the basic text/instructional resource(s) and the curriculum objective
Criterion Five: Clear Approaches for Classroom Use	
0	No approaches cited for classroom use
1	Overall, vague statement on approaching the subject
2	Provides general suggestions on approaches
3	Provides specific examples of how to approach key concepts/skills in the classroom

The analyses presented in [Exhibit 2.3.3](#), using the criteria from [Exhibit 2.3.2](#), are for the minimum basic components only. Additional analyses of curriculum are provided further in this finding.

The curriculum documents were rated using a 3-point scale. Scores for each document were calculated by adding the individual scores for each criterion. A curriculum document that receives a score of 12 out of 15 possible points is considered minimally adequate. The ratings for the Manchester School District curriculum documents are displayed in [Exhibit 2.3.3](#).

Exhibit 2.3.3

**Auditors' Ratings of Grades K-12 Curriculum Documents
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Curriculum Document Title	Grade	Date	Criteria					Total Rating
			Obj.	Asmt.	Prereq.	Res.	Strats.	
Social Studies Curriculum Units of Study—Grade 6	6	2010	2	0	0	0	0	2
Social Studies Curriculum Units of Study—Grade 7	7	2010	2	0	0	0	0	2
Social Studies Curriculum Units of Study—Grade 8	8	2010	2	0	0	0	0	2
MSD Everyday Math Kindergarten Units	K	2008	2	2	0	2	0	6
MSD Everyday Math Grade 1 Units, Grade 1 Maintaining	1	2008	2	2	0	2	2	8
MSD Everyday Math Grade 2 Units, Grade 2 Maintaining	2	2008	2	2	3	2	2	11
MSD Everyday Math Grade 3 Units, Grade 3 Maintaining	3	2008	2	2	3	2	2	11
MSD Everyday Math Grade 4 Units, Grade 4 Maintaining	4	2008	2	2	3	2	2	11
MSD Everyday Math Grade 5 Units, Grade 5 Maintaining	5	2008	2	2	3	2	2	11
Math 6, 7, 8 Content and Skills	6, 7, 8	2012	1	0	0	0	0	1
Grade 6 Math Maintaining	6	2008	2	0	0	0	3	5
LA Curriculum Kindergarten	K	none	2	1	0	2	3	8
LA Curriculum Grade one	1	none	2	1	0	2	3	8
LA Curriculum Grade two	2	none	2	1	0	2	3	8
LA Curriculum Grade three	3	none	2	1	0	2	3	8
LA Curriculum Grade four	4	none	2	1	0	2	3	8
LA Curriculum Grade five	6-8	none	2	1	0	2	3	8
Manchester School District (SAU 37) Secondary Language Arts Curriculum Grades 6-12, LA—Middle School (grades 6-8)	6-12	2008	2	1	2	1	0	6
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Kindergarten	K	2007	2	2	0	2	0	6
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Grade one	1	2007	2	2	0	2	0	6
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Grade two	2	2007	2	2	0	2	0	6
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Grade three	3	2007	2	2	3	2	0	9
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Grade four	4	2007	2	2	3	2	0	9
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Grade five	5	2007	2	2	0	2	0	6
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Grade six	6	2007	2	2	0	2	0	6
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Grade seven	7	2007	2	2	3	2	0	9
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Grade eight	8	2007	2	2	3	2	0	9
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Biology	9-12	2007	2	2	0	2	0	6
SAU 37 Science Curriculum Physical Science & Earth Space Science	9-12	2007	2	2	0	2	0	6
ASL I Course Competencies	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	2	7
ASL II Course Competencies	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	2	7
ASL III Course Competencies	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	2	7
AP Studio Art Core Comp.	9-12	2010	2	2	0	0	0	4
2nd Draft Founds Fund	9-12	2009	2	1	3	0	0	6
Art History Core Comp	9-12	2009	2	2	0	0	0	4
Computer Graphic Design I	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft Advertising Art	9-12	2009	1	1	0	0	0	2

Exhibit 2.3.3 (continued)
Auditors' Ratings of Grades K-12 Curriculum Documents
Manchester School District
March 2013

Curriculum Document Title	Grade	Date	Criteria					Total Rating
			Obj.	Asmt.	Prereq.	Res.	Strats.	
Draft Drawing I	9-12	2009	2	1	3	0	0	6
Draft Drawing full year 1 2	9-12	2009	2	1	3	0	0	6
Draft Intro to Art	9-12	2009	2	1	3	0	0	6
Draft Painting I	9-12	2009	2	1	3	0	0	6
Draft Photography	9-12	2009	2	1	3	0	0	6
Graphic Design II	9-12	2009	2	1	3	0	0	6
Pottery III	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Sculpture I	9-12	2010	2	1	3	0	0	6
Up Draft Pottery I Comp	9-12	2009	2	1	3	0	0	6
Up Draft Pottery II	9-12	2009	2	1	3	0	0	6
Marketing	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Principles of Management	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Marketing II – SAU	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Business Communications	9-12	2009	2	3	0	1	0	6
Business Law – SAU	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Sales & Marketing Final	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
ICT I	9-12	2010	2	3	0	1	0	6
Career Explorations	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Fashion Merchandising	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Media Presentations	9-12	2009	2	3	0	1	0	6
Career Study Skills	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Desktop Publishing	9-12	2009	2	3	0	1	0	6
Keyboarding Competencies	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Accounting I	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Sports and Entertain	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
ICT II	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Basic Foods	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Baking Comps	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Bakery and Gourmet Shop-Central	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Advanced Foods	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Regional Foods Final	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Foods Competencies	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Sewing I Comps	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Sports Nutrition CACES	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Infant Care and Child De	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Needlework	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Intermediate Foods	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Leather Crafts	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Fundamental Foods	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Draft Sports Nutrition	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Draft Consumer Ed.	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
ELL I CACES	9-12	2009	1	1	0	0	0	2
ELL II CACES	9-12	2009	1	1	0	0	0	2
ELL Read Imp CACES	9-12	2009	1	1	0	0	0	2

Exhibit 2.3.3 (continued)
Auditors' Ratings of Grades K-12 Curriculum Documents
Manchester School District
March 2013

Curriculum Document Title	Grade	Date	Criteria					Total Rating
			Obj.	Asmt.	Prereq.	Res.	Strats.	
Creative Writing	9-12	2010	2	3	0	2	0	7
English I	9-12	2010	2	3	0	2	0	7
English II	9-12	2010	2	3	0	2	0	7
English IV TBA	9-12	2010	2	3	0	2	0	7
Fantasy Lit	9-12	2010	2	3	0	2	0	7
Heroes in Literature	9-12	2010	2	3	0	1	0	6
Intellectual Freedom	9-12	2010	2	3	0	2	0	7
Journalism	9-12	2010	2	3	0	2	0	7
Lit & Film	9-12	2010	2	3	0	2	0	7
Lit and Comp	9-12	2010	2	3	0	2	0	7
Mythology	9-12	2010	2	3	0	2	0	7
Shakespeare	9-12	2010	2	3	0	2	0	7
Short Fiction	9-12	2010	2	3	0	2	0	7
Sports Literature	9-12	2010	2	3	0	2	0	7
Women's Literature	9-12	2010	2	1	0	2	0	5
Writing Workshop	9-12	2010	2	3	0	1	0	6
Library Science #1	9-12	2010	2	1	0	0	0	3
Library Science # 2	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Algebra I MSD Course Guideline Aug 2010	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Algebra II L2 MSD Course Guideline	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Algebra Skills I MSD Course Guidelines 2010	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Algebra Skills II MSD Course Guideline	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Calculus Course MSD Guideline Aug 2010	9-12	2010	2	0	0	0	0	2
Finite Math MSD Course Guideline Aug 2010	9-12	2010	2	0	0	0	0	2
Geometry Course MSD Guideline Aug 2010	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Geometry Skills MSD Course Guideline Aug 2010	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Math I MSD Course Guideline Aug 2010	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Math II MSD Course Guideline Aug 2010	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Math III MSD Course Guideline Aug 2010	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Pre-Calculus MSD Course Guideline Aug 2010	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft 5-22 Theory 2	9-12	2009	2	1	2	0	0	5
Draft 5-22 Theory 3	9-12	2009	2	1	2	0	0	5
Draft Band Comp 10-10-08	9-12	2009	2	3	2	0	0	7
Draft Chamber Choir	9-12	2009	2	1	2	0	0	5
Draft Concert Choir	9-12	2009	2	1	2	0	0	5
Draft High School Singers	9-12	2009	2	1	2	0	0	5
Draft Hist Amer Contemp Music	9-12	2009	2	1	2	0	0	5
Draft Music Appr	9-12	2009	2	3	2	0	0	7
Draft Theory 1	9-12	2009	2	3	2	0	0	7
Ear Training	9-12	2009	2	0	2	0	0	4
Orchestra Competencies	9-12	2009	2	3	2	0	0	7
Piano Keyboarding 5-2	9-12	2009	2	1	2	0	0	5
Biology Course Content Competencies	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Biotech	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5

Exhibit 2.3.3 (continued)
Auditors' Ratings of Grades K-12 Curriculum Documents
Manchester School District
March 2013

Curriculum Document Title	Grade	Date	Criteria					Total Rating
			Obj.	Asmt.	Prereq.	Res.	Strats.	
Draft Anat. and Phys	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Ecology Competency Final	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
First Aid 6-10 version 2	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Health April 2010	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Physical Education	9-12	2010	2	2	0	0	0	4
Physics Competencies	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Phys Sci Comp Revised	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Revised Chem doc	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
American Literature Final	9-12	2009	2	3	0	2	0	7
Crime Justice Manchester	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Draft American Govt.	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft Euro. History	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft Facing History	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Geography	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft Hist of the Midd #2B	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft Lessons of the VIE #2C	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Draft Modern Middle East	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft NH Hist	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft Psychology	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Draft Sociology Core	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft Western Hem Geo	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Economics Templates	9-12	2009	2	1	0	1	0	4
Law and Government	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Manchester Law and Ethics	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
US History Course CO	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
World History	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Architectural Design	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Automotive	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Computer Animation	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft Industrial Technology	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Drafting	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Home Maintenance	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Intro to Eng Design	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Video Revised	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Video II	9-12	2009	2	1	0	0	0	3
Web Design Revised	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Woodworking	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft 20th Cent Drama	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft Theatre 1	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft Theatre 2	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft Theatre 3	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft German I	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft German II	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft German III	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5

Exhibit 2.3.3 (continued)
Auditors' Ratings of Grades K-12 Curriculum Documents
Manchester School District
March 2013

Curriculum Document Title	Grade	Date	Criteria					Total Rating
			Obj.	Asmt.	Prereq.	Res.	Strats.	
Draft Latin 1 Comps	9-12	2009	2	3	0	0	0	5
Draft Spanish IV Revised	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Latin II as of 2-6	9-12	2009	2	2	0	0	0	4
Latin III as of 2-6	9-12	2009	2	2	0	0	0	4
Latin IV as of 2-6	9-12	2009	2	2	0	0	0	4
Spanish I (a) Dec09	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Spanish II Dec09	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Spanish III (a) Dec09	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Spanish V Dec09	9-12	2010	2	3	0	0	0	5
Average			2.0	2.2	0.5	0.5	0.2	5.3

As shown in Exhibit 2.3.3:

- The average total rating for K-12 curriculum documents is 5.3 on a scale of 0 to 15, which fails to meet the 12 points required for adequacy.
- Curriculum document ratings ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 11 points.
- Four curriculum documents received ratings of 11 points (Grades 3-5 Everyday Math Units: Maintaining)
- The strongest overall category was Congruity of the Curriculum to the Assessment Process, with an average score of 2.2 out of a possible 3 points.
- The weakest overall category was Clear Approaches for Classroom Use, with an average score of 0.2 out of a possible 3 points.

Comments related to the ratings for each criterion in Exhibit 2.3.3 follow:

Criterion 1: Clarity and Specificity of Objectives

Mean Rating: 2.0

The majority of guides or combination of curriculum documents included standards, identifiable skills, and/or concepts to be learned. In order to score a 3 for this criterion, a guide must also describe for each objective when (sequence within course/grade), how the actual standard is to be performed, and the amount of time to be spent learning. Many of the guides had several of these components, but none of the guides included all of the criteria required to earn a 3 in this category. For example, the high school competencies describe the concepts to be learned but fail to describe when the standard was to be performed or the amount of time to be spent learning.

Criterion 2: Congruity of the Curriculum to the Assessment Process

Mean Rating: 2.2

This criterion received the highest rating. Over half of the documents (57 percent) received a 3 for this category. The majority of high school competencies provided assessment samples linked to a rubric designed for district-wide use that were specifically linked to the objective. Other documents provided some descriptions of assessment but failed to link them to specific objectives or skills.

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

Mean Rating: 0.5

This criterion requires that prerequisite skills or essential skills, knowledge, or attitudes be described in the curriculum document. The science, the arts, and English documents provided the concepts required prior to the

current learning by describing the objectives for previous grades. The elementary math curriculum documents in grades 1 through 5 provided a scope and sequence by trimester for the specific learnings. Many of the documents did not reference prerequisite skills.

Criterion 4: Delineation of the Major Instructional Tools

Mean Rating: 0.5

The elementary math, ELA, and K-8 science documents named a primary instructional resource as well as supplemental materials and received a rating of 2 out of 3. Most of the remaining documents did not indicate any instructional tools or materials to be used for instruction.

Criterion 5: Clear Approaches for Classroom Use

Mean Rating: 0.2

This criterion had the lowest mean rating. Eight percent of the guides provided an approach for classroom use. The elementary language arts documents provided specific examples of how to approach key concepts/skills in the classroom. The remaining guides (92 percent) did not include any suggestions for classroom use.

In addition to the analysis of curriculum documents for minimum basic components, the auditors also interviewed board members, administrators, teachers, and parents and conducted an informal survey of teachers. When asked about the quality of the written curriculum in the district, interviewees confirmed that there is concern that the written curriculum is inadequate to guide classroom instruction. Many comments referred to the lack of curriculum consistency between schools.

- “Regarding the Common Core, there should be more consistent direction. Different directions come from different departments.” (Administrator)
- “A lot of the curriculum needs updating. It’s an unending debate about what kids should know at each level.” (Parent)
- “There has been a lot of independence here, especially at the high schools. It’s problematic when they don’t work together.” (Administrator)
- “Curriculum development tends to be school by school, especially at the high schools. The high schools have not shared accreditation reports, for example.” (Administrator)
- “At middle school there is no common lesson plan or content.” (Administrator)
- “A lot of times the elementary schools are not getting social studies and science.” (Board Member)
- “We have 22 schools really running their own business.” (Administrator)
- “The curriculum is old and outdated; some courses do not have a cohesive curriculum to work off of; many materials I have to search for and print/purchase myself; no district-wide curriculum so when students move from one school to another, they may or may not have covered the same objectives.” (Informal Survey)

The individuals that were interviewed expressed concern over the lack of a written curriculum in some subject areas and the overall inconsistencies in the curriculum being implemented from school to school.

In summary, the auditors found the overall quality of the curriculum documents in the Manchester School District to be inadequate to direct quality instruction. Most of the documents lack the clarity, precision, and specificity in the objectives, assessments, resources, and instructional approaches necessary to support the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Analysis of Curriculum Against System Expectations

After analyzing the written curriculum documents against audit criteria, the auditors then analyzed the written curriculum against the system’s own expectations. This analysis is conducted to determine whether the design of curriculum documents supports expectations concerning their delivery. For example, if district leaders express

the desire to engage all students in rigorous, hands-on, and student centered learning, then one would expect to find written curriculum documents that include suggested approaches and student projects that reflect this emphasis.

Auditors reviewed multiple documents for explicit expectations concerning what instruction and classroom-based activities should look like (see [Finding 3.2](#)). For this review, auditors focused only on system-level documents that are not content-area specific, since content-specific expectations would not be valid in every classroom district-wide. The documents reviewed included the Vision of the Manchester School District, Board of School Committee Policies, Manchester School District Mission, Manchester School District - Curriculum and Instruction webpage, and the Manchester School District Education Technology Plan 2010 – 2013.

The following expectations were listed:

- Respectful and engaging learning environment (Vision of the Manchester School District, Manchester School District Mission);
- High expectations for student achievement (Vision of the Manchester School District);
- Rigorous and standards-based curriculum (Manchester School District - Curriculum and Instruction webpage);
- Meets the needs of diverse learners (Manchester School District - Curriculum and Instruction webpage);
- Embraces diversity (Vision of the Manchester School District, *Board of School Committee Policy: Administration 117 Diversity*); and
- Creates classrooms that are interactive, inquiry driven, cooperative, and collaborative (Manchester School District Technology Plan Progress Report).

The auditors then examined district curriculum documents for each of these characteristics to see if the written curriculum supports and promotes these instructional expectations. The results are grouped by content area. The data are presented in [Exhibit 2.3.4](#):

Exhibit 2.3.4
Alignment of Written Curriculum with District Expectations
Manchester School District
March 2013

Guide	Engaging Learning Environment	High Expectations	Rigorous	Standards Based	Needs of Diverse Learners	Embraces Diversity	Cooperative/ Collaborative	Inquiry Driven
Elementary ELA	X				X			
Secondary ELA				X				
Elementary Math				X				
Middle School Math								
Science K-12	X		X	X			X	X
Social Studies 6-8				X				
High School Competencies	X			X			X	
Total by Expectation	43%	0%	14%	71%	14%	0%	29%	14%
X = met								

[Exhibit 2.3.4](#) indicates that the auditors found that no single curriculum guide incorporated all of these expectations adequately. However, almost all of the curriculum documents met at least one expectation; the Science K-12 met the most. In the high school competencies the majority of performance assessments

incorporated collaborative learning and several, but not all, incorporated inquiry learning. In the majority of documents, standards were linked to the student learning objectives.

The auditors found that the design of the written curriculum does not adequately integrate the components and characteristics necessary to meet district expectations for curriculum delivery. This disconnect between design and delivery was also observed during classroom visits (see [Finding 3.3](#)).

During interviews, auditors heard comments from several individuals concerning what kind of instruction they would like to see in classrooms. These comments were congruent with the expectations found in the district documents.

- “I’d love to walk into a classroom and see all kids actively learning in math. Not just being spoken to about math.” (Administrator)
- “When I go into a teacher’s room for an observation, I want to see students engaged and feeling good about themselves.” (Administrator)
- “I’d like to see a constructivist approach. I think we have come a long way in reading, but we are not there in math.” (Administrator).
- “[What I expect to see in classrooms is] more hands-on at the lower levels and more lecture give and take conversation in the upper levels.” (Administrator)
- “Teachers should be willing to try to reach every student’s learning style. They need to learn differentiation. It shouldn’t be a choice.” (Parent)
- “Project-based learning is the way to engage students.” (Administrator)

In summary, documents and district stakeholders described expectations for an engaging learning environment that provides students with opportunities to participate in collaborative, rigorous, inquiry-based learning. The design of the curriculum documents does not adequately or consistently incorporate these expectations.



Northwest Elementary fourth graders working together on a Readers’ Workshop assignment



Small group work in a West High School Spanish class

Use of Curriculum

Auditors visited classrooms and schools, interviewed principals and teachers, and administered an informal survey to determine the degree to which teachers teach the district curriculum. The auditors found that the use of the district curriculum is widely inconsistent from school to school, subject to subject, and classroom to classroom. Some teachers use no written district curriculum (see [Finding 2.2](#)), while others confuse the use of an instructional resource with curriculum.

An informal survey was conducted during the week of the audit team visit. One hundred and seventy (170) individuals, mostly teachers, responded to the question: “What do you use to guide instruction?” The majority of

respondents (55.3 percent) indicated that they use the district developed curriculum daily, weekly, or monthly to guide instruction. Another 28.8 percent indicated that they use school-developed curriculum to guide instruction.

Comments regarding what teachers use to guide instruction included:

- “We have a relatively new textbook so they’ve been using that [to plan instruction for math].” (Administrator)
- “They use the [Grade Level Expectations] GLE’s to guide their instruction.” (Administrator)
- “The plans are based on what the city tells me I have to teach.” (Teacher)
- “I do use the seventh grade Common Core.” (Teacher)
- “[For] math they are following a pacing guide. Is that being consistently implemented across the district? No.” (Administrator)
- “I use the Common Core and the WIDA (World Class Instructional Design and Assessment) Standards. We align the Common Core with the WIDA standards.” (Administrator)
- “We use the curriculum that Manchester developed.” (Administrator)
- “We don’t have a book or anything so it’s a curriculum that we came up with on our own.” (Teacher)
- “I have a curricular guide planned out by the state.” (Teacher)
- “[I use the] state standards and my own teacher-created lesson plans.” (Informal Survey)
- “I have developed my own curriculum based on competencies and state guidelines.” (Informal Survey)
- “I bought my own curriculum and use Common Core and district expectations to plan.” (Informal Survey)
- “[I use] both district and school-developed curriculum.” (Informal Survey)
- “I use a lot of my own materials. The district does not supply enough to support the curriculum or training.” (Informal Survey)

The use of district-developed curriculum is inconsistent across the district. Many subject areas lack curriculum documents (see [Finding 2.2](#)). The documents that exist lack some of the key components that would provide direction for teachers as they plan instruction.

Analysis of Student Work Samples (Cognitive Type)

Cognitive type is a descriptor of the type of thinking that is required with respect to content. In order to provide district leaders with additional information about the cognitive type of student work, an analysis was performed using student work samples. Artifacts were randomly collected by the auditors during classroom visits in each of the 22 schools that were visited during the audit. The artifacts were calibrated using Bloom’s Taxonomy, which is described in [Exhibit 2.3.5](#).

Exhibit 2.3.5

Description of Cognitive Types in Bloom's Taxonomy

Cognitive Domain	Definition of Type	Additional Clarification Comments
Knowledge	Includes those behaviors and test situations that emphasize the remembering, either by recognition or recall, of ideas, material, or phenomena.	<p>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.</p> <p>Remembering is the major psychological process involved.</p>
Comprehension	When confronted with a communication, written or oral, students are expected to know what is being communicated and to be able to use the material or ideas contained in it.	<p>Three types: translation, interpretation, and extrapolation.</p> <p>Emphasis is on the grasp of the meaning and intent of the material.</p>
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 holds together the communication as a whole.	<p>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.</p> <p>Not to be confused with the comprehending the meaning of something abstract (which is comprehension).</p>
Synthesis	Putting together elements and parts so as to form a whole, to a pattern or structure not clearly there before.	<p>Focus on creative ability of the student, but within limits of a framework.</p> <p>Must draw upon elements from many sources and put these together in a structure or pattern not clearly there before.</p> <p>Should yield a product.</p>
Evaluation	Making judgments about the value, for some purpose, of ideas, works, solution, methods, material, etc.	<p>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.</p> <p>Are not opinions but judgments based on criteria.</p>
Source: <i>Taxonomy of Educational Objectives</i> , Benjamin Bloom, Editor, Longman, 1956		

In analyzing the cognitive types, each sample was calibrated into one of three summary categories: knowledge or comprehension; application; or analysis, synthesis, or evaluation. The 32 artifacts that were analyzed are presented by grade level in [Exhibit 2.3.6](#).

Exhibit 2.3.6

Cognitive Type of Student Artifacts
English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies
Manchester School District
March 2013

Grade Level	Number of Artifacts	Knowledge or Comprehension		Application		Analysis, Synthesis, or Evaluation	
K-5	4	1	25%	1	25%	2	50%
6-8	16	6	38%	5	31%	5	31%
9-12	12	9	75%	1	8%	2	17%
Totals	32	50%		22%		28%	
Data Sources: Student artifacts collected in English, mathematics, science, and social studies classes by auditors during classroom visits.							

As indicated in Exhibit 2.3.6:

- Half of the four elementary samples required students to engage in higher order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, or evaluation).
- Cognitive tasks at the middle school level were equally divided between the three categories: 38 percent knowledge/comprehension; 31 percent application; and 31 percent analysis, synthesis, or evaluation.
- The majority of high school assignments (75 percent) were at the level of recalling facts, remembering ideas, or grasping the meaning and intent of the material.
- Half of the total samples collected were at the recall level of cognition.

In addition to calibrating student work samples based on Bloom's Taxonomy, auditors also conducted an analysis to determine alignment with the Common Core standards. Each artifact was matched with the corresponding Common Core Standard, as shown in Exhibit 2.3.7. The grade level in which the artifact was collected is represented in the left hand vertical column. The grade level at which the artifact corresponded with the Common Core is indicated by an "X" under the horizontal grade level row. The column to the far right represents the percentage of artifacts that were on or above grade level according to the Common Core standards. A total of 15 student work samples were matched to the English Language Arts or Mathematics Common Core standards.

Exhibit 2.3.7

Curriculum Calibration of Student Artifacts
With Grade Level Mathematics or English Language Arts Common Core Standards,
Grades 2, 4, 6, 8-12
Manchester School District
March 2013

Grade	Number of Student Artifacts Compared with Grade Level Standards Distributed by Grade													% of Artifacts at Grade Level
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
2	X													0
4				X										0
6				X			XX	X						75
8									XX					100
9										X				100
10							X							0
11									X			X		50
12										X	X		X	33
Key: X = one artifact														
Sources: Student artifacts collected in English Language Arts and mathematics classes by auditors during classroom visits														

As indicated in [Exhibit 2.3.7](#):

- Seventy-five (75) percent of the grade 6 artifacts were at or above grade level.
- One hundred (100) percent of grade 8 artifacts were at grade level.
- Thirty-three (33) percent of grade 12 artifacts were at grade level.
- Eight out of 15 (53 percent) of the total work samples were below grade level. One work sample was above grade level.

The auditors determined that half of the student work that was collected was at the lowest cognition levels of the Bloom's Taxonomy and more than half (53 percent) was below grade level when compared to the Common Core standards. These samples do not meet district expectations for rigorous standards-based instruction.

Congruence of Common Core Standards with District Mathematics Benchmark Assessment Items

Alignment between the written, taught, and tested curriculum is necessary in order to provide students with the opportunity to master content material that they are held accountable for on assessments. The auditors examined the alignment of the Common Core standards with assessment items taken from the grades 3 and 5, second trimester math assessments and the Algebra I Level 3 2012-13 Midterm Exam. Analysis was conducted to determine consistency between the Common Core standards and the district administered assessments.

The audit team reviewed multiple assessment items from grade levels in which assessments were available. Auditors evaluated the congruency between the Mathematics Common Core standards and the assessment items developed by district staff by selecting a sampling from grades 3, 5, and Algebra I. The auditors examined the congruence of the standards and assessments by analyzing them in terms of content, context, and cognition, with three samples from each grade level that demonstrated representative alignments. [Exhibit 2.3.8](#) summarizes the auditors' analyses of the mathematics samples.

Exhibit 2.3.8

**Congruency Comparison of Mathematics Common Core Standards
With Second Trimester Assessment Grades 3, 5, and Algebra I Mid-term Exam
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Common Core Standards	Sample Assessment item	Congruence of Assessment Item to Common Core Standards		
		Content	Context	Cognitive Type
3.OA.1 Interpret products of whole numbers.	12. Which of the following number sentences is not true? A. $2 \times 0 = 2$ B. $2 \times 0 = 0$ C. $2 \times 1 = 2$ D. $2 \times 2 = 4$	Y	N	N
3.NF.1 Understand a fraction $1/b$ as the quantity formed by 1 part when a whole is partitioned into b equal parts; understand a fraction a/b as the quantity formed by a parts of size $1/b$.	4. Look at the set of shapes. O O O O □ □ Which fraction shows the part of the set of shapes that is circles? A. $2/4$ B. $2/6$ C. $4/2$ D. $4/6$	Y	N	N
3.G.1 Understand that shapes in different categories (e.g., rhombuses, rectangles, and others) may share attributes (e.g., having four sides), and that the shared attributes can define a larger category (e.g., quadrilaterals). Recognize rhombuses, rectangles, and squares as examples of quadrilaterals, and draw examples of quadrilaterals that do not belong to any of these subcategories.	20. Look at the quadrangles below. Quadrangle 1 □ Quadrangle 2 ▱ Quadrangle 3 ◇ Quadrangle 4 □ Which of the quadrangles are similar? A. Quadrangle 1 and Quadrangle 2 B. Quadrangle 2 and Quadrangle 3 C. Quadrangle 3 and Quadrangle 4 D. Quadrangle 4 and Quadrangle 1	Y	N	N
5.NF.1 Add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators (including mixed numbers) by replacing given fractions with equivalent fractions in such a way as to produce an equivalent sum or difference of fractions with like denominators.	4. Jose walked $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to raise money for his school. Maria walked $2\frac{3}{8}$ miles. How far did Jose and Maria walk altogether? A. $7/8$ miles B. $5\frac{4}{10}$ miles C. $5\frac{7}{8}$ miles D. $23\frac{13}{82}$ miles	Y	Y	Y
5.NF.4a Apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication to multiply a fraction or whole number by a fraction. a. Interpret the product $(a/b) \times q$ as a part of a partition of q into b equal parts; equivalently, as the result of a sequence of operations $a \times q / b$.	7. On Saturday, Dora practiced playing her violin 5 times. Each time she practiced for $\frac{1}{4}$ hour. Which choice below is not equal to the time Dora spent practicing? A. $5/4$ hours B. $1\frac{1}{4}$ hours C. 1 hour 15 minutes D. 65 minutes	Y	Y	Y

Exhibit 2.3.8 (continued)
Congruency Comparison of Mathematics Common Core Standards
With Second Trimester Assessment Grades 3, 5, and Algebra I Mid-term Exam
Manchester School District
March 2013

Common Core Standards	Sample Assessment item	Congruence of Assessment Item to Common Core Standards		
		Content	Context	Cognitive Type
Grade 5	20. What is the area of a rectangle with sides 3 cm and 5 cm long?	N		
A-REI 3. Solve linear equations and inequalities in one variable, including equations with coefficients represented by letters.	Solve for X 35. $aq - zx = f$	Y	Y	Y
A-REI 10. Understand that the graph of an equation in two variables is the set of all its solutions plotted in the coordinate plane, often forming a curve (which could be a line).	Graph the following line 59. $y = 3/5x - 1$	Y	Y	Y
A-SSE 3a. Choose and produce an equivalent form of an expression to reveal and explain properties of the quantity represented by the expression. a. Factor a quadratic expression to reveal the zeros of the functions it defines.	Simplify each expression and choose the appropriate letter. 20. $4x^2 + -3x + 2x^2$ a. $9x^2$ b. $6x^2$ c. $6x^2 - 3x$ d. $9x^2 - 3x$	Y	N	N
Key: Y = Congruent; N = Not Congruent				

As noted in [Exhibit 2.3.8](#):

- Four of nine (44 percent) assessment items were fully congruent with the Common Core Standard for content, context, and cognition.
- Four of nine (44 percent) assessment items were not congruent for context or cognition.
- One item (11 percent) was not congruent for content and therefore could not be analyzed for context or cognition.

In summary, auditors found that less than one-half of the assessment items that were analyzed were fully congruent with the Mathematics Common Core standards.

Summary

Overall, the written curriculum in the Manchester School District is inadequate to meet quality criteria. Curriculum guides lack the specificity and characteristics needed to direct classroom instruction and ensure that district expectations for curriculum delivery are met. The use of written curriculum varies across the district from school to school and subject to subject. In addition, auditors found that the rigor of student artifacts was low and often below the intended grade level. Finally, assessment items and Mathematics Common Core standards were largely incongruent in context and cognition.

Finding 2.4: Programs and interventions are not systematically designed, implemented, evaluated, or linked to the curriculum to positively impact student achievement.

A common core of student learning goals and objectives provides the framework for a comprehensive curriculum. Additional programs are initiated to address identified weaknesses in the curriculum or instructional materials, to support students with specific needs in mastering the learning objectives, and/or to extend curricular offerings. Clear linkages between the core curriculum and supporting programs create a coherent and focused approach to comprehensive educational program development and implementation.

A second type of effort included in curricular support options is referred to as an intervention. This is typically a program, practice, process, or strategy designed or selected to meet targeted student needs and to change specific results over time. Effective programs and interventions are connected to district and school priorities and are well planned, adequately funded, fully implemented, and systematically evaluated. An effective school district develops and implements procedures to facilitate the design, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of all district and school programs and interventions to increase the likelihood of a positive impact on student learning.

The process of designing and implementing an effective program or intervention includes the steps below.

1. Assess the current situation;
2. Analyze data collected and diagnose need;
3. Use data to identify the problem or issue;
4. Propose and examine alternatives;
5. Select the program intervention or alternative that best addresses the problem;
6. Develop a formal plan for design, deployment, and implementation—and include measurable goals and objectives;
7. Identify staff proficiencies required for implementation, appropriate staff development needed, and a clear communication plan for appropriate audiences;
8. Provide human, material, and fiscal resources needed to initiate and sustain the intervention;
9. Establish a formative and summative feedback plan with sound and appropriate techniques for monitoring the ongoing deployment and implementation of the intervention;
10. Implement the intervention with well-defined mechanisms for monitoring progress tied to intervention goals, objectives, and expectations;
11. Modify or adjust the intervention, as needed, and continue implementation; and
12. Regularly reassess and determine whether to continue, modify, or terminate the program.

Programs that do not include the steps in the process outlined above may not address the identified need or produce the desired results: improved student achievement. If programs are not systematically evaluated for their effectiveness, district leaders have no way to determine if a program should be modified, expanded, or eliminated.

To determine the status of programs and interventions in the Manchester School District, auditors reviewed board policies, school program surveys, an informal online survey, job descriptions, and other documents. In addition, auditors observed a number of programs in operation and interviewed board members, administrators, teachers, and parents regarding the procedures used for planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and interventions.

The auditors found that decisions regarding the implementation, modification, expansion, or termination of programs are often made informally. Board policy provides general references to the evaluation of programs (see [Finding 1.1](#)). However, no criteria were identified to assure the alignment of program methods, content,

and outcomes to the overall curriculum and instructional system (see [Findings 1.1](#) and [2.1](#)). A comprehensive program evaluation plan was not provided to the auditors (see [Findings 4.1](#) and [4.4](#)).

The following board policies reference programs and interventions:

- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 102.1: Substantive Duties* requires “the implementation of educational programs designed to reflect (district) goals and objectives.” The Board of School Committee is to review such programs and report the results to the public.
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 135: Evaluation of Instructional Programs* states the following: “The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall require the evaluation of the instructional programs in accordance with local and state guidelines. S/he shall be responsible for reporting to the Board periodically with regard to the effectiveness of programs on student achievement.”
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 141: Prior Program Approval* requires board approval of programs and interventions that vary from the regular educational program: “The School Committee shall approve all programs that constitute a major variation or might be considered ‘experimental’ in nature. Examples of such programs might be, although not limited to, variation of traditional scheduling, student grouping, varied staffing patterns, shortened or flexible hourly instructional offerings, modular scheduling, work-study programs, year-round school, full-day kindergarten, and elementary multiage and looping classrooms.”

Board policies describe approval and evaluation requirements for supplemental programs. However, the auditors were not presented with documents that indicate that programs are being evaluated as board policy requires. There is no formal process established to determine the effectiveness of programs on student achievement (see also [Finding 4.4](#)).

In addition to reviewing board policies, the auditors also examined job descriptions in order to determine responsibilities related to program design, delivery, and evaluation. The following job descriptions describe program-related duties:

- Assistant Superintendent for Student Services: “Responsible for developing innovative ideas and concepts; devises realistic plans and programs that may be adopted or implemented to execute those ideas, for the benefit of the District’s Pre-K-12 students.”
 - “Inaugurates studies and research in various aspects of Pre-K-12 education; plans and develops research and innovative programs that will provide information concerning the Pre-K-12 instructional program.”
 - “Coordinates all research projects that will provide information concerning the Pre-K-12 instructional program.”
 - “Assists in the determination of the types of educational programs needed by the Pre-K-12 schools and makes appropriate recommendations.”
- Site Coordinator for 21st Century Community Learning Center: “Collect program data and file all necessary reports as directed.”
- Data Analyst: “Use student performance data to assist staff in designing interventions.”
 - “Evaluate interventions and use student performance data to drive instructional decisions.”
 - “Use curriculum-based measurements to make informed decisions regarding student instructional and programmatic decisions.”
- Reading Specialist: “Participate in the establishment, development, and implementation of developmental reading programs required of all students.”
- Teacher-Literacy/Math Intervention: “Plan necessary interventions for struggling learners.”

- Director of Federal Projects/Professional Development: “Consider, evaluate and make decisions regarding all requests from school personnel for projects and programs requiring federal funds.”

Although a number of job descriptions describe roles related to program implementation or evaluation, the auditors did not find evidence that a systematic approach to program implementation is in place.

As previously noted, auditors identified district program interventions through a program survey completed by principals, a review of district documents, and interviews with parents, board members, administrators, and teachers. [Exhibit 2.4.1](#) lists elementary school program interventions as presented to the auditors in the program survey. The school is listed with the number of program interventions by content area. The total number of program interventions for each school is listed to the right. The last row provides the unduplicated total number of program interventions for each content area. Some examples of programs that were listed in the survey were: Everyday Math, Readers’ and Writers’ Workshop model, and Holt McDougal Math Course. Some examples of intervention programs included: Reading Recovery, Lexia Reading Program, and Leveled Literacy Intervention.

Exhibit 2.4.1

Elementary School Program Interventions by Content Area and School Manchester School District March 2013

School	Content Area				
	Literacy	Math	Science	Social Studies	Total
Bakersville	3	2	1	1	7
Beech	8	1			9
Gossle Parkr	8	1	1	1	11
Green Acres	11	3	1	1	16
Hallsville	4	1	1	1	7
Highland-Goffe’s	2	2	1	1	6
Jewett	2	1	1	1	5
McDonough	3	1	1	1	6
Northwest	11	6			17
Parker	11	2	1	1	15
Smith	10	2	1	1	14
Webster	11	2			13
Weston	11	2	1	1	15
Wilson	3	1	1	1	6
Total All*	32	10	2	2	46
*Programs were counted once, although the same program could be offered at more than one school.					
<i>Source: District Program Survey submitted by building principals</i>					

As indicated in [Exhibit 2.4.1](#):

- There are total of 46 different program interventions offered at the elementary school level.
- Literacy has the largest number of separate programs (32). The literacy content area included reading, writing, and spelling.
- The school that listed the most program interventions was Northwest with a total of 17 programs.
- The school that listed the fewest number of program interventions was Jewett with five.
- Seven schools (50 percent) had more than 10 interventions.

A similar comparison was conducted at the middle school level. [Exhibit 2.4.2](#) shows the overview by content area for three of the four middle schools. No information was presented for the fourth middle school.

Exhibit 2.4.2

Middle School Program Interventions by Content Area and School Manchester School District March 2013

School	Content Area						
	Literacy	Math	Science	Social Studies	Behavior	Other	Total
Hillside	9	3	3	2	-	-	17
Southside	8	3	2	2	1	-	16
McLaughlin	19	5	4	1	1	2	32
Total All*	29	8	4	2	2	2	47
*Total includes count of unique interventions or programs by content area							
Source: District Program Survey, completed by building principal or staff							

As presented in [Exhibit 2.4.2](#):

- There are a total of 47 programs and interventions that are offered at the middle school level.
- The highest number of programs and interventions are offered in literacy with a total of 29.
- The school that listed the highest number of programs and interventions is McLaughlin with a total of 32.

[Exhibit 2.4.1](#) and [Exhibit 2.4.2](#) were created using program survey information that was submitted by each building principal. There were varying amounts of information on each survey, which may account in part for the differences in program totals. However, at both the elementary and middle school levels, there is a wide range in the number of program offerings. At the elementary level, the school with the lowest number of programs had a total of five and the school with the largest number had 17. At the middle school level, the school with the fewest number listed 16 programs, while the school with the largest number listed 32 programs.

In addition to reviewing documents and compiling the results of the program survey, the auditors visited all of the schools in the district. During interviews with administrators and teachers, the auditors learned of a number of additional initiatives including Response to Intervention (RTI), Teacher Effectiveness Model (Charlotte Danielson), Creating Independence through Student-Owned Strategies (CRISS), Professional Learning Communities (PLC's), and Educational Talent Search (ETS).

Interviews with stakeholders provided comments related to specific programs and interventions that are currently taking place in the district:

- “The Everyday Math program is weak.” (Informal Survey)
- “I do not feel Everyday Math is a well-designed math program.” (Informal Survey)
- “The Everyday Math is not working; we know it’s not working and yet we aren’t trying anything else.” (Administrator)
- “Everyday Math does not meet needs of students below grade level or students who are ELL.” (Informal Survey)
- “Currently, we struggle with our language arts curriculum at the elementary level.” (Informal Survey)
- “[There are] not enough programs for needy students.” (Informal Survey)
- “We do not have a core reading & writing program, only a workshop model.” (Informal Survey)

In addition to comments about the need for additional programs or the need to eliminate or modify current programs, auditors also received comments related to the implementation of programs and professional development (see [Finding 3.1](#)):

- “[There is a] lack of teacher training for new programs such as Readers’ Workshop and Writers’ Workshop. Reading Specialists receive training, but classroom teachers do not. It doesn’t make sense.” (Informal Survey)
- “The only program where I have seen any attempt at district-wide consistent training occur in the past dozen years is Everyday Math - which many are no longer using. And even then, with the training being for all staff, the distribution of materials and supplemental items was not complete or comprehensive which caused other holes to open up.” (Informal Survey)
- “There is no training for the materials and programs we are being asked to teach.” (Informal Survey)
- “New teachers do not receive any training in any of the new programs (Everyday Math, Foundations, etc.). They are also given leftovers of manipulatives from other teachers, instead of a solid class set of anything.” (Informal Survey)

Respondents also commented on the overall lack of consistency from school to school:

- “This district has no consistency among schools. Every time you turn around there is a new program to try or let’s change things around because a few people think that’s what needs to be done without even getting input from others.” (Informal Survey)
- “Programs used in some buildings are not used in others at the elementary level.” (Informal Survey)

In addition to comments about the lack of consistency from school to school, interviewees and respondents commented on the number of initiatives in the district.

- “We need fewer initiatives; the School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools’ initiatives are out of control.” (Administrator)
- “I’d love to take an initiative and see it through. We seldom follow through on things before starting something else.” (Administrator)



City Year volunteers provide assistance in classrooms at several Manchester schools

And, finally, auditors heard from respondents and interviewees about the lack of program evaluation in the Manchester School District:

- “Programs need to be selected and reviewed by teachers as well, to insure the program will work and not [be] influenced by the dollar amount.” (Informal Survey)
- “[There is] no type of program evaluation system in the district.” (Administrator)
- “[Some individuals have these] sacred cows, I would like to know which of these programs is really working in the district and which are not. [For example] Read 180, Readers’ and Writers’ Workshop,

Everyday Math, and 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Are some of the pull out and speech programs really working?” (Board Member)

- “Why do we do ‘X’? That should be a question.” (Administrator)

Those interviewed consistently described the lack of a process for the selection, implementation, and evaluation of the programs in the Manchester School District.

Summary

In summary, the Manchester School District does not have a process for the selection, implementation, or evaluation of programs and interventions. The auditors found policies and job descriptions that reference program evaluation, but guidance for a systematic process is absent. An expectation for clear linkages between the curriculum and supplemental programs and interventions is not evident. The auditors found a large number of programs that are currently being implemented in the district, but there is no evidence that criteria for effective program implementation are in place. In addition, there are large differences in the numbers and types of programs that are being offered among schools. Interviews with key stakeholders confirmed the lack of procedures and the presence of inconsistencies in the adoption, implementation, and evaluation of programs in the district.

STANDARD 3: The School District Demonstrates Internal Consistency and Rational Equity 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 Manchester School District:

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

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

Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Manchester School District:

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

The Professional Development Master Plan assists Manchester School District educators in meeting state requirements for recertification, but the plan does not provide focus on district goals or coordination and consistency across the school district. Staff development functions are primarily school-based and lack district-wide coordination and systematic evaluation. District-wide professional development is minimal due to funding limitations.

Expectations for instructional practice are not clearly and consistently communicated in board policy, job descriptions, the teacher appraisal instrument, or curriculum guides. Common elements in district documents include use of a variety of approaches, active student engagement, active learning, and appropriate use of technology. During brief classroom visits, the auditors observed a preponderance of teachers engaged in direct instruction, such as lecturing or presenting to students, or in assisting or monitoring students as they did seatwork.

Board policies, job descriptions, and appraisal instruments do not reflect current expectations for principals and others for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum. Principals visit classrooms and various types of monitoring activities take place, but administrators indicated wide differences in the frequency and types of monitoring tasks performed.

The Manchester School District Board of School Committee policies and district planning documents indicate a commitment to student success in the educational program. Programs and initiatives have been implemented to support this commitment, but these efforts have not had a positive impact on student performance. An analysis of test scores reveals that a long-standing achievement gap persists for minority, special education, and economically disadvantaged students, and insufficient progress has been made toward reducing the disparities. A large number of students leave the school system between grades 9 and 12. Inequalities exist in student access to a consistent curriculum and to some district programs and services.

Finding 3.1: A comprehensive professional development master plan has been developed, but its focus is primarily on assisting educators in meeting state requirements for continuing education units. The plan does not provide focus on district priorities or the coordination and consistency across the district needed to impact teaching and learning.

An effective professional development program is guided by a comprehensive, long-range plan that provides instructional staff with the knowledge and skills to design and deliver the written curriculum. Successful implementation of the written curriculum among and between classes, grade levels, departments, and schools is an important goal of a professional development program. A professional development plan that is coordinated with other district and school plans and linked to district needs obtained from student assessment data builds human capacity that can be expected to result in higher levels of student learning.

In effective school districts, professional development is more than a one-time workshop or a beginning of the year training session. Professional development is an ongoing, results-based process that involves all personnel engaged in teaching and learning in the school district. While a comprehensive plan is vital, the professional development effort needs to become an integrated and institutionalized component of school district operations. A variety of instructional models are utilized in professional development efforts, often mirroring strategies that district personnel are to use in their own classrooms. Effective professional development includes components such as presentation of content, demonstration of skills, modeling techniques, opportunities for guided practice, coaching, professional reflection, and intensive follow-up. Follow-up activities include meaningful practice along with monitoring to assure mastery and to measure effectiveness in improving student achievement.

To determine the adequacy of the professional development program in the Manchester School District, auditors reviewed board policies, mission and goal statements, the district Professional Development Master Plan (PDMP), job descriptions, the District Improvement Plan, school improvement plans, the District Education Technology Plan, assessment documents, and other relevant district and state level documents. Interviews were conducted with district administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and support staff to obtain information on the planning and implementation of professional development in the district.

The auditors found that the Manchester School District Professional Development Master Plan contains some elements of effective planning, but it does not provide focus on district priorities and coordinate these priorities across the district. The Professional Development Master Plan, the District Education Technology Plan, the District Improvement Plan, and school improvement plans all reference professional development, but these plans are not adequately linked to provide a comprehensive system-wide program of professional development (see [Finding 1.2](#)). Professional development is primarily provided at the school level. The focus of the Professional Development Master Plan is in assisting educators so they can satisfy state requirements for continuing education units.

Auditors reviewed district policies to determine board direction for professional development. The following board policies reference professional development:

- *Board of School Committee Administrative Policy 100: Administrative Goals* states the intent to “assure the best and most effective instructional programs by... establishing staff development programs which support instruction and student achievement.”
- *Board of School Committee Personnel Policy 100: Personnel Goals/Priority Objectives* states that one of the board’s personnel goals is to conduct a staff performance program that contributes to the continuous improvement of staff performance.
- *Board of School Committee Personnel Policy 118: Professional Staff Orientation and Training* states, “Orientation of personnel who are new to the school district may extend over a longer period of time, and may provide a broadly-based effort to supply information and background details which shall improve the new teacher’s understanding of the district’s framework.”
- *Board of School Committee Personnel Policy 119: Professional Staff Development Opportunities* directs the superintendent or designee to provide appropriate staff development so that “staff members become knowledgeable about new developments and changes in their specialized fields and shall utilize any new and/or improved methods in their work.”

As noted, board policies include the expectation that professional development will be provided to support instructional programs and used to help staff become skilled in new or otherwise improved methods. Policy also includes expectations that professional development support the continuous improvement of staff performance. Provision of job orientation and training for new teachers and for staff members who will experience changes in their subject areas is also to be provided. However, auditors did not locate any board policies that give specific direction for determining professional development goals or how to select, prioritize, or coordinate professional development activities based on those goals. Policies do not delineate the identification of professional development outcomes or how an evaluation process of the professional development activities in relationship to district goals and student outcomes is to occur.

Auditors identified no documents, including board policy or the professional development plan itself, that suggest that the purpose of the professional development effort is to bring about organizational change other than by incremental, teacher by teacher performance improvement. The auditors also did not find a formalized system in place by which the quality, effectiveness, or impact of professional development is evaluated.

Site-based professional development teams are to be established at each school. District goals are developed annually and distributed to the schools. School goals are then developed by each school leadership team and distributed to all educators and other stakeholders by September 15 of each year. Individual educators then develop goals that support both district and school goals. The school staff development teams send representatives to monthly meetings of the district professional development team to address questions about the process and monitor implementation of the district plan.

The auditors examined the job descriptions of staff members involved in the implementation and/or supervision of classroom instruction. Job responsibilities associated with professional development or staff training are included in [Exhibit 3.1.1](#).

Exhibit 3.1.1

Staff Development Responsibilities Identified in Job Descriptions of Professional Personnel Manchester School District March 2013

Superintendent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keeps informed of modern educational thought and practices by advanced study, by visiting school systems elsewhere, by attending educational conferences, conferring with professional and lay groups, and by other appropriate means and keeps the BOSC informed of trends in education.
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides leadership for curriculum and assessment development and implementation, professional development, and implementation of instructional practices to improve the teaching-learning process and to meet district goals.Utilizes findings from research and district studies to improve the content, sequence, and outcomes of the teaching/learning process; directs instructional and curriculum services to meet students' needs; and plans, implements, and evaluates instructional strategies and assessment techniques.Obtains and uses evaluation findings, including student achievement data to examine curriculum/instructional program effectiveness; provides and supports implementation of research-based strategies to ensure academic achievement; and involves instructional staff in evaluating and selecting textbooks, instructional materials, resources, and provisions for the instructional activities of the district.
Assistant Superintendent for Student Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Works with the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction to develop and implement Pre-K-12 staff training programs to meet the changing educational needs in the district.Works with Human Resources Department in planning and administering an efficient system of recruiting, hiring, training, supervising, and evaluating school personnel.In collaboration with the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, organizes a variety of training programs for interns, practice teachers, paraprofessional personnel, and all other assigned Pre-K-12 personnel. Devises and implements staff development activities.
Director, Federal Projects/Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensures all stakeholders understand their responsibilities in relation to the administration of the Manchester School District's Professional Development Master Plan.Oversees development and implementation of the Manchester School District's Professional Development Master Plan.Coordinates the district-wide professional development committee and provide building-level training for professional development committees.Collaborates with colleagues to provide necessary professional development for district-wide coordination of curriculum, professional development, and assessment.Works with the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction to plan for in-district professional development opportunities.Assists in the development and coordination of the sections of the budget that pertain to professional development.
Elementary Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Coordinates the activities of the school's in-service training program.In cooperation with the appropriate central office administrators, is responsible for organizing, planning, and auditing the staff development program.
Middle School Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides in-service training to teachers as needed.Responsibilities include interviewing, hiring, and training employees; planning; assigning and directing work; appraising performance; rewarding and disciplining employees and students; addressing complaints; and resolving problems.
High School Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In cooperation with central office administrators, is responsible for organizing, planning, and auditing the staff development program.
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Employs instructional methods and materials that are most appropriate for meeting stated objectives and assesses the accomplishments of students on a regular basis to provide progress reports as required.Maintains and improves professional competence and attends staff meetings and other in-service activities as required.

Exhibit 3.1.1 (continued)
Staff Development Responsibilities Identified in
Job Descriptions of Professional Personnel
Manchester School District
March 2013

Teacher-Math Curriculum Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides leadership and professional development in mathematics. • Coordinates the professional development implementation plan for mathematics and collaborates with school teams to help maintain connections and permit consistency across and between schools. • Establishes school level leadership teams and trains those teams in best practices. • Provides training, demonstrations, and ongoing professional development based on current needs by school. • Facilitates discussions about school and district data that will be used to inform instructional, budgetary, and professional development decisions.
Literacy/Math Intervention Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-teaches/models/observes lessons with feedback. • Helps teachers apply professional development activities into classroom instruction. • Coordinates peer planning and collaboration and sharing of effective practices.
Teacher-Language Arts Integration Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes school level leadership teams and trains those teams in best practices. • Provides training, demonstrations, and ongoing professional development based on current needs by school. • Facilitates discussions about school and district data that will be used to inform instructional, budgetary, and professional development decisions. • Coordinates the professional development implementation plan for language arts and collaborates with school teams to help maintain connections and promote consistency across and between schools.
Teacher-Technology Integration Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies training needs of teachers and administrators, creates and directs programs responsive to those needs. • Supports teachers in integrating technology in classroom curricula and the teaching/learning process. • Participates in appropriate workshops and conferences to improve skills and knowledge needed to perform assigned duties. • Aids with classroom management, co-teaches using technology, creates training aids, and participates in the selection of appropriate educational software to augment class content.
Title I Reading Specialist/Non-Title I Reading Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and provides sustained ongoing support and professional development for teachers or other educational personnel. • Demonstrates new materials and techniques.
Title I Reading Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and provides sustained ongoing support and professional development for teachers or other educational personnel. • Demonstrates new materials and techniques.
Teacher-Language Arts Curriculum Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes school level Language Arts leadership teams and trains those teams in Reader's/Writer's Workshop. • Provides school specific training, demonstrations, and ongoing professional development around Language Arts guided by the needs of each site. • Coordinates and provides training and collaboration with school teams to help maintain connections and promote consistency across and between schools. • Facilitates discussions about school and district data that will be used to inform instructional, budgetary, and professional development decisions.
Data Analyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses student performance data to assist staff in designing interventions. • Evaluates interventions and uses student performance data to drive instructional decisions. • Monitors and provides feedback concerning the integrity and fidelity with which interventions are implemented. • Engages and leads staff in employing a problem-solving model.
<i>Source: District job descriptions</i>	

Exhibit 3.1.1 indicates that a substantial number of job descriptions include responsibilities for the implementation of professional development, including responsibility for the development of a district professional development master plan, as in the case of the Director of Federal Projects/Professional Development position.

The following planning documents reference professional development:

- The District Improvement Plan states that a district-wide Professional Development Committee provided oversight in the development of the Professional Development Master Plan. The Improvement Plan also lists the activity: “Provide sufficient, structured professional development opportunities to all district educators.” However, the plan does not describe “sufficient,” specific topics and participants are not listed.
- School improvement plans list various professional development activities that are generally aligned with school goals (see Finding 1.2). Schools in Need of Improvement plans describe opportunities for coaching support and a focus on ongoing school-wide staff development efforts. In addition to in-service training sessions, other formats for school-based staff development included book studies, peer observations, model lesson demonstrations, and Professional Learning Communities. The topics most frequently cited were trainings in differentiation of instruction, technology, Common Core Standards, math best practices, and literacy.
- The Education Technology Plan states the need for increased professional development in order to embed technology in the delivery of the curriculum in the classroom (see Finding 5.4). The district was currently in the process of replacing aging teacher classroom computers as a first step in embedding web-based content into lesson planning.

The audit uses 18 criteria for assessing the effectiveness of a professional development program. The criteria are built around two major areas: context and process. The *context* criteria address the organization and culture in which new learning is introduced and implemented. The *process* criteria refer to how professional development efforts take place, addressing the means for the acquisition of the new learning.

Exhibit 3.1.2 provides the auditors’ assessment of the district’s efforts relative to the 18 criteria.

Exhibit 3.1.2

Curriculum Management Improvement Model Staff Development Criteria Auditors’ Assessment of Staff Development Program Manchester School District March 2013

Characteristics	Auditors’ Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
Policy		
1. Has policy that directs staff development efforts.		X
2. Fosters an expectation for professional growth.	X	
3. Is for all employees.		X
Planning and Design		
4. Is based on a careful analysis of data and is data-driven.	Partial	
5. Provides for system-wide coordination and has a clearinghouse function in place.		X
6. Provides the necessary funding to carry out professional development goals.		X
7. Has a current plan that provides a framework for integrating innovations related to mission.		X
8. Has a professional development mission in place.	X	
9. Is built using a long-range planning approach.	Partial	
10. Provides for organizational, unit, and individual development in a systemic manner.		X
11. Focuses on organizational change—staff development efforts are aligned to district goals.		X

Exhibit 3.1.2 (continued) Curriculum Management Improvement Model Staff Development Criteria Auditors' Assessment of Staff Development Program Manchester School District March 2013		
Characteristics	Auditors' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
Delivery		
12. Is based on proven research-based approaches that have been shown to increase productivity.	X	
13. Provides for three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.		X
14. Is based on human learning and development and adult learning models.		X
15. Uses a variety of professional development approaches.	X	
16. Provides for follow-up and on-the-job application necessary to ensure improvement.	Partial	
17. Expects each supervisor to be a staff developer of staff supervised.	X	
Evaluation		
18. Requires an evaluation of process that is ongoing, includes multiple sources of information, focuses on all levels of the organization, and is based on actual change in behavior.		X
Total	5	13
Percentage	27.8%	

A district's professional development program is determined to be adequate if 70 percent of the 18 audit criteria are met. The Manchester School District Professional Development Master Plan (2011-2016) and other district documents met audit characteristics on five, or 27.8 percent, of the characteristics. Three characteristics were partially adequate (which deems them inadequate), and 10 were inadequate. Therefore, the district's approach to professional development is considered inadequate.

Details supporting the analysis in [Exhibit 3.1.2](#) follow:

1. Board Policy Direction (Inadequate)

Current board policies require the district to provide professional development but do not give direction for determining how to select, prioritize, or coordinate professional development activities based on the goals stated in the policies (see [Finding 1.1](#)). Furthermore, policies do not delineate the identification of professional development outcomes or how an evaluation of the professional development activities in relationship to district goals and student outcomes was to occur. Auditors rated this characteristic as inadequate.

2. Expectations for Professional Growth (Adequate)

The Manchester School District Professional Development Master Plan (PDMP) affirms, "Effective high quality professional development is integrated and job embedded, and engages all educators in a coordinated and supported effort to support district and school goals and promote high student achievement." *Board Policy Personnel 100: Personnel Goals/Priority Objectives* also identifies that among the board's personnel goals is the goal to provide staff development programs that will contribute to the continuous improvement of staff performance. Auditors rated this characteristic as adequate.

3. Participation of All Employees (Inadequate)

The district professional development plan is designed to support a continuous three-year cycle of professional re-certification for all certified staff, including certified paraprofessionals. This is a requirement of both the district and the State of New Hampshire. However, this norm of continuous learning does not extend to auxiliary staff other than a few "on-the-job" technical trainings specific to a given job. The PDMP specifically lists the following as needing to develop three-year plans:

“Professional educators including Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Business Administrators, Principals, Assistant Principals, District Administrators, Special Education Administrators, Directors, Counselors, Social Workers, Teachers, Media Supervisors and Specialists, Paraeducators, and other professional educators.” Due to the lack of formal training opportunities for district employees falling outside of these categories, auditors rated this characteristic as inadequate.

4. Data-driven (Partially Adequate)

The PDMP itself does not include student achievement data or identify district-wide professional development needs. Instead, the plan suggests the type of data the individual educator might use in developing his or her three-year certification plan. The plan states that assessment results guide the development of district and school goals, and, thus, should guide the individual educator’s professional development efforts, but it doesn’t state what the goals are: “It is important to measure the individual growth of the educator as it is revealed through the measurement of student growth.”

An educator beginning the three-year certification cycle is to follow these steps:

- A. Perform a self-assessment of professional strengths and weaknesses in four domains: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities.
- B. Reflect on identified areas of strength and weakness in three areas: knowledge of subject area, knowledge of learners and learning, and knowledge of teaching strategies and best practices.
- C. Review school and district improvement goals.
- D. Review and analyze data and information regarding student learning and achievement, including but not limited to: state and/or district assessments; classroom formative and/or summative assessments; student portfolios and/or student work; and student data profiles.

The plan provides examples of the types of data an educator could use in developing his/her plan, but it does not present data for the purpose of identifying district-wide professional development needs. This characteristic was rated as partially adequate and is therefore inadequate.

5. System-wide Coordination (Inadequate)

Professional development decisions are made at the individual school level or based on employee’s personal choices. District-wide coordination of staff development initiatives to provide consistency among schools is absent. This characteristic was rated as inadequate. Representative comments made during interviews included the following:

- “We don’t have comprehensive professional development district-wide. It’s left to the principals.” (Parent)
- “Middle schools and high schools are on their own for staff development.” (Administrator)
- “Salaries take up most of the budget; we can’t bring in district-wide professional development.” (Administrator)
- “District-wide professional development is offered in other districts; we need to catch up.” (Teacher)

6. Adequate Resources (Inadequate)

Neither the district plan or board policy addresses fiscal support for the implementation of professional development efforts. Interview responses indicated that resources are inadequate and have impaired the implementation of district-wide staff development. This characteristic was rated as inadequate.

- “Title II all goes into salaries. We can’t provide district-wide staff development as a result.” (Administrator)

- “Our mentoring program went by the wayside due to funding and the amount of training it required.” (Administrator)
- “When grant funding for training runs out, there is no follow-through (with staff development). They think we’re doing it, but you get new staff and they aren’t trained.” (Teacher)
- “We are always on the treadmill of not enough dollars to train our staff.” (Administrator)

7. Integrates Mission-related Innovations (Inadequate)

The supporting documents for the professional development program do not provide a framework for integrating innovations related to the professional development mission other than by implication (i.e., by improving individual educator performance, the system will improve). This characteristic was rated as inadequate.

8. Program Mission (Adequate)

The statement of purpose for the Manchester Professional Development Master Plan “emphasizes the correlation between high quality professional development, professional competence, and student achievement as the paramount purpose of engaging in high quality professional development activities.” The auditors rated this characteristic as adequate.

9. Uses Long-range Planning Approach (Partially Adequate)

Consistent with state statute *Part ED 512 Professional Development Master Plan and Recertification*, the Manchester School District Professional Development Master Plan is designed for a five-year duration (2011-2016). However, long-range plans for district-wide professional development are not addressed. The plan’s major purpose is to assist certified staff in meeting three-year re-certification requirements. Auditors rated this characteristic as partially adequate, and it is therefore inadequate.

10. Systemic Staff Development at all Levels (Inadequate)

The PDMP references the relationship between district, school, and classroom professional development and student achievement, but the district does not provide a coordinated program at the district and school levels. Staff development efforts are school-based; a district-wide program is nonexistent. This characteristic was rated as inadequate.

11. Organizational Change Focus (Inadequate)

Auditors did not identify any documents, including board policy and the professional development plan itself, that suggested the purpose of the professional development effort was to bring about organizational change other than incremental, teacher by teacher performance improvement that would ultimately improve student achievement. This characteristic was rated inadequate.

12. Based on Research-Based Approaches (Adequate)

The PDMP specifies that effective professional development programs are data-driven, ongoing, and sustainable and that, as a result, they promote a climate of collaboration, trust, respect, and a willingness to take risks. These characteristics are therefore expected parts of individuals’ three-year plans. The plans must include at least one goal related to the educator’s knowledge of effective, developmentally appropriate educational strategies and best practice. This characteristic was rated adequate.

13. Provides Initiation, Implementation, and Institutionalization (Inadequate)

This characteristic describes a process whereby a system-wide sequence of professional growth results in organizational improvement. Auditors identified no evidence of this outcome as a master plan component or board policy expectation. This characteristic was rated inadequate.

14. Adult Learning Model (Inadequate)

No specific evidence was found to support the use of human learning and development or adult learning models in the design or implementation of the professional development effort of the district. This characteristic was rated inadequate.

15. Varied Approaches (Adequate)

The PDMP states, “Learning through a variety of delivery methods, including the use of technology, allows professionals to employ different learning strategies as they improve, change, and/or augment their methods of instruction. The resulting improvement in instructional strategies directly affects student achievement.” The PDMP and school improvement plans describe a variety of delivery methods. This characteristic was rated adequate.

16. Job Embedded and Ongoing (Partially Adequate)

These characteristics were specifically cited in the purpose statement of the PDMP. However, a review of school improvement plans indicated that only a few schools (mostly School Improvement Grant Schools) provided job-embedded, ongoing staff development opportunities. This characteristic was rated as partially adequate.

17. Supervisors as Staff Developers (Adequate)

Both the PDMP and job descriptions clearly state the expectation that professionals in supervisory roles coordinate training as well as conduct the training of those they supervise. This characteristic was rated adequate.

18. Ongoing Evaluation Linked to Student Outcomes (Inadequate)

The purpose statement of the master plan emphasizes the connection between professional development and student achievement. The district level professional development committee meets yearly to review data and information gathered from the PDMP process as a means for evaluating the effectiveness of the plan for both educators and students. However, there is no formalized system in place by which the quality, effectiveness, or impact of professional development is evaluated and the evaluation data are used to modify the district plan and to support system-wide change. The collection of data related to the professional development effort is primarily used to ensure that educators can satisfy state requirements for continuing education units. This characteristic was rated inadequate.

Additional comments about the staff development program made by stakeholders during interviews included the following:

- “We adhere to the district professional development plan [at this school], but others do not.” (Administrator)
- “Professional development is harder to implement now that teacher activities cannot be signed off until the teacher not only completes the professional development activity, but also provides evidence of the impact of the professional development in their class.” (Administrator)
- “We want to develop a principal (leadership) academy with a state university, as more training is needed.” (Administrator)
- “Only lip service is given to any meaningful change.” (Teacher)

As can be noted, common threads in interviews included concerns about district-wide consistency/coordination and funding limitations.

Summary

In summary, the auditors found components of professional development planning in the Manchester School District, but a coordinated, system-wide professional development program is not evident. The Professional Development Master Plan is designed to assist district educators in satisfying their re-certification requirements.

The plan does not provide focus on district priorities or provide for the coordination and consistency across the district needed to impact teaching and learning.

Finding: 3.2: Expectations for curriculum delivery are broadly defined and do not provide sufficient direction for instructional practices. Observed classroom instructional activities frequently do not conform to the general expectations that have been established.

The effective delivery of curriculum is a vital determinant of a school district's capacity to promote student achievement. Research-based teaching strategies that are stimulating, relevant, and focused promote student learning across all segments of the student population regardless of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. In an effective school district, leadership establishes clear expectations regarding the nature and quality of instruction, communicates those expectations to teachers, observes classroom activities to ensure that they meet expectations, analyzes data generated during observations, and uses those data to modify curriculum and instruction.

To determine district expectations for classroom instructional practices, auditors reviewed district documents including mission and vision statements, board policies, district and school level plans, job descriptions, the teacher appraisal instrument, curriculum and instruction committee meeting agendas and minutes, board meeting minutes, as well as other management and governance documents pertaining to instructional delivery expectations. Auditors also visited all district schools and observed classrooms in which instruction was occurring during the time of the site visits. Finally, auditors interviewed board members, administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members regarding district instructional expectations and practices.

The auditors found that documents relative to the delivery of the curriculum in the classroom describe various general expectations for instructional practice, but the expectations are not specific or aligned among documents and do not provide consistent direction for classroom instruction. Common elements in the documents included use of a variety of approaches, student engagement, active learning, and appropriate use of technology.

Brief classroom visits provided the auditors with a general impression of the teaching practices used in the district across all grade levels. Most students across all school levels were oriented to their work (on task) during the school visits, with the highest rate of student involvement noted in the elementary classrooms. However, instructional practices did not consistently reflect district expectations for a wide variety of approaches and active engagement (see [Finding 2.3](#)).

The following board policies reference instructional practices:

- *Board of School Committee Students Policy 114: Student Involvement in Decision-Making* states, "The role of the school is to create a stimulating learning climate which develops active student involvement in their education."
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 104: Curriculum Development* states, "Curriculum development is the foundation of instruction. It is an all-encompassing task which involves the entire community. Students, parents, teachers, and administrators work cooperatively to develop a curriculum that strives to provide a wide variety of approaches to instruction in an increasingly complex world."
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 111: Meeting the Instructional Needs of Students with Different Talents* requires: "At all levels, individual differences in student performance, learning rate, and style shall be identified and appropriately addressed."
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 118.1: Use of Videos/DVDs/Supplemental Electronic Resources* states, "Student engagement, rather than passive modes of instruction, is more beneficial to students." Therefore, the board directs that electronic resources need to be used "appropriately and sparingly" and show a direct link to curricular learning objectives.
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 147: 1:1 Computing Devices in Manchester Schools* states the belief that electronic devices will help students develop skills that are necessary in the 21st century work world. These skills include:

- Critical and creative thinking,
- Problem-solving skills,
- Information and computer skills,
- Interpersonal and self-direction skills,
- Technology literacy,
- Collaboration and communication in a global world, and
- Experience in an online learning community.

The policy affirms, “Devices will allow students to direct their own learning and have greater reliance on active learning strategies. Students will be able to transfer knowledge across disciplines. The increased access to technology will enhance instruction and provide more achievement opportunities for our students.”

As noted above, board policies describe several expectations for instructional practice, such as creating a stimulating learning environment, use of a variety of instructional approaches, responsiveness to individual differences, and appropriate use of technology.

An auditor review of job descriptions was conducted to identify district expectations for instruction. Exhibit 3.2.1 lists the pertinent job descriptions.

Exhibit 3.2.1

Professional Development Responsibilities Identified in Job Descriptions of Professional Personnel Manchester School District March 2013

Superintendent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps informed of modern educational thought and practices by advanced study, by visiting school systems elsewhere, by attending educational conferences, conferring with professional and lay groups, and by other appropriate means and keeps the BOSC informed of trends in education.
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides leadership for curriculum and assessment development and implementation, professional development, and implementation of instructional practices to improve the teaching-learning process and to meet district goals. • Ensures the district/school educational objectives are aligned to state frameworks and to instructional practices that yield the highest standards of student achievement, instructional excellence, and educational technology. • Develops annual goals and action planning for the teaching and learning program. • Utilizes findings from research and district studies to improve the content, sequence, and outcomes of the teaching/learning process; directs instructional and curriculum services to meet students’ needs; and plans, implements, and evaluates instructional strategies and assessment techniques. • Obtains and uses evaluation findings, including student achievement data, to examine curriculum/instructional program effectiveness; provides and supports implementation of research-based strategies to ensure academic achievement; and involves instructional staff in evaluating and selecting textbooks, instructional materials, resources, and provisions for the instructional activities of the district.
Elementary Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation. • Monitors the implementation of IEPs by specialists and classroom teachers.
Middle School Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides instructional leadership to staff including: curriculum planning, review, and implementation, and professional development.
High School Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists in the development of curriculum and is responsible for its implementation and evaluation.

Exhibit 3.2.1 (continued) Professional Development Responsibilities Identified in Job Descriptions of Professional Personnel Manchester School District March 2013	
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employs instructional methods and materials that are most appropriate for meeting stated objectives and assesses the accomplishments of students on a regular basis to provide progress reports as required.
Teacher-Math Curriculum Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes school level leadership teams and trains those teams in best practices. • Provides training, demonstrations, and ongoing professional development based on current needs by school. • Facilitates discussions about school and district data that will be used to inform instructional, budgetary, and professional development decisions.
Literacy/Math Intervention Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps teachers align district standards with effective instruction and assessment. • Co-teaches/models/observes lessons with feedback. • Helps teachers apply professional development activities into classroom instruction. • Creates or acquires needed instructional resources and programs. • Plans necessary interventions for struggling learners. • Coordinates peer planning and collaboration and sharing of effective practices.
Teacher-Language Arts Integration Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes school level leadership teams and trains those teams in best practices. • Provides training, demonstrations, and ongoing professional development based on current needs by school. • Facilitates discussions about school and district data that will be used to inform instructional, budgetary, and professional development decisions.
Teacher-Technology Integration Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops, produces, and utilizes effective instructional materials and curriculum integration. • Supports teachers in integrating technology in classroom curricula and the teaching/learning process. • Aids with classroom management, co-teaches using technology, creates training aids, and participates in the selection of appropriate educational software to augment class content.
Title I Reading Specialist/Non-Title I Reading Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribes appropriate reading instruction. • Evaluates new instructional materials. • Demonstrates new materials and techniques.
Teacher-Language Arts Curriculum Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes school level language arts leadership teams and trains those teams in Reader's/Writer's Workshop. • Provides school specific training, demonstrations, and ongoing professional development around language arts guided by the needs of each site. • Facilitates discussions about school and district data that will be used to inform instructional, budgetary, and professional development decisions.
Title I Certified Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes responsibility of individual learning plans. Plans include identification of student needs, prescription for instruction, and implementation in coordination with the school principal.
Data Analyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses student performance data to assist staff in designing interventions. • Evaluates interventions and uses student performance data to drive instructional decisions. • Monitors and provides feedback concerning the integrity and fidelity with which interventions are implemented.
<i>Source: Job descriptions</i>	

As seen in Exhibit 3.2.1, many job descriptions reference instructional strategies, but few describe what the expected instructional strategies are. For example, the classroom teacher's job description only references "appropriate instructional strategies." The Math and Language Arts Curriculum Specialists' job descriptions list the training of teams in "best practices," but do not specify what those practices are. One exception is in the job description of the Technology Integration Specialist, which expects co-teaching with technology.

Additional district documents reference instructional expectations as follows:

- The Manchester School District Mission Statement is: “Through the involvement of our families, educators, and the community, the Manchester School District provides a safe, supportive, respectful, and engaging learning environment which has high expectations for student achievement and embraces diversity. As a result, each student is prepared to be a responsible citizen, lifelong learner, and contributing member of society.”
- The teacher evaluation instrument includes the broad category “Instructional Strategies.”
- Curriculum documents provide minimal information regarding curriculum delivery (see [Finding 2.3](#)).
- The *Phase 1 Report of the New Hampshire Task Force on Effective Teaching* was developed by the New Hampshire Task Force on Effective Teaching to create an agreed upon definition of effective teaching to be used statewide. It includes the following with regard to effective teachers and instructional practices:

The Learner and the Learning:

Effective teachers...

- Set and maintain high expectations for learners and achievement of all students;
- Engage all students as active learners;
- Create an environment of mutual respect and caring; and
- Engage students in collaborative learning.

Instructional Practice:

Effective Teachers...

- Facilitate personalized learning through intentional, flexible, and research-based strategies;
- Incorporate multiple forms of assessment to evaluate student learning and adapt instruction accordingly; and
- Integrate technology as a tool for education and assessment.

Auditors did not identify district documents specifying the use of this state report or the definition of effective curriculum delivery contained within it. However, during interviews the auditors learned that School Improvement Grant schools are piloting the recommendations of this report within their teacher appraisal process.

[Exhibit 3.2.2](#) provides examples of strategies and activities listed in Title I School Improvement Plans that reference instructional delivery.

Exhibit 3.2.2
School Improvement Plans
Target Strategies and Activities for Achieving School Goals
Manchester School District
2011-2013

School	Strategies/Activities
Northwest Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre/post assessments and class profiles used to make instructional changes based on student performance. • Professional development on best practices in literacy. • Integration of Common Core Standards into units of study.
Hallsville Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis and collaborative planning based on data findings during professional learning communities. • Professional development on differentiated instruction through small groups and on the Common Core Standards related to student performance, best practices, and the workshop model. • Model lessons by reading specialist on the workshop model. • Focus walk reflections on the workshop model.
Beech Street Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observations by peers related to indicators for effective teaching and classroom management. • Literacy coaches observe in classrooms and provide individual feedback. • Classroom teachers have a common planning time to collaborate on effective differentiated lessons. • PLC meetings topics- best practices in modeling, demonstration, and graphics; in re-teaching; and questioning.
Bakersville Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized instruction based on pretest results. • Professional development in areas of differentiation, assessment, and the “closing” component of reading, writing, and math workshops. • Book studies on math and differentiation. • Literacy and math demonstration classrooms to model effective reading, writing, and math practices.
Wilson Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development in utilizing student data to inform instruction in Reader’s, Writer’s, and Math Workshops. • Professional Development in the implementation of Reader’s, Writer’s and Math Workshops.
Parker Varney Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase instructional capacity in RtI. • Professional development in literacy and math. • Expand capacity to integrate technology in lesson plans.
Gossler Park Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase capacity to assess and monitor student achievement gaps. • Increase instructional capacity in RtI. • Professional development in literacy and math.
Southside Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase instructional capacity in RtI. • Increase instructional capacity in differentiating instruction. • Increase capacity to deliver math instruction.
McLaughlin Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify students with learning gaps and deficiencies and implement interventions for students to reach target growth rates. • Refine the RtI Model and Positive Behavior Strategies.
Parkside Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase teachers’ understanding and capacity to implement performance based instructional supports. • Expand capacity to integrate technology in lesson plans. • Professional development in ELL, math, and language arts.
<i>Source: Title I School Improvement Plans (2011-12 and 2012-13)</i>	

Exhibit 3.2.2 indicates that training in reading, writing, and math strategies; differentiation of instruction; and integration of technology in lesson planning were common elements in a number of school improvement plans.

Overall, the written guidance provided for the delivery of the curriculum is too general to be operational, varies from school to school, and is more focused on instructional goals than instructional practices (*what* rather than the *how*).

To determine how classroom instruction compares with the district's expectations, the auditors visited all schools in the system and all classrooms in which instruction was occurring at the time of the visit. During each school visit, auditors categorized instruction using a snapshot protocol instrument. These "snapshot" observations were recorded in 399 Manchester School District classrooms during the on-site visits. The validity of the auditors' observations is dependent upon the assumption that what was observed in the sample minutes was representative of a "typical" day. To enhance observer reliability, a uniform observation protocol was utilized by auditors as they visited district classrooms. Data such as predominant teacher and student activities, student orientation to work, and use of technology were observed and categorized. Exhibits addressing different aspects of these observations are presented in the following sections.

Teacher behaviors were classified as listed in [Exhibit 3.2.3](#)

Exhibit 3.2.3

Classification of Predominant Teacher Activities

Activity	Description
At Desk	Teacher is sitting in a chair at desk and is not engaged or assisting students.
Direct Instruction	Teacher is presenting information, leading a discussion, or is going over an assignment with the entire class.
Small Group	Teacher is working with a small group of students while the rest of the class is engaged in seatwork, centers, or other activities.
Monitoring Students	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 the students.
Assisting Students	Teacher is providing help to students either individually or in pairs.
Other	Teacher is engaged in an activity other than the classifications listed, e.g., distributing papers, grading assignments, watching an audio visual presentation with students, talking on the telephone, using email, or preparing students for transition.

[Exhibit 3.2.4](#) shows the predominant teacher behaviors observed during brief classroom visits.

Exhibit 3.2.4

Frequency and Percentage of K-12 Teacher Activities Observed by Auditors During Classroom Visits Manchester School District March 2013

Activity	Total Number Observed	Percentage of Total Observations
Direct Instruction	170	42.6
Assisting Students	75	18.8
At Desk	56	14.0
Small Group	54	13.5
Monitoring	33	8.3
Other	11	2.8
Total	399	100%

[Exhibit 3.2.4](#) indicates the following about predominant teacher classroom behaviors:

- Over 40 percent of teachers observed were delivering direct instruction to the entire classroom.
- Assisting individual students (18.8 percent), teacher at desk (14 percent), and working with small groups (13.5 percent) were the next most frequent teacher activities.

- Just over eight percent of the teachers were engaged in monitoring students as they worked.

Exhibit 3.2.5 displays the same teacher activity descriptors as before, but results are disaggregated by school level (elementary, middle, and high school).

Exhibit 3.2.5

Frequency and Percentage of Teacher Activities by School Level As Observed by Auditors During Classroom Visits Manchester School District March 2013

Teacher Activity	Elementary School Frequency/Percent Observed		Middle School Frequency/Percent Observed		High School Frequency/Percent Observed	
At Desk	17	7.2	18	20.0	21	29.2
Direct Instruction	111	46.8	31	34.4	28	38.9
Small Group	45	19.0	7	7.8	2	2.8
Monitoring	17	7.2	9	10.0	7	9.7
Assisting Students	44	18.6	20	22.2	11	15.3
Other	3	1.3	5	5.6	3	4.2

Exhibit 3.2.5 displays the following:

- The most common teacher activity observed by the auditors at all three school levels was direct large group instruction, with 46.8 percent of elementary teachers, 34.4 percent of middle school teachers, and 38.9 percent of high school teachers engaged in this activity.
- At 19 percent, teaching small groups was the second most common teacher activity observed in elementary schools, closely followed by assisting students at 18.6 percent.
- After direct instruction, the most common teacher activity at the middle schools was assisting students (22.2 percent), closely followed by the “at desk” activity (20 percent).
- After direct instruction at the high school level, the most frequent teacher activity was “at desk” (29.2 percent). Small group instruction was seldom observed at this level (only 2.8 percent).
- Even though the total percentage of teachers observed using direct instruction did not exceed 50 percent at any of the three school levels, the percentage of usage of direct instruction was found to be quite high at several individual schools. While not included in the exhibit, additional disaggregation by school resulted in the following: Green Acres Elementary (82 percent), Weston Elementary (70 percent), Bakersville Elementary (67 percent), and West High School (67 percent).
- One of the least observed teacher activities at the elementary level was “teacher at desk” (7.2 percent), but at the high school level, this activity was observed nearly 30 percent of the time by the auditors.



Kindergarten students completing seatwork at Highland-Goffe's Falls Elementary



Northwest Elementary first graders engaged in a lesson via an every pupil response strategy

During classroom visits, auditors also noted predominant student behaviors. Exhibit 3.2.6 provides definitions of student behaviors used in this section.

Exhibit 3.2.6

Classification of Predominant Student Behaviors

Activity	Description
Large Group	Students are receiving direct instruction as a whole group or class.
Applied Practice	Students are using information or skills taught prior to this activity and practicing the application of learning.
Testing	Students are taking tests or quizzes.
Problem Solving	Students individually or in groups are trying to solve problems by deciphering information, analyzing data, or determining additional information needed and how to obtain that information.
Seatwork	Students are working on individual assignments or tasks without interaction with other students.
Small Group	A small group of students is being instructed by the teacher. Students may be involved in listening, discussing, or going over an assignment.
Silent Reading	Students are observed to be reading silently using teacher provided or approved material during class time.
Transition/Other Activities	Students are participating in sponge activities or some other type of transition/independent review, especially before or during instructional transitions.

Exhibit 3.2.7 shows the predominant student activities in the class at the time of the observation.

Exhibit 3.2.7

**Frequency and Percentage of K-12 Student Activities
As Observed by Auditors During Classroom Visitations
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Student Activity	Total Number Observed	Percent of Total Observations
Large Group	180	44.4
Seatwork	71	17.5
Small Group	63	15.6
Applied Practice	51	12.6
Transition/Other	17	4.2
Silent Reading	14	3.5
Testing	8	2.0
Problem Solving	1	0.25
Total	405	100.0%

Exhibit 3.2.7 shows the following:

- In over 44 percent of district classrooms, students were engaged in a large group activity, typically the class as a whole. This often involved listening to teachers give information, responding to teachers' questions, completing worksheets under teacher direction, or other similar activities.
- In 17.5 percent of classrooms, students were working individually on seatwork.
- In 15.6 percent of classrooms, students were working in small groups.

Auditors also reviewed the student activity observations by school level. Exhibit 3.2.8 displays the frequency and percentage of student engagement in activities by elementary, middle, and high school grade levels.

Exhibit 3.2.8

**Frequency and Percentage of K-12 Student Activities
As Observed by Auditors During Classroom Visits
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Student Activity	Elementary School Frequency/Percentage		Middle School Frequency/Percentage		High School Frequency/ Percentage	
Large Group	120	48.8	29	32.6	31	44.3
Applied Practice	23	9.3	17	19.1	11	15.7
Testing	3	1.2	2	2.2	3	4.3
Problem Solving	1	.4	0	0	0	0
Seatwork	42	17.1	18	20.0	11	15.7
Small Group	44	17.9	12	13.5	7	10
Silent Reading	12	4.9	2	2.2	0	0
Transition/Other	1	.4	9	10.1	7	10
Total	246	100%	89	100%	70	100%

As may be observed in Exhibit 3.2.8:

- Participation in large or entire classroom group instruction was the primary student activity in elementary schools (48.8 percent). This activity was observed at the middle schools as well, but in a lower percentage of classes (32.6 percent). The high school's most commonly observed category was

also large group instruction, with 44.3 percent of the observed classrooms employing this instructional arrangement.

- Although student activity distributions did not drastically vary across the school levels, some differences were observed. Small group work peaked in elementary schools, becoming less prevalent in middle school and high school, while applied practice was more common in middle and high schools than in the elementary schools. Silent reading diminished in frequency from about five percent in elementary to “not observed” at the high school level.
- Specific instances of problem solving were infrequent at all school levels, but transition activities were more common at the middle and high school levels.

As auditors entered classrooms, they noted the number of students who appeared oriented (on task) to their work. [Exhibit 3.2.9](#) displays the student orientation to teacher directed instruction for each of the three levels of school.

Exhibit 3.2.9
Frequency of Students Oriented to Work During Classroom Visits
Manchester School District
March 2013

Elementary Students oriented to class expectations	Middle School Students oriented to class expectations	High School Students oriented to class expectations
92%	85%	85%

[Exhibit 3.2.9](#) displays the following information:

- Most students across all school levels were on task during the school visits, ranging from a low of 85 percent in high schools and middle schools to a high of 92 percent at the elementary schools.
- Middle and high school students were noted to be off task more in classrooms where the predominant teacher activity was “seated at desk.”

At the time of the audit visit, the district was in the process of updating classroom computers and internet access. Therefore, detailed notations regarding the use of technology devices in the classrooms were not collected by the auditors. However, students were seldom observed using computers except in lab settings, in part due to aging technology and challenges with implementation (see [Finding 5.4](#)).

Auditors conducted interviews at the school and district levels regarding curriculum delivery and related topics. The following are representative of comments obtained during interviews.

- “No particular teaching approach or method of instruction is required by the district. Teaching expectations for the classrooms is [sic] left to the principal and teaching staff.” (Administrator)
- “Principals are more ‘managing’ rather than providing instructional leadership.” (Administrator)
- “There’s a resistance to differentiated teaching. It’s like: ‘I’m not going to be doing anything but lecture.’” (Parent)
- “When I walk into a teacher’s room for an observation, I want to see students engaged and feeling good about themselves.” (Administrator)
- “District developed assessments showed which teachers were floundering, but unless they agree, there is no authority to work with them in the classroom.” (Administrator)

Summary

The auditors found a lack of clear and consistent direction for instructional practice in district documents. Expectations vary among documents and are often written in general terms. Common elements in documents

included use of a variety of approaches, student engagement, active learning, and appropriate use of technology. If the data shown in the preceding finding can be assumed to be typical of daily teaching, then the auditors concluded that teaching practices do not generally reflect district expectations. District-wide instructional delivery often consisted of teacher-directed whole group instruction, assisting students, or individual seatwork.

Finding 3.3: Monitoring the delivery of the curriculum is inconsistent and inadequate to provide teachers with feedback that leads to the improvement of instructional practices and increased student achievement.

Supervision of curriculum and instruction can be an effective tool for improving teaching and learning. Systemic monitoring ensures that the adopted curriculum is being implemented and provides teachers with support and feedback to improve their teaching. Typical components of curriculum monitoring include activities such as regular review of lesson plans, frequent visits to classrooms, formal and informal observations, formal and informal conferences with teachers, and participation in staff, grade level, or departmental team meetings for curriculum discussions.

Board policy needs to provide direction for what is to be taught in the classroom, as well as expectations for curriculum monitoring and coaching across the system. The primary responsibility for monitoring curriculum delivery and instructional practices lies with the building principal. In addition, other district staff may assist in communicating expectations and in curriculum monitoring and coaching.

The auditors reviewed various documents to determine the expectations for monitoring in the Manchester School District. Board policies, job descriptions, performance appraisal instruments, the District Improvement Plan, school improvement plans, and other related documents were analyzed. Principals, teachers, and district administrators were also interviewed.

Overall, the auditors found that board policies, job descriptions, appraisal instruments, and other district documents lack clear direction for expectations for instructional strategies and for monitoring curriculum delivery (see [Findings 1.1](#), [1.3](#), and [3.2](#)). Interview data indicated that the quality of monitoring and the amount of time principals engage in monitoring vary widely across the schools and are inconsistent in providing teachers with feedback to promote improved instructional practices.

The following board policies reference the instructional leadership role of the principal:

- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 106: School Building Administration* states that the principal is the “responsible head and professional leader in the development of the educational program and in the improvement of instruction . . .”
- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 100: Administration Goals* states that the general purpose of the administration is to coordinate and supervise the creation and operation of an environment in which students learn most effectively: “Administrative duties and functions should be appraised in terms of the contribution made to improving instruction and learning.”

Board policies provide generalized expectations for instructional leadership, but they do not specifically describe expected approaches for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum in the classroom (see [Finding 1.1](#)). Job descriptions are also silent relative to responsibilities for curriculum monitoring (see [Finding 1.3](#)).

A goal of the District Improvement Plan (2011-12) states; “The district will develop consistent tools to evaluate teacher effectiveness.” One elementary school improvement plan referenced the principal’s daily classroom walk-throughs that were focused on the monthly PLC best practices taught that month. In addition, the school data team conducted monthly focus walks to look for “implementation of indicators in instruction.”

However, the auditors did not find evidence that a systematic process has been developed to monitor instructional practices and provide feedback to teachers on their delivery of the curriculum in the classroom.

[Exhibit 3.3.1](#) shows the responses of 239 teachers to an informal survey question regarding administrator classroom visitations.

Exhibit 3.3.1

Teachers' Perceptions of Frequency of Administrators' Classroom Visits Manchester School District March 2013

How often does your principal or assistant principal visit your classroom?		
Answer Options	Response Percentage	Response Count
At least weekly	32.5	74
At least monthly	21.1	48
At least twice a year	13.2	30
I rarely see my principal/assistant principal in my classroom	33.3	76
	answered question	228
	skipped question	11
Source: Online Curriculum Management Teacher Survey		

Exhibit 3.3.1 indicates a wide range in the frequency in which principals and assistant principals visit classrooms.

- Over 33 percent of teacher respondents reported that administrators rarely visited their classrooms.
- Almost 56 percent of teacher respondents stated that principals visit their classrooms from one to four times per month.

Interview data indicated that most principals monitor instruction to some degree, but expectations and practices are inconsistent district-wide. The following are representative comments:

- “The elementary principals are more in tune to what’s happening in classrooms. This doesn’t happen as much at the middle schools and high schools.” (Administrator)
- “A weakness is the lack of focus of building administrators on curriculum, instruction, and assessment.” (Administrator)
- “The four School Improvement Grant schools are doing walk-throughs according to the Danielson School Effectiveness Model.” (Administrator)

Some principals described walking through classrooms frequently, using a checklist to indicate best practices, meeting with teachers to discuss classroom observations, and/or discussing student achievement data. Other comments included the following:

- “I try to visit every class every day.” (Administrator)
- “I expect to see the essential elements of guided reading when I walk into classrooms.” (Administrator)
- “I expect to see project-based learning on Fridays.” (Administrator)

Other principals mentioned that they were not able to visit classrooms as frequently as they wanted. One principal summed it up: “I can’t get out of the office. I’m seeing so many kids every day for classroom management issues, I’m lucky if I get into classes once a month.”

Principals also stated that central office administrators make visits to their schools infrequently and have not provided clear expectations, coaching, or support relative to curriculum monitoring.

- “Our supervisors get to our buildings once or twice a year and then only to check on something.” (Administrator)
- “It’s difficult for us to get into schools and see what’s going on.” (Administrator)
- “The board inundates district administrators with tasks that keep them from visiting schools and classrooms.” (Administrator)

Overall, school administrators are engaged in various curriculum monitoring activities, including classroom walk-throughs. However, the type, frequency, and quality of these practices vary widely among principals. Classroom visits are frequent by some principals and occasional by others. The auditors concluded that the design for monitoring is inadequate to sustain consistency and to support and improve student achievement.

Finding 3.4: Inequalities exist in access to comparable programs, services, and learning opportunities. Resource allocation practices contribute to some inequities.

In a well-managed school system, all students are placed in programs and activities with equal access to the curriculum and services available in the district. Access should not be determined by gender, ethnicity, attendance area, or socioeconomic status. The auditors expect to find similar proportions of students by gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnic origin in specific programs as reflected in the general student population. No one student group should be disproportionately represented in retention and suspension rates, graduation rates, and enrollment in various special programs and services.

While the term equal means “exactly the same,” the audit refers to “equity” as the principle of treating students in accordance with differentiated needs. 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, differential educational responses, and equitable distribution of resources, school systems perpetuate the disparities among students that a public school education was designed to ameliorate.

The auditors reviewed documents including board policies, BOSC meeting minutes, district plans, test data, budget documents, and enrollment and participation reports compiled by school district and state personnel. They interviewed board members, community members, administrators, teachers, and parents. Auditors also visited classrooms in all the schools and collected observational data on most of the instructional spaces in the district.

The auditors found that the Manchester School District’s board policies, administrative regulations, and district and school improvement plans indicate the intent to provide students with equal access to programs and opportunities and to implement interventions and distribute resources based on student needs (see [Findings 1.1, 1.2, 2.4, 5.1, and 5.3](#)). However, the auditors noted inequalities in a number of areas, including staff demographics and student participation in certain programs. The educational program a student experiences depends on the school he or she attends. A large number of ninth graders drop out of school before they reach the twelfth grade. Student performance data and graduation rates remain below state averages (see [Finding 4.3](#)). Poverty and ethnicity continue to be predictors of low student achievement. English Language Learners’ and special education students’ test scores do not exhibit improvement over time (see [Findings 4.3 and 5.2](#)).

The following board policies address equal access to educational opportunities (see [Finding 1.1](#)):

- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 117: Diversity* states that the district shall “foster an organizational and educational climate that maximizes the benefits of Manchester’s diversity as part of a global society. The school district’s concept of diversity shall encompass nationality, ethnicity, gender, ideological perspective, socioeconomic status, age, religion, sexual orientation, ability/disability, language, educational level, and occupational background. This policy is based on the assumption that students will succeed academically when:
 - They experience a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment;
 - They learn how to interact with others who reflect the diversity of contemporary American society;
 - Their teachers understand, respect, and respond to diverse perspectives; and
 - Their families feel welcome in the schools.”
- *Board of School Committee Foundations Policy 102: Nondiscrimination* declares that it is the policy of the Board that “there shall be no discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, age, or disability for employment in, participation in, admission or

access to, or operation and administration of any educational program or activity in the Manchester School District.”

- *Board of School Committee Foundations Policy 103: Open Hiring/Equal Employment Opportunity* states that the district will recruit and consider candidates without regard to age, race, color, religion, country of origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

As indicated above, board policies include expectations that students will have equal access to the district educational program.

The vision of the Manchester School District states the desire to provide an environment “in which all students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to become lifelong learners as well as positive and productive citizens” (see [Introduction](#)).

The district mission states that it has “high expectations for student achievement and embraces diversity” (see [Introduction](#)).

The District Improvement Plan describes initiatives to develop consistency in curriculum, instruction, and assessment and efforts to improve the English Language Learner (ELL) program (see [Finding 1.2](#)). School improvement plans also list various initiatives to address student needs. A major goal of the Technology Plan is “to provide equitable access to all students.”

Student and Staff Characteristics

The Manchester Refugee Center provides services and programming for new arrivals to this country. Manchester has become the most ethnically diverse city in the state with a large number of English Language Learners resettled in the school district’s attendance area.

Many individuals interviewed cited the diversity of the student body as a strength of the school district. Representative comments included the following:

- “A strength is our diversity and the opportunity for our students to meet all kinds of kids.” (Administrator)
- “A strength is the diversity of our student population both ethnically and socioeconomically. It gives our kids a greater viewpoint on life.” (Parent)

Other comments indicated concerns relative to the diverse student body.

- “There is a cultural belief that these students can’t succeed.” (Administrator)
- “The ELL (English Language Learners) and special education kids are seen as ‘those kids.’” (Teacher)
- “We need to have more conversations about diversity. Are more minority students in Levels 1 and 2?” (Administrator)

The auditors expect to find the diversity of a district staff reflective of the diversity of the student population. Proportionate representation in the ethnic and gender composition of the staff and students in a school system provides students with role models and contributes to their sense of belonging.

[Exhibit 3.4.1](#) compares the ethnicity of district administrators, teachers, and support staff with the ethnicity of the student body.

Exhibit 3.4.1

Ethnicity of District Staff and Students in Percentages Manchester School District March 2013

	Administrators	Teachers	Support Staff	Students
White	97.3	98.7	96.4	66.2
Hispanic	1.3	0.5	1.0	17.0
Black	1.3	0.6	1.6	8.0
Asian/Pacific Is.	0	0.3	1.0	4.9
Multi-race	0	0	0	3.4
Native American or Alaskan	0	0	0	0.4
<i>Source: New Hampshire Department of Education (11/1/12)</i>				

Exhibit 3.4.1 indicates that the percentage of White staff members is overrepresented by at least 30 percentage points in all categories compared with the ethnicity of the student body.

Exhibit 3.4.2 presents a comparison of the gender of district staff members with the gender of Manchester School District students.

Exhibit 3.4.2

Gender of District Staff Members and Students Manchester School District March 2013

	Male	Female
Administrators	40.0	60.0
Teachers	20.6	79.4
Support Staff	9.4	90.6
Student Enrollment	51.4	48.6
<i>Source: New Hampshire Department of Education (11/1/12)</i>		

Exhibit 3.4.2 shows that female staff members are overrepresented and male personnel are underrepresented in comparison with male and female students.

Exhibits 3.4.1 and 3.4.2 indicate that district students receive the majority of their instruction from White females. The auditors did not find Board of School Committee policies or planning documents that reference efforts to develop a diverse teaching staff.

Participation in Challenging Courses and Special Education

The Manchester School District does not offer a program for gifted and talented students at the elementary level. Ability grouped, or leveled classes, are implemented in language arts and mathematics at the middle school and in the core content areas at the high school.

An administrator described the leveling system as follows: “We use academic leveling whereby the students are placed in one of three levels based on test scores. It is not uncommon for the lower group to have more students and, therefore, larger class sizes. It is probably the same system we used to call tracking.”

Correspondence from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Public Secondary Schools, the accreditation entity for high schools, indicated concerns that “the school district’s grouping practices do not reflect the diversity of the student body” (2-16-10). The Commission requested an analysis of the numbers of race and gender in each of the levels of course offerings and “a plan to correct the racial and/or ethnic under-representation in the two highest academic levels and . . . the elimination of arbitrary requirements that allow greater access to challenging course work for all students” (7-14-10). In subsequent correspondence,

the commission again reminded high school and district administrators of its expectation regarding leveling practices and the fostering of heterogeneity in its Standard for Accreditation on School Culture and Leadership, Indicator 2: “The school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/ language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages)” (8-23-11). The auditors were not provided with data that included ethnic representation in leveled courses or with a plan that addressed the commission’s concerns.

The Advanced Placement Program (AP) offers high school students the opportunity to participate in challenging college level coursework while in high school. Favorable scores on AP tests afford students the opportunity to earn advanced standing or college credit at selected colleges and universities.

Special education provides a continuum of specialized services to address students’ identified needs (see [Finding 5.2](#)).

[Exhibit 3.4.3](#) shows the percentages of district students participating in special education and Advanced Placement courses by ethnicity.

Exhibit 3.4.3
Ethnic Percentages of Students Enrolled in Special Education and
Advanced Placement Courses
Manchester School District
March 2013

	Special Education	Advanced Placement*	District Enrollment
White	69.0	76.6	66.2
Hispanic	18.6	9.0	17.0
Black	7.4	3.4	8.0
Asian/Pacific Is.	1.7	8.7	4.9
Multi-race	2.3	1.6	3.4
Native American/Alaskan	0.5	0.6	0.4
Not available	0.6	-	
*students may be enrolled in one or more AP courses			
<i>Source: District document</i>			

[Exhibit 3.4.3](#) indicates the following:

- White students comprise 76.6 percent of the students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses although they constitute 66.2 percent of the student body. Therefore, they are overrepresented in Advanced Placement courses by 10.4 percentage points.
- White students make up 69 percent of the students enrolled in special education and are overrepresented by 2.8 percentage points.
- Hispanic students comprise 9 percent of the students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses although they constitute 17 percent of the student body. Therefore, they are underrepresented in Advanced Placement courses by 8 percentage points.
- Hispanic students comprise 18.6 percent of the students enrolled in special education and are overrepresented by 1.6 percentage points.
- Black students comprise 3.4 percent of the students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses although they represent 8 percent of the student body. They are underrepresented in Advanced Placement courses by 4.6 percentage points.
- Black students are slightly underrepresented in special education (0.6 percentage point).

- Asian and Pacific Islander students are overrepresented in AP courses by 3.8 percentage points and underrepresented in special education by 3.2 percentage points.
- The percentage of Native American/Alaskan students participating in AP courses and Special Education closely reflects their percentages in the student body.

Exhibit 3.4.4 summarizes student participation in special programs and courses by gender.

Exhibit 3.4.4

**Enrollment in Special Education and
Advanced Placement Courses by Gender in Percentages
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Program	Total District Enrollment in Program	Percent Male	Percent Female
Special Education	20.3	64.6	35.2
AP Courses*	2.1	48.9	51.1
District Total		51.4%	48.6%
*Students may be enrolled in more than one AP course			
<i>Source: District document</i>			

Exhibit 3.4.4 demonstrates the following:

- Males are overrepresented in special education by 13.2 percentage points and underrepresented in Advanced Placement courses by 2.5 percentage points.
- Female students are underrepresented in special education by 13.4 percentage points and overrepresented in Advanced Placement courses by 2.5 percentage points.

Students may have different learning opportunities depending on the school they attend. In Exhibit 3.4.5 the auditors examined the number of Advanced Placement (AP) offerings by high school and compared them with the percentage of economically disadvantaged students at each school.

Exhibit 3.4.5

**Advanced Placement Courses Offered by High School
Manchester School District
2012-13**

	Central	Memorial	West
AP English Lit & Composition	X	X	X
AP Calculus	X	X	X
AP Biology	X	X	X
AP Chemistry	X	X	X
AP Physics	X	X	X
AP American Government		X	
AP Micro-Economics		X	
AP Modern European History	X		
AP U.S. History	X	X	X
AP World History Survey	X		
AP Studio Art	X	X	X
AP Latin – Vergil		X	
AP Spanish Language/Culture		X	
Total AP Courses Offered	9	11	7
% Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Meals	37.2	35.9	46.1

Exhibit 3.4.5 indicates that Memorial High School offers the most AP courses and has the lowest percentage of economically disadvantaged students. However, interview data indicated that district and high school administrators have made substantial progress this past year in working toward providing a consistent Program of Studies across the three high schools.

Early Childhood and Kindergarten Programs

The Selma Deitch Early Learning Program provides preschool services to approximately 300 children each year at five elementary schools. The program serves students with identified disabilities, those from socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods, and Manchester residents who choose to enroll in the tuition program. Three-year-olds attend in the mornings and four- to five-year-olds attend in the afternoons for two to five days each week, based on their needs.

Currently eight elementary schools offer a full-day tuition-free kindergarten program, three schools offer both a full-day and a half-day program, and three offer a half-day program only. The auditors learned during interviews that there are not enough openings in the full-day programs to meet the needs of all interested families.



Kindergarten iPad users at Wilson Elementary

Exhibit 3.4.6 shows the Early Learning Program and Kindergarten offerings and poverty levels by elementary school.

Exhibit 3.4.6

Early Learning Program and Kindergarten Offerings Manchester School District March 2013

Elementary School	Preschool	Kindergarten	% Free & Reduced
Bakersville	X	Full Day	79.8
Beech Street		Full Day	93.6
Gossler Park		Full Day	77.3
Green Acres	X	Full Day and Half-Day	20.0
Hallsville		Full Day	57.3
Highland-Goffe's Falls		Half-Day	38.2
Jewett	X	Half-Day	46.3
McDonough		Full Day	73.6
Northwest		Full Day	55.5
Parker-Varney	X	Full Day	61.8
Smyth Road	X	Half-Day	24.5
Webster		Full Day and Half-Day	39.2
Weston		Full Day and Half-Day	40.3
Wilson		Full Day	86.7
<i>Sources: New Hampshire Department of Education document 10-31-12 F & R Eligibility and District document</i>			

Exhibit 3.4.6 shows the following:

- The percentage of students eligible for free and/or reduced price meals ranges from a low of 20 percent at Green Acres to a high of 93.6 at Beech Street.
- The four highest poverty schools (Beech Street, Wilson, Bakersville, and Gossler Park) each offer a full-day kindergarten program. Only Bakersville has a preschool program.
- Two of the four lowest poverty schools (Green Acres, Smyth Road, Highland-Goffe's Falls, and Webster), Green Acres and Webster, offer both a full-day and a half-day kindergarten program. Smyth Road and Highland-Goffe's Falls have half-day kindergarten programs.
- Two low poverty schools, Green Acres and Smyth Road, have preschool programs; Highland-Goffe's Falls and Webster do not.

Students at the highest poverty schools have access to a full-day kindergarten program. Location of the Early Learning Program sites is based more on available space than on socioeconomic characteristics.

Student Attendance

Regular school attendance is essential in order for students to be successful in the educational program. The *Board of School Committee Students Policy 101.1: Attendance Policy* defines excused and unexcused absences and the responsibilities of students, teachers/guidance counselors, parents/guardians, and administrators. An attendance plan is to be developed with parents/guardians for a student who is regularly absent. Interventions may include an Alternative Education Plan, modification of the student's schedule, Saturday morning school to make up missed work, counseling services, referral to an outside agency, or the filing of an educational neglect petition with the Court.



Large class sizes, such as this Central High School class, are found at some district schools

Exhibit 3.4.7 compares the Manchester School District student attendance rate with state averages.

Exhibit 3.4.7

Comparison of District and State Attendance Rates in Percentages Manchester School District 2007-08 to 2011-12

Year	District Attendance Rate	State Attendance Rate
2007-08	92.9	94.7
2008-09	92.3	94.7
2009-10	92.1	94.5
2010-11	92.4	94.8
2011-12	91.7	94.8
<i>Source: State Department of Education document</i>		

Exhibit 3.4.7 shows the following:

- District student attendance declined by 1.2 percentage points over the five-year period.
- The district attendance rate has remained from 1.8 to 3.1 percentage points below state averages during the time frame.

Graduation Rate

Despite efforts focused on dropout prevention, the Manchester School District continues to lose a large number of students between the ninth and twelfth grades.

Exhibit 3.4.8 compares the numbers of students in the ninth and twelfth grades over the past eight years.

Exhibit 3.4.8

Ninth to Twelfth Grade Enrollment Comparison Manchester School District 2001-02 to 2011-12

Year	Grade 9	Year	Grade 12	Difference since Grade 9	Percent Change
2001-02	1,888	2004-05	1,333	-555	-29.1
2002-03	1,935	2005-06	1,424	-511	-26.4
2003-04	1,956	2006-07	1,485	-471	-24.1
2004-05	1,930	2007-08	1,424	-506	-26.2
2005-06	1,972	2008-09	1,466	-506	-25.7
2006-07	2,062	2009-10	1,140	-922	-44.7
2007-08	1,702	2010-11	1,107	-595	-35.0
2008-09	1,812	2011-12	1,159	-653	-36.0

Source: New Hampshire Department of Education - October 1 enrollment

Exhibit 3.4.8 demonstrates:

- For the past eight years, grade 12 classes have had from 471 to 922 fewer students than were enrolled in the grade 9 classes four years earlier; there were from approximately 24 percent to 36 percent fewer students over the four-year time frame.
- Between the 2001-02 and 2011-12 school years, the percentage of ninth graders not reaching the twelfth grade increased by 6.9 percentage points.
- The smallest difference was with the 2006-07 twelfth grade class, which had 24.1 percent fewer students than in the ninth grade.
- The largest difference was with the 2009-10 twelfth grade class, which was 44.7 percent smaller than the 2006-07 ninth grade class.

A number of individuals interviewed expressed concerns about the student failure rate and dropouts. Representative comments included the following:

- “We need to be responsible for students’ success or failure. During the last grading period, we had 650 course failures.” (Administrator)
- “We can’t allow students to fail. They should be able to continue working on a competency they failed.” (Administrators)
- “Our kids aren’t learning - graduation rates are the worst. Our (high school) dropout rate is twice the state average.” (Board Member)

Exhibit 3.4.9 presents a comparison of the Manchester School District and state graduation rates for the past five years.

Exhibit 3.4.9

Comparison of District and State Student Graduation Rates in Percentages Manchester School District 2007-08 to 2011-12

Year	District Graduation Rate	State Graduation Rate
2007-08	78.9	87.9
2008-09	84.0	90.2
2009-10	74.4	85.9
2010-11	74.8	86.6
2011-12	73.6	86.6

Source: New Hampshire Department of Education document

Exhibit 3.4.9 indicates:

- District graduation rates have lagged from 6.2 to 13 percentage points behind the state averages during the five-year period.
- District rates have decreased by 5.3 percentage points since 2007-08.

Exhibit 3.4.10 shows the graduation rates by high school for the past three years.

Exhibit 3.4.10

Graduation Rate by High School Manchester School District 2009-10 through 2011-12

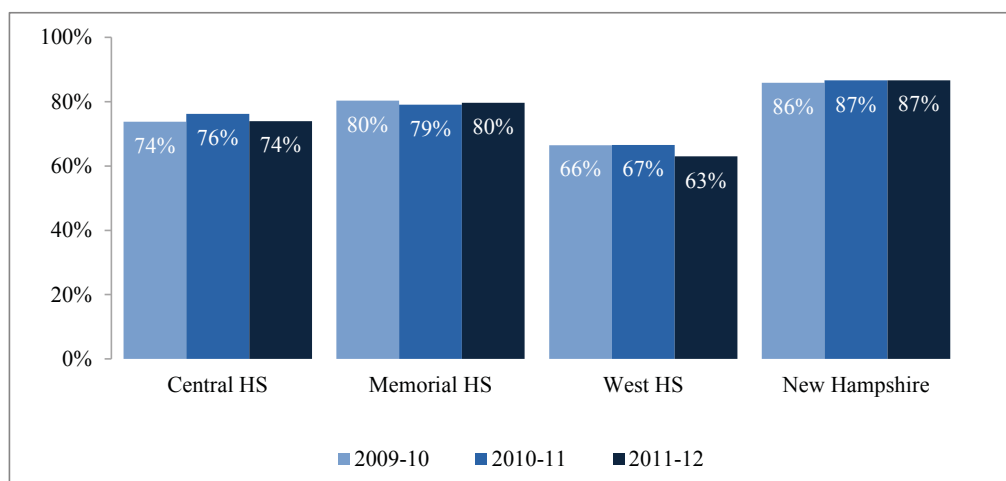


Exhibit 3.4.10 indicates the following:

- None of the high schools have increased their graduation rates over the time span.
- The graduation rates at Central and Memorial High Schools have not changed, but the West High School graduation rate has decreased by six percent.

Student Achievement

Ethnicity and socioeconomic status are predictors of student test performance when the written, taught, and assessed curricula are not aligned. Achievement gaps on the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) persist for Manchester socioeconomically disadvantaged and minority students (see [Finding 4.3](#)). Schools with the highest percentages of low income students generally have the lowest test scores. Special education students and English Language Learners are not exhibiting a pattern of improvement over time (see [Finding 5.2](#)). Although improvement has been shown in some areas, consistent progress has not been made.

Support Programs

The auditors found that a number of programs and interventions have been implemented to support student learning needs (see [Findings 2.4](#) and [5.2](#)). Examples of such initiatives include the following:

English Language Learners Program (ELL)

As noted in [Exhibit 0.7](#), the number of English Language Learners enrolled in the district has increased steadily since 2008-09, totaling approximately 10 percent of the student body. Students are placed, depending on their degree of proficiency, in self-contained classrooms with other students of limited English proficiency or in a regular classroom. Students placed in regular classrooms leave the classroom and receive English instruction from an ELL specialist.

A 2009 State Monitoring Review of the ELL program stated; “It is very difficult for students to achieve proficiency when many processes are not in place or are not consistent across the district.”

A review of the ELL program conducted by West Ed in 2010 also mentioned a lack of the following elements in Manchester’s program: a consistent curriculum, coherence between mainstream and ELL programs in curriculum and in expectations for students, and an awareness of policies, procedures, and realities pertaining to ELL.

The Manchester School District Improvement Plan (2011-12) referenced having an English Language Learner Coordinator address consistency between schools, identifying appropriate curricular materials, data-driven decision making, transition issues, and increasing ELL parent involvement. However, the coordinator position was filled for a short time and was vacant at the time of the audit site visit. An ELL procedural guide had been developed, but board action placed it on hold , delaying implementation (see [Finding 1.4](#)).

The 2009 Monitoring Review indicated the need for district-wide ELL professional development activities for classroom teachers. The auditors found several school improvement plans that referenced providing staff training in best practices for English Language Learners. [Exhibit 3.4.11](#) shows the responses of 239 teachers to a survey question regarding professional development for working with ELL students.

Exhibit 3.4.11

Teachers’ Perceptions of ELL Professional Development Opportunities Manchester School District March 2013

I have been trained in effective ELL strategies for working with students whose primary language is not English.		
Answer Options	Response Percentage	Response Count
Strongly Agree	8.8	20
Agree	21.1	48
Neutral	14.1	32
Disagree	30.0	68
Strongly Disagree	26.0	59
	answered question	227
	skipped question	12

Source: Online Curriculum Management Teacher Survey 3/13

[Exhibit 3.4.11](#) indicates that 56 percent of teacher respondents perceived that they had not been provided adequate training in working with English Language Learners. Sample comments included:

- “I have had no training and have many ELL students in my classes.”
- “I work closely with the ELL teachers, but have not had training.”
- “The training that I have is because I took it on my own.”

Other perceptions about the ELL program expressed by individuals interviewed reflect the absence of consistent, district-wide procedures in the program.

- “There is no vertical or horizontal alignment with ELL.” (Administrator)
- “ELL kids can get lost. Some don’t get the service they need because no one knows about them.” (Teacher)
- “They hold on to ELL students too long in that program.” (Administrator)
- “We have students who never get out of ELL. They didn’t even used to test kids to get them out of that program.” (Administrator)
- “ELL is a district issue. We have passionate teachers who want to keep ELL students in the program forever versus others who believe students need to have the opportunity to develop independence.” (Board Member)

Finding 4.3 shows that ELL NECAP scores are substantially below those of a comparison group and are not improving over time.

Manchester School of Technology

The Manchester School of Technology opened in the fall of 2012 with its first freshman class of 84 students. It offers project-based learning in the core areas and access to state-of-the-art technology. The program is integrated with the career related offerings of the Regional Career and Technical Center with which it shares a campus.

Extended Learning Opportunities

The Extended Learning Opportunity Program allows high school students to earn credit toward graduation for projects outside of the classrooms. Each high school has an Extended Learning Opportunity Coordinator who works with community mentors and students.

Program Alternative to Secondary School (PASS)

PASS provides an alternative approach for completing high school requirements. Located on the Manchester School of Technology Region 15 Career and Technical Center campus, PASS emphasizes project-based learning

21st Century Community Learning Centers Afterschool Program

This afterschool program offers a wide variety of enrichment activities, tutoring, prevention programs, technology education programs, art, music, and recreational activities. District-certified tutors work with one to four students at a time. Student Learning Plans are developed for each student. The program operates at seven elementary schools, all four middle schools, and one high school.

Allocation of Resources

The audit defines equity as the distribution of resources based on areas of need so that all students have the tools necessary to experience academic success. The auditors reviewed various documents, including board policies, planning documents, staffing patterns, federal and state grant documents, and budget allocations, to obtain information about the distribution of resources in the Manchester School District (see Finding 5.1). The auditors also conducted interviews with board members, administrators, and teachers.

The following board policies reference equity and allocation of resources:

- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 100: Administration Goals* states that a major goal of the administration is to “assure the best and most effective instructional programs by ensuring that the ‘differing needs and talents of students’ are considered when planning educational programs.”
- *Board of School Committee Fiscal Policy 100: Fiscal Management Goals/Priority Objectives* states that the fiscal management plan seeks to “Establish levels of funding which will provide high quality education for the students of the district.”

- *Board of School Committee Fiscal Policy 106: Funding Proposals, Grants, and Special Projects* directs the superintendent to inform the board of all possible sources of state, federal, and other funds and donations of cash services and equipment for the support of the schools and/or for the enhancement of educational opportunities.
- *Board of School Committee Fiscal Policy 127: Gifts/Donations* states that it is the responsibility of the school district to implement programs for obtaining gift support from alumni, parents of alumni, grandparents, faculty and staff, corporations, and foundations. Fundraising campaigns are authorized by the board to enhance the efforts of the schools in meeting their goals.

The auditors found that the budget process is currently not linked to district improvement planning (see [Finding 1.2](#)) or adequately linked to student needs and curricular priorities (see [Finding 5.1](#)). Cost-benefit analyses have not been conducted to promote high productivity (see [Finding 4.4](#)). Additionally, a number of factors contribute to inequities in the distribution of resources among district schools. Examples include the following:

- Certain schools receive funding from grants or special programs. Title I funds have enabled eight schools to fund a reading specialist. Some schools receive School Improvement Grant funds (SIG) or Schools in Need of Improvement (SINI) grants. This has enabled them to fund supplemental instructors and provide staff development and supplemental resources.
- Contributions from local businesses or foundations and donations of technology vary among schools.
- The 21st Century Community Learning Center program grant provides for afterschool academic enrichment activities at high poverty schools.
- PTA and booster club revenues vary among schools from no fundraising efforts to over \$30,000 raised in one year. Among the various materials or activities purchased from these funds, the following were mentioned by parents, teachers, or principals during interviews: field trips, library books and media ware, technology, school activity days, and playground equipment.

Many individuals interviewed commented on the allocation of resources in the school district. Representative comments included the following:

- “Title I funds can’t buy some of the things we need that PTO funds can provide.” (Administrator)
- “Different schools have different grants. We can meet once a month for a half day on curriculum due to our grant. Every school can’t do that.” (Teacher)
- “There are a lot of good ideas, especially at the SIG schools, due to the additional funding available.” (Administrator)
- “There is no district funding for library books. We have to raise our own money.” (Administrator)
- “The kids from half-day kindergarten aren’t ready for first grade.” (Administrator)
- “We cut the budget massively. Then we’re asking foundations for a thousand dollars here and there. The solution is to have a really clear vision and priorities for where our funding goes.” (Community Member)

School-based Decision Making

School-based decision-making is based on the premise that those closest to the issue and those impacted by a decision are included in problem solving and decision-making. When implemented effectively, school-based decision making is a form of planning that engages teachers, parents, community members, and, in some cases, students in striving to achieve the district’s mission and goals while simultaneously meeting site needs.

Shared decision-making roles, responsibilities, and relationships need to be stated in board policy so that decisions at all levels are consistent with the intent of the board of education and its responsibility for providing a quality educational program for all students. When roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined in policy

and monitored for compliance, there is an increased likelihood that district focus, connectivity, effectiveness, and efficiency will be hindered.

The auditors examined board policies, district and school improvement plans, curriculum documents, student achievement data, teacher survey data, and other applicable documents to determine the status of school-based decision making in the Manchester School District. In addition, interviews were conducted with board members, administrators, teachers, parents, and community members.

The auditors found that the implementation of school-based decision making in the Manchester School District has hindered the provision of a consistent educational program for the district's students and impeded a clear focus on improving student achievement. Board policies provide minimal direction for district and school-based decision making, contributing to a fragmented approach to teaching and learning (see [Finding 1.1](#)). Staffing is inadequate to provide for district-wide curriculum management functions (see [Finding 1.3](#)).

Expectations for the delivery of instruction and for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum in the classrooms are unclear (see [Findings 3.2](#) and [3.3](#)). Programs and interventions that are in addition to the curriculum are not systematically designed, implemented, evaluated, or linked to the curriculum to impact student achievement (see [Finding 2.4](#)). Some inequalities exist in access to comparable learning opportunities (see [Finding 3.1](#)). Professional development efforts and the use of technology to support learning vary widely from school to school (see [Findings 3.1](#), [3.2](#) and [5.3](#)).

Student mobility within some district schools is high, but the educational program a student experiences at one school may differ widely from the education a student receives at another school (see [Finding 2.1](#)). The bottom line is that student achievement continues to remain well below state averages and has not exhibited a sufficient rate of improvement (see [Finding 4.3](#)).

The following Board of School Committee policies reference school-based decision making:

- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 100: Administration Goals* states that a major goal of administration shall be “providing opportunities for collaborative decision making with staff, students, parents, and members of the community.”
- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 105: Line and Staff Relations* states that every school shall be encouraged to develop appropriate educational programs for students attending that school consistent with district goals and adopted programs, board policy, state law, and state board regulations.
- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 106: School Building Administration* requires, “General operation, fiscal management, and instructional leadership will be provided by the principal through a site based management model.”

While board policies reference school-based decision making, they do not provide clear direction for the roles and responsibilities of a school council or accountability for school effectiveness. Responsibilities for staffing, curriculum, assessment, instructional practices, professional development, and allocation of discretionary resources are not clearly defined (see [Finding 1.1](#)). During interviews a number of individuals commented about the implementation of school-based decision making in the Manchester School District:

- “School-based decision making can’t move an organization forward if there is no system accountability.” (Administrator)
- “We have 22 schools running their own shows.” (Administrator)
- “The schools run everything. If the district tries to do anything (coordinate centrally), school staff complain to board members and then we can’t do it.” (Administrator)
- “Our schools each go off in their own direction.” (Administrator)
- “Our schools are too much like silos; they need to work with the superintendent, not independently from him.” (Board Member)

- “We need more definitive lines on what is the role of the board, superintendent, and school administrators.” (Administrator)
- “Almost one-third of our students turned over during the first four months of the school year. Of the 158 students that left our school, 108 stayed within the school district. Yet our curriculum varies from school to school.” (Administrator)

Many teachers responding to the audit teacher survey commented about the lack of consistency in the educational program. Representative comments included the following:

- “We need consistency in all areas of the curriculum across the district.”
- “We need common practices across all schools—district-wide.”
- “Teachers need to be held to consistent standards within all schools in the areas of best practices.”
- “Each school is like its own school district.”

Summary

A number of programs and initiatives have been implemented to address the diverse needs of Manchester students. However, the implementation of school-based decision making has contributed to an inconsistent educational program of separate initiatives. Staff demographics do not reflect the ethnic and gender representation of the student body. Inequalities exist in access to a consistent educational program. For example, all students don’t have access to full-day kindergarten or to some Advanced Placement courses. Minority and economically disadvantaged students are not achieving at the level of other students, indicating a lack of alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. A troubling number of students leave the school system between grades 9 and 12.

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

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

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

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

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

What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Manchester School District:

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

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

Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Manchester School District:

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

Auditors found that the Manchester School District lacks a comprehensive, system-wide student assessment and program evaluation planning process for generating feedback for instructional decision making. Board policies and job descriptions do not provide an adequate foundation for such a planning process and for methods for the use of data. Instructional decisions are dependent on each school principal's levels of expertise and interest. Thus, the district is not able to assure the quality and comparability of feedback data across the system.

Auditors found that only a fraction of the courses in the district are formally assessed with testing instruments that are standardized across the district and required for all students in each course or grade. Therefore the district does not provide teachers and administrators with reliable district-wide feedback on student performance and data on whether the curriculum is producing the desired results. In addition, members of the wider Manchester community must make judgments about the system's total effectiveness from feedback on a small portion of the district's work.

Manchester's overall performance on the *New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)* reading and math tests has not changed meaningfully in the past four years, and the performance of some schools and student groups is declining. However, different school buildings exhibit substantial variation in their test scores, as do different demographic groups of students. Subgroup performance discrepancies are substantial, and at the current rate of progress, achievement gaps are unlikely to be closed.

The district does not have a plan for the use of data for decision making in all district operations. Few programs supplemental to the curriculum are evaluated. As a result, the district does not know which programs are most effective in helping students master the content of the curriculum or most cost effective. The program reports that were presented to auditors do not contain the elements needed to help administrators make informed decisions, and the district is operating largely without the feedback necessary for effective outcome-based management.

Finding 4.1: Student assessment and program evaluation planning is not comprehensive and centrally-directed to provide guidance for district-wide decision making.

A comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan provides the foundation for making decisions about the effectiveness of curriculum design, its delivery, and the efficacy of each instructional program. The data derived from a wide range of student performance measures encompassed in such a plan provide school district leadership the means for determining how well the curriculum and supporting programs are producing desired learning results. Many types of data, including test results, survey data, and statistical analyses of program efficacy, contribute to decisions concerning modification or elimination of programs that fall short or fail to deliver on the district's stated goals. Such information is critical for individual teachers as well as for school leaders, program administrators, and district-level decision makers to assess areas in need of improvement.

To determine the extent to which comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation planning is in place and used for the improvement of student learning, the auditors reviewed documents (board policies, plans, job descriptions, curriculum documents, district website, assessment materials, and outcome data), interviewed stakeholders (board members, administrators, teachers, and support staff), and visited classrooms in all of the district's school buildings. Exhibit 4.1.1 displays the documents that were reviewed for the findings in Standard 4:

Exhibit 4.1.1

**Documents Reviewed for Standard Four
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Document	Date
Manchester School District Assessment Calendar (Appendix 1 in Manchester School District Professional Development Master Plan)	6/13/11
Manchester School District Data Analysis Calendar (Appendix 2 in Manchester School District Professional Development Master Plan)	6/13/11
School Approval Site Visit Report Summary	April 2012
Cover Memo to School Approval Site Visit Report Summary	5/29/12
Survey Results: Aggregate of Schools Scheduled for Accreditation Visit in 2012	Not Dated
Content Specifications for the Summative Assessment of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium	1/6/11
Manchester Board of School Committee Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting	2/6/13
21 st Century Community Learning Centers Information Sheet	2011–12
The Essential Elements of Guided Reading	Not Dated
Guided Reading Checklist	Not Dated
Individual 3 Year Professional Development Plan Form 3	5/16/11
2011–2012 Title I School Improvement Plan and School Improvement Progress Report for 2010–2011 (Various Schools)	June–July 2012
Corrective Action Plans for Northwest Elementary School, Beech Street Elementary School, Henry Wilson Elementary School, Hallsville Elementary School	12/18/12
Enrollment by Ethnicity, Gender, Grade and School	Not Dated
Strategic Plan Overview	Not Dated Downloaded 1/13/2013
Manchester Board of School Committee, Sub-Committee on Strategic Planning Meeting	7/24/12 1/22/13 2/6/13
Manchester Regional School District Strategic Goals	2009-10
District in Need of Improvement Goals	4/6/11
Manchester School District Writing Rubric, Grades 6-12	Not Dated
NECAP Released Item Support Materials (various subjects and subjects)	2012
Press Release: NH Department of Education to Provide Assessment Builder Software to All New Hampshire School Districts	Not Dated
Participation in ACCESS for English Language Learners	Not Dated
Manchester School District Professional Development Master Plan, 2011 – 2016	7/23/12
School Goals [First Class>Desktop>Professional Development>School Goals]	Not Dated
Various assessment and enrollment reports available through www.mansd.org and www.education.nh.gov .	2009-2012

It should be noted that Finding 4.1 focuses on the *planning* that gives direction to student assessment and program evaluation. Discussion of the district's *practices* in these areas is found in Findings 4.2 and 4.4.

Auditors found that the Manchester School District does not have a plan that guides student assessment and program evaluation, and there is no direction in policy or in district procedures that requires such a plan. However, various planning documents contain references to the use of assessment data. School Improvement Plans conform to the state template that requires the use of assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of some improvement strategies. The Professional Development Master Plan is based on the expectation that teachers will provide evidence of improved student achievement as a result of their professional development activities. The Professional Development Master Plan also contains an appendix that outlines a systematic process for

implementing a data analysis program. Several job descriptions contain language that addresses the use of student assessment data for improving instruction, and some job descriptions include the use of assessment data for program evaluation (see [Exhibit 1.1.5](#)). These documents, however, do not establish a cohesive, district-wide expectation for the use of assessment data at all levels, and they do not provide guidance to staff in the processes and methods for doing so. Written direction for student assessment and program evaluation does not meet the Curriculum Audit™ standards for adequacy.

The board policies listed in [Exhibit 4.1.2](#) were examined to determine the adequacy of direction for assessment and program evaluation in Manchester School District.

Exhibit 4.1.2
Board Policies Reviewed for Standard Four
Manchester School District
March 2013

Policy	Title	Approval/ Update
Administration 100	Administration Goals	1/8/01
Administration 101	School Superintendent	1/8/01
Administration 104	Evaluation of Superintendent	1/8/01
Administration 106	School Building Administration	1/8/01
Administration 107	School Principals	1/8/01
Administration 108	Building Principal(s) Evaluation	1/8/01
BOSC 102.1	Substantive Duties	2/11/02
Instruction 104	Curriculum Development	7/9/01
Instruction 105	Curriculum Adoption	7/9/01
Instruction 112	Programs for Students with Disabilities	5/14/01
Instruction 118	Instructional Materials	5/13/09
Instruction 118R	Appendix: Guidelines for Selection of Instructional Materials	5/13/09
Instruction 125	Middle and High School Grading System	7/9/01
Instruction 135	Evaluation of Instructional Programs	4/16/01
Instruction 141	Prior Program Approval	8/13/01
Instruction 143	Student Evaluation for Specific Learning Disability	5/10/10
Instruction 143R	Appendix: Regulations for Student Evaluations for Specific Learning Disabilities	5/10/10
Personnel 123	Evaluation of Professional Staff	3/11/02

Auditors determined that none of the reviewed policies establishes a comprehensive, district-wide system of classroom assessment or an approach to planning for student assessment and program evaluation (see [Finding 1.1](#)). *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 100: Administrative Goals* states that “Administrative duties and functions should be appraised in terms of the contribution made to improving instruction and learning.” However, “improving instruction” is not defined and could be interpreted to mean, for example, creating an engaging classroom climate or demonstrating the evaluator’s preferred instructional methods, rather than raising students’ performance on well-written assessments that measure their mastery of the curriculum content.

Other policies (*Board of School Committee Administration Policy 106: School Building Administration*, *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 107: School Principals*, and *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 108: Building Principal(s) Evaluation*) refer to managing an “effective education program” but do not relate effectiveness to students’ mastery of the curriculum.

Two additional policies address evaluation of the district's programs:

- *Board of School Committee BOSC Policy 102.1: Substantive Duties* requires the board to review educational programs *vis-à-vis* the district's goals and objectives.
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 135: Evaluation of Instructional Programs* requires the superintendent to evaluate instructional programs and to report to the board "periodically with regard to the effectiveness of programs on student achievement."

These policies establish, in broad terms, that program evaluation will occur and that it will reflect the board's goals and student achievement. However, the policies are inadequate to provide direction to the district's staff for a cohesive, systematic, district-wide planning process for student assessment and program evaluation.

In addition, auditors reviewed the job descriptions listed in [Exhibit 4.1.3](#).

Exhibit 4.1.3

Job Descriptions Reviewed for Standard Four Manchester School District March 2013

Job Description	Date
Superintendent	Aug. 2010
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	Aug. 2010
Elementary School Principal	May 2012
Middle School Principal	May 2012
High School Principal	May 2012
Assistant Principal	May 2012
Data Analyst	Dec. 2009
District Grant Writer and Evaluator	Not Dated
Teacher	Not Dated
Teacher – Language Arts Curriculum Specialist	July 2011
Teacher – Language Arts Integration Specialist	2011
Teacher – Literacy/Math Intervention	July 2009
Teacher – Math Curriculum Specialist	Aug. 2012
Title I Home/School Coordinator	Not Dated
Title I Instructor	Dec. 2012

The auditors found that the job descriptions of the Language Arts Integration Specialist and the Math Curriculum Specialist direct those employees to oversee the development of assessment plans in their disciplines. The Principal's job description does not address the use of assessment data to improve student learning. The Classroom Teacher's job description does not list expectations for the use of student assessment data to inform lesson planning (see [Finding 1.3](#)).

[Exhibit 4.1.4](#) presents 15 audit characteristics of quality student assessment and program evaluation planning and the auditors' assessment of the district's approach. For the district's assessment planning to be considered adequate, at least 11 of the 15 characteristics (70 percent) must be rated as adequate.

Exhibit 4.1.4

Characteristics of a Comprehensive Student Assessment and Program Evaluation Plan and Auditors' Assessment of the District's Approach Manchester School District March 2013

Characteristic	Auditors' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Describes the philosophical framework for the design of the student assessment plan and directs both formative and summative assessment of the curriculum by course and grade in congruence with board policy. Expects ongoing formative and summative program evaluation; directs use of data to analyze group, school, program, and system student trends.	Partial	
2. Includes an explicit set of formative and summative assessment procedures to carry out the expectations outlined in the plan and in board policy. Provides for regular formative and summative assessment at all levels of the system (organization, program, and student).		X
3. Requires that formative, diagnostic assessment instruments that align to the district curriculum be administered to students frequently to give teachers information for instructional decision making. This includes information regarding which students need which learner objectives to be at the appropriate level of difficulty (e.g., provides data for differentiated instruction).		X
4. Provides a list of student assessment and program evaluation tools, purposes, subjects, type of student tested, timelines, etc.	Partial	
5. Identifies and provides direction on the use of diverse assessment strategies for multiple purposes at all levels—district, program, school, and classroom—that are both formative and summative.		X
6. Specifies the roles and responsibilities of the central office staff and school-based staff for assessing all students using designated assessment measures, and for analyzing test data.	Partial	
7. Specifies the connection(s) among district, state, and national assessments.		X
8. Specifies the overall assessment and analysis procedures used to determine curriculum effectiveness.		X
9. Requires aligned student assessment examples and tools to be placed in curriculum and assessment documents.		X
10. Specifies how equity issues will be identified and addressed using data sources; controls for possible bias.		X
11. Identifies the components of the student assessment system that will be included in program evaluation efforts and specifies how these data will be used to determine continuation, modification, or termination of a given program.		X
12. Provides for appropriate trainings for various audiences on assessment and the instructional use of assessment results.		X
13. Delineates responsibilities and procedures for <u>monitoring</u> the administration of the comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan and/or procedures.		X
14. Establishes a process for communicating and training staff in the interpretation of results, changes in state and local student achievement tests, and new trends in the student assessment field.		X
15. Specifies creation of an assessment data system that allows for the attribution of costs by program, permitting program evaluations to support program-based cost-benefit analyses.		X
Total	0	15
Percentage of Adequacy	0%	
Note: Partially Adequate counts as inadequate		

Exhibit 4.1.4 shows that the Manchester School District's approach to student assessment and program evaluation planning was not rated as adequate on any of the 15 characteristics, although three characteristics partially met audit standards.

The following observations formed the basis for auditors' ratings in Exhibit 4.1.4.

Characteristic 1: Philosophical Framework (Partially Adequate)

Board policies do not provide a philosophical framework for a student assessment process. Formative and summative assessments are being used in some instances, but there is no plan that directs their use. However, the job descriptions of the Language Arts Integration Specialist and the Math Curriculum Specialist assign the responsibility of facilitating the design and development of a comprehensive assessment plan for their subject areas. This criterion is rated as partially met and is therefore inadequate.

Characteristic 2: Formative and Summative Assessment Procedures (Inadequate)

Some school improvement plans contain examples of the use of both formative and summative assessment for evaluation purposes, but there is no district-wide direction for their use at all levels.

Characteristic 3: Formative, Diagnostic Assessment Instruments (Inadequate)

Some school improvement plans prescribe differentiated instructional methods based on formative assessment. School Improvement Grant schools use AIMSweb for that purpose, but there is no guidance for system-wide use of formative or diagnostic assessment for differentiating instruction and no plan that guides the selection, administration, scoring, analysis, and application of formative assessments.

Characteristic 4: Assessment and Program Evaluation Tools (Partially Adequate)

The Manchester School District Assessment Calendar, found in Appendix 1 of the Professional Development Master Plan, lists assessments, grade levels, and the purpose of each test. However, this list of assessments is provided so that educators may present student results on the tests as evidence of the success of their professional development activities. There is no indication that these assessments are required to be given to all students, that this list is exhaustive, or that it is part of an overall plan for assessment in the district. Program evaluation tools are not addressed in any of the other documents presented to the auditors. This criterion was partially met and is therefore inadequate.

Characteristic 5: Use of Diverse Assessment Strategies (Inadequate)

No district documents provide the level of specificity this criterion requires. This criterion is inadequate.

Characteristic 6: Roles and Responsibilities for Assessment (Partially Adequate)

Job descriptions describe some roles and responsibilities relative to assessment and analysis of data. The Data Analyst's job description lists as a core function: "The analysis and use of data to improve student achievement, inform instruction, and monitor progress toward goals." The District Grant Writer and Evaluator is to "Direct an ongoing program of evaluation for all existing federal, state, and private grants." As noted above, the Language Arts and Mathematics Curriculum Specialists are to develop assessment plans for their subject areas. However, Principals' and Teachers' job descriptions do not list key assessment responsibilities. This characteristic is partially adequate.

Characteristic 7: Connections Among Assessments (Inadequate)

The alignment of district, state, and national assessments is not adequately addressed.

Characteristic 8: Assessment and Analysis Procedures for Curriculum Effectiveness (Inadequate)

None of the documents examined provide guidance for how to use data to determine curriculum effectiveness. The Manchester School District Data Analysis Calendar provides a framework that could form the outline of a plan for using data to determine curriculum effectiveness, but it does not outline the procedures for doing so. This criterion was not met.

Characteristic 9: Aligned Assessment Examples in Documents (Inadequate)

The auditors did not identify documents that require the inclusion of aligned assessment examples in curriculum documents, although some curriculum documents did include examples (see [Findings 2.1](#) and [2.3](#)). This characteristic is rated inadequate.

Characteristic 10: Equity Issues (Inadequate)

None of the examined documents address equity issues related to assessment. This characteristic was rated as inadequate.

Characteristic 11: Use of Data for Decision Making (Inadequate)

Board policies and planning documents do not provide a foundation for a data-driven school district. Assessment practices and procedures for using data vary widely among buildings and departments. There is inadequate central administrative guidance or oversight to assure consistency, quality, and comparability. The only references to program evaluation state that it should occur. There is no specification of the methods or procedures for using assessment data to manage decision making about the programs the district offers to students. This characteristic is inadequate.

Characteristic 12: Appropriate Assessment Training (Inadequate)

The Manchester School District Data Analysis Calendar lists the activity “Coordinate and train school data teams” but does not prescribe the content, audiences, purposes, assessments, or methods involved in carrying out this training. School improvement plans indicate that the use of data is emerging in some schools, but this is not consistent across the district. This characteristic is inadequate.

Characteristic 13: Monitoring Responsibilities (Inadequate)

Board policies and job descriptions do not reference responsibilities for monitoring student assessment and program evaluation. This characteristic is inadequate.

Characteristic 14: Communication and Training (Inadequate)

District documents do not reveal a district-wide process for communicating and training staff in the new Common Core Standards or Smarter Balanced Assessments. Interview data indicated that training was developed and provided at a number of schools, but the quality and consistency of such trainings varied among schools. This characteristic is inadequate.

Characteristic 15: Assessment Data System (Inadequate)

None of the documents examined requires budget decisions to be related to student outcome data (see [Finding 5.1](#)).

The following were typical comments made by district staff members about needs relative to student assessment and program evaluation planning:

- “There’s a lack of focus from administration on assessment. They wipe their hands of it and leave it to the BLILs (Building Level Instructional Leaders).” (Administrator)
- “Assessment has not been in the forefront. Very little training has occurred in this area.” (Administrator)
- “We need a person to oversee all assessments in the district and put the data together.” (Administrator)
- “We do not have strong standardized local assessments to drive decision making in curriculum.” (Administrator)
- “There is no program evaluation. We don’t do that.” (Administrator)
- “[I would like to see] standardized local assessment for grades 1 through 9 in math and language arts as a starting point.” (Administrator)
- “We need assessments for the science and social studies texts.” (Administrator)

Additional comments made by staff members and board members reflected awareness that data and assessment do not play an adequate role in district planning and decision making:

- “We use data, but our decisions are not based on it.” (Administrator)
- “I would like to see data. We don’t have enough data to make decisions. The school board makes decisions on what they feel is good.” (Board Member)
- “Some on the board want to move to a data-driven decision making process.” (Board Member)
- “There is not an expectation to evaluate programs...so we do a minimal job with everything.” (Administrator)

Summary

The Manchester School District does not have a formal, district-wide plan that provides staff with coherent guidance for student assessment and program evaluation. Although some documents and plans include elements of assessment planning, the district lacks a comprehensive approach to providing data to be used for making decisions about the educational program.

Finding 4.2: The scope of assessment is inadequate to monitor student progress, evaluate student achievement in all areas of the curriculum and at all grade levels, and provide feedback for district planning processes.

A comprehensive student testing program provides the foundation for decisions regarding curriculum design and delivery. One aspect of the comprehensiveness of the assessment program is the extent of the taught curriculum that is formally assessed. If only part of the curriculum is assessed, decision making is based on incomplete feedback, and planning for improvement may be misguided. When the scope of assessment is inadequate, those generalizations may form an inaccurate picture of the district’s effectiveness. A comprehensive set of assessments provides ongoing, timely, and complete information that will contribute to quality control of the educational program.

In an effective testing program, student achievement is formally evaluated in every course taught within the system and at every grade level. While it is desirable to have assessment for every course offered, the audit standard is that 100 percent of core course offerings (English/language arts, math, science, and social studies) and 70 percent of all other courses are formally assessed.

To determine the scope of assessment in Manchester School District, auditors examined board policies, course listings, curriculum documents, school and district plans, and assessment lists. In addition, auditors interviewed board members and district staff about the scope of assessment in the district.

The auditors found that many areas of the curriculum are not formally assessed with either formative or summative tests. As a result, the scope of formal assessment is not adequate to provide complete and comprehensive feedback about students’ success in mastering the content of the curriculum or about the progress students are making week by week during their courses.

For this finding, a “formal assessment” is defined as an assessment that is administratively mandated in a standardized form for all of the district’s students in a grade level or course.

Please note the following related to the audit definition of formal assessments:

- Both formative and summative assessments are counted as formal assessments if they meet the criterion of administrative mandate.
- State and national examinations are considered formal assessments if they are required for all Manchester students in a grade level or course.
- Teacher-made tests are not counted as formal assessments unless they are mandated district-wide and standardized.

- Assessments that are required for all of the district's students in a particular subgroup are considered formal assessments, such as the ACCESS test for English Language Learners.
- Assessments that are given by specialists on an as-need basis to diagnose individual student's learning differences are not considered formal assessments of the curriculum.
- *Advanced Placement* examinations are counted as formal assessments by the auditors, even though they are optional, because they are standardized nationally and because many students in AP courses elect to take the exams.

While board policy states the expectation for assessing students and evaluating the outcomes, policy does not address the scope of student assessment (see [Finding 4.1](#)). Board policy falls short of requiring formative and summative evaluation of all content areas at all grades and in all subjects.

[Exhibit 4.2.1](#) lists all of the formal assessments administered in the district. The list includes assessments from three sources: locally developed tests, commercial tests purchased by the district, and state-mandated tests. The tests are classified as formative or summative. For purposes of this audit report, a formative test is one that assesses material still being taught and is designed to be diagnostic. A summative test is one that is given after instruction on the material is finished, such as a unit test or final examination.

Exhibit 4.2.1

Formal Assessments of Student Performance Manchester School District March 2013

Assessment	Type	Formative/ Summative	Description
NECAP	State Mandated	Summative	Annual tests for language arts and math administered in the fall of Grades 3-8 and 11. Each test measures curricular content for the previous grade. Annual tests for writing and science in three grades.
ACCESS	State Mandated	Formative	English language proficiency test administered to all ELL students until proficiency is attained.
NAEP	Federally Managed	Summative	Annual tests for math, reading, writing, and science in grades 4 and 8.
AIMSweb	Commercial	Formative	Computerized developmental reading tests given three times per year to all students in SIG schools and all IEP students in grades K-8. Also used in some buildings for progress monitoring. AIMSweb math tests also used in some buildings.
Gates-McGinnity	Commercial	Summative	Measures basic literacy skills in grades K-2 and vocabulary and comprehension in grades 3-5. Administered once a year.
Math Quarterly Assessments	Locally Developed	Summative	Math exam administered three times per year to all students in grades 6-8. Not given in 2012-13 school year.
Language Arts Trimester Assessments	Locally Developed	Formative	Running records are done three times per year for all students in grades K-5. Some schools monitor selected students with more frequent running records.
Math Trimester Assessments	Locally Developed	Summative	Math exam administered three times per year to all students in grades K-5.
Algebra Placement	Locally Developed	Summative	Administered in May of grade 7 to determine placement in Algebra for eighth grade.
High School Math Placement	Locally Developed	Summative	Administered in January of grade 8 to determine ninth grade math placement.
<i>Sources: Manchester School District Assessment Calendar Dates, interview data.</i>			

The school year 2012-13 is a year of transition to the Common Core Learning Standards (see [Finding 2.1](#)). Although many teachers are currently modifying their curricula, the *New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)* tests have not yet been aligned to the Common Core.

AIMSweb is not mandated universally in any grade level, but is required for special education students in grades 1 through 8, and is therefore included in the list of formal assessments. It is also required for all students in School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools.

Additional tests are listed in the Professional Development Master Plan 2011-2016, Appendix 2: Manchester School District Assessment Calendar as tests that may be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of individual professional development plans, but were not identified by administrative staff as required for all students, and therefore do not meet the audit criteria to be counted as formal assessments:

- *Idea Proficiency Tests* - May be administered throughout the school year to English Language Learners in all grades.
- *PALS* - May be administered twice a year to preschool and kindergarten students.
- *Schlagal Spelling* - May be administered three times per year in grades 1 and 2.
- *District Writing Assessment* - May be administered three times per year in grades 1 through 8.

In addition, there is a document titled Manchester School District Writing Rubric, Grades 6-12. No indication was provided that it is a required formative assessment.

The auditors then determined the curriculum areas at each grade level that are assessed by the tests listed in [Exhibit 4.2.1](#). That information is displayed in [Exhibit 4.2.2](#). *NECAP* tests are listed in the grade of the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) being measured, which is prior to the grade in which the test is administered. Thus, for example, “Grade 3 Writing” measures mastery of the grade 2 writing GLEs and is counted here as a grade 2 test.

Each of the *NECAP* science tests measures content spanning multiple grades. The tests are administered in the fall of grades 4, 8, and 11. Together, they assess content from grades K through 11 and are listed in [Exhibit 4.2.2](#) in all of those grades because feedback exists for each grade’s curriculum. However, only the teachers in grades 4, 8, and 11 receive feedback about their current students’ mastery of the previous year’s science content (indicated with “◀S”).

Exhibit 4.2.2

Formal Assessments Administered by Grade Level and Curriculum Area Manchester School District March 2013

Test and Curriculum Area	Grade													
	P	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
NECAP														
Reading				S	S	S	S	S	S			S		
Math				S	S	S	S	S	S			S		
Writing						S			S			S		
Science		S	S	S	S	◀S	S	S	S	◀S	S	S	◀S	
ACCESS		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
NAEP														
Reading						S				S				
Math						S				S				
Science						S				S				
AIMSweb Reading		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O				
Gates-McGinnity		D	D	D	D	D	D							

Exhibit 4.2.2 (continued) Formal Assessments Administered by Grade Level and Curriculum Area Manchester School District March 2013														
Test and Curriculum Area	Grade													
	P	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Language Arts Trimester Assessments		D	D	D	D	D	D							
Math Trimester Assessments		D	D	D	D	D	D							
Math Placement									D	D				
AP														
English														O
Math														O
Science													O	O
Social Studies													O	O
Art														O
World Languages														O
Key: S = Required state assessment; D = Required district assessment; O = Optional or given to select students; Blank cell = No formal assessment given														
Sources: Manchester School District Assessment Calendar Dates, Interview data, NECAP website														

Exhibit 4.2.2 indicates the following:

- There is no formal assessment of social studies in any grade level, other than as an option for AP courses.
- Science is only formally assessed by state and national summative annual tests.
- NECAPs and AP tests are the only formal assessments administered in grades 9-12.

The presence of formal assessment for each core subject at each grade level is summarized in Exhibit 4.2.3.

Exhibit 4.2.3

Scope of Formal Assessment by Grade Level in Core Curriculum Areas Manchester School District March 2013

Core Curriculum Area	Grade												
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Mathematics	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■		
Science	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Reading	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■		
Writing					■			■			■		
Social Studies													
Key: ■ = Formally assessed; Blank cell = Not formally assessed													

As noted in Exhibit 4.2.3:

- Math, science, and reading are tested in grades K-8 and 10. Science is also tested in grades 9 and 11.
- Writing is assessed in grades 4, 7, and 10.
- Science is the only subject formally tested in grades 9 and 11.
- Only optional AP tests are given to students in grade 12, as indicated in Exhibit 4.2.2.

Exhibit 4.2.4 summarizes the scope of formal assessment in grades K-5. For the elementary grades, auditors consider a “course” to be a subject in one grade level, such as fourth grade science.

Exhibit 4.2.4

Scope of Elementary Curriculum Areas Formally Assessed Manchester School District March 2013

Content Areas	Number of Courses Offered	Courses with Formative Assessment		Courses with Summative Assessment		Total Courses Formally Assessed	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Academic Core Courses							
Mathematics	6	0	0	6	100	6	100
Science	6	0	0	6	100	6	100
Reading	6	6	100	6	100	6	100
Writing	6	0	0	1	17	1	17
Social Studies	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Academic Core	30	6	20%	19	47%	19	47%
Non-core Courses							
Art	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Music	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Physical Education	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Health	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Non-core Courses	24	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Scope of Elementary Assessment	54	6	11%	19	35%	19	35%

The information in Exhibit 4.2.4 shows the following:

- Fewer than half of the elementary core academic courses are formally assessed (47 percent). The scope of assessment does not reach the audit standard of 100 percent.
- Social studies courses are not formally assessed.
- Writing is only formally assessed at one elementary grade level.
- None of the non-core courses are formally assessed, either formatively or summatively, at the elementary level.
- The scope of the total elementary curriculum is 35 percent.

Exhibit 4.2.5 summarizes the scope of formal assessment in grades 6–8.

Exhibit 4.2.5

Scope of Formal Assessment by Course in Middle Grades Manchester School District March 2013

Content Area	Number of Courses Offered	Courses with Formative Assessment		Courses with Summative Assessment		Total Courses Formally Assessed	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Academic Core Courses							
Social Studies	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
English Language Arts	3	3	100	3	100	3	100
Science	3	0	0	3	100	3	100
Mathematics	3	0	0	3	100	3	100
Total Academic Core	12	3	25%	9	75%	9	75%
Non-core Courses							
Art	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chorus	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Band	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Orchestra	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family and Consumer Sciences	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Physical Education	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tech Ed	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Computer Literacy/Keyboarding	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Music	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multisensory Reading	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Language Arts Essentials	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stay Program	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Non-core Courses	36	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Scope of Middle School Assessment	48	3	6%	9	19%	9	19%

The information in Exhibit 4.2.5 shows:

- Three-fourths of the core academic courses in Manchester’s middle schools have formal assessment , which does not reach the audit expectation of 100 percent.
- No middle school social studies is formally assessed.
- There is no formal assessment in any non-core course in Manchester’s middle schools.
- Overall, fewer than one fifth (19 percent) of the middle school courses have formal assessments.

Exhibit 4.2.6 summarizes the scope of formal assessment at the high school level. During building visits and interviews, auditors received conflicting reports about the commonality among high school tests and the consistency of implementation district-wide. Due to the lack of clarity around the topic, course exams are not included in the scope of formal assessment in Exhibit 4.2.6.

Exhibit 4.2.6

**Scope of Formal Assessment by Course in High School
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Content Area	Number of Courses Offered	Courses with Formative Assessment		Courses with Summative Assessment		Total Courses Formally Assessed	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Required Core Academics							
English/Language Arts	40	0	0	3	8	3	8
Mathematics	18	0	0	4	22	4	22
Science	18	0	0	8	44	8	44
Social Studies	34	0	0	5	15	5	15
Total Academic Core	110	0	0%	20	18%	20	18%
Non-core Courses							
Art	27	0	0	1	4	1	4
Business	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Extended Learning Opportunities	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family and Consumer Science	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Health / PE	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Music	19	0	0	0	0	0	0
Technology Education	16	0	0	0	0	0	0
World Languages	25	0	0	2	8	2	8
Library Science	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Naval Science Dept.	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
English Language Learners	4	4	100	0	0	4	100
Jobs for NH Graduates	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special Education Dept.	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
School of Technology	52	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Non-core Courses	206	4	2%	3	1%	7	3%
Total Scope of High School Assessment	316	4	1%	23	7%	27	9%

The information in [Exhibit 4.2.6](#) shows that:

- Overall, less than one tenth of the total high school courses in Manchester have formal assessments of any kind.
- Core courses have a scope of assessment of only 18 percent.
- Formal assessment in non-core courses is limited to *AP* tests and the *ACCESS* exam for English Language Learners, both of which are only administered to selected groups of students.

Exhibit 4.2.7 summarizes the data considered by auditors in rating the adequacy of the scope of formal assessment in the Manchester School District.

Exhibit 4.2.7

Summary of K-12 Scope of Assessment Manchester School District March 2013

School Level	Academic Core Courses			Non-Core Courses			Meets Audit Standard
	# offered	# tested	% tested	# offered	# tested	% tested	
Elementary Grades	30	19	47	24	0	0	No
Middle Grades	12	9	75	36	0	0	No
High School	110	20	18	206	7	3	No
Total District Scope of Assessment	152	43	28	208	36	17%	No

The Manchester School District administers formal assessments in 28 percent of the district's core academic courses and 17 percent of non-core courses, and therefore does not meet the audit standard for the scope of assessment, which expects formal assessment in 100 percent of core courses and 70 percent of non-core courses.

During interviews with auditors, several staff members made comments concerning their perceptions of the scope of assessment in the district. The following are representative:

- “We had district-wide quarterly assessments in reading and math, but they’re gone. There are no district-wide exams for middle schools.” (Administrator)
- [High school common assessments?] “As written, yes. As practiced, no. It varies from school to school and teacher to teacher.” (Administrator)
- “We have district-wide assessments in K-5 Language Arts and Math that are locally developed, but they’re not strong enough to guide instructional decisions.” (Administrator)
- “There is no common assessment for social studies.” (Administrator)

Summary

The scope of assessment in the Manchester School District is inadequate at all levels in both the core academic areas and in the non-core offerings. The overall lack of formal course assessments impedes curricular and instructional decision making and the evaluation of district programs.

Finding 4.3: Overall academic performance in the Manchester School District has not shown a steady pattern of improvement over the past four years, and performance among schools varies substantially. Performance disparities among student subgroups are not moving toward parity.

Tests and other performance measures provide district stakeholders with information about the effectiveness of curriculum and instructional approaches. Predictive techniques, such as the computation of “years to parity” estimate performance gaps among student groups and predict the rate and direction of progress for student subgroups over time. By making connections across time and among different student groups, school leaders can identify trends in demographics and student achievement that will help them focus their efforts and resources on the areas of greatest need.

New Hampshire participates in a regional testing program that provides a wide array of charts and graphs of state test data for districts to use in determining the success of their instructional programs. Toward that end, auditors reviewed Manchester's achievement trends by examining patterns of achievement in the district's *New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) results*. Auditors found that the achievement of Manchester's students, as a whole, has flattened over the last four years. However, the overall pattern masks considerable variation among buildings. Some schools are trending upward, while others are remaining at the same level or trending downward. The performance of different subgroups of students also varies considerably. Performance of non-

White students, IEP students, and English Language Learners in most buildings is losing ground compared to that of their White counterparts who do not have IEPs and who are not eligible for ELL services.

District NECAP Performance

NECAP assessments are administered throughout the state to students in grades 3-8 and 11 in mathematics and reading. Writing is assessed in grades 5, 8, and 11, and science tests are given in grades 4, 8, and 11. [Exhibits 4.3.1](#) and [4.3.2](#) show the district performance on *NECAP* reading and math assessments for the past four years. The two exhibits represent students from all of the grades tested in all of the schools.

Exhibit 4.3.1

**Percentage of Students Proficient on NECAP Reading/English Tests
Aggregate of all Buildings and Grades
Manchester School District
2007–2012**

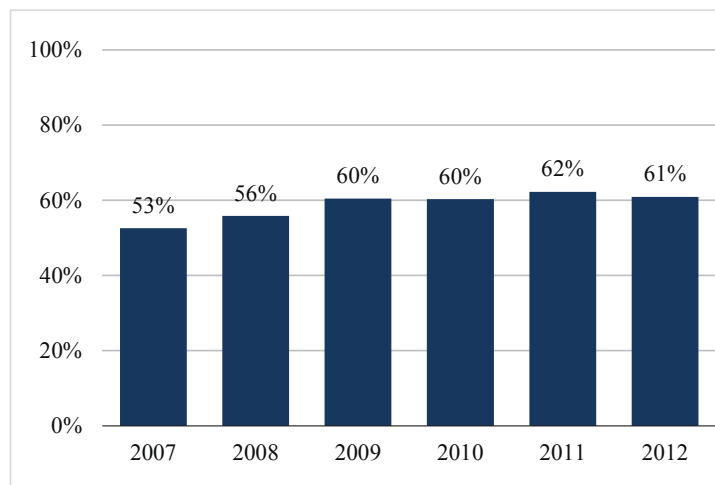
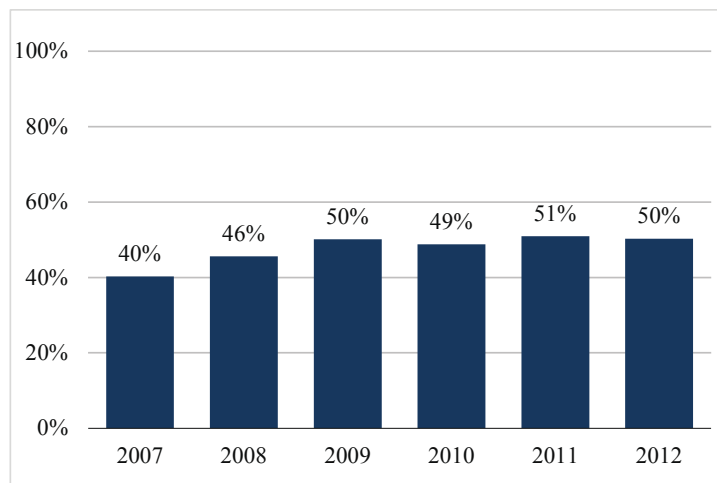


Exhibit 4.3.2

**Percentage of Students Proficient on NECAP Math Tests
Aggregate of all Buildings and Grades
Manchester School District
2007–2012**



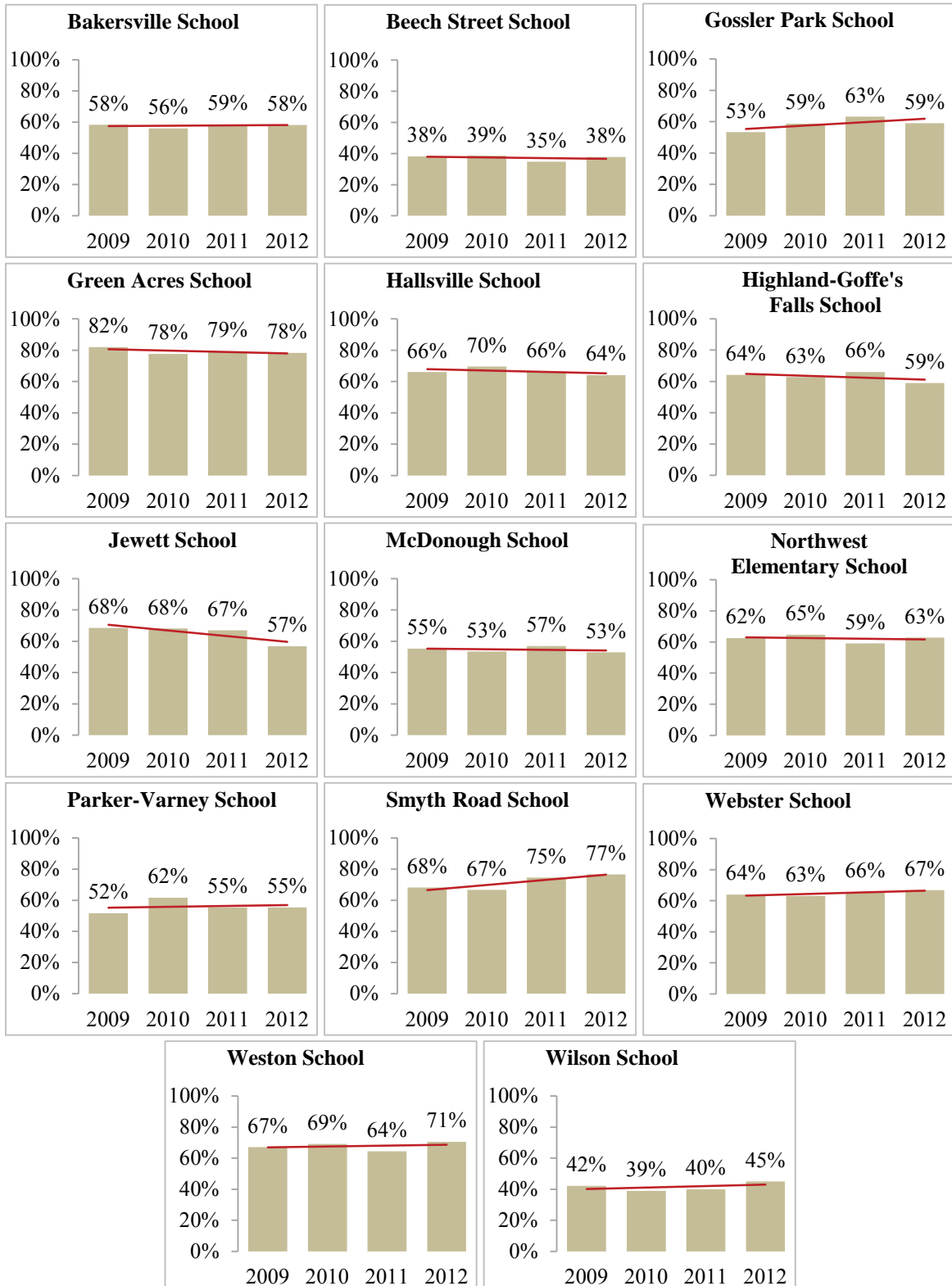
The following observations can be made from Exhibits 4.3.1 and 4.3.2:

- In both subjects, scores were increasing in 2007 and 2008, but have plateaued since 2009.
- Overall, more students are proficient in reading than in math. The size of the difference between the two subjects has been fairly stable since 2007.
- Approximately four out of every 10 students in Manchester do not read at the proficiency levels expected in their grades.
- Half of the student population is not able to complete the math problems that are expected at their grade levels.

Student achievement results as well as demographic characteristics vary substantially among district schools. Exhibit 4.3.3 compares *NECAP* reading scores among district schools for the last four years. Each graph represents all of the students tested with all grades combined. The red trend lines indicate the overall direction of the scores.

Exhibit 4.3.3

Percentage Proficient on NECAP Reading Tests Aggregate of All Grades at Elementary Schools Manchester School District 2009–2012



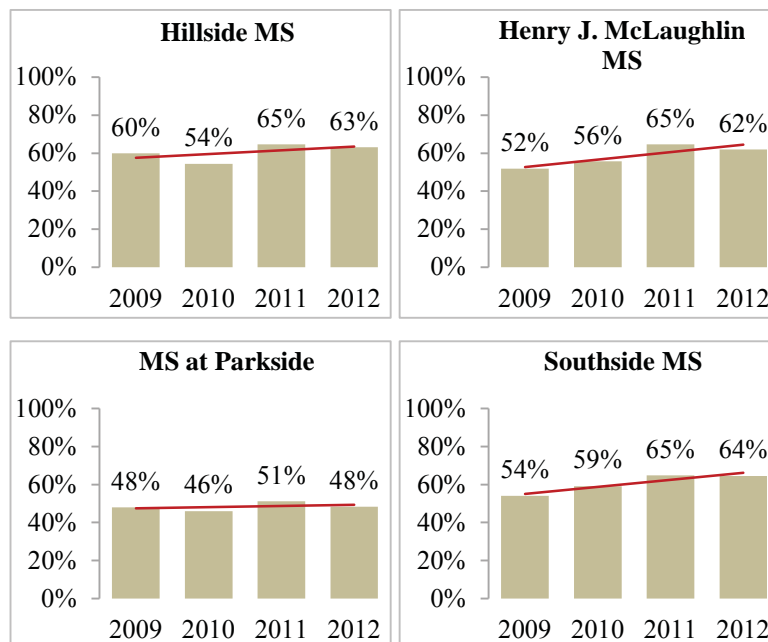
The following observations about elementary reading achievement can be made from [Exhibit 4.4.3](#):

- In 2012 most of the schools achieved between 53 and 67 percent of their students at proficiency. Smyth Road and Green Acres are higher (77 and 78 percent proficient), and Beech Street is substantially lower (38 percent).
- The two highest achieving schools were only one percentage point apart in 2012. However, Green Acres arrived at that score by trending down from a higher score, while Smyth Road has improved from a lower score.
- Overall, the trends are fairly flat. Seven schools are trending slightly upward, two are flat, and five are trending slightly downward.

[Exhibit 4.3.4](#) shows reading performance in the district's middle schools for the past four years.

Exhibit 4.3.4

Percentage Proficient on NECAP Reading Tests Aggregate of All Grades at Middle Schools Manchester School District 2009–2012



The following observations about middle school reading achievement can be made from the charts in [Exhibit 4.3.4](#):

- In 2012, three of the middle schools have from 62 to 64 percent of their students at proficiency. Parkside has 48 percent of its students at proficiency on the *NECAP* reading test.
- In the three schools with higher rates of proficiency, the trend is upward. Southside and McLaughlin have increased by 10 percentage points since 2009.
- At Parkside, the percentage at proficiency has not changed. As a result, the difference between Parkside and the other three schools has increased.

Exhibit 4.3.5 shows *NECAP* reading proficiency at the district's high schools.

Exhibit 4.3.5

**Percentage Proficient on NECAP Reading Tests
High Schools
Manchester School District
2009–2012**

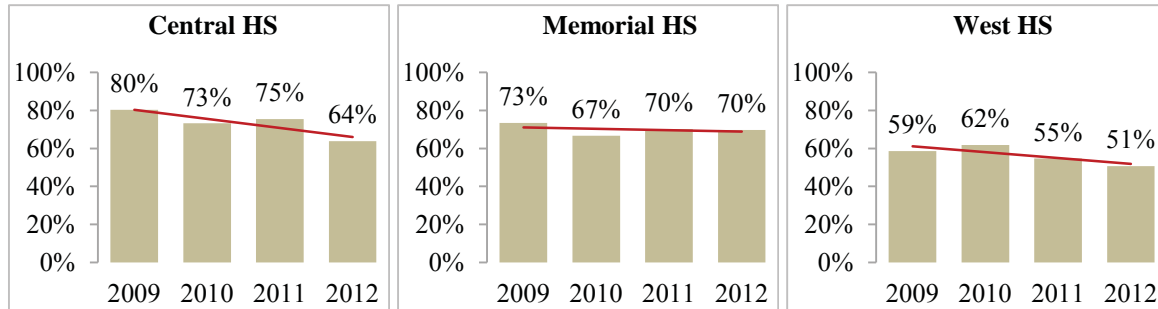


Exhibit 4.3.5 indicates the following:

- In all three high schools, the percentage of students who are proficient on the *NECAP* English test has decreased over the last four years.
- The four-year trend at Memorial High School is slightly downward, but the percentage proficient did not decrease from 2011 to 2012.
- The rate of decrease is steepest for Central, which has decreased by 16 percent since 2009.
- Overall, proficiency is lower at West than at the other two high schools.

Exhibit 4.3.6 compares the percentage of math proficiency among elementary schools.

Exhibit 4.3.6

Percentage Proficient on NECAP Math Tests Aggregate of All Grades at Elementary Schools Manchester School District 2009–2012

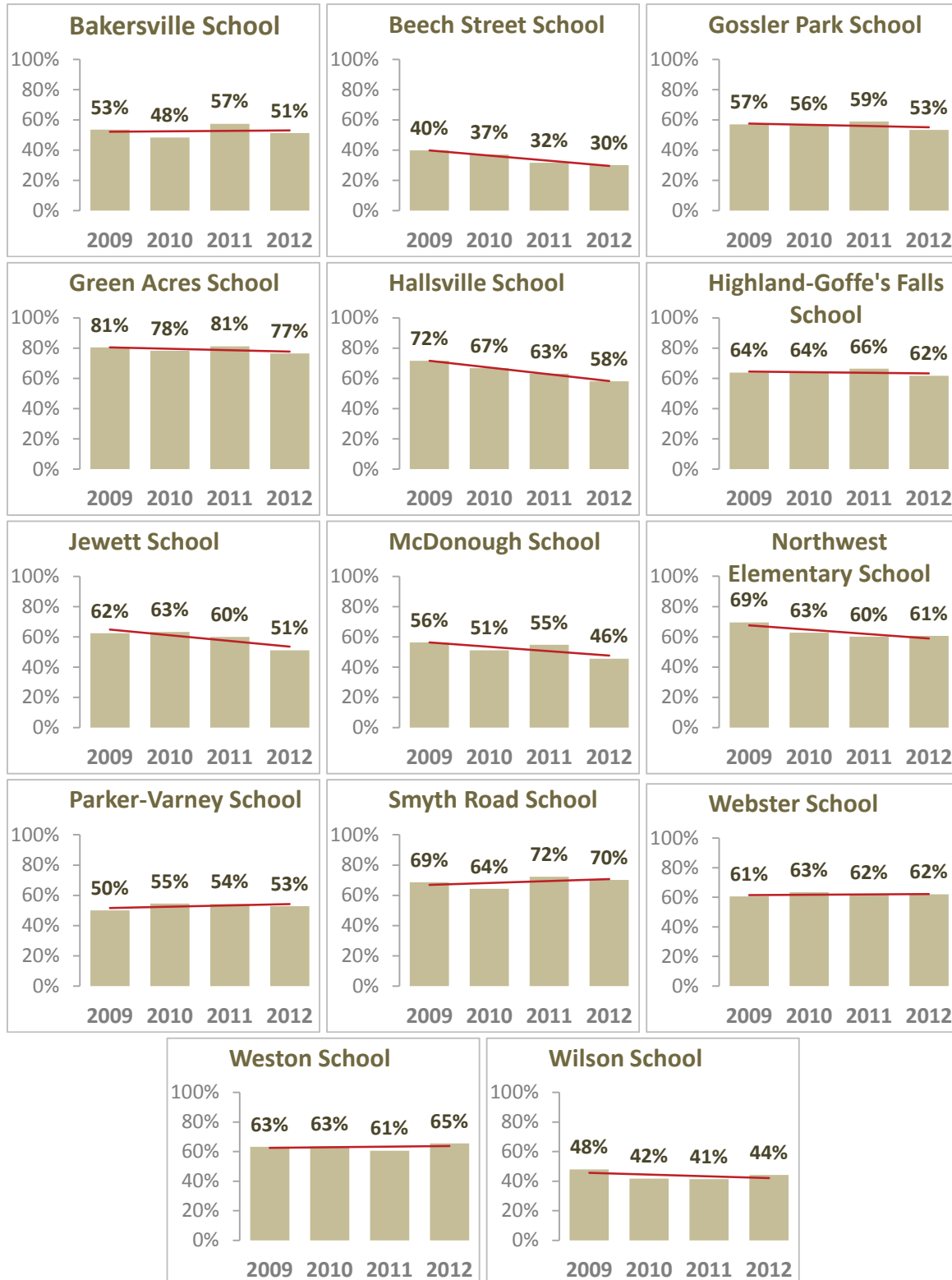


Exhibit 4.3.6 demonstrates the wide range of elementary math achievement among district schools:

- In 2012, math proficiency ranged from 30 percent of students proficient at Beech Street to 77 percent at Green Acres.
- Ten (10) of the schools are trending downward. Of those 10, Beech Street, Hallsville, Jewett, and McDonough have decreased by 10 or more percentage points since 2009.
- Four of the schools are trending slightly upward. None of the schools has increased by more than three percentage points in math proficiency since 2009.

Exhibit 4.3.7 presents *NECAP* math proficiency at the middle schools.

Exhibit 4.3.7

Percentage Proficient on NECAP Math Tests Aggregate of All Grades at Middle Schools Manchester School District 2009–2012

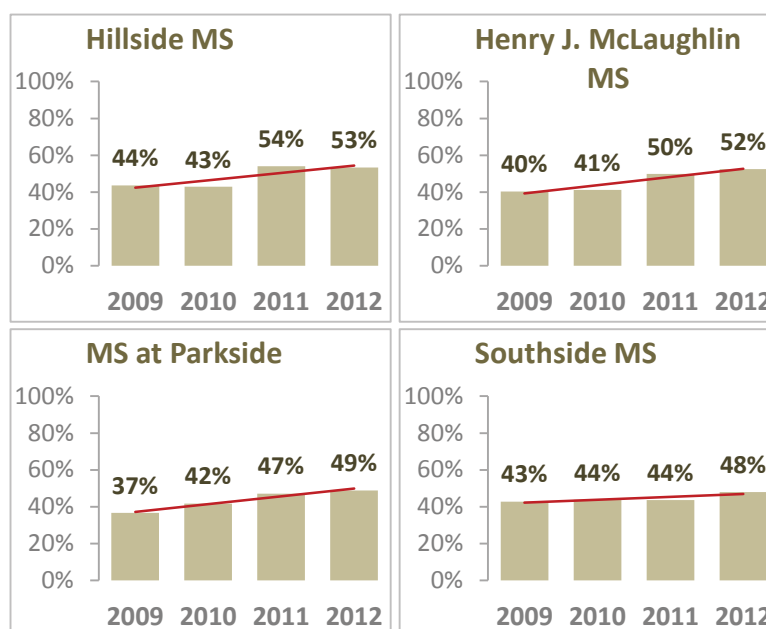
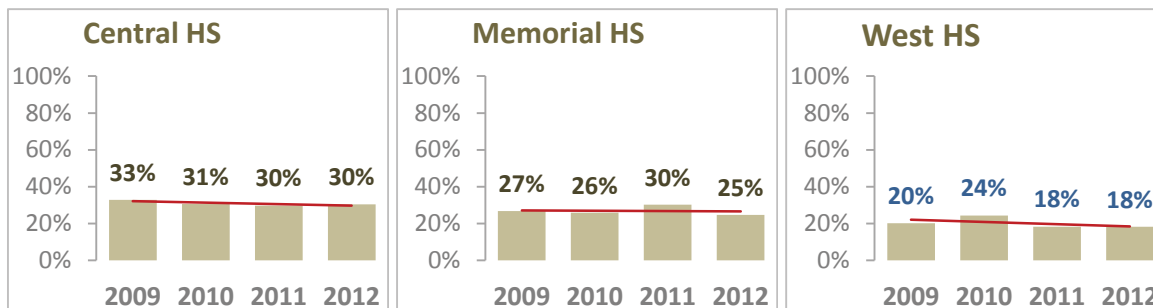


Exhibit 4.3.7 shows the following:

- In 2012, roughly half of the district's middle school students were proficient on the *NECAP* math test.
- All four middle schools have similar patterns of achievement levels and upward four-year trends.
- Henry J. McLaughlin and Parkside have the steepest upward trends. Both schools have improved their math proficiency by 12 percentage points since 2009.

Exhibit 4.3.8 presents the percentages of students proficient in math at the district high schools.

Exhibit 4.3.8
Percentage Proficient on NECAP Math Tests
High Schools
Manchester School District
2009–2012



The following observations can be made about Exhibit 4.3.8:

- Overall, high school math proficiency is low. In 2012, roughly one-fourth of the district's high school students scored proficient on the *NECAP* math test.
- Math proficiency rates in 2012 range from 18 percent at West High School to 30 percent at Central High School.
- The direction of the trend in all three high schools is slightly downward, indicating that fewer and fewer students are proficient on each year's test.

The following general observations are noted when collectively comparing all of the grade levels and subjects shown in Exhibits 4.3.1 through 4.3.8.

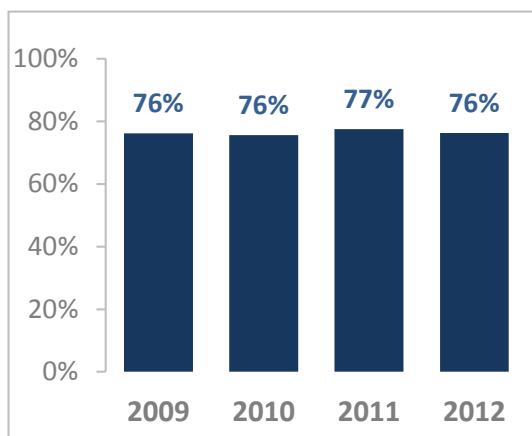
- There is no clear pattern of achievement. In both reading and math, some schools are trending up, some are flat, and some are trending down.
- The direction of change is not necessarily correlated with whether the scores, overall, are high or low. Among the lower-performing schools, some are improving and others are falling behind. The same is true for higher-performing schools.
- In both subjects, some trends are steeper than others. Some schools are trending up or down rapidly, while others are changing only a small amount per year.
- All four middle schools are trending upward in both subjects, with the single exception of reading at the Middle School at Parkside, which is not changing.
- All three high schools are trending down in both subjects.
- Four elementary schools are trending up in both subjects: Parker-Varney, Smyth Road, Webster, and Weston.
- Five elementary schools are trending down in both subjects: Green Acres, Hallsville, Highland-Goffe's Falls, Jewett, and McDonough.

These data make it clear that the education a student in Manchester receives depends, in part, on which school the student happens to attend. In a district with a high mobility rate, these differences are of particular concern, as they create inequity for students who transfer between schools during a school year (see Finding 3.4). Exhibit 3.4.6 indicated that the percentage of students eligible for free and/or reduced price meals varied from 20 to over 93 percent. Ethnicity and socioeconomic status are predictors of student test performance when the written, taught, and assessed curricula are not aligned.

Comparison of Student Subgroups

Substantial achievement gaps were found among student subgroups. The comparison group used consists of students who have three characteristics: they are White, they do not have IEPs, and they do not currently qualify for ELL services. [Exhibit 4.3.9](#) shows the comparison group's performance for the last four years in reading and math.

Exhibit 4.3.9
Comparison Group Percentage Proficient
on NECAP Reading/English Tests
Manchester School District
2009–2012



[Exhibit 4.3.9](#) demonstrates that the comparison group's performance on *NECAP* reading tests has remained flat for these four years, which mirrors the pattern of the overall district performance shown in [Exhibit 4.3.1](#). However, the percentage of students who are proficient is higher in the comparison group than in the district-wide aggregate.

[Exhibit 4.3.10](#) shows the district-wide performance gap in reading scores between three different subgroups of students in comparison to the comparison group. The three subgroups are non-White students, students with IEPs, and students who qualify for ELL services. The bars in these charts do not represent the percentage of students who were proficient, but the difference between the subgroup's percentage proficient and the comparison group's percentage proficient. A small bar shows a small gap, and a longer bar shows a wider gap. The grey line represents the comparison group's achievement level as a starting point for the bars. Since the comparison group was, by design, chosen to be the students who often score highest on tests, it is not unexpected that most of the bars extend downward, indicating that the subgroup's achievement was lower than the comparison groups. The red line indicates the overall trend of the gaps. If the red line slopes upward, the gap is closing. If the red line rises to meet the grey line, that subgroup has achieved parity with the comparison group. Since some upward slopes are steeper than others, not all schools that are improving are doing so at the same rate. The trend lines are extended two years into the future to indicate which groups are improving quickly enough to reach parity within that time frame.

Exhibit 4.3.10

Gap Between Subgroups and Comparison Group NECAP Reading Tests Aggregate of All Schools and Grades Manchester School District 2009–2012

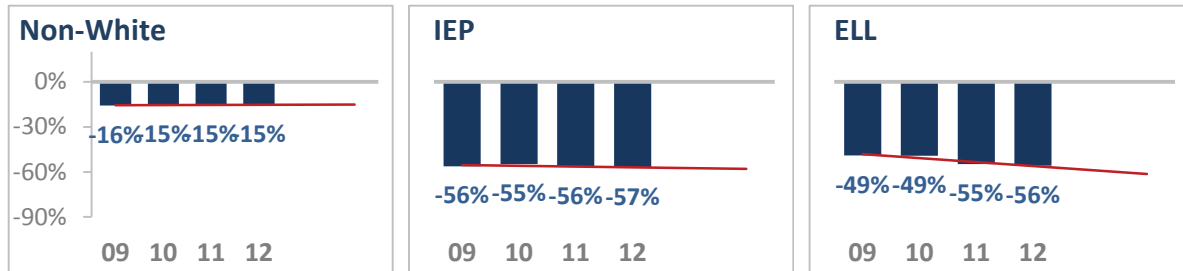


Exhibit 4.3.10 lists the following observations about district-wide aggregates on the *NECAP* reading test:

- The gaps between non-White students and the comparison group are smaller than for IEP students or ELL students.
- The trend for gaps of non-White students and IEP students are nearly flat, indicating that they are not moving either closer to or further from the comparison group.
- The gaps between ELL students and the comparison group are growing wider. As a district-wide average, EL students are falling further behind.

Exhibits 4.3.11 shows the same comparison separately for each elementary school's reading performance.

Exhibit 4.3.11

Gap Between Subgroups and Comparison Group Elementary Schools NECAP Reading Tests Manchester School District 2009–2012

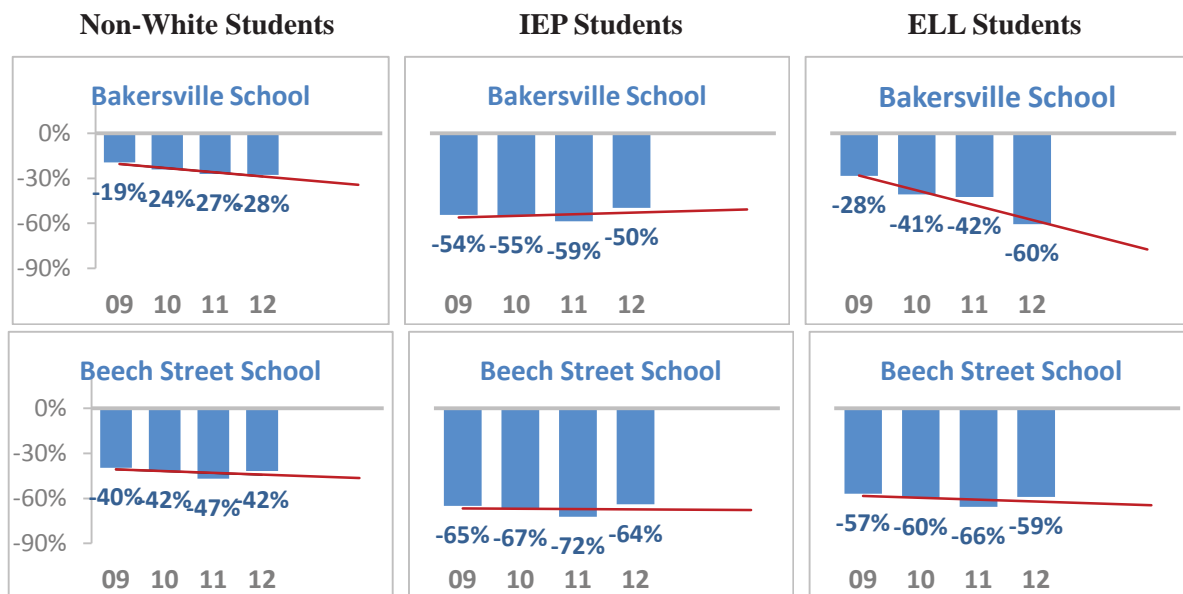


Exhibit 4.3.11 (continued)
Gap Between Subgroups and Comparison Group
Elementary Schools
NECAP Reading Tests
Manchester School District
2009–2012

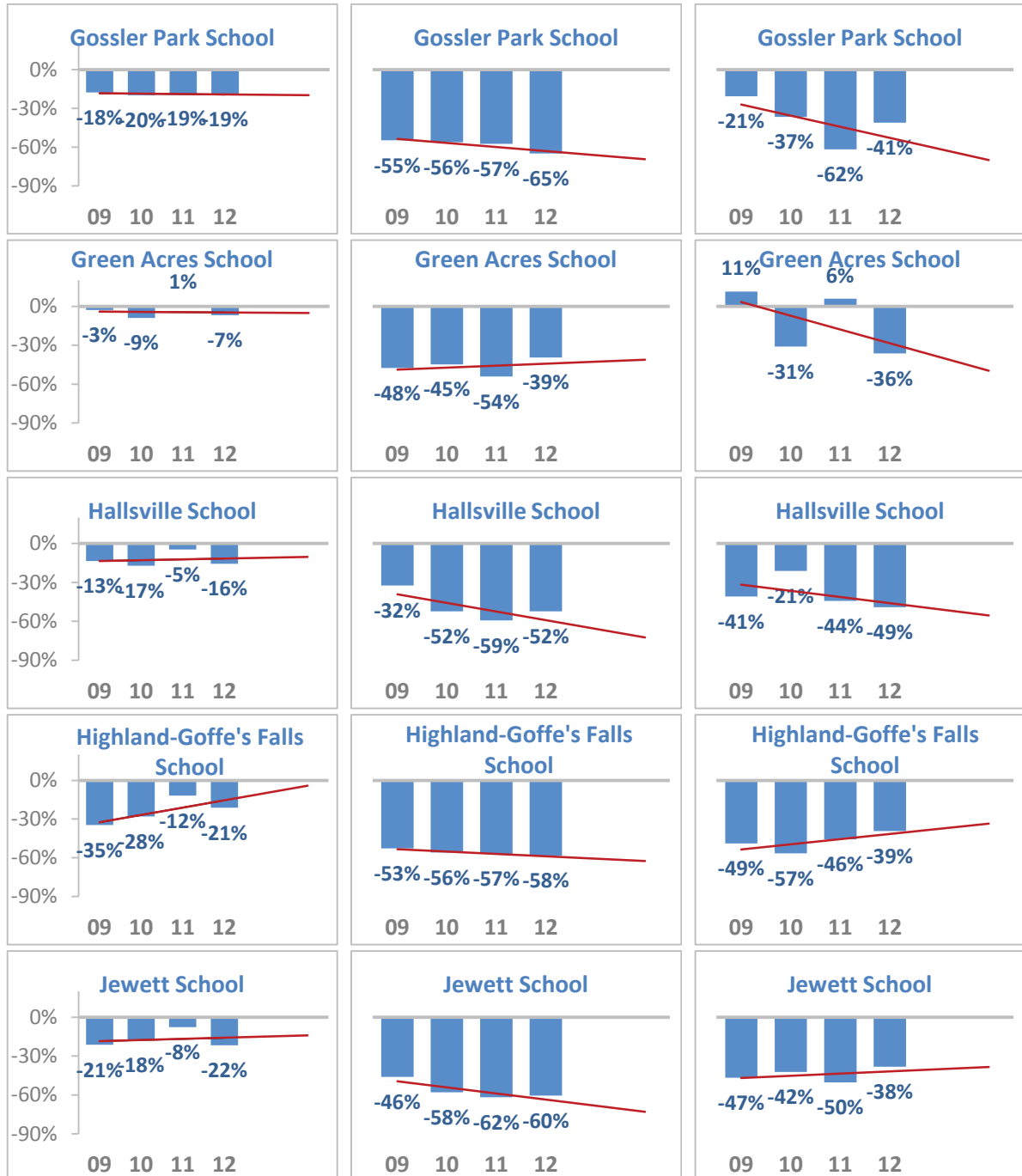


Exhibit 4.3.11 (continued)
Gap Between Subgroups and Comparison Group
Elementary Schools
NECAP Reading Tests
Manchester School District
2009–2012

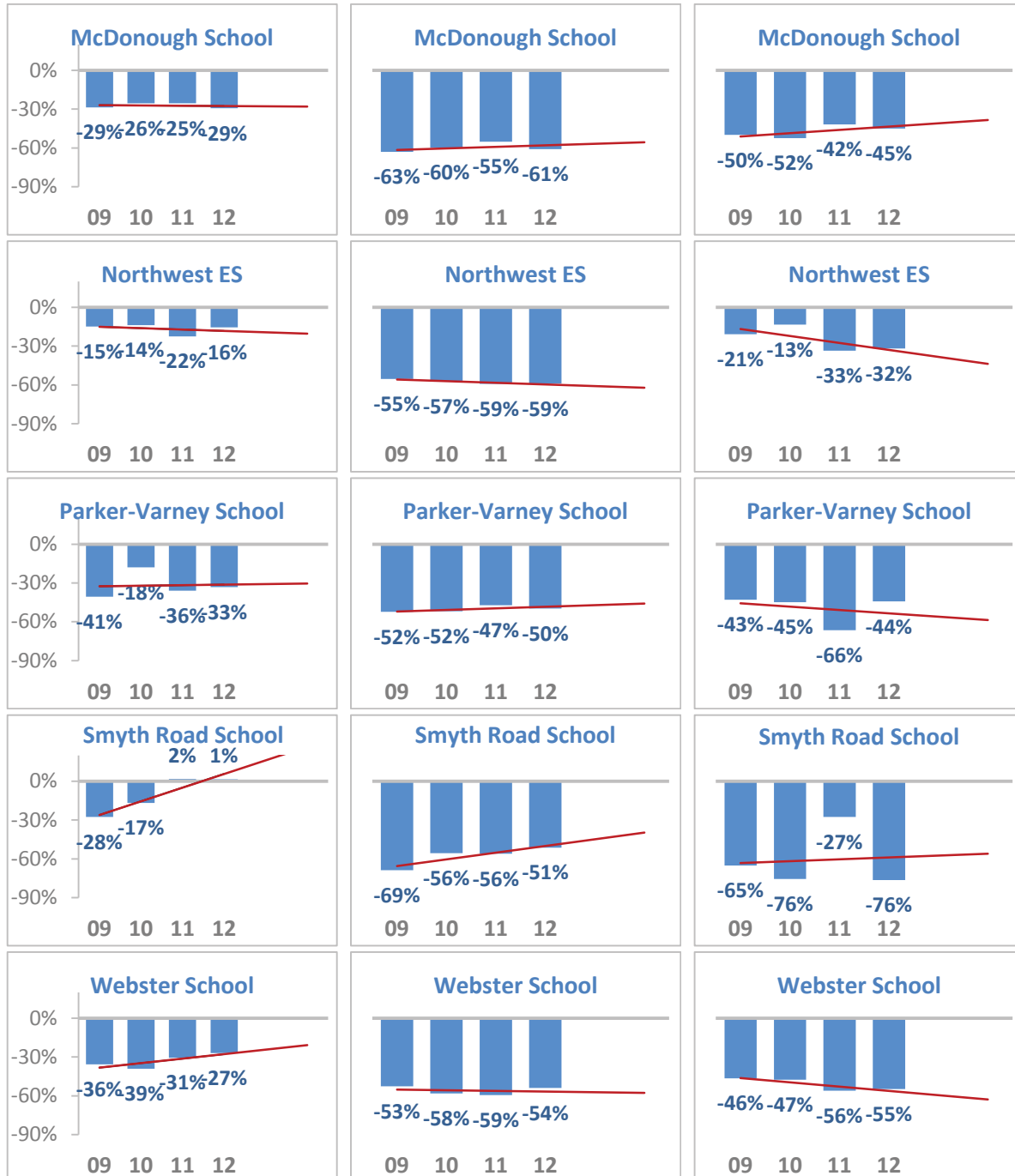


Exhibit 4.3.11 (continued)
Gap Between Subgroups and Comparison Group
Elementary Schools
NECAP Reading Tests
Manchester School District
2009–2012

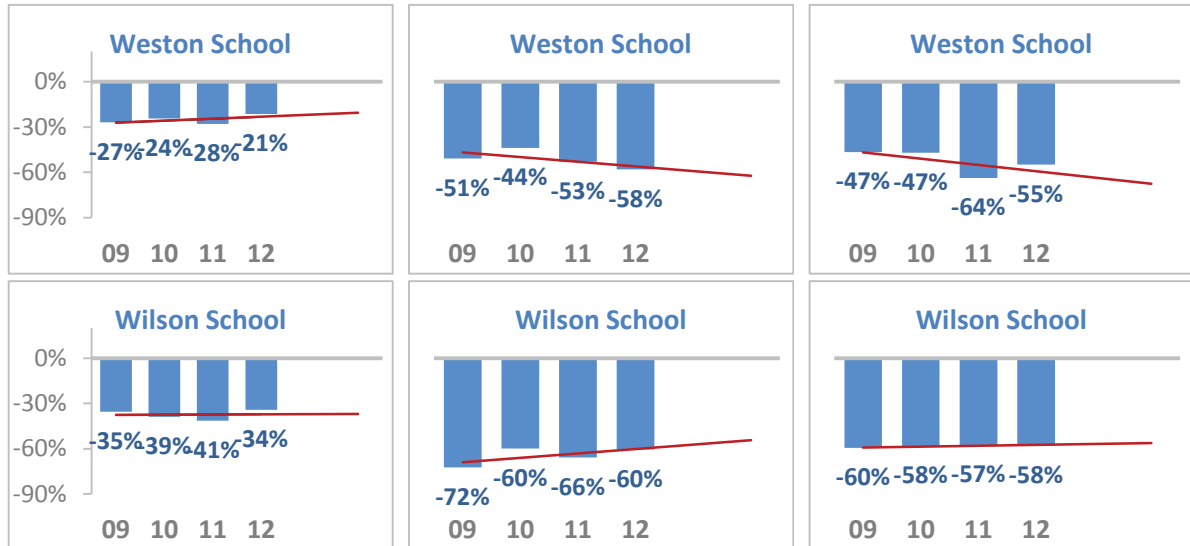


Exhibit 4.3.11 indicates the following:

- Non-White students in seven schools are moving toward parity with the comparison group, although only Smyth Road shows a trend that would close the gap by 2014. Highland-Goffe's Falls would close the gap by 2015 if the present trend were maintained.
- Non-White students in five elementary schools are moving away from parity with the comparison group.
- IEP students are moving toward parity with the comparison group in six schools, and away from parity in seven schools. None of the upward trends would close the gap by 2014.
- ELL students are moving away from parity in nine schools, and toward parity in five schools. In some cases, the downward trend is steep.

Exhibit 4.3.12 shows the gaps of subgroup reading performance and the comparison group at the middle school level

Exhibit 4.3.12
Gap Between Subgroups and Comparison Group
Middle Schools
NECAP Reading Tests
Manchester School District
2009–2012



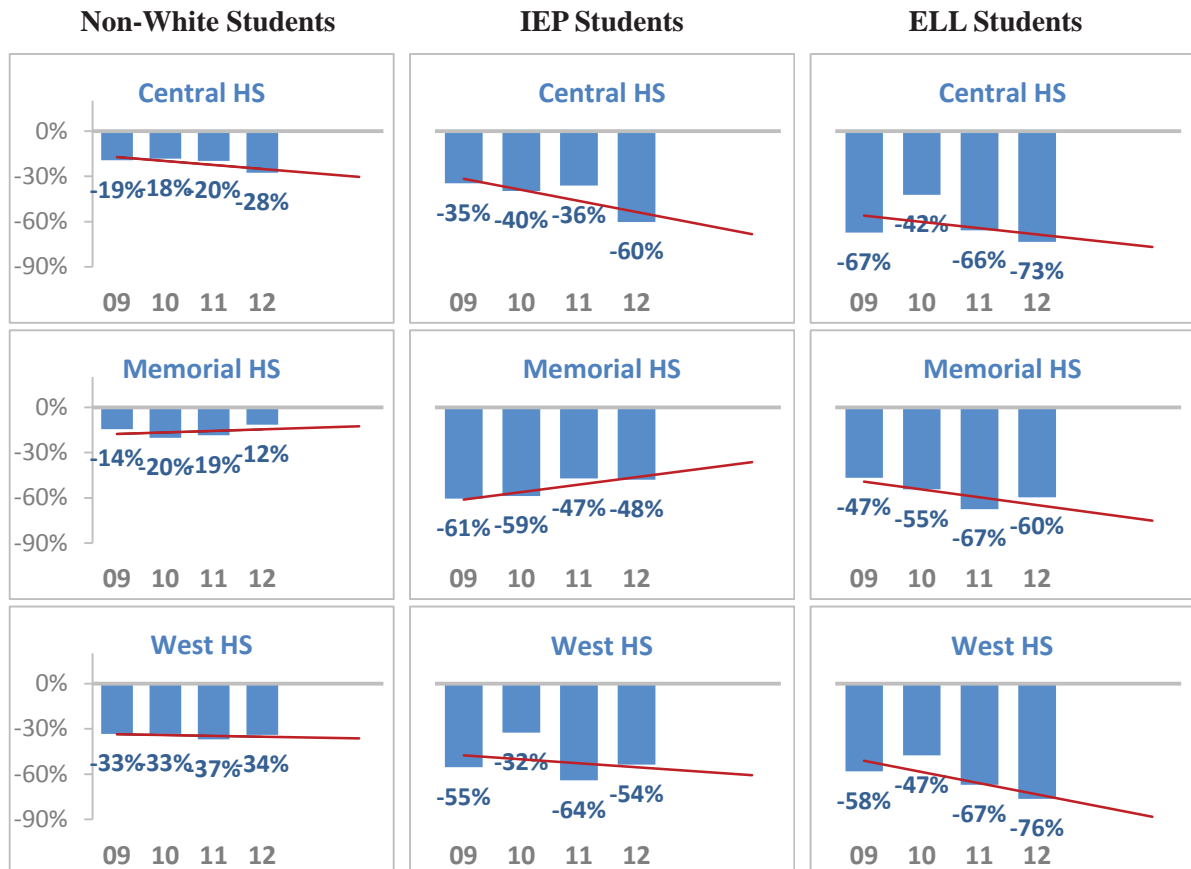
Exhibit 4.3.12 demonstrates:

- Non-White students are closing the gap with the comparison group in three of the district's middle schools. At Parkside, non-White students are falling further behind the comparison group.
- At Southside, IEP students are gradually moving toward parity. At Hillside, they are falling further behind the comparison group. At Parkside and McLaughlin Schools, the trend line is flat, showing that IEP students are neither approaching nor falling behind the comparison group.
- The gap between ELL students and the comparison group is widening in three of the buildings. At McLaughlin MS, the gap is decreasing marginally.

Exhibit 4.3.13 shows the gaps between subgroups and the comparison group in high school reading.

Exhibit 4.3.13

Gap Between Subgroups and Comparison Group High Schools NECAP Reading Tests Manchester School District 2009–2012



Based on Exhibit 4.3.13, the following observations about achievement gaps in high school reading can be made.

- Subgroups are falling behind the comparison group in all but two of the comparisons shown in this exhibit. Both of the gap-closing trends are at Memorial (non-White students and IEP students).
- At West, the four-year gap trend between IEP students and the comparison group is widening, but the gap narrowed by 10 percent from 2011 to 2012.
- ELL students are falling steeply behind the comparison group in all three high schools.

Exhibits 4.3.14 through 4.3.18 show the same comparisons for math results. Exhibit 4.3.14 shows the comparison group's proficiency on *NECAP* math assessments.

Exhibit 4.3.14

Percentage Proficient on NECAP Math Tests Comparison Group Manchester School District 2009–2012

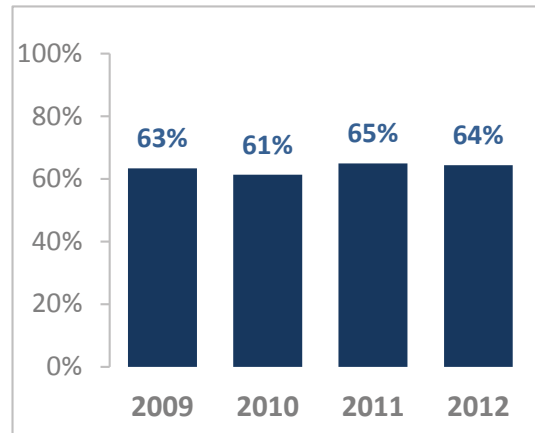


Exhibit 4.3.14 shows that the comparison group's math performance has not shown a consistent increase or decrease since 2009.

Exhibit 4.3.15 demonstrates the district-wide achievement gaps in math between non-White students, IEP students, English Language Learners, and the comparison group.

Exhibit 4.3.15

Gap Between Subgroups and Comparison Group NECAP Math Tests Aggregate of All Schools and Grades Manchester School District 2009–2012

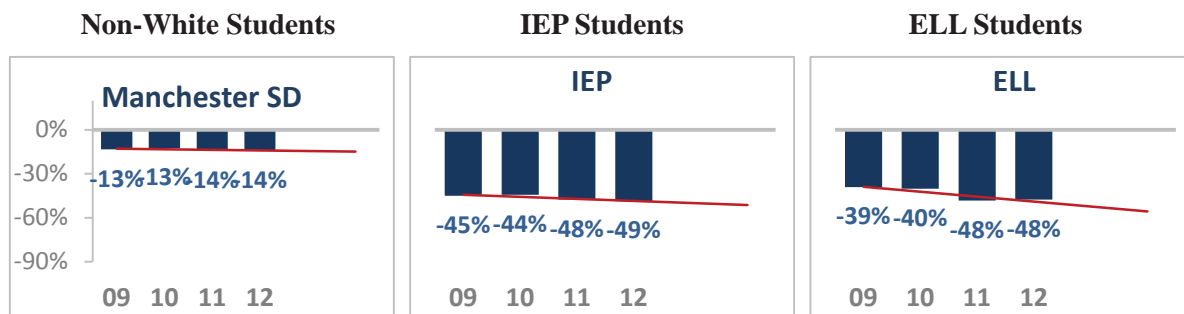


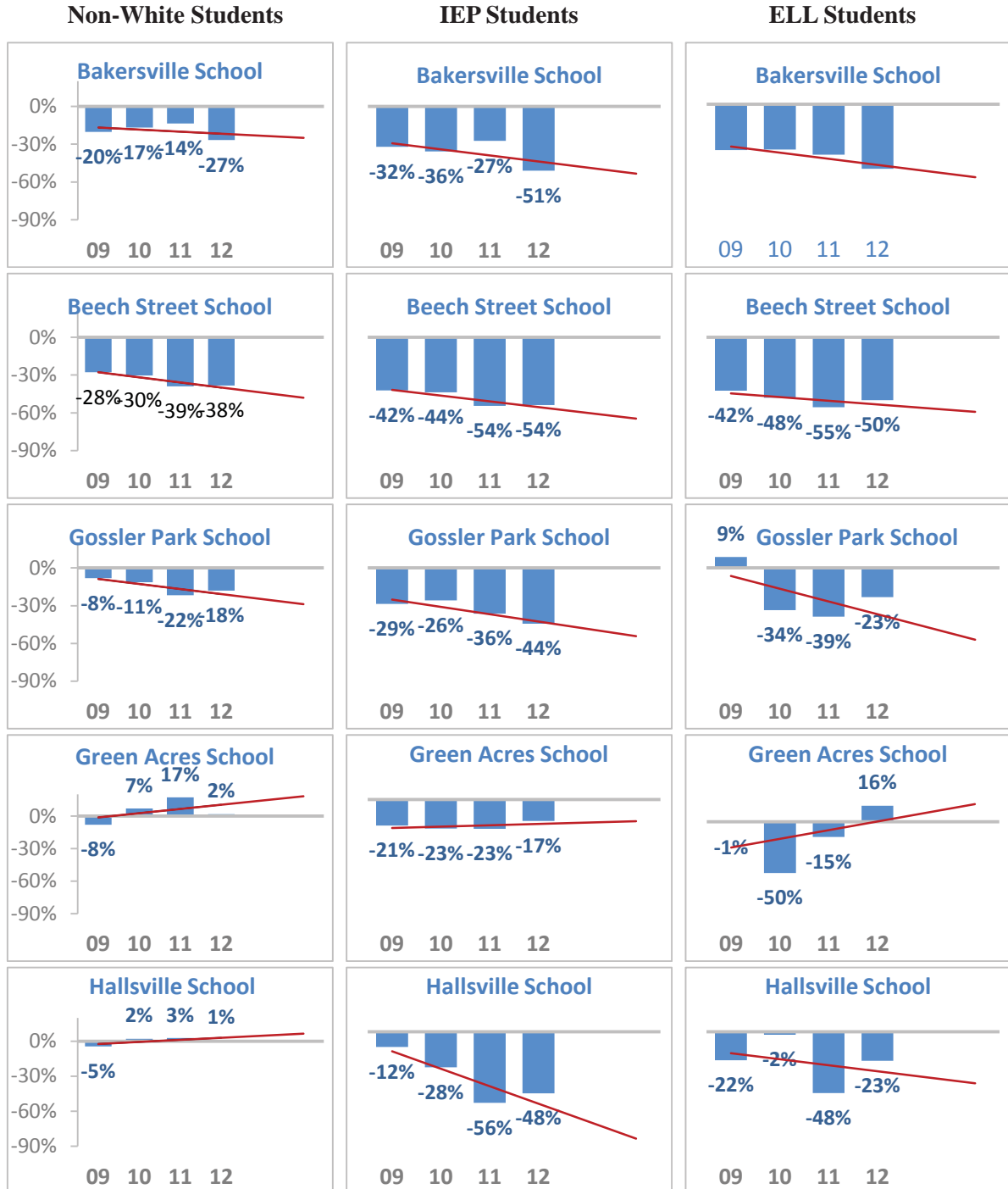
Exhibit 4.3.15 indicates:

- All three of the subgroups, in district-wide averages for all grades, are moving away from parity with the comparison group for proficiency on the *NECAP* math test.
- ELL students are falling further behind from year to year than non-White students or IEP students

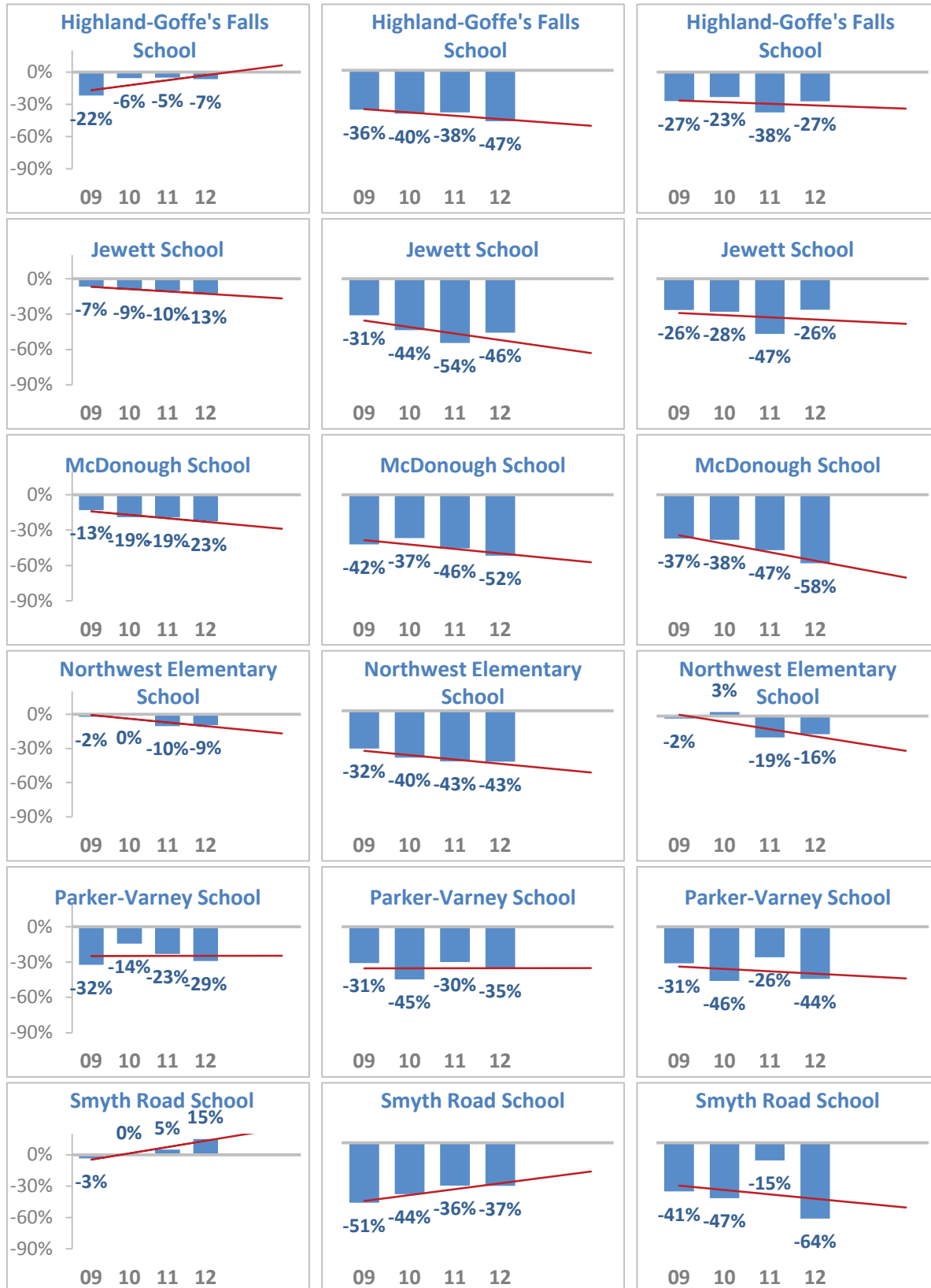
Exhibit 4.3.16 compares the gaps in math proficiency between subgroups and the comparison group by elementary school.

Exhibit 4.3.16

Gap Between Subgroups and Comparison Group Elementary Schools NECAP Math Tests Manchester School District 2009–2012



Gap Between Subgroups and Comparison Group (continued)
Elementary Schools
NECAP Math Tests
Manchester School District
2009–2012



Gap Between Subgroups and Comparison Group (continued)
Elementary Schools
NECAP Math Tests
Manchester School District
2009–2012

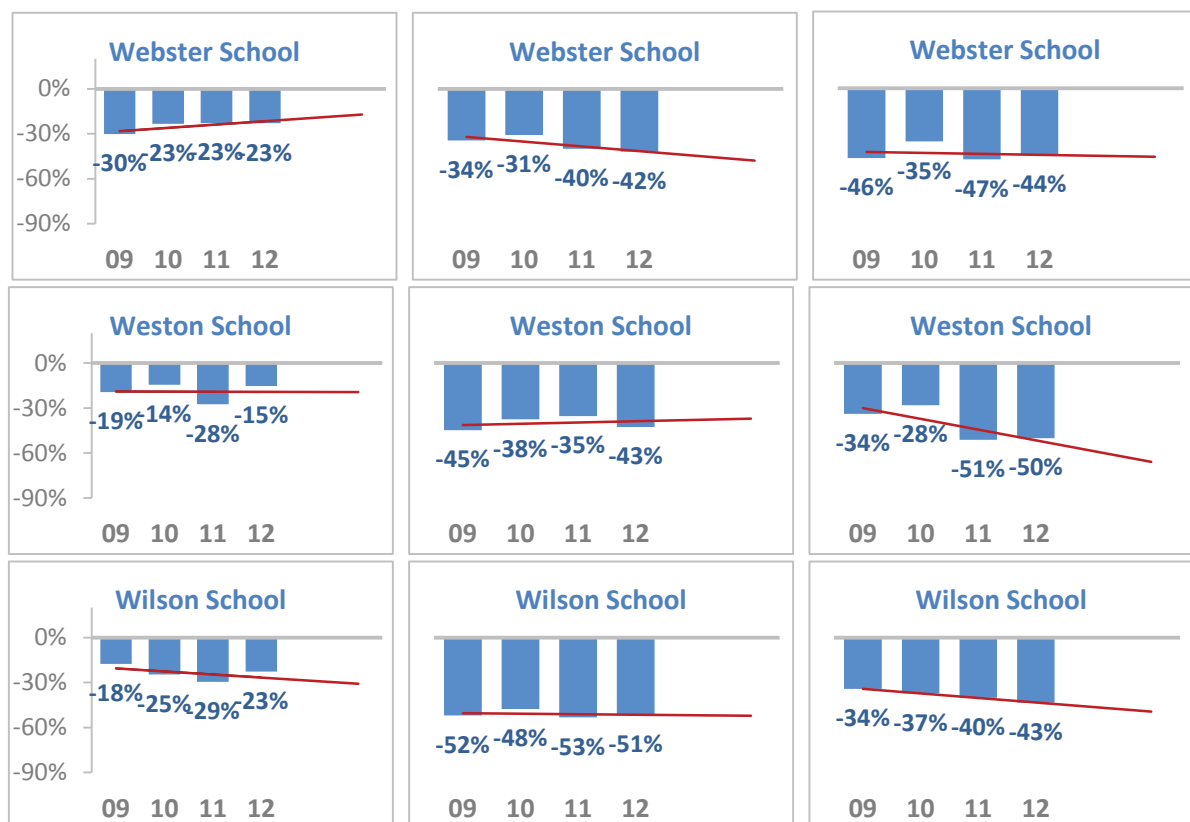


Exhibit 4.3.16 indicates:

- In four schools (Green Acres, Hallsville, Highland-Goffe's Falls, and Smyth Road), non-White students have achieved parity with the comparison group.
- In half of the elementary schools, non-White students are moving away from parity with the comparison group.
- The IEP students at Green Acres, Parker-Varney, and Smyth Road are gradually approaching parity. The gap is closing most rapidly at Smyth Road, where the current trend would lead to parity in about seven years.
- ELL students are falling further behind the comparison group in 12 of the 14 schools. At Webster, the four-year trend is flat. At Green Acres, ELL students have exceeded the math performance of the comparison group.

Exhibit 4.3.17 shows the proficiency gaps in math between subgroups and the comparison group by middle school.

Exhibit 4.3.17

Gap Between Subgroups and Comparison Group Middle Schools NECAP Math Tests Manchester School District 2009–2012



Exhibit 4.3.17 shows the following:

- Non-White students are closing the gap with the comparison group in all four middle schools, although none of the trends is steep enough to achieve parity by 2014.
- The gaps between IEP students and the comparison group have remained fairly flat in all four buildings. At McLaughlin and Parkside, they are improving marginally.
- The gaps between ELL students and the comparison group vary considerably from building to building. Parkside has the strongest pattern of gap closing, but the current trend will not lead to parity with the comparison group by 2014.

Exhibit 4.3.18 shows the achievement gaps in math proficiency between subgroups and the comparison group by high school.

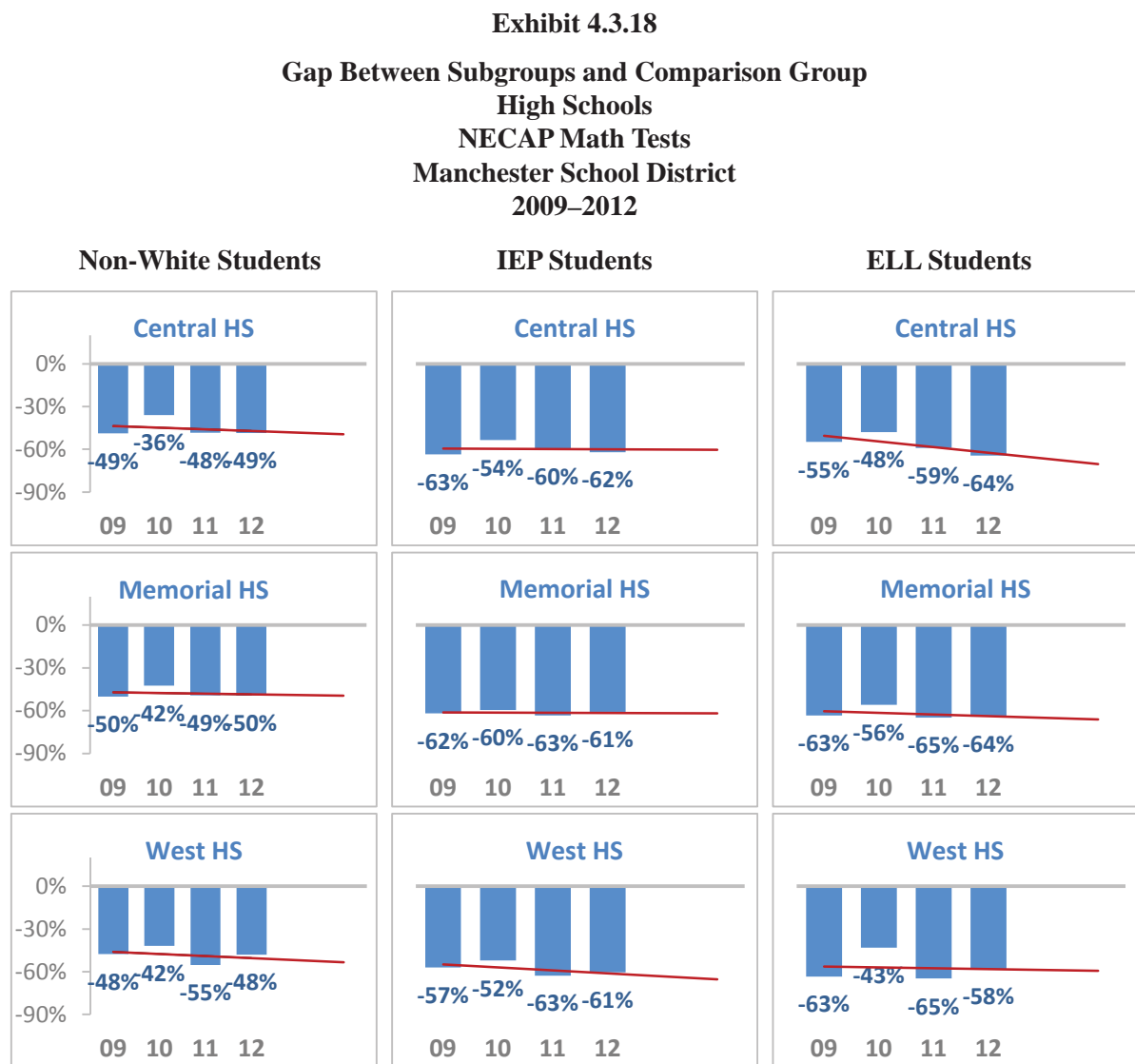


Exhibit 4.3.18 indicates that the gaps for most of the subgroups are increasing or decreasing marginally when viewed as four-year trends. However, if the 2009 scores were removed and the three-year trends were displayed, all 12 of the charts would show steeper moves away from parity with the comparison group.

The following observations are noted from the comparisons shown in Exhibits 4.4.9 through 4.4.18:

- In looking at the red trend lines, the most salient feature is their variety. Students in some schools are moving toward parity, some are falling further behind, and others mirror the district-wide plateau pattern.
- The middle schools have experienced a more consistent pattern of upward trends in both reading and math than, as a group, either the elementary or high schools.
- Overall, the gaps tend to be wider for reading than for math.
- Overall, the English Language Learners are moving away from parity more than the other subgroups in both reading and math, although there are some schools that have seen notable improvements with the ELL subgroup. However, some schools have small numbers of ELL students, and their performance averages can be skewed by one or two students who score very high or very low.

- Non-White students are approaching parity with the comparison group in more buildings than the IEP or ELL students.

During interviews with board members and district employees, a number of individuals shared their perceptions about student achievement levels in Manchester. The following sample comments are representative:

- “Our achievement is growing, but we haven’t kept up with AYP.” (Administrator)
- “Overall, our kids do awful on *NECAP*.” (Administrator)
- “*NECAP* scores are bad and getting worse.” (Board Member)
- “The (test) data can be misleading because it’s a different group of kids (due to mobility)” (Administrator)

Summary

Looking at the trends shown in the preceding exhibits, two conclusions emerge. First, the overall *NECAP* performance in reading and math has not shown a steady pattern of improvement over the past four years. Second, within that overall average there are sizeable differences in the achievement among the district’s schools and student subgroups. In many buildings, those gaps are growing wider, and many of Manchester’s students in the most at-risk categories are losing ground. These observations corroborate the concerns related to the district’s lack of an aligned, system-wide written, taught, and assessed curriculum.

Finding 4.4: The use of data in decision making is emerging in some areas, but a systemic approach to the use of data in all critical functions is lacking.

Professionals working in an effective school system assess the impact of their efforts by analyzing data to help determine if what they are doing is working, whether they should be doing something differently, and how they can do it better. Assessment resources may include data from tests, formative assessments, surveys, program evaluation, external evaluations and accreditation reports, and teacher evaluations. The resulting data need to be made available to all levels of the school system in formats that can be effectively utilized in decision-making situations such as the following:

- District long-range planning;
- School improvement planning;
- Curriculum review, modification, or adoption;
- Classroom teaching decisions;
- Instructional materials selection;
- Professional development planning;
- District and school-based program selection and evaluation; and
- Human and financial resource allocations and budget development.

The audit team reviewed documents that reflect the district’s use of data (see [Exhibit 4.1.1](#)) and interviewed stakeholders (board members, administrators, teachers, and staff) about the use of data in decision making in the Manchester School District.

The auditors found a general expectation for program evaluation in board policies, but specific guidance for data-driven decision making throughout the district is absent (see [Findings 1.1](#), [1.3](#), and [4.1](#)). Expectations for the use of data are included in a few job descriptions, but they are missing in the job descriptions of key leadership positions and classroom teachers.

A major goal of the District Improvement Plan is “To develop district-wide consistency in the delivery of standards-based curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention to support individual students’ growth towards proficiency.”

Auditors found that while a great deal of student assessment and other data are available to district personnel, these data are not sufficiently accessed throughout the system to provide feedback to guide instructional decision making. Manchester School District's assessment practices are generally managed at the school level, resulting in a lack of consistency in all aspects of assessment and data use. Some professional development has been provided on the use of test data (see [Finding 3.1](#)). However, the district lacks a formalized student assessment and program evaluation plan to direct the collection and use of data in improving student achievement and in evaluating programs (see [Finding 4.1](#)). Student assessment data are not available for most of the courses taught in the district (see [Finding 4.2](#)). Program evaluations and student assessment data are not used in the budget process (see [Finding 5.1](#)). While there is an emphasis on competency-based assessment throughout the district, there is inadequate administrative control to provide useable district-wide feedback data that are generated by well-designed assessment instruments (see [Finding 4.2](#)). In addition, comments made during interviews indicated a challenge with the implementation of the student data system.

Some instances of data use were evident, such as in developing the District Improvement Plan and some school improvement plans (see [Finding 1.2](#)). Individual principals, curriculum specialists, the Data Analyst, and some teachers use data to address their specific circumstances. Formative use of assessment information has been used in some classrooms to identify and report progress toward mastery of specific skills. However, for the most part, the primary uses of data have been to identify student needs for instructional placement or for program services, to support grant application requests, and to attain feedback for purposes of state and *NCLB* accountability reporting. System-wide and integrated data usage was not found.

This finding will discuss the district's use of feedback from three sources: formative assessment, summative assessment, and program evaluation.

Use of Formative Assessment Data

The first component of the auditors' examination of the use of feedback from formal formative assessments is a rating of the presence of five essential components of a formative assessment system. [Exhibit 4.4.1](#) lists the components, the audit criteria for each component, and the auditors' rating. The formative assessment system, as a whole, is considered adequate with 12 or more points out of 15 possible, which is a score of 80 percent.

Exhibit 4.4.1

Formative Assessment Analysis Frame 1: Minimal Components Manchester School District March 2013

Point Value	Criteria	Auditors' Rating
	1. Formal formative student assessments for all curriculum standards/objectives are available for teacher use in determining students' <u>initial acquisition of learning</u>	
0	No district formative student assessments to determine initial acquisition of learning are in place for any of the curriculum standards.	
1	Formative assessments to determine students' initial acquisition of learning are in place for some of the curriculum, including at least two or three academic core areas at a minimum of six grade levels.	1
2	Formative student assessments to determine initial acquisition of learning are in place for all required core academic courses (mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies) in grades 2-12.	
3	Formative assessments are in place to determine students' initial acquisition of learning for all required and elective subject areas and all grades/courses.	

Exhibit 4.4.1 (continued)
Formative Assessment Analysis Frame 1: Minimal Components
Manchester School District
March 2013

Point Value	Criteria	Auditors' Rating
2. Informal formative assessments are available for all appropriate course/grade standards/objectives for teachers to use prior to teaching a standard to determine if students possess necessary prerequisites (the concepts, knowledge, and skills that are required before students can successfully master the intended standard or objective)		
0	No district formative student assessments to determine whether prerequisite knowledge of learning are in place for any of the curriculum standards.	0
1	Formative student assessments to determine student prerequisite knowledge of learning are in place for some of the curriculum, including at least two or three academic core areas, at a minimum of six grade levels.	
2	Formative student assessments to determine student prerequisite knowledge of learning are in place for all required core academic courses (mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies) in grades 2-12.	
3	Formative student assessments to determine student prerequisite knowledge of learning are in place for all required and elective subject areas and all grades/courses.	
3. Informal formative assessments for all standards/objectives are in place for teachers to use prior to teaching a standard to determine prior student mastery		
0	No district formative student assessments to determine students' prior mastery of learning are in place for any of the curriculum standards.	0
1	Formative student assessments to determine prior mastery of learning are in place for some of the curriculum, including at least two or three academic core areas at a minimum of six grade levels.	
2	Formative student assessments to determine students' prior mastery of learning are in place for all required core academic courses (mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies) in grades 2-12.	
3	Formative student assessments to determine students' prior mastery of learning are in place for all required and elective subject areas and all grades/courses.	
4. Pools of informal student assessment items for all curriculum standards/objectives are available for teachers to use during their ongoing instruction to diagnose students' current status of learning—both initial acquisition and sustained mastery		
0	No district item pools for informal district formative student assessments are available for teachers' use as part of their ongoing instruction around the standards.	
1	Item pools for informal formative student assessments are available to determine student learning for some of the curriculum including at least two or three academic core areas at a minimum of six grade levels.	1
2	Item pools for informal formative student assessments are available to determine student learning for all required core academic courses (mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies) in grades 2-12.	
3	A variety of informal formative student assessments are available to determine student learning for all required and elective subject areas and all grades/courses.	

Exhibit 4.4.1 (continued) Formative Assessment Analysis Frame 1: Minimal Components Manchester School District March 2013		
Point Value	Criteria	Auditors' Rating
5. Formative student assessments are treated as diagnostic tools rather than summative tools		
0	Formative student assessments are generally seen as summative in nature or the distinction between the two is not reflected in their use.	
1	Some formative student assessments are used appropriately, but most are seen and/or used as summative instruments. Grades are often assigned for scores.	
2	Many formative student assessments are being used appropriately, but there is some use of the assessments in a summative way. In some cases, grades are assigned for scores.	2
3	Formative student assessments are generally used appropriately as diagnostic tools. No grades are given on the assessments; rather, teachers use the information from these assessments to guide their instructional decisions regarding each student's needs.	
Total Points		4

The Manchester School District's use of formative assessment received four out of 15 possible points, or 27 percent. Therefore, the use of formal formative assessment data in the district is not adequate to provide staff members with feedback for planning or modifying instruction and interventions for all of the district's students.

During visits to schools, auditors saw many classrooms using the Readers/Writers Workshop model of literacy instruction (see [Finding 3.2](#)). The workshop model is solidly grounded in formative assessment. The workshop model was observed most consistently in elementary buildings, but was also observed in some middle and high school classrooms. During interviews, mention was made of extending the workshop model in some buildings to mathematics and other disciplines. In teaching literacy skills, formative assessments provide information about a stage of skill development, which is different from the role of formative assessment in measuring students' progress in acquiring a set of discrete competencies. In measuring progress on a basic skill continuum, the different types of formative assessments described in [Exhibit 4.4.1](#) (prerequisites, prior mastery of course competencies, initial acquisition, and ongoing mastery) are less distinct. Manchester has instituted measures such as running records and AIMSweb that function in both ways, that is, to measure progress along the continuum of reading development and to measure certain milestone competencies of reading development, such as phonemic awareness or specific phonics skills.

Administrators at both the district and building levels indicated that formative assessment practices vary substantially from building to building. During visits to classrooms where whole-group lessons were in progress, auditors rarely observed in-the-moment informal comprehension checks. Some classes used individual white boards for all students to display their answers to math problems or short answers to teacher questions. In one classroom, a teacher used a "thumbs up/sideways/down" strategy for students to self-report their level of comprehension of the concept being explained.

The following comments provide explanation of auditors' ratings in [Exhibit 4.4.1](#).

Component 1: Assessments to Determine Initial Acquisition of Learning (One Point)

When the workshop model of organizing instruction is faithfully implemented, teachers monitor students' acquisition of the lesson's learning targets in reading and writing. A rating of one point indicates that assessment of initial acquisition is in place for some core courses.

Component 2: Assessments to Determine Prerequisite Learning (No Points)

Grading in Manchester is, at least in part, based on students' mastery of competencies. This provides teachers with knowledge of course prerequisites, although not necessarily prerequisites for each lesson. In addition, administrators reported that the basis for grading differs from building to building. There are placement tests for seventh and eighth grade math that can provide the teachers with information on students' mastery of

prerequisites. *NECAP* results provide feedback about acquisition of last year's competencies, although the timing of the *NECAP* tests reduces their usefulness as formative measures. In areas with a highly sequenced series of competencies, they are not practicable as formative assessments of prerequisites. No points were given to this area because of the lack of district-provided assessments to measure students' mastery of prerequisites for units and lessons.

Component 3: Assessments to Determine Prior Student Mastery (No Points)

Auditors did not see evidence of formative assessments designed to determine students' prior mastery of the content of lessons, units, or courses.

Component 4: Assessments to Diagnose Students' Current Status of Learning (One Point)

The district has a state-provided contract with Performance Plus, which includes an item bank for some content areas that could be used by teachers to construct formative assessments. The items available in Performance Plus are keyed to competencies. Use of the Performance Plus item bank is discretionary and varies from building to building and teacher to teacher. AIMSweb contains a bank of items that can be used for progress monitoring. The district provides standardized passages for the running records that are used as Trimester Exams in elementary schools. While such interim exams are not considered formative if they measure competencies that have been taught in the prior trimester, running records are, by design, diagnostic tests of reading skill development regardless of when they are offered, and thus are considered formative tests. One point is awarded for this component because of the limited scope of the district's provision of test items keyed to competencies.

Component 5: Formative Assessments Used as Diagnostic Tools (Two Points)

Formative assessments in Manchester are generally used as diagnostic measures, although high schools may assign a portion of the course grade based on formative assessments. Running records are formative in design, but they are used as quasi-summative measures when they are used to report the percentage of students on grade level at the classroom, program, grade, and building levels.

In summary, the only area where the use of formative assessment is consistently used is in elementary reading and writing. In other areas, there are examples of the use of formative assessments, but that use is discretionary and varies substantially from building to building.

Use of Summative Assessment Data

Exhibit 4.4.2 describes the audit criteria for the use of summative assessment data along with the auditors' ratings.

Exhibit 4.4.2

**Characteristics of Summative Student Assessment
Data Use for an Adequate Instructional Approach
Auditors' Ratings of District Approach
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Characteristic	Auditors' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Provides teachers with student achievement data for each student in their class(es). Data from prior years' assessments are available by student, so every teacher has data for their new students at the beginning of the year or course.	Partial	
2. Identifies for the teacher the individual student's summative data for every objective, his or her respective level of achievement for that objective, and where he or she is within that level. Data include group or subgroup levels of achievement for a given concept/standard.	Partial	
3. Presents the student's summative achievement data for every objective within the context of the district's sequence of objectives or pacing chart.	Partial	
4. Presents teachers with longitudinal data for each student, organized by class roster, and specifies the gain required to close any identified achievement gaps. This information is intended to assist teachers in moving each student to grade-level performance over the course of their education within the district.	Partial	
5. Identifies formative student assessment instruments that teachers may use prior to teaching targeted concepts, knowledge, or skills to diagnose individual student mastery of those targeted objectives based on summative achievement data from one or more years. This allows teachers to determine whether students are making desired progress over time.	Partial	
Total	0	5
Percentage of Adequacy	0%	

Manchester's use of summative assessment data was rated as inadequate for all five of the criteria. The use of summative assessment data in Manchester School District is not adequate to guide improvement of curriculum and the design and delivery of units of instruction.

For the partially adequate in Exhibit 4.4.2, some elements of an adequate approach to the use of summative assessment data are seen in:

- The quality of *NECAP* reports that are provided to administrators at the classroom and building levels;
- The process outlined for using summative data in the Manchester School District Data Analysis Calendar, including training provided to building administrators and data teams in the use of summative assessment data for improving achievement of the GLEs;
- Summative uses of competency-based grading;
- The use of trimester tests in reading and math in elementary schools;
- Placement tests at the completion of seventh and eighth grade math; and
- The availability of Performance Plus as an environment for building summative reports for a variety of subject areas.

The ratings of partially adequate in Exhibit 4.4.2 fall short of being rated as adequate for the following reasons:

- Lack of administrative oversight in the use of assessment data and the resulting inconsistent use of assessment resources from building to building and
- Lack of a means for making the previous year's summative data available at the start of the school year.

Summative assessment data can be a powerful tool for improving the of curriculum design and for evaluating the effectiveness of the methods used to deliver the curriculum. However, because of the lack of administrative initiative in directing the execution of those functions, buildings have adopted a variety of practices, and the power of summative assessment data for the improvement of curriculum and instruction is not being fully realized.

The following comments from interviews with administrators and teachers reflect the diversity of assessment practices:

- “There are no set protocols or guidelines for analysis or facilitations. It’s a building-level issue. The principal guides it.” (Administrator)
- “We have two elementary curriculum specialists. They developed assessments and identified teachers who were struggling, but if they don’t want to let us into their classrooms, we can’t (assist).” (Administrator)
- “The leadership in the building is what mandates the data, as far as use.” (Teacher)
- “Teachers use a variety of formative assessments.” (Administrator)
- “Data teams operate in this school and use both *NECAP* and site assessments in their discussions of student performance.” (Administrator)



Kindergarten students at Northwest Elementary used data to create this graph

Use of Program Evaluation Data

The Board of School Committee's policies state that the district's programs are to be evaluated (see [Finding 4.1](#)). However, the auditors did not receive any documents that support that expectation and guide district staff in evaluating programs and using the results to decisions whether each program provides adequate cost benefit for improving student learning (see [Finding 5.1](#)). The Strategic Plan Overview, which outlines the overall principles to guide strategic planning, does not mention program evaluation. During interviews, several staff expressed the perception that program evaluation does not occur in Manchester School District.

The auditors have identified 14 characteristics of a quality program evaluation plan or process. [Exhibit 4.3.3](#) presents these characteristics and an analysis of the districts approach.

Exhibit 4.4.3

**Characteristics of a Quality Program Evaluation Plan or Process
and Auditors' Assessment of the District's Approach
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Characteristics of a Quality Program Evaluation Plan or Process	Auditors' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Describes board or administrative directives to have program evaluation procedures in place	Partial	
2. Specifies procedures for program evaluation, including needs assessment and formative evaluation and summative evaluation methods		X
3. Specifies the proficiencies of persons responsible for conducting the evaluation, enhancing likelihood that findings achieve maximum credibility and acceptance		X
4. Expects multiple measures designed to obtain quality data about the goals and objectives of the program and to be accurate and reliable measures		X
5. Provides for multiple measures of data collection to be used, including both quantitative and qualitative data		X
6. Expects the critical elements of the program's implementation to be specified and provides for measurement of the fidelity with which those elements are executed		X
7. Expects outcome data to be correlated with measures of the fidelity of the program's implementation		X
8. Directs ongoing formative assessments for the first two years for any new program implementation and summative evaluation at the end of the third year		X
9. Directs that all existing programs undergo a program evaluation at least every three years		X
10. Expects procedures used in the evaluation process to be clearly described		X
11. Specifies that program evaluation reports clearly describe the program, including its context, purposes, and procedures		X
12. Expects program evaluation reports to be utilized to support timely decisions regarding program effectiveness, identify both strengths and weaknesses of the program, and include findings and recommendations for continuation as is, modification, or termination		X
13. Directs program evaluation designs to be practical, ethical, and cost effective, and to adequately address relevant political issues		X
14. Expects all proposals for the initiation of new programs to include needs assessment data, a description of formative and summative evaluations, and data collection procedures		X
Total		14
Percentage of Adequacy	0%	

The Curriculum Audit™ standard for adequacy is a rating of 70 percent or higher. Manchester School District's approach to program evaluation received partial credit on one characteristic and no credit on the other 13. Therefore, Manchester's approach is inadequate to provide feedback about the effectiveness of the district's programs.

The following comments explain the ratings in Exhibit 4.4.3. Characteristics that are not mentioned here are not addressed in any policy, job description, procedure, or guidance document.

Characteristic 1: Directives for Program Evaluation Procedures (Partially Adequate)

Board policy and job descriptions establish the expectation that programs will be evaluated (see [Exhibit 1.1.5](#)). However, these documents fall short of establishing directives for evaluation to determine the effectiveness of all programs and functions at all levels of the system.

Characteristic 2: Specific Procedures for Program Evaluation (Inadequate)

There is no direction in policy or in regulations for program evaluation methods beyond the broad expectation in the Data Analyst's job description that data should be used "to improve student achievement." The Professional Development Master Plan meets this characteristic for evaluation of individual professional development plans. If similar procedures were in place for program evaluation, this characteristic would be rated as adequate.

Characteristic 5: Provides for Multiple Measures of Data Collection (Inadequate)

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Information Sheet provides a model for the use of multiple data sources. The sheet lists the program's quantitative goals and provides an outcome figure for each goal. Outcome measures include course grades, attendance rates, perception survey results, discipline records, student self-reports of skill development and program participation, affective factors, and program enrollment rates of at-risk student groups. Beyond this single program, no direction is provided that addresses district-wide use of quantitative or qualitative collection of data.

Characteristic 11: Specifications for Program Evaluation Reports (Inadequate)

Board policy states that reviews of programs will be reported to the board, but the nature or content of those reports is not addressed.

During interviews with central office administrators and building principals, auditors asked which programs had been evaluated and requested copies of evaluation reports. The documents provided were compliance reports for federal grants and progress reports for Title I Schools in Need of Improvement (SINI) and Restructuring schools. The compliance reports assure the funding agency that required activities were carried out and are not evaluations of the program's outcomes or impact. None of the documents provided was an evaluation report of the effectiveness of an instructional program in helping students meet the goals of the curriculum.

The SINI progress report format is intended to document the overall impact of the plan, and the progress reports are therefore not evaluations of particular programs or strategies. The reports follow a standard template that includes a narrative titled "Evidence of Progress: Improved Student Achievement." The narratives present the school's overall success, based on *NECAP* scores, trimester tests, or the school's Title I accountability status, although none of the narratives reviewed by auditors provides empirical documentation that links the school's success to specific strategies or programs within the plan's overall scope. Nevertheless, some of the narratives claim a causal relationship with implementation of the plan's strategies, as in these two examples:

- "Overall the school's success [making AYP] can be attributed to the additional small group instruction provided through the Enrichment block....During the Enrichment block, [IEP] students were meeting with their resource teacher in small groups to address their specific needs. However, this small group experience did not have the same impact academically as the Enrichment block small groups. In retrospect, students in this subgroup would have benefited from participation in the Enrichment block activities."
- "The factors that propelled this significant improvement were our strong commitment to our partnership with parents. Our yearlong homework objective of reading independently nightly and responding to literature at least three times per week, students showed improvement in their homework and schoolwork. Our combined efforts allowed students to unlock their potential and perform at levels they were unable to reach before."

[Finding 2.4](#) indicated that a number of programs supplemental to the curriculum are being implemented within district schools. However, the auditors did not receive evidence that any of them have been formally evaluated by district staff against the goals of the local curriculum and reported to the board. The lack of program

evaluation data limits the district's ability to make informed decisions about the effectiveness and cost benefit of existing programs.

Interviews with district staff members indicated concerns about the implementation of the ASPEN student data system. The following are sample comments:

- “We have a terrible challenge around data collection. ASPEN implementation has been a struggle. We customized data and have to reset. We are using about 20 percent of its capacity.” (Administrator)
- “ASPEN is so customized we can't use data in a meaningful way. We are cautious because we don't know how accurate the data are.” (Administrator)
- “We need to be able to get accurate feedback to help us make decisions.” (Administrator)

The following excerpt from the minutes of a Board of School Committee meeting captures the essence of the district's lack of program evaluation:

“As we...start really seeing what programs we have and what staffing we have, [we] are going to have to make even more difficult decisions relative to where are we with our successes and where are we allocating resources that haven't proven to be successful...Typically it's a response to the [enrollment] numbers,... and what has the most popular support, and not necessarily what is the most productive for our students.”

In addition, the following comments made during interviews with stakeholders reflect similar perceptions:

- “There's no formal expectation [for program evaluation], no funding or staffing to carry it out.” (Administrator)
- “There is no accountability for results.” (Community Member)
- “The district has full-day and half-day kindergarten, but we don't test to see if this makes a ‘difference.’” (Board Member)
- “There is no program evaluation. We don't do that.” (Administrator)

When asked about the process for program adoption, respondents consistently indicated that it is driven more by intuition than program data. The following comments are representative:

- “It's word of mouth mostly. We find someone who's using it and watch it in action. If we like it, we buy it or copy it.” (Administrator)
- “Someone has an idea; then they discuss it as a group and rely on the team's experience. It's mostly trial and error. We buy it, then we keep data, and the team decides if we need to go further.” (Administrator)
- “We wanted to buy Singapore Math because the assistant principal was exposed to it and liked it. We looked at it, and it seemed good.” (Administrator)

Summary

In examining the use of three kinds of feedback about the district's effectiveness—formative assessment, summative assessment, and program evaluation—auditors found that, in contrast to the District Improvement Plan's goal of developing district-wide consistency in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention, these functions operate primarily on school-based decisions. The district does not have a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan or any guidance for an approach to developing such a plan. Program evaluation is minimal, with no system in place to prioritize limited resources or maximize staff time.

Very few courses outside of elementary reading and math have formal, district-wide common assessments other than mandatory state and federal norm-referenced tests. Although the district provides assessment reports and trains principals and teachers in using the data to improve teaching and learning, assessment practices and procedures for using data vary widely among buildings, and there is inadequate central administrative guidance or oversight to assure consistency, quality, and comparability.

STANDARD 5: The School District Has Improved Productivity.

Productivity refers to the relationship between system input and output. A school system meeting this standard of the PDK-CMSi Curriculum Audit™ is able to demonstrate consistently improved pupil outcomes, even in the face of diminishing resources. Improved productivity results when a school system is able to create a consistent level of congruence between major variables in achieving enhanced results and in controlling costs.

What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Manchester School District:

While the attainment of improved productivity in a school system is a complex process, caused in part by the lack of a tight organizational structure (referred to as “loosely coupled”), common indicators of a school system meeting this audit standard are:

- Planned and actual congruence among curricular objectives, results, and financial allocations;
- A financial data base and network that can track costs to results, provide sufficient fiduciary control, and be used as a viable data base in making policy and operational decisions;
- Specific means that have been selected or modified and implemented to attain better results in the schools over a specified time period;
- A planned series of interventions that have raised pupil performance levels over time and maintained those levels within the same cost parameters as in the past;
- School facilities that are well-kept, sufficient, safe, orderly, and conducive to effective delivery of the instructional program; and
- Support systems that function in systemic ways.

Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Manchester School District:

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

The auditors determined that the current budget process and decisions related to its formation are not linked to measurable indicators of program effectiveness. Consequently, budget decisions regarding the allocation of resources are not based on an analysis of cost-benefit or other evidence of effectiveness. The allocations to schools are formula-driven rather than based on district and school goals, curricular needs, or measured priorities.

Some district stakeholders related a number of concerns about the special education program. Costs of the program and inconsistent implementation of the program were the most frequently cited issues. Of greatest concern to auditors is that district special education students are less likely to attain proficiency on state assessments and are less likely to graduate than the state average for IEP students. Manchester students are also not showing a pattern of improvement over time.

The schools are generally clean, but in spite of ongoing maintenance efforts, the aging buildings present a wide range of repair and renovation challenges. A redistricting proposal is being considered to address student attendance patterns, but the proposal does not address the age or condition of the facilities. A current long-range comprehensive facilities, renovation, and maintenance plan has not been developed to guide decision making in these areas.

The implementation of technology is hindered by the aging facilities infrastructure and inadequate funding. A technology bond referendum is currently being considered to address these issues. The District Education Technology Plan includes elements of effective planning, but it does not provide for coordination across the school district. Decisions for technology acquisition and training have been school-based, resulting in a fragmented approach to the integration of technology in the instructional program.

Finding 5.1: The district's budget development and decision-making process is inadequate due to the lack of connections to the district's mission, curriculum goals, and strategic priorities, more over, lacking cost-benefit analyses and use of performance data, decisions are not likely to be effective.

Educational programs and services require appropriate levels of financial support in order to maintain viability and to improve school system functions and operations. The district general fund budget is the major financial planning document for expressing in dollars board support for the goals and priorities of the school system. As such, the budget should reflect a direct connection between the resources provided and the criticality of the goals toward which those resources are directed. System-wide productivity is enhanced by budgetary decisions that assure adequate resources are allocated to those program efforts that are most closely linked to school system goals and outcomes and that can demonstrate success in meeting those goals and outcomes. Such linkage allows the budget to become a numerical expression of system priorities for curriculum, teaching, and learning and thereby mirrors the essential values of the schools and the community the districts serve. Without this systematic connection, decision makers at all levels can easily allow themselves to implement new programs or to expand existing efforts without first determining their linkage to goals and results, thereby diverting resources away from the system's principal mission and focus.

In order to determine the budget process used in the Manchester School District, auditors examined budget preparation documents and related materials including: four years of audited annual financial reports, Subcommittee of Finance Committee agendas and minutes Sub-Committee on Transparency and Accountability with the Budget minutes and board policies regarding district budget development and other financial matters. Also reviewed were the City of Manchester Comprehensive Annual Reports for the past three years, as were a variety of state reports prepared and submitted by district staff or originating with the state, such as the DOE 25, Valuations, Property Tax Assessments and Tax Rates of School Districts, budget process documents, and related business/finance records. Other documents dealing with financial resources or associated allocation processes at the state and local level were also included in the review, such as community information brochures and information regarding school funding litigation in the state.

Interviews were conducted with Board of School Committee members, central and site-based administrators, teachers, parents, and other community members to obtain information relative to the budgetary processes used by the school district and their degree of effectiveness. Finally, schools and classrooms were visited to observe programs in operation.

Auditors found that the district board and administration use a traditional line item budget that includes a process for reviewing budget needs by examining current budget commitments and attempting to balance requests for new programs and the costs of expanding or simply maintaining existing efforts given projections of future revenue. Data inputs to the process included: enrollment projections and student distributions, detailed salary projections based on union contracts, analysis of current expenditures and revenues, as well as projections for the coming year. Pursuant to policy, the superintendent is expected to work closely with the principals and other administrators to assess the needs of the schools. Another step in the process is to work with the City of Manchester Mayor and Board of Aldermen, as this body has the authority to approve or reject the budget request. Auditors did not find the budget process to reflect a direct connection between the resources provided and the criticality of the goals toward which those resources are directed. There was no evidence of a system-wide effort to achieve greater productivity by making budgetary decisions that assure adequate resources are allocated to those program efforts that are most closely linked to school system goals and outcomes and that can demonstrate success in meeting those goals and outcomes. Instead, efforts to support ongoing programs in fiscally challenging times consist of such approaches as attempting to negotiate concessions from unions, making reductions to the workforce, targeting specific programs perceived to be too costly, or transferring resources to expendable trusts as a way to carry forward funding from the previous fiscal year.

Board policies related to budget development and decision making, fiscal planning and accountability, budget priorities, and other budgetary matters include the following:

- *Board of School Committee Fiscal Policy 100: Fiscal Management Goals/Priority Objectives* states, "The School Board recognizes the importance of excellent fiscal management in managing public

resources to achieve the goals of the educational plan of the district. The Board will be vigilant in fulfilling its responsibilities to see that these funds are used wisely to achieve the purpose for which they are allocated.” In addition, “The district fiscal management plan seeks to achieve the following goals:

1. Engage in thorough advance planning to develop budgets and guide expenditures to achieve the greatest educational returns and the greatest contributions to the educational program.
 2. Establish levels of funding which will provide high quality education for the students of the district.”
- *Board of School Committee Fiscal Policy 101: Annual Budget* addresses the linkage between the budget and educational program as follows: “One of the primary responsibilities of the Board is to secure adequate funds to carry out an effective program of instruction. The adopted annual school budget is the financial outline of the District’s educational program; it is the legal basis for the establishment of tax rates.” This policy continues as follows: “The Superintendent will be responsible for preparing and presenting to the Board of School Committee (BOSC) for adoption, the annual school budget. The Board expects the Superintendent to work closely with the principals and other administrators to assess the needs of the schools. The principals shall be responsible for gathering information on the financial requirements of their school and will confer with appropriate staff in order to develop budget requests.” This policy goes on to describe the relationship between the Board of School Committee and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. It is this latter board that makes the final decision regarding the level of funding, while the BOSC decides how approved funding levels are to be expended.
 - *Board of School Committee Fiscal Policy 103: Budget Planning, Preparation, and Schedules* notes that “The Superintendent may establish procedures for the involvement of staff in the development of the budget proposal.”
 - *Board of School Committee Fiscal Policy 106: Funding Proposals, Grants, and Special Projects* stipulates that “The Superintendent will inform the Board of all possible sources of state, federal, and other funds and donations of cash services and equipment for the support of the schools and/or for the enhancement of educational opportunities. The Superintendent is to apprise the Board of its eligibility for general or program funds and to make recommendations for Board action.”
 - *Board of School Committee Fiscal Policy 107: Funds from Local Tax Sources* states, “It is the responsibility of the School Board to present sufficiently the needs and goals of the schools to the public and to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen so that local support of education can indeed provide programs in an appropriate manner. The major share of all financial support for local school districts is raised by taxing property within the District. Most of the financial support of public education, therefore, is subject to bottom-line approval by the vote by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.”

In addition, the school board will:

1. “Accept all available state funds to which the district is entitled by law or through regulations of the State Board of Education, providing there is a specific need for them and that matching funds required are available;
2. Accept all federal funds which are available providing there is a specific need for them and that matching funds required are available; and
3. Accept all gifts and other funds that will further the policies and purposes of the District provided such gifts are not prohibited by law or contrary to the policies of the Board of School Committee.”

In addition to the BOSC policies on budget and finance, the City of Manchester Charter also provides governance language regarding the budget approval process. *Section 6.06* of the Manchester City Charter includes the following:

- *SECTION 6.06: School District Budget* specifies, “The School Committee shall prepare and submit its budget proposal. The budget shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

The budget shall be submitted in accordance with the budget schedule established by the Mayor under Section 6.03(a). The Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall accept such budget as submitted, or reject it and return it to the School Committee along with the explanation for rejection and the maximum dollar amount, which the Board of Mayor and Aldermen will approve. The School Committee shall then submit a revised budget, which shall not exceed the maximum dollar amount established by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. The School Committee shall administer, expend and account for the funds approved by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and shall have the exclusive authority to transfer funds among line items in the school budget.”

The City Charter thus establishes the authority of the Mayor and Aldermen to decide the maximum budget amount, but defers to the Board of School Committee with regard to how this budget authority is expended. Interestingly, a rationale for this budget approval process is contained in *Board of School Committee Fiscal Policy 107: Funds from Local Tax Sources*, which states that the Mayor and Aldermen retain budgetary control because “The major share of all financial support for local school districts is raised by taxing property within the District.” While still true, the proportion of revenue has changed somewhat. In 2009, 46 percent of the revenue came from the City of Manchester taxpayers. In 2012, that revenue source had fallen to 42 percent. Budget control in the district is established by object categories within the school budgets. The Board of School Committee must approve school district budget transfers from one object category to another. The School District Business Administrator is responsible for establishing controls related to the management and monitoring of the budget to prevent expenditures from exceeding budgeted appropriations.

The auditors determined that while board policy provides linkage between budget development and the district’s educational program (see *Board Policy Fiscal 101: Annual Budget*), policy makes no provision for a curriculum-based or program performance driven allocation system in setting, managing, and overseeing the budget to identify and achieve the goals of the educational program. No evidence was provided to auditors demonstrating that school district priorities were identified through system-wide program evaluation and then used to prioritize resource allocation with first dollars being directed toward the highest priorities (see [Finding 4.4](#)). Interviewees confirmed that programs and initiatives were not evaluated for efficacy prior to program funding allocations for the coming year. As noted previously, no current board policy was identified that specifically addressed such an expectation.

Job descriptions are often used to establish direction and assign responsibility for the budget process. Auditors found that the superintendent’s job description was largely focused on fiscal accountability without an expected linkage between the budget and support of the educational enterprise. For example, the superintendent’s job description requires him/her to “...oversee and administer the use of all district facilities, property, and funds with the maximum of efficiency.” The superintendent will “consider the budgetary implementations of all decisions.” The superintendent is also given “Overall responsibility for the developing and recommending, for BOSC review and approval, the annual budget for the support of the educational programs and for the operation and maintenance of schools in accordance with BOSC policy.” Other specific responsibilities of the superintendent related to the budget include the following:

- “Maintain adequate records for the schools, including an accounting system and financial reporting procedure which ensures that all funds will be accounted for in accordance with BOSC policy, and local and state laws.
- Establishes and maintains efficient procedures and effective controls for all expenditures of school funds in accordance with the adopted budget, subject to direction and approval by the BOSC.”

Overall, these responsibilities for budget and finance are more descriptive of the duties of an accounting supervisor than that of the Chief Executive Officer of a school district. No connection was found in support of the superintendent’s role in establishing funding priorities based on program evaluation data or needs assessment.

The following are other district job descriptions that relate to the budget and finance system of the Manchester School District.

Business Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has direct responsibility for financial and budget management; • Prepares and administers the district budget process under the direction of the superintendent; • Designs, implements, and administers the budget control system for the district; • Prepares reports... “concerning the status of their budgetary accounts to guard against overspending”; • Consults and works with city finance; • Maintains a continuous internal auditing program for all funds; • Prepares analysis of all district costs and methods of financing, including long-range requirements and projections; and • Coordinates, processes, and controls transfers of budgeted funds as directed by the superintendent and BOSC. <p>A number of additional duties related to recordkeeping and monitoring of finances are listed in this job description, but none deals with the use of program-based decision making relative to the allocation of fiscal resources.</p>
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists in the development of budgets, including staffing needs, instructional materials, resources, and provisions for the instructional activities of the district; • Coordinates the preparation of district and program budget requests through the improvement planning process;
Assistant Superintendent for Student Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists administration in budget development and long-range financial planning for Pre-K-12 planning purposes.
Director, Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and administers the school district budget.
Director of Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares the Human Resources budget with the Business Administrator, including salaries, professional days, tuition reimbursement, and substitute costs.
Director, Federal Projects/Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares and administers a budget for federal projects.
High School Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submits budget requests for each school year to the appropriate Central Office Administrator. These requests will reflect cooperative planning on the part of the principal, staff, and appropriate Central Office Administrators.
Middle School Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares the school budget.
Elementary School Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares budgets and submits them to the Assistant Superintendent and Business Administrator. • Establishes budgetary needs.

Job descriptions of the staff members responsible for budget development and implementation contain little or no direction with regard to connections between program outcomes and resource allocations. In addition, there were no job requirements listed for any of these positions requiring the examination of budget requests based upon evaluation of criticality of need or curriculum effectiveness.

Based on a review of the documents listed above, auditors concluded that the budget process and the product that results demonstrated an adequate level of compliance and fiscal control. No material findings were identified in the independent auditor’s reports over a four-year span, and questioned costs in those reports (see [Exhibit 5.1.3](#)) were resolved by management. While accounting accuracy represents a firm foundation for fiscal reporting and accountability, it is insufficient for establishing the budget process as a means for bringing about mission-driven organizational change and enhanced operations.

Exhibit 5.1.1 includes the revenue and expenditure sources for the past three fiscal years, up to the most current year ending June 30, 2012.

Exhibit 5.1.1
Revenue and Expenditure Comparisons for
FY Ending 2010 to FY Ending 2012
Manchester School District
2009-10 through 2011-12

Revenue Sources	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	% Change¹
District Assessment	52,082,553	53,047,469	55,088,892	5.8
Other Local	19,042,218	18,137,047	18,217,648	-4.3
State	68,857,457	81,809,243	80,244,806	16.5
Federal	41,943,870	27,513,726	24,439,363	-41.7
TOTAL REVENUE	\$181,926,098	\$180,507,485	\$177,990,709	-2.2
Expenditure Sources				
Instruction	115,672,112	121,256,745	122,420,901	5.8%
<i>Support Services:</i>				
Student	8,440,149	9,083,689	9,826,798	16.4
Instructional Staff	2,839,841	2,369,271	2,362,700	-16.8
General Administration	1,315,155	754,387	792,729	-39.7
Executive Administration	653,333	871,180	885,211	35.5
School Administration	7,947,693	8,370,434	9,459,986	19.0
Business	1,412,607	1,102,605	1,070,071	-24.2
Operation/Plant Maintenance	11,823,545	11,956,078	11,343,891	-4.1
Student Transportation	4,772,406	4,997,674	5,152,307	8.0
Other	1,923,129	1,673,766	1,906,425	-0.9
Non-instructional Services	5,438,530	5,723,791	6,266,719	15.2
<i>Debt Service:</i>				
Principal	6,001,664	6,162,664	6,608,443	10.1
Interest	6,176,694	6,103,374	5,977,152	-3.2
Facilities Acquisition/Construction	123,865	210,280	46,615	-62.4
Intergovernmental Payment		109,124		
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$174,540,723	\$180,745,062	\$184,119,948	5.5%
Excess revenue over expenditure	7,385,375	(237,577)		
Other financing sources (uses)		3,200,000		
Transfers in	1,913,243			
Transfers out	(1,913,243)			
Net change in fund balances	7,385,375	2,962,423	(6,129,239)	
Fund balance, beginning	(9,294,696)	(1,909,321)	1,053,102	
Fund balance, ending	(1,909,321)	1,053,102	(5,076,137)	
¹ "Percent change" indicates the percent different between totals and subtotals for fiscal year 2010 and fiscal year 2012.				
Source: Annual Financial Reports for fiscal years ending 2010-2012				

As can be seen, local and state sources of revenue together comprise the principal components of the Manchester School District annual revenue. This revenue picture has recently changed because of a 42 percent reduction in federal funding due in part to the conclusion of *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* support. State

funding to the district increased somewhat in FY 2011 and 2012 just as federal revenue began to recede, which had a moderating effect on the overall reduction in district revenue, resulting in only a 2.2 percent overall decline between FY 2010 and FY 2012. As can be noted in [Exhibit 5.1.1](#), there was a net deficit in the fund balance in FY 2012 amounting to \$6,129,239, resulting in a deficit in the ending balance of \$5,076,137 (due to the carry-over of a positive beginning fund balance amounting to \$1,053,102). The FY 2012 annual financial report includes the following explanation for this deficit: “The general fund has a fund deficit of \$6,167,635 at the fund reporting level at June 30, 2012 (Exhibit C-1, AFR for FY 2012). This deficit is a result of recording teachers’ salaries payable of \$10,841,912 at June 30, 2012, which is not budgeted until the subsequent fiscal year. The School District has consistently followed this budgeting process.” However, the FY 2010 revenue and expenditure report stated a substantial positive fund balance followed by another, but smaller, change in the fund balance for FY 2011, resulting in a positive ending fund balance for that year as well.

While [Exhibit 5.1.1](#) above displayed aggregated funding by government revenue group, [Exhibit 5.1.2](#) to follow provides a more detailed look at the government revenue sources displayed by constituent funds.

Exhibit 5.1.2

Government Funds Statement of Revenue and Associated Percent of Revenue Manchester School District FY 2012

Government Revenues	General	%	Food Service	%	Other Government	%	Total Government
District Assessment	55,088,892	30.9	n/a		n/a		55,088,892
Other Local	11,892,408	6.7	1,631,369	0.92	4,693,871	2.6	18,217,648
State	79,442,729	44.6	84,036	0.05	718,041	0.4	80,244,806
Federal	3,303,246	1.9	3,769,339	2.12	17,366,778	9.8	24,439,363
Total Revenue	\$149,727,275	84.1%	\$5,484,744	3.1%	\$22,778,690	12.8%	\$177,990,709

Source: Exhibit C-3: Annual Financial Reports for fiscal year ending 2012

[Exhibit 5.1.2](#) represents the sources of government funds for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012. The largest single contributor to the district for fiscal year 2012 was the general funding from the state of New Hampshire, totaling over 44 percent of the total government revenue, followed by the district assessment, comprising nearly 31 percent of general revenue.

When looking at a school district’s overall status, auditors frequently consider long-term capital debt, sometimes referred to as bonded indebtedness. However, the Manchester School District does not have the legal authority to issue debt and does not own the buildings housing its educational programs (see [Finding 5.3](#)). The district contracts with the city to provide maintenance and related services, or, in some cases, contracts services that are administered and billed by the city, such as in the case of the current custodial service company. The district generally pays for these services via “city service invoices.” Due to the age of many of the buildings used by the school district, maintenance costs are especially high, with costs running to nearly \$11.5 million dollars for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012. With regard to the school district’s inability to levy taxes to pay long-term facilities debt, the City of Manchester has issued debt on behalf of the school district, but the school district is not obligated to repay this debt. However, annually, the city appropriates resources to the school district that include an amount equal to the current year’s principal and interest due. Then the school district repays the city this same amount. The outstanding bond debt that the City of Manchester has issued on behalf of the school district is \$115.5 million. In addition, “on July 1, 2010, the School District accepted a promissory note from the City in the amount of \$3,200,000 with an interest rate of one percent. The note will be repaid over a period of eight years beginning in fiscal year 2012. The note was originally issued for the purpose of purchasing textbooks and classroom technology. Per an amended agreement between the City and School District, the City has authorized the School District to spend the monies as they see fit” (*Annual Financial Report for fiscal year ending 2012, page 34*).

An important indicator of the ability of an organization's management to implement recommendations of external reviews and audits is its record of response to the independent auditor's Report on Compliance, which is found in the audited Annual Financial Report. District effort to improve fiscal operations in response to such feedback is also an important means for achieving enhanced productivity. Exhibit 5.1.3 displays the status of auditor findings over four consecutive years. This exhibit is not included to represent a complete listing of compliance findings, but as an indicator of overall district effort to resolve particular findings. After the original statement of finding in a particular fiscal year, the re-appearance of that finding in following years indicates the independent auditors continued to find evidence of additional instances of the original condition.

Exhibit 5.1.3

Responses to Independent Auditor's Compliance Reports Manchester Public Schools Fiscal Years 2009–2012

FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
The district is not in compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.	No finding in this area.	No finding in this area.	No finding in this area.
The district is not in compliance with requirement that federally funded equipment be identified with tags.	The district is not in compliance with requirement that federally funded equipment be identified with tags	No finding in this area.	Some equipment purchased with federal funds were not assigned inventory stickers, included on federal equipment inventory listings, and listings did not include all required NH DOE components.
District failed to file two quarterly reports by the required filing dates.	District failed to file two quarterly reports by the required filing dates.	No finding in this area.	No finding in this area.
District failed to maintain periodic certifications documenting employees working on a single federal award or cost objective.	District failed to maintain periodic certifications documenting employees working on a single federal award or cost objective.	District failed to maintain periodic certifications documenting employees working on a single federal award or cost objective.	No finding in this area.
No finding in this area.	District not in compliance with procurement and suspension and debarment requirements.	District not in compliance with procurement and suspension and debarment requirements.	No finding in this area.
No finding in this area.	Free and reduced meal applications were not signed and dated by designated approving official.	Free and reduced meal applications were not signed and dated by designated approving official.	No finding in this area.
No finding in this area.	No finding in this area.	Internal controls over expenditures for goods and services are not in place and operating effectively.	No finding in this area.
<i>Source: Audited Annual Financial Reports for FY ending June 30, 2009 to FY ending June 30, 2012</i>			

As noted in Exhibit 5.1.3, some items were identified as occurring two or three times over the four years reviewed. While these recurring compliance items addressed the same issues, the issues were often reported to occur in different departments or schools of the district. In any case, all were eventually addressed, often through additional staff training and awareness.

Budget Development Process

The Board of School Committee and the administration use a traditional line item budget that includes a process for reviewing budget needs by examining current budget commitments and attempting to balance requests for new programs and the costs of expanding or simply maintaining existing efforts given projections of future revenue. Data inputs to the process included enrollment projections and student distributions, detailed salary projections based on union contracts, analysis of current expenditures and revenues, as well as projections for the coming year. Pursuant to policy, the superintendent is expected to work closely with the principals and other administrators to assess the needs of the schools. Another step in the process is to work with the City of Manchester Mayor and Board of Aldermen, as this body has the authority to approve or reject the budget request. Auditors did not find the budget process to reflect a direct connection between the resources provided and the criticality of the goals toward which those resources are directed. There was no evidence of a system-wide effort to achieve greater productivity by making budgetary decisions that assure adequate resources are allocated to those program efforts that are most closely linked to school system goals and outcomes and that can demonstrate success in meeting those goals and outcomes. Instead, efforts to support ongoing programs in fiscally challenging times consist of such approaches as attempting to negotiate concessions from unions, making reductions to the workforce, targeting specific programs perceived to be too costly, or transferring resources to expendable trusts as a way to carry forward funding from the previous fiscal year.

Auditors found some evidence of efforts to modify the current budget process in the minutes of the Sub-Committee on Transparency and Accountability with the Budget (April 30, 2012). In these minutes, it was proposed that principals would submit budget requests based on their goals and objectives after getting input from their parent groups, students, faculty, and support staff. This would result in each principal presenting his or her budget request to the superintendent. Requests would then be compiled into a proposed budget to support the district goals and objectives. Meetings with the Board of School Committee, providing opportunities for additional community input, would follow. Ultimately, an operating budget would be deliberated and approved by the Board of the School Committee before being taken to the City Board of Mayor and Aldermen for action. While not addressing a linkage between funding and evidence of effectiveness, this proposal does link the budget process to changing district and school goals and objectives rather than simply functioning as an exercise in finding support for existing programs.

Using a performance-based budget process, district leadership can achieve improved outcomes at the same or lower costs, thereby adjusting to uncertainties rather than succumbing to them. Auditors examined the district budget development process to determine the presence of performance-based budget components and the adequacy of their use in the budget process. Exhibit 5.1.4 presents a display of that analysis.

Exhibit 5.1.4

**Components of a Performance-based Budget and
Adequacy of Use in the Budget Development Process
Manchester School District
March 2013**

Performance-based Budget Criteria	Auditors' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Tangible, demonstrable connections are evident between assessment of operational curriculum effectiveness and allocations of resources.		X
2. Rank ordering of program components is provided to permit flexibility in budget expansion, reduction, or stabilization based on changing needs or priorities.		X
3. Each budget request or submittal shall be described so as to permit evaluation of consequences of funding or non-funding in terms of performance or results.		X
4. Cost benefits of components in curriculum programming are delineated in budget decision making.		X
5. Budget requests compete for funding based upon evaluation of criticality of need and relationship to achievement of curriculum effectiveness.		X
6. Priorities in the budget are set by participation of key educational staff in the allocation and decision-making process. Teacher and principal suggestions and ideas for budget priorities are reflected and incorporated in budgeting decisions.	X	
Total	1	5
Percentage of Adequacy	17%	

As displayed in Exhibit 5.1.4, auditors considered only one of the six components of a program-based budget process to be present and adequately used in the most recent budget process. As the overall rating fell below the required 70 percent, auditors found that the budget process as currently implemented failed to meet program-based budget criteria.

Further comments are provided below for each component.

Characteristic 1: Connections (Inadequate)

Auditors reviewed a number of district documents, observed the operation of programs in the schools, and discussed the budget process and program evaluation efforts to determine their linkage. While recent proposals for change in the budget development process to make it better connected to the achievement of district goals have been made, auditors found no evidence of a linkage between the results of the evaluation of existing programs and budget decisions concerning those programs. This criterion is rated as inadequate.

Characteristic 2: Rank Ordering (Inadequate)

The auditors found no formally documented rank ordering of system-wide priorities tied to the allocation of available fiscal resources. In difficult budget years, decisions regarding such priorities have been avoided by using established procedures to reduce staff, for example, rather than determining the relative value of existing efforts and eliminating programs based on those determinations. This criterion was not met.

Characteristic 3: Consequences of Funding/Not Funding (Inadequate)

Auditors were not provided with documentation or budget proposals that included an analysis of potential consequences to students, staff members, or the organization as a whole with regard to not funding particular efforts. The budget process as described to the auditors was one based on the provision of incremental increases in support of existing efforts. This criterion is rated as inadequate.

Characteristic 4: Cost-benefit Analysis (Inadequate)

Auditors determined that cost-to-benefit information was not collected or used to make decisions concerning resource allocations. While some programs and grants were evaluated to meet funding or compliance requirements, auditors found no instances in which district efforts or approaches found to be more effective and less costly replaced less effective and more costly efforts with the same objectives. The elimination of programs, when it does occur, is therefore based on factors other than cost-benefit. This criterion was not met.

Characteristic 5: Competition on Basis of Need and Effectiveness (Inadequate)

As noted previously, auditors did not identify evidence of a linkage between program funding and demonstrations of program effectiveness. Auditors did find some evidence of a process for using “needs assessment” data to determine the need for a change in a program. In addition, per policy, new programs are to be taken to the board for approval before implementation, but this process was not well documented. Overall, the use of performance data to compare the relative effectiveness of existing efforts was not evident (see [Finding 4.4](#)). Competition for resource allocation among the various programs and approaches requires the establishment of a database of performance indicators and the subsequent collection and analysis of performance data. Auditors did not find such indicators or processes. This characteristic was rated as inadequate.

Characteristic 6: Staff Participation (Adequate)

The Manchester School District budget process is expected in policy to “maintain excellent fiscal management in managing public resources and to achieve the goals of the educational plan of the district.” The budget development process does not require the use of performance or outcome data but instead has as its focus the allocation of resources needed to continue existing efforts while adjusting to such factors as student enrollment patterns, rising costs, tax caps, and other factors bearing on the amount of available funding. The process includes timelines and steps calling for input in the form of budget requests from the schools. Community involvement consists of opportunities to attend a public meeting for the presentation of the budget before its formal adoption. The ongoing concern of the BOSC to provide better access and involvement was also found in the minutes of the Sub-Committee on Transparency and Accountability with the Budget. This criterion is rated as adequate.

Interviews with district and site administrators, principals, teachers, and parents indicated concerns about the challenging fiscal situation of the school district.

- “Health benefits are a fiscal cancer, and we can’t stop the bleeding.” (Board Member)
- “Special education is an issue for me, but the concern is about the cost. I am also concerned about boutique classrooms, a term I use for specialized high school classes with a very small class size.” (Board Member)
- “Funding is a problem because people (of influence), are not willing to spend any money on anything.” (Board Member)
- [A large issue is] “...the fiscal support of our district. People don’t like to use the word ‘under-funded,’ but we are... we have been.” (Administrator)
- “One hundred and sixty-one (161) staff members were riffed last year. Many of them were teachers.” (Board Member)
- “This is a district that incorporates technology at an enterprise scale, but with a coffee shop budget.” (Administrator)
- “Funding is at the center of all district and school problems.” (Administrator)
- “Education has not been a priority in Manchester for years. We just scrape by from year to year. Until the city looks at education as a priority, this will not change.” (Board Member)

Summary

In summary, the school system lacks a documented process and set of procedures for development and adoption of the annual budgets that meet audit criteria for performance-based budgeting. There is no documented evidence of connections among the school department goals, curriculum priorities, student assessments or program evaluations, and the budget development processes in the Manchester School District. Rather, administrators are allowed to request funds for programs and initiatives without documentation of results or procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of the initiative. The auditors concluded that allocations to schools are now formula-driven rather than based on curricular or other planning goals, measured and predetermined priorities, or cost-benefit analyses.

Finding 5.2: District special education students underperform state averages for students with IEPs and are not showing a pattern of improvement. Stakeholder concerns exist relative to costs and consistent implementation of the program.

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* of 1975 requires that students with special needs be provided with a free, appropriate education in the least restrictive environment that is appropriate for the students' needs. Students are placed in an educational setting most conducive to the implementation of their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The range of services may include support within a regular education classroom, a combination of services within a regular classroom and in a special education resource room, services in a special education classroom with some inclusion in the comprehensive program, or services within a special school setting.

The auditors reviewed documents, including board policies, district plans, test data, budget documents, and enrollment and participation reports, compiled by school district and state personnel relative to the status of the special education program within the Manchester School District. They interviewed board members, community members, administrators, teachers, and parents about their perceptions of the program. Auditors also visited classrooms in all the schools and collected observational data on special education services in the district.

The Manchester School District provides a continuum of services for students with disabilities within the special education program. The auditors found that the district identifies approximately two percent more students for special education services than the state average, and the state identification rate is about two percent above the national average. District special education students are about 10 percent less likely to graduate and are less likely to reach proficiency on state assessments than the state special education average. In addition, district special education test scores are not showing improvement over time (see [Finding 4.3](#)). Interview data indicated concerns about the costs related to the program and about inconsistencies in program implementation among district schools.

At the time of the audit visit, the district was working with the state on a special education approval process at the elementary level. Next year the middle schools and high schools will be engaged in this process. In addition, the state was conducting a desk audit of district IEPs for compliance.

The following Board of School Committee policies reference the special education program:

- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 111: Meeting the Instructional Needs of Students with Different Talents* states that the educational program should “Provide formal studies to meet the general academic needs of all students, opportunities for individual students to develop specific talents and interests, and opportunities to develop the skills necessary to become independent learners.... At all levels, individual differences in student performance, learning rate, and style shall be identified and appropriately addressed.”
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 112: Programs for Students with Disabilities* states that the district will provide “a free, appropriate public education and necessary related services required under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, to all students with disabilities residing within the district.”

For students eligible for services, the district shall follow procedures for identification, evaluation, placement, and delivery of students with disabilities provided in state statutes.

- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 128.2: Eligibility for Certificate of Completion or Modified Curriculum Diploma* describes the procedures for obtaining a Certificate of Completion for special education students as determined by the IEP team.

Three major topics concerning the special education program are reviewed in this finding. The first is information about the numbers of students served in the district compared to local, state, and national prevalence rates. This topic area also includes program costs associated with their implementation. The second topic deals with legal compliance of the program, which is determined based on the most recent New Hampshire Department of Education Annual Performance Report. Finally, state assessment data concerning the performance of students receiving special education services is presented and discussed.

Program Background, Student Participation, and Program Costs

The special education program of the Manchester School District, like most such programs, is impacted by legal requirements both in terms of programming for students, and also with regard to intricate funding requirements. When the *Education of All Handicapped Children Act* went into effect in the mid-1970s, it brought about widespread changes in teaching and learning, not the least of which was the shift of responsibility to school staff to provide appropriate programs for disabled students who had not been serviced in many cases prior to the law. While this law, now termed the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA)*, never promised public schools full funding in support of its far-reaching requirements, Congress has authorization to fund up to 40 percent of the *excess cost* of educating disabled students. Excess cost is the cost of providing an education to a disabled student that is beyond the normal per student cost to educate students in the school district. Actual federal funding to cover this excess cost has never exceeded 19 percent of the actual excess cost. This leaves the major funding responsibility with the states and school districts. The exhibit to follow presents Manchester School District special education program costs compared to the district's regular education program expenditures.

Exhibit 5.2.1 displays the dollar cost of general education and special education programs in the Manchester School District for the most recently completed and audited fiscal year. In general, program costs for special education are driven by federal and state requirements (including the federal statute, the *IDEA (U.S.C. 1400 et seq.)*, the U.S. Department of Education's regulations implementing that statute, (*34 CFR Part 300*), the New Hampshire laws (RSAs), and the *New Hampshire Board of Education Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities(Ed 1100)*).

Exhibit 5.2.1

General Fund Actual and Percentage Costs of Regular and Special Education Programs Manchester School District March 2013

Elem.	Salary	Benefits	Purchases	Supplies	Property	Other	Total
RegEd	19,387,501	7,539,442	52,863	293,795	-0-	40	27,273,641
SPED	8,255,873	5,134,627	1,331,609	70,354	14,353	1,356	14,808,172
MS							
RegEd	10,963,370	4,300,283	35,751	153,311	-0-	390	15,453,105
SPED	4,080,291	2,200,065	1,342,882	23,534	6,083	1,053	7,653,908
HS							
RegEd	15,517,645	5,912,159	126,544	336,612	2,744	1,035	21,896,739
SPED	3,132,220	1,366,537	3,152,084	47,214	4,056	1,666	7,703,777
All Grades							
RegEd	45,868,516	17,751,884	215,158	783,718	2,744	3,874	64,623,485
SPED	15,468,384	8,701,229	5,826,575	141,102	24,492	4,075	30,165,857
Percent	33.7%	49.0%	2708.0%	18.0%	892.6%	105.2%	46.7%
<i>Source: Manchester School District DOE-25 for 2011-2012</i>							

As can be noted in [Exhibit 5.2.1](#), reported general fund costs under regular and special education instruction, which includes both regular and special education instructional costs, amount to over half of the district budget. Special education salary costs are about a third of the regular education costs, but special education benefit costs are nearly half as much as general education benefits. The category of *purchases*, which typically represents the purchase of specialized services, is substantially greater for special education, driven by the exceptional needs of this population. Overall, special education instructional costs amount to 46.7 percent of the regular education instructional spending.

With regard to offsetting revenue, a grant summary report developed for the auditors included the new fiscal year IDEIA grant totaling \$4,219,563 and a preschool disabled grant amounting to \$156,388. The total for these two federal sources equals \$4,375,951, or about 14.5 percent of the special education program cost. This figure is close to the average excess cost reimbursement for these federal grants.

Students receiving special education services in the Manchester School District, like other districts across the country, have been determined eligible for these services through a complex process of individual evaluation, and, via the efforts of a school based team and the parents, have had an individualized educational program developed to meet their learning needs. These processes (eligibility evaluation and IEP development), are governed by statutes, regulations, and court decisions. In addition, they are monitored closely by the State Department of Education as well as by advocacy groups. Additional objective information concerning these programs and related requirements can be found on a parent information network website titled Parent Information Center on Special Education at <http://www.nhspeciald.org/index.shtml>.

Another cost associated with both regular and special education services is student transportation. In the case of special education, such transportation is designated as a related service, and as such must be provided when the IEP team determines it is necessary in order for the student to participate in the special education program. [Exhibit 5.2.2](#) provides a display of general education and special education transportation costs by level of school (high school, middle school, and elementary school). As with the previous exhibit, the designation of costs in [Exhibit 5.2.2](#) is taken from a state report termed the DOE-25, which is the annual report of the district's fiscal year results. A number of students identified as eligible for special education travel with the regular education student population; the special transportation costs are associated with only those designated as having an IEP and requiring special transportation.

Exhibit 5.2.2

Cost of Student Transportation for Regular and Special Education Students Manchester School District March 2013

Transportation Cost	Elementary	Middle School	High School	Total Cost
Regular Education	\$973,351	\$1,140,440	\$274,834	\$2,388,625
Special Education	\$1,368,724	\$732,426	\$652,742	\$2,753,892
<i>Source: Manchester School District DOE-25 for 2011-2012</i>				

As can be seen in [Exhibit 5.2.2](#), special education student transportation is approximately 15 percent more costly than general education transportation. In most school districts, this is in part the result of transporting fewer students per vehicle and subsequent loss of economies of scale, the cost of additional staff such as transportation aides, and requirements that may restrict the amount of time a particular student may be on a bus.

[Exhibit 5.2.3](#) displays comparison data regarding prevalence rates for students eligible for special education, free and reduced price lunches, and for English Language Learner status in the state and for the two largest school districts in New Hampshire.

Exhibit 5.2.3

Comparison of State and Large School Districts Regarding the Distribution of Students Requiring Specialized Programs Manchester School District March 2013

Total ADM	Free/Reduced	Special Education	ELL
State			
180,906	47,390	28,404	3,219
	26.2%	15.7%	1.8%
Manchester SD			
13,754	6,794	2,360	1,307
	49.4%	17.2%	9.5%
Nashua SD			
11,275	4,454	1,603	599
	39.5%	14.2%	5.3%
<i>Source: New Hampshire Department of Education, Division of Program Support, Bureau of Data Management: Estimated FY2014 Municipal Summary of Adequacy Aid</i>			

The following observations can be drawn from [Exhibit 5.2.3](#):

- Both school districts have substantially more students meeting the eligibility requirements for free or reduced price lunch than the state average. However, the Manchester School District has the highest percentage (approaching half of the total student membership).
- The percentage of students qualifying for special education services in the two school districts varies somewhat from each other, but neither is significantly above or below the state average. Another way to look at the distribution of students meeting IDEIA eligibility requirements is to examine the percentage of statewide special education students coming from the Manchester School District. Manchester schools educate about 7.6 percent of all students in the state, and serve 8.3 percent of all students receiving some level of special education services. Again, this is an expected level of participation, especially given the challenges of identifying and serving students in the more remote and less densely populated areas of the state.

- The distribution of English Language Learners in the Manchester School District when compared to the state is disproportionate. Approximately five times as many English Language Learners in terms of percent of student population reside and attend school in the Manchester School District as compared to the state (see [Finding 3.4](#)). In addition, the proportion of students in Manchester who are eligible for English Language Learning services is about twice that of the Nashua School District (9.5 percent versus 5.3 percent). Interview comments as well as program documents reviewed by the auditors suggested that this concentration of ELL eligible students was partially related to the status of the city as a designated resettlement site for refugees. In addition, Manchester, compared to other areas in the state, has historically had more job opportunities for immigrating persons, more affordable housing, and public transportation. However, current economic conditions and the gradual movement away from manufacturing in the region have had a negative impact on these relocation advantages.

A final comparison of special education program identification prevalence compared to the overall general education population can be made by looking at the national data. The U.S. Department of Education publishes state-by-state data annually; however, the most recent report is for the 2009-10 school year. Based on these data, the State of New Hampshire had a special education identified population of 15.3 percent, while the national average was 13.1 percent. This placed New Hampshire as the twelfth highest state in terms of percentage of students receiving special education. For comparison, neighboring Massachusetts was the second highest in the nation at 17.5 percent, and nearby Maine was number three at 17.3 percent. Connecticut, on the other hand, was one of the lowest in terms of percentage of identified special education students, with just 12.2 percent.*

**Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.*

Program Compliance

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act requires that states report annually on the progress of each local school district on a set of program indicators. [Exhibit 5.2.4](#) displays the most recent available Annual Performance Report of district progress along with the state targets and state level performance for each indicator. Indicators failing to meet state targets are presented in bold type and are discussed in the material that follows the exhibit.

Exhibit 5.2.4

New Hampshire Special Education District Report for FY 2010-2011 Manchester Public Schools March 2013

	District (%)	State Target (%)	State Performance (%)
Indicator 1: Graduation Rate			
Memorial High School	61.2	75	71.6
Central High School	60.0	75	71.6
West High School	57.1	75	71.6
Indicator 2: Dropout Rate			
Memorial High School	1.2	3.3	.67
Central High School	0.0	3.3	.67
West High School	1.0	3.3	.67
Indicator 3: Statewide Assessment Participation and Performance			
A. Did this District meet AYP targets for the Disability Subgroup?	No	n/a	n/a
Percent of districts that met AYP objectives for disability subgroup	n/a	47	28
B. Participation rate in state testing			

Exhibit 5.2.4 (continued)
New Hampshire Special Education
District Report for FY 2010-2011
Manchester Public Schools
March 2013

	District (%)	State Target (%)	State Performance (%)
Indicator 3: Statewide Assessment Participation and Performance (continued)			
Elem. participation rate: Reading	99	97	99
HS participation rate: Reading	95	97	99
Elem. participation rate: Math	99	97	98
HS participation rate: Math	95	97	98
<i>C. Proficiency rate</i>			
Reading Proficiency: Elementary	21	70.4	37
Reading Proficiency: High School	31	70.4	37
Math Proficiency: Elementary	21	69.2	31
Math Proficiency: High School	7	69.2	31
Indicator 4: Rate of Suspension or Expulsion			
Significant discrepancy in suspension – expulsion rate (over 10 days)	No	2.87	3.45
Significant discrepancy in suspension – expulsion rate (ethnicity)	No	0	0
Indicator 5: Placement Options			
In regular class 80% or more	76.4	49	72.6
Inside regular class less than 40%	14.5	18	8.6
In separate schools/residential settings/homebound/hospital	1.8	2.8	2.7
Indicator 7: Preschool Performance			
<i>Outcome A: social-emotional</i>			
Made growth	80.5	66.3	69.6
Reached age expectations	72.3	71.3	68.4
<i>Outcome B: knowledge and skill</i>			
Made growth	94.2	67.1	73.0
Reached age expectations	72.3	53.4	50.7
<i>Outcome C: Behavioral</i>			
Made progress	65.3	68.5	68
Reached age expectations	60.4	63.1	55.2
Indicator 8: Parent Involvement			
Parents report schools facilitate parent involvement.	47	50	35
Indicator 9: Disproportionality			
Had disproportionate representation of ethnic group in special education	No	0	0
Indicator 10: Disproportionate Representation in Targeted Categories			
Had disproportionate representation of ethnic group in specific disability categories	No	0	0
Indicator 11: Evaluation Timelines			
Percent of students evaluated within 45 days of parent consent.	92	100	96
Indicator 12: Early Intervention/Preschool Special Education			
Percent of students referred prior to age three and found eligible who have an IEP developed and implemented by age three.	89.5	100	98

Exhibit 5.2.4 (continued)
New Hampshire Special Education
District Report for FY 2010-2011
Manchester Public Schools
March 2013

	District (%)	State Target (%)	State Performance (%)
Indicator 13: Secondary Transition Planning			
Percent of students aged 16 and above having appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals.	n/a	100	50.9
Indicator 14: Post School Outcomes			
Percent of youth leaving school with IEPs and enrolled in higher education within one year.	58.8	43.2	54.4
Percent of youth leaving school with IEPs and enrolled in higher education or employed within one year.	70.6	70.2	75.7
Percent of youth leaving school with IEPs and enrolled in higher education or some other post-secondary education or training program; or employed within one year.	82.4	82.6	87.9
<i>Source: New Hampshire Special Education District Report (July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011)</i>			

The following is a review of those Annual Performance Report indicators rated below state target levels.

Indicator 1: Graduation Rate: All three comprehensive high schools failed to meet the statewide target of a 75 percent graduation rate for students with IEPs. Actual statewide performance also fell below the indicator target.

Indicator 2: Dropout Rate: All three comprehensive high schools met the state dropout rate target.

Indicator 3: Statewide Assessment Participation and Performance: In terms of performance, the disability subgroup failed to meet AYP targets. District students comprising the “disability” group underperformed the state’s elementary and high school proficiency targets for both reading and math (see [Finding 4.3](#)).

Indicator 4: Rate of Suspension or Expulsion: The district data did not indicate a significant discrepancy in the suspension/expulsion (i.e., suspensions or expulsions without special education services for over 10 days).

Indicator 5: Placement Options: The district met the state criteria for use of more inclusive classroom placement options.

Indicator 6: Preschool Settings: Was not rated by the state.

Indicator 7: Preschool Performance: The district preschool special education program met the state target for progress in social-emotional areas as well as for progress in knowledge and skills but failed to meet the state target for the behavioral progress outcome.

Indicator 8: Parent Involvement: The district failed to meet the state target for parent involvement in the special education program, but outperformed the actual statewide performance on this indicator.

Indicator 9: Disproportionality: The district was not found to identify students as disabled disproportionately based on race or ethnicity.

Indicator 10: Disproportionate Representation in Targeted Categories: The district also did not over-identify students from the various ethnic groups for specific special education programs such as “emotionally disabled” or “autistic.”

Indicator 11: Evaluation Timelines: All students evaluated for special education eligibility must receive all testing within 45 days of parent written permission to conduct said evaluation. The school district met this standard only 92 percent of the time, thus failing to meet the state target.

Indicator 12: Early Intervention/Preschool Special Education: This indicator requires that all students referred to the district prior to age three, and found qualified for special education preschool services, have an education plan developed and implemented by age three. The district met this target 89.5 percent of the time, thus failing to meet the state target that requires all students to be served by age three.

Indicator 13: Secondary Transition Planning: This indicator was not rated by the state.

Indicator 14: Post School Outcomes: The district met the requirement regarding the state target percentage of students with IEPs enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving school. However, the district failed to meet the higher state target percentage for students enrolled in either higher education or competitive employment. The district also failed to meet the target for percentage of youth leaving school with IEPs and enrolled in higher education or some other post-secondary education or training program; or employed within one year.

Overall, the district special education program was not compliant on five indicators and only partially compliant on three indicators.

Special Education Students' Performance on State Assessments

Exhibit 5.2.5 presents a comparison of grade 11 *NECAP* reading proficiency of all district students, district special education students, and state education students (also see Finding 4.3).

Exhibit 5.2.5

Multi-Year Comparison of 11th Grade *NECAP* Reading Performance Percentage Proficient or Above for All District Students, All State Special Education, and District Special Education Students Manchester School District March 2007-2012

Eleventh Grade	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
District Total	57	68	73	68	69	64
State Special Education	25	30	30	29	37	35
District Special Education	15	26	25	30	28	23
<i>Source: NECAP Percent Proficient or Above for Program level: Reading Teaching Year Report for District</i>						

Exhibit 5.2.5 shows that while students with individual education plans have generally underperformed both the state “students with IEPs” and the district “all student” groupings, performance that was once approaching or exceeding the state average for the “students with IEPs” group has fallen relative to the state both in the 2011 and 2012 assessment cycles. To the extent that there is a pattern of performance for eleventh grade special education test takers over the past six years, it is not likely that performance will make incremental positive progress toward parity with the “all students” group.

Exhibit 5.2.6 presents a comparison of eighth grade *NECAP* reading proficiency of all district students, district special education students, and state education students.

Exhibit 5.2.6

**Multi-Year Comparison of 8th Grade NECAP Reading Performance
Percentage Proficient or Above for All District Students,
All State Special Education, and District Special Education Students
Manchester School District
March 2007-2012**

Eighth Grade	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
District Total	43	46	53	61	64	66
State Special Education	24	30	35	40	46	43
District Special Education	14	13	18	27	26	20
<i>Source: NECAP Percent Proficient or Above for Program level: Reading Teaching Year Report for District</i>						

Exhibit 5.2.6 indicates the following:

- Eighth grade *NECAP* performance over the past six years shows substantial and growing gaps (in terms of percentage of test takers performing at proficient or above) between district special education students and both their district peers and the state level special education population.
- The district “all students” group demonstrates modest, but steady progress over the six years, while the state special education group has also made gains.
- The district special education group has not maintained the same pace, and in the fall 2012 administration had only 20 percent in the proficient or better performance group compared to 43 percent of the state special education group.

Exhibit 5.2.7 presents a comparison of the grade 6 *NECAP* reading proficiency of all district students, district special education students, and state education students

Exhibit 5.2.7

**Multi-Year Comparison of 6th Grade NECAP Reading Performance
Percent Proficient or Above for All District Students,
All State Special Education, and District Special Education Students
Manchester School District
March 2007-2012**

Sixth Grade	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
District Total	48	51	54	63	60	59
State Special Education	32	33	33	37	39	36
District Special Education	12	15	16	21	17	18
<i>Source: NECAP Percent Proficient or Above for Program level: Reading Teaching Year Report for District</i>						

Exhibit 5.2.7 suggests that the eighth grade performance pattern is also seen in sixth grade performance in that the district special education group has maintained about half the proficient or above percentage as the state special education group. Again, the year-to-year pattern does not suggest that long-term movement toward parity with the state group, let alone the district “all students” group, will occur.

Exhibit 5.2.8 presents a comparison of fourth grade reading performance on the *NECAP* assessment.

Exhibit 5.2.8

**Multi-Year Comparison of 4th Grade NECAP Reading Performance
Percent Proficient or Above for All District Students,
All State Special Education, and District Special Education Students
Manchester School District
2007-2009**

Fourth Grade	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
District Total	56	58	60	57	61	59
State Special Education	33	35	36	38	38	37
District Special Education	19	17	20	18	22	18

Source: NECAP Percent Proficient or Above for Program level: Reading Teaching Year Report for District

The fourth grade performance over the past six years repeats the sixth grade performance patterns and suggests the same interpretation. The proficiency percentage of special education test takers is only half the state percentage and a third of the district “all students” group.

Overall, the test performance over the past six years indicates that the current efforts of the Manchester School District are not moving the special education group toward parity with regular education students.

During interviews, parents, staff members, and board members related their perceptions about the special education program. The following are sample comments relative to concerns about special education costs:

- “Special education is an issue in this district. I’m concerned about the cost.” (Board Member)
- “The district is pennywise and pound foolish. If they invested more up front in special education, there’d be less out of district placement needs.” (Parent)
- “We have overuse of special education. Too many students are identified and we let that become a crutch.” (Teacher)
- “A lot of paras are written into IEPs. We have over 300 special education paras; it’s a huge budget.” (Administrator)
- “We pay out more to paraprofessionals in benefits rather than in salary.” (Administrator)

Other comments were made regarding the lack of consistency in program implementation:

- “RtI is strong in some schools and not others. There is no consistent approach.” (Administrator)
- “We should all be implementing RtI consistently. Some buildings don’t even have it.” (Teacher)
- “Every school does their own thing with IEPs.” (Administrator)
- “It would be nice to have everything in one place (procedures) like the ELL manual.” (Teacher)

Summary

The Manchester School District identifies about two percent more students for special education services than the state average. District special education students underperform state special education averages on *NECAP* assessments and are less likely to graduate than state IEP students. Assessments indicate that a steady pattern of improvement is not in evidence. Stakeholders interviewed expressed concerns about the costs of the program, particularly related to the number of paraprofessionals, and the lack of coordination in program implementation across the district.

Finding 5.3: Facility planning documents exist, but a current, comprehensive long-range facilities plan is lacking to provide flexibility for addressing change in population patterns or to allow for the positioning of facilities and technology assets to meet evolving community needs.

Delivery of the curriculum requires an appropriate setting and a supportive physical environment. Providing adequate educational and support facilities is a major responsibility of the school district and the community. These facilities represent a substantial investment, both in terms of initial capital outlay for their construction and the ongoing costs to keep them at a level of functionality that advances the educational mission. The design of school facilities, adequacy of space, environmental controls within that space, and flexibility of use should all work together to enhance the educational program. Facilities that are well maintained, clean, appropriately heated and cooled, and safe help establish a learning climate that is both pleasant and conducive to the delivery of the instructional program.

Effective long-range facility planning is imperative in that it provides a mechanism for monitoring facilities' functionality, anticipates resource allocations to maintain that functionality, and provides a process for examining facility needs in the future. These needs are identified through the use of community and staff input, demographic projections, ongoing assessments of the condition of the schools, and the establishment of priorities for facilities projects. Planning should also be based on the careful analysis of all factors that impact the learning environment, such as enrollment trends, curriculum needs, student demographic changes, evolving instructional practices, exceptional student requirements, technology advancements, community needs, and the support services needed to maintain that environment. Long-range planning ensures that a school system is prepared financially for the task of maintaining a level of quality in existing and future facilities commensurate with community expectations and students' educational needs.

The auditors visited each of the district's school sites and most of its classrooms to gather data on the learning environment and to note any special problems that may exist. Auditors also interviewed board members and district employees and reviewed policies and planning documents to determine the extent to which the long-range planning processes of the district meet audit criteria for comprehensive facilities planning.

Overall, the auditors found the schools to be generally clean. Custodial and light maintenance efforts were well regarded in the majority of schools. However, most buildings are quite old, averaging over 60 years of continuous use, with nearly a third ranging from 90 to well over 100 years of service. In spite of on-going maintenance and repair efforts, buildings evidence a wide range of system concerns and general deterioration due to their age, severe weather exposure, and usage patterns over the years. Technology challenges have impeded the integration of technology into teaching and learning (see [Finding 5.4](#)). A long-range facilities, maintenance, and renovation plan has not been developed to guide decision making in these areas.

Due to variables affecting student attendance patterns, some schools are crowded, while others are underutilized. District leadership has recently presented a Redistricting Proposal (January 28, 2013) to address space consideration among district schools. These documents do not reference the age or condition of the facilities.

The following Board of School Committee policies reference district expectations for facilities and how they are to be maintained and managed to support the educational mission.

- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 200: Facilities: Projections* directs that enrollment projections will be prepared on a five-year basis under the direction of the superintendent and will be reviewed annually. This policy also specifies that student growth projections, city planning and zoning changes, as well as current and planned city land development and housing changes be considered in this review.
- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 201, Facilities: Educational Specifications* stipulates: "When the District considers new construction and major additions, the Board shall require the Superintendent to develop a set of comprehensive educational specifications for the architect. These specifications, which shall then be discussed in conferences with the architect shall include:
 - Information concerning the plan of school organization and estimated enrollment in the proposed building;

- A description of the proposed curriculum and the teaching methods and techniques to be employed;
- A schedule of space requirements, including an indication of relative locations of various spaces;
- A desired layout of special areas and the equipment needed for such areas;
- An outline of desired mechanical features and special finishes; and
- A description of the grounds area and playground.

All educational specifications must be approved by the Board of School Committee.”

- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 202: Facilities: Selection of a Licensed Architect* notes that “The State Board of Education requires that a design professional must be employed to design the plans of the proposed building to make the project eligible for state building aid.”
- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 203: Facilities: Site Acquisition Procedure* states, “Priorities based upon student population, location, and education needs shall be established well in advance in order that proper locations for school sites might be acquired. Sites shall be acquired in advance of time for construction to allow adequate time for the completion of topography studies and other preliminary work.
 - Eminent domain action for the acquisition of property for school site purposes shall be executed only after negotiations fail; and
 - The School Board shall have sole power to select and purchase land for school use, subject to applicable powers of the City Charter.”
- *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 205: Facilities: Energy Policy* states, “The official policy of the Manchester School District is to conserve energy where possible and to take a leadership role in developing a realistic energy ethic and awareness of energy needs and costs.” This statement is followed by a number of implementing guidelines and procedures, as well as a set of “Facilities Energy Policy Regulations.”
- *Board of School Committee Safety Policy 108: Buildings and Grounds Management* states, “The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall have the general responsibility for the care, custody, and safekeeping of all school property, establishing such procedures and employing such means as may be necessary to discharge this responsibility. At the building level, the principal shall be responsible for overseeing the school facility and for the proper care of school property by the staff and students.”

Auditors found that board policy does not require alignment of facility planning with the curriculum and instructional goals of the district. While *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 201: Educational Specifications* specifies the development of an educational specifications document for new and renovated schools, auditors did not receive such documents for school renovations or construction completed since policy adoption in December 2000.

Auditors also examined other district documents, including job descriptions. However, as the facilities are owned and maintained by the city or its contractors, few district job descriptions address specific facilities responsibilities. In practice, the City of Manchester facilities staff interacted most frequently with the school district Business Office.

The major facilities planning documents include the following:

- Manchester School District Redistricting Proposal (January 28, 2013);
- Manchester School District School Capacity and Redistricting (February 9, 2011);
- Facilities Assessment and Feasibility Study for Henry Wilson and Beech Street Schools, Selma Deitch and District Offices (April 14, 2008);
- Long Range Facilities Planning (July 1, 2004);

- Programmatic Assessment of School Buildings (December 1, 2000);
- Engineering Evaluation of School Buildings (October 1, 2000); and
- Long Range Facilities Plan (November 1, 1999).

The most recent district-wide planning document that includes facilities assessment was titled Long Range Facilities Planning, and is dated July 2004. In addition, a Facilities Assessment and Feasibility Study was conducted in 2008 for Wilson and Beech Street Elementary Schools, The Deitch Early Learning Center and the School District Offices. The district is engaged in a strategic planning process, but the goals of this initiative do not at this time place a focus on school facilities. Finally, a redistricting proposal has been recently offered, but it is primarily directed toward proposed student attendance patterns and does not address the condition and capabilities of the schools.

Identified facility issues include potential structural failure, unchecked deterioration of exterior masonry walls and windows, and building configuration and infrastructures inadequate to support current or planned technology deployment. Many buildings have antiquated interior layouts that create security concerns and fail to support current approaches to instructional delivery. For example, the open classroom approach that is still evident in 1970s vintage schools is not conducive to current instructional approaches or to the education of students with diverse learning needs. Particular safety concerns include cracks and holes in playground surfaces, toxic building materials that often become known during repair efforts, missing or damaged classroom window shades, a lack of exterior security lighting, significant intercom system functionality issues, and the inability to monitor and control access at some schools.

District and city efforts to address these situations have ranged from major renovation projects such as the “Design-Built” projects of over a decade ago, to a work-order driven system of repair. While systems of preventive maintenance are clearly not unknown to the district, they are not systematically applied. Instead, the district uses a deferred maintenance approach in which unfunded facilities needs are placed on a list and prioritized. Prioritized items then wait for funding availability. The priority list itself changes as particular items gain the attention of the district board and administration. Auditors found that planning and policy documents related to facilities were not comprehensive or written in a way that linked the educational program needs with facilities sufficiency, program development and implementation, renovation, health/safety, and maintenance.

An expectation of the audit is that a district will have a comprehensive facilities plan or planning process in place to maintain and improve the quality of facilities needed to provide an appropriate environment for student learning. The audit establishes eight planning components as critical characteristics of a master facilities plan or process. For a plan or process to be judged adequate, approximately 70 percent, or six of the eight components, must be present. These components and the auditors’ assessment of the district’s facility planning efforts are presented in Exhibit 5.3.1.

Exhibit 5.3.1
Comparison of Facility Planning Efforts to
Audit Components of Comprehensive Long-range Facilities Planning
Manchester School District
March 2013

Components of a Comprehensive Long-Range Facilities Plan	Auditors' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Philosophical statements that reflect community aspirations and the educational mission of the district and their relationship to short- and long-range facilities goals		X
2. Enrollment projections that take into account any known circumstances that may change the pupil population	X	
3. The current organizational patterns of the district and identification of possible organizational changes necessary to support the educational program	X	
4. Identification of educational programs considered by designers of capital projects for renovation or addition of school facilities		X
5. A detailed evaluation of each facility, including assessment of structural integrity, mechanical integrity and efficiency, energy efficiency, operations and maintenance, and health and safety requirements		X
6. Prioritization of needs for renovation of existing facilities and the provision of additional facilities	Partial	
7. Cost analysis of potential capital projects to meet the educational needs of the district, including identification of revenues associated with capital construction	X	
8. Procedures for the involvement of all stakeholders of the school community in the development and evaluation of the long-range facilities plan	X	
Total	4	4
Percentage of Adequacy	50%	
*Partial = Inadequate		

As indicated in [Exhibit 5.3.1](#), the facility planning documents were found inadequate for identifying and completing facilities projects in support of curriculum delivery. Overall, the facilities planning documents provided by district staff met four of the eight criterion statements (50 percent) and therefore failed to meet the overall planning requirement, which consists of the presence of at least six of the eight criterion statements. The following provides a brief discussion of each of these eight components and auditors' assessment of the associated district plans.

Characteristic 1: Philosophical Statement (Inadequate)

Board policy does not identify the responsibilities of the board and district leadership regarding facilities, nor is policy adequate in addressing community aspirations and the educational mission of the district as they relate to facilities. Policies referring to facilities were more focused on state construction requirements and risk management. While important, neither these policies, nor other district planning documents include a clear linkage between facilities decisions and the educational mission. The auditors rated this component as inadequate.

Characteristic 2: Enrollment Projections (Adequate)

Policy language was found to include references to the use of demographic projections and related enrollment data in the development of a comprehensive facilities plan. In addition, a common feature of nearly all facilities plans completed in or for the district over the past 15 years have included information on enrollment as well as projections that have proven to be reasonably accurate over time. The auditors rated this component as adequate.

Characteristic 3: Organizational Patterns and Support (Adequate)

Recent planning documents reviewed by the auditors include information concerning an assessment of current district organizational patterns to meet future educational program needs. Perhaps the best example of this is the *2013 Redistricting Proposal*, which describes organizational changes necessary to support the educational program both now and in the future. While the district enrollment has continued a steady, long-term decline for a number of years, no plans reviewed by the auditors addressed methods for stemming or reversing this trend. A comprehensive facilities plan, once prepared, would include both those data needed to understand changes affecting district families as well as the schooling choices made by the “sending” district families. Such data could be used to develop more targeted educational program support to improve enrollment. Overall, the auditors rated this component as adequate.

Characteristic 4: Educational Program Needs (Inadequate)

The development of capital project plans and schedules needs to include opportunities for the input of educational leaders, typically school principals, demographers, and facilities experts. This is important because the identification of educational program needs is critical to the design of capital projects, whether these are new schools or renovations to existing schools. Specific to this school district, effective planning must also include the City of Manchester, in recognition of the fact that the district does not own the schools that house its operations. The identification of program needs and their relationship to facilities is also of particular concern, considering that most schools have not had changes in physical configuration for some time, and in some cases, for over 100 years. Such facilities planning finds support in *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 202: Facilities: Selection of a Licensed Architect* and *Board of School Committee Administration Policy 201: Facilities: Educational Specifications*, which call for the development of educational specifications. However, the district lacks planning documents that address educational specifications, or that provide comprehensive recommendations for new construction, major renovation of existing structures, and significant repairs to facility infrastructure and systems. A facilities plan, once developed, should provide evidence that the district has been engaged in a broad-based program of community information sharing concerning capital projects. At this time, district facilities plans are outdated and fragmented, while more current planning, such as the technology expansion initiative, is not integrated into a comprehensive facilities and program plan. Overall, the auditors rated this component as inadequate.

Characteristic 5: Facility Needs Assessment (Inadequate)

The Manchester School District Building and Sites Subcommittee meets on a regular basis to discuss issues such as building maintenance, site improvements, school requests, and related topics. However, there has been no recent detailed evaluation of each facility, including assessment of structural integrity, mechanical integrity and efficiency, energy efficiency, operations and maintenance, and health and safety requirements. Instead, projects are listed in a priority rank, but the ranking changes based on factors other than those associated with a particular project. Some projects move forward, such as the paving of a parking lot, for example, but then are completed without painting the parking lines. The district does not have a comprehensive, up-to-date facilities needs assessment that can garner broad-based support for a prioritized facilities project schedule. The auditors rated this component as inadequate.

Characteristic 6: Prioritization of Needs for Renovation and New Construction (Partially Adequate)

The *2013 Redistricting Proposal* provides a set of options for adjusting student attendance patterns, but does not address construction or renovation needs. The Facilities and Sites Subcommittee maintains a prioritized list of needed building repairs, but, as noted in subcommittee minutes and interview data listed below, the procedures for prioritization are unclear. This auditors rated this characteristic as partially adequate, and it is therefore inadequate.

Characteristic 7: Capital Cost Analysis (Adequate)

The cost of facilities and all projects involving their repair, cleaning, maintenance, and renovation are major topics of the BOSC and the Facilities and Sites Committee. Consideration of cost estimates for projects and discussion of funding sources consumes most of the agendas of the latter. While there is no current capital

improvement plan addressing the condition and needs of all facilities at this time that might contain the associated fiscal data, capital cost analysis is an ongoing feature of Facilities Subcommittee discussions in the Manchester School District. Auditors rated this component as adequate.

Characteristic 8: Stakeholder Involvement (Adequate)

Auditors determined that the subcommittee structure of the school district, especially as it relates to school facilities, provides opportunities for stakeholder involvement. The auditors rated this component as adequate.

Overall, elements of facilities planning are evident in the Manchester School District, but the district does not meet the audit standard for comprehensive, long-range facilities planning.

Construction and Renovation History

The beginning of public education was the decision of the Town of Derryfield (later Manchester) to hire a teacher in 1781 (see [Introduction](#)). While no schools are still in service from that era, the Manchester School District continues to maintain a number of veteran facilities. [Exhibit 5.3.2](#) provides information on the original construction year and age of the district's schools.

Exhibit 5.3.2

History of School Construction Manchester School District March 2013

School Name	Current Age	Original Construction Year
Henry J. McLaughlin Middle School	15	1998
Northwest Elementary	26	1987
Manchester School of Technology	31	1982
Beech Street Elementary	40	1973
Highland-Goffe's Falls Elementary	44	1969
Parker-Varney Elementary	44	1969
Hillside Middle School	45	1968
Middle School at Parkside	48	1965
Southside Middle School	48	1965
McDonough Elementary	49	1964
Green Acres Elementary	51	1962
Memorial High School	54	1959
Gossler Park Elementary	58	1955
Jewett Street Elementary	58	1955
Smyth Road Elementary	58	1955
Webster Elementary	75	1938
Weston Elementary	91	1922
West High School	92	1921
Bakersville Elementary	97	1916
Wilson Elementary	117	1896
Central High School	118	1895
Hallsville Elementary	122	1891
Average School Age	63	1950
<i>Source: Long Range Facilities Plan, November 1, 1999</i>		

Exhibit 5.3.2 indicates the following:

- The district schools range in age from 15 to 122 years; the average age is 63 years.
- Twelve (12) of the schools are over 50 years old; three schools are over 100 years.

The schools that have operated the longest without renovation tend to have the most facility concerns, but other district schools have a variety of functional issues as well as seen in the facilities assessment to follow.

The Facilities Assessment and Feasibility Study for Henry Wilson and Beech Street Schools, Selma Deitch and District Offices (April 14, 2008) included the following information.

- The code review of Henry Wilson Elementary, a school built in 1896, with new additions built in 1917 and 1996, stated, “There are numerous building and life-safety code violations throughout the building, including a lack of an automated fire suppression system and self-closing doors.”
- The code review for Beech Street Elementary was similar even though this school was built in 1973: “There are numerous building and life-safety violations throughout the building, with the most noticeable being the lack of an automatic fire suppression system. The second major issue was the creation of a ‘dead end’ corridor due to the arrangement of student desks in some classrooms.” A problem with the swing direction of an egress door was also cited.

As Exhibit 5.3.2 indicated, a number of district schools have been in continuous use for many years and have experienced not only the usual wear and tear and infrastructure aging of a public school, but have also been long exposed to the climate extremes characteristic of New England. Auditors toured all school facilities reviewed facilities reports provided by district staff. Exhibit 5.3.3 displays a summary of these observations.

Exhibit 5.3.3

School Facility Conditions Manchester School District March 2013

School	Facilities Issues
Bakersville Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gym floor tile damage
Beech Street Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate public address system• Open classroom design prevents lock-down• Peeling and/or faded paint in some classrooms• Wireless system inadequate to support instructional devices
Central High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roof leaks in several buildings• Numerous window shades damaged or missing• Paint peeling and/or worn• Cracked/broken blackboards in some classrooms
Gossler Park Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Playground and other paved areas damaged and worn• Window shades damaged or missing
Green Acres Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Playground and other paved areas damaged and worn
Hallsville Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Window shades damaged or missing• Intercom system not adequate both inside and outside of the building• Inadequate external security lighting
Henry J. McLaughlin Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Numerous exterior window screens missing or damaged• Window blinds in poor condition or missing• Classroom doors do not lock properly• Peeling laminate in some cabinets/counters• Broken or missing floor tiles in hallway

Exhibit 5.3.3 (continued) School Facility Conditions Manchester School District March 2013	
School	Facilities Issues
Highland-Goffe's Falls Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paved areas damaged and worn
Hillside Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Window shades damaged or missing
Jewett Street Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground and other paved areas damaged and worn
Manchester School of Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No concerns reported
McDonough Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground fencing defective
Memorial High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bathroom doors damaged or worn
Middle School at Parkside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Window shades damaged or missing
Northwest Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground and other paved areas damaged and worn • Carpet worn/torn
Parker-Varney Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intercom system inadequate both inside and outside of the building • Window shades damaged or missing • Classroom door locks do not secure properly • Playground and other paved areas damaged and worn
Smyth Road Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Window shades damaged or missing
Southside Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground and other paved areas damaged and worn • Window shades damaged or missing
Webster Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing or damaged window screens allowing entry to stinging insects
West High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paved areas damaged and worn • Numerous window shades damaged or missing • Floor tile wear- tripping hazard
Weston Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground and other paved areas damaged and worn • Gym floor and library carpet require repair
Wilson Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground and other paved areas damaged and worn • Open classroom design does not allow for classroom lockdown • All parking on the adjacent street • Insufficient phone lines into the school

As can be noted, all schools have some level of inadequacy that impacts the instructional program, and student and staff safety, or reduces student and staff comfort. In addition to the items listed previously, district staff noted that nearly all schools require at least some interior painting and playground/parking lot resurfacing.

Another common theme identified in [Exhibit 5.3.3](#) includes the need to replace window shades. This is not simply a comfort issue (helping keep rooms cool on sunny days). As was pointed out by staff, missing or damaged window shades have safety implications as well. Another safety concern had to do with the number of schools having inadequate intercom systems. Auditors learned during site visits that it was not uncommon to find that intercom systems did not reach all staff members, which in some situations could be a serious security concern.

The district board and staff face significant challenges with regard to the school facilities. Many schools are well along in their service life and thus require more, not less maintenance. Many were designed during a time when technological innovation was moving from fountain pens to ball points. Instructional programs and student populations had very different needs. The district is now in the position of caring for these facilities, but do not own them or have the capacity to obtain long-term debt for major capital projects. Facilities maintenance

and related costs amount to approximately six percent of the annual district budget. In addition, the district is clearly not exempted from new requirements from the various governmental agencies, and must address these requirements with the same level of compliance as a district having state of the art facilities.

In addition, the district staff is experiencing demographic changes such as a multi-year net reduction in student enrollment and a change in the instructional requirements of the incoming students. While elementary populations have remained somewhat stable for the past eight years, the high school population, which includes students from neighboring elementary districts, is steadily falling. Decisions by these districts to send their students elsewhere or build their own high school would accelerate this problem.



Safety issues exist, such as this deteriorated blacktop on the Gossler Park playground

Auditors conducted interviews with district and site personnel, including site administrators, teachers, board members, district level administrators, and other staff. In addition, auditors met with parents and community patrons regarding facility issues in the district. The following comments were typical of those citing renovation and repair needs:

- “The condition of many of our schools is that they are clean but old and worn. They are hot in the summer and cold in the winter.” (Board Member)
- A lot of our classrooms don’t have window shades, which is both a comfort and potential security issue. The doors to the classrooms were changed several years ago so that they can no longer be locked from inside the class and now require a key just to lock them.” (Administrator)
- “Ten (10) years ago we spent \$110,000,000 in capital improvements to the schools. As a result, the high schools are in good shape; as are the middle schools, but some of the elementary schools need work. Some of these schools are over 100 years old.” (Board Member)
- “Our playground equipment is a piece of junk and serves as a target for graffiti. Also, our playground blacktop area is cracked and has chunks of tar lying around.” (Administrator)
- “Our school gets uncomfortably hot in the warmer months and cold in the winter. The centrally controlled temperature sensors are out of the way next to the hallway entrance, but the rooms are too hot or cold on the other side of the room next to the windows.” (Administrator)

Additional comments were made about facilities planning.

- “There are no facility standards or inspections to maintain those standards that I am aware of; each school makes its own requests when a repair is needed. This results in some facilities requests being considered based on who you know.” (Administrator)

- “I have a very good relationship with the facilities guy so we don’t have a problem in that area. I’m lucky, I call, and they come and fix it that day or the next day.” (Administrator)
- During the last phase of major capital improvements about 10 years ago, high schools received major renovations while elementary schools were repaired, painted, and had infrastructure repairs. No space was added then, so our elementary students are still in portables.” (Board Member)



Student doing research in the media center at West High School

Summary

The auditors found the schools to be generally clean, but with substantial challenges related to aging facilities. In spite of ongoing maintenance and repair efforts, buildings evidence a wide range of system concerns and general deterioration. In addition, many schools have antiquated interior layouts that create security concerns and fail to support current approaches to instructional delivery. Auditors found that planning and policy documents related to facilities are not comprehensive or written in a way that links educational program needs with facilities sufficiency, program development and implementation, renovation, health/safety and maintenance. A redistricting proposal is currently being considered to address student attendance patterns, but the proposal does not reference the condition of facilities.

Finding 5.4: Some elements of technology planning are in place, but the district’s technology program lacks coordination across all levels of the organization. An aging infrastructure and inadequate funding currently impede the implementation of technology to enhance the educational program.

Effective technology planning enhances student learning and increases efficiency and effectiveness in management functions. System expectations for the use of technology need to be clearly defined and provide direction for the integration of technology throughout the school system. Planning for the use of technology is key to providing direction for the selection, adoption, implementation, and evaluation of technology as an instructional tool.

To determine the quality of the technology program in the Manchester School District, the auditors reviewed the Education Technology Plan (2010-2013), board policies, job descriptions, survey data, and other related documents. In addition, they interviewed board members, central office and school administrators, teachers, parents, and community members and conducted site visits to all school buildings.

Overall, the auditors found that the implementation of technology in the Manchester School District is hindered by an aging infrastructure and inadequate funding (see [Findings 4.3](#) and [5.1](#)). A technology bond referendum is being considered by district officials to address these issues. Board policies and job descriptions reference the use of technology, but they do not provide a foundation for the integration of technology throughout the school system. The District Education Technology Plan includes elements of effective planning, but it does not provide for coordination across all levels of the organization. At the time of the audit visit, a district-wide

initiative was underway in which each school was being outfitted with high speed internet access and some outdated classroom computers were being replaced with newer technology. During school visits, the auditors observed minimal use of technology in classrooms outside of computer labs.

Exhibit 5.4.1 lists the documents related to the technology program reviewed by the auditors:

Exhibit 5.4.1
Technology Documents Reviewed by the Auditors
Manchester School District
March 2013

Document	Date
Manchester School District Education Technology Plan	7/1/10-6/30/13
Manchester School District Technology Plan Progress	1/24/13
Manchester School District Technology Strategic Plan Executive Summary and Technology Bond Budget Narrative	3/13/13
Board Policies	1999-2012
Job Descriptions	1998-2012
Maximizing Educational Opportunities	11/13/12
2011-12 District Improvement Progress Report and 2012-13 Action Plan	6/29/12
School Improvement Plans	2012
Manchester Strategic Plan Stakeholder Survey	Jan. 2013
Online Informal Teacher Survey	Mar. 2013
Professional Development for Library Media Specialists	Dec. 2012
New Hampshire Department of Education School Approval Site Visit Reports	2010-11; 2011-12
New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Public Secondary Schools: Manchester Central High School Self-Study Survey Results	1/10/12
New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Public Secondary Schools: Five-Year Progress Report of Manchester West High School	3/1/10

The following board policies reference the use of technology:

- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 131.3: Online/Virtual Education* states that the board allows video-based, internet-based, and online courses as a means to fulfill academic requirements. Approved courses must align with state and local standards, be delivered by staff licensed in the state from which the course originates, and contain provisions for feedback and monitoring of student progress. The policy lists the following requirements for review before a course is approved as part of a student's educational program: a syllabus, including prerequisites; specific learning goals/activities; student evaluation criteria; and teacher responsibilities.
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 142: Intranet/Internet Responsible Use Policy* states that intranet/internet access is to be used to further educational goals and objectives. User responsibilities, unacceptable uses, disciplinary actions, and parent/guardian responsibilities are outlined in the policy.
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 147: 1:1 Computing Devices in Manchester Schools* states that 1:1 devices will allow students to direct their own learning and have greater reliance on active learning strategies. This policy covers receipt of such device, care of the device, use of the device, repair or replacement, accidental damage, student carelessness, claims, and privileges and consequences.
- *Board of School Committee Instruction Policy 148: Web Tools and Social Media* provides guidelines for teachers using online activities in the classroom in a safe, controlled environment.

The following job descriptions list responsibilities related to the technology program.

- Superintendent – Responsible for the development, implementation, and maintenance of curriculum design and development, school law, educational technology, facilities management, and student services administration.
- Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction – Ensures the district/school educational objectives are aligned to state frameworks and to instructional practices that yield the highest standards of student achievement, instructional excellence, and educational technology.
- Coordinator, Computer Help Desk – Answers the computer help-desk phone and provides the first point of contact for school district computer users in need of assistance.
- Data Analyst – Provides sustained training in effectively using student data systems.
- Director of Information Technology – Plans, organizes, and directs the operations and activities of the Information Technology Department and develops policies and procedures to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of departmental operations and addresses technology needs within the school district.
- Technology Integration Specialist – Develops and provides training to support teachers and administrators in integrating technology in classroom curricula and the teaching/learning process and assists with classroom management, co-teaches using technology, creates training aids, and participates in the selection of appropriate educational software to augment class content.
- Library Media Generalist – Assesses and implements the use of new technologies for library media center management, educational applications, and information retrieval.

Job descriptions reference responsibilities relative to the technology program for a number of positions; however, the principals' and teachers' job descriptions do not list expectations for the use of technology.

The district technology staff includes a technology director, a network manager, two hardware technicians, a help desk coordinator, a technology integration specialist, and an administrative assistant. The District Technology Committee is comprised of the Superintendent, the Technology Director, the Director of Professional Development, the Federal Projects Director, the Technology Integration Specialist, and Library Media Generalists. The committee members contributed to the development of the district Technology Plan and serve as the oversight group for “refining, implementing, and evaluating the impact of the action plans,” as described in the plan.

The Maximizing Educational Opportunities report (2012) stated that 522 Manchester School District students are currently participating in the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS). Each high school has recently developed a Blended Learning Lab to assist students enrolled in VLACS. The labs offer courses that combine face-to-face instruction with online learning.

A comparison of the district's technology planning to audit criteria is presented in [Exhibit 5.4.2](#).

Exhibit 5.4.2

CMSi Quality Criteria for Instructional Technology Programs Manchester School District March 2013

Criteria	Auditors' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Board policy or administrative regulation for instructional technology exists.	X	
2. There is a clear statement of program philosophy/vision.	X	
3. A comprehensive view of technology exists.	X	
4. A needs assessment has been completed and evaluated		X
5. Measurable student goals and objectives exist.	Partial*	
6. An ongoing student assessment component exists.		X
7. An ongoing program assessment component exists.	X	
8. There are comprehensive staff trainings with measurable standards for equipment, application, and technology.		X
9. School site equipment standards exist.		X
10. Internet access standards exist.	X	
11. The role of the school library is stated.	X	
12. An implementation budget has been identified.	X	
13. A maintenance budget has been identified.	X	
14. Technology site plans are aligned with district plans.		X
Total	8	6
Percentage Adequate	57.1%	
*Partial = inadequate		

The auditors found technology program planning to be adequate in eight of the criteria, partially adequate on one criterion, and inadequate in five of the criteria. Seventy (70) percent of the characteristics must be rated as adequate to meet the audit standards for a quality technology program. Therefore, the Manchester School District's technology planning does not meet the standard for quality instructional technology planning.

The following provides further detail about the ratings in [Exhibit 5.4.2](#):

Criterion 1: Board Policies (Adequate)

Policies related to instructional technology have been recently updated. A goal and corresponding action plan of the technology plan is to maintain and update policies and procedures as emerging technologies are implemented. This characteristic was met.

Criterion 2: Program Philosophy or Vision (Adequate)

The Manchester School District Technology Plan Progress Report (2013) states that the overarching technology vision is to facilitate student-centered learning and to provide equitable access to all students. An expanded vision connected to the School District Mission is described in the Technology Plan. This characteristic was rated adequate.

Criterion 3: Comprehensive Technology View (Adequate)

Board policies are silent relative to the use of technology as a management tool, but the Technology Plan addresses district-wide information systems, infrastructure improvements, human resources software, and information systems. In addition to computers, instructional technology goals reference a wide range of technological tools, such as interactive white boards, data projectors, digital cameras, scanners, color laser printers, video conferencing systems, e-textbooks, etc. This characteristic is adequate.

Criterion 4: Needs Assessment (Inadequate)

No reference is made to a needs assessment in the technology plan. The plan Progress Report states that “We are in the process of building rubrics, surveys, and tests. Our goal is to define benchmarks and timelines for all components of our technology plan.” This characteristic is inadequate.

Criterion 5: Measurable Student Goals and Objectives (Partially Adequate)

The technology plan states that a focus has been on helping all students to be literate by the end of eighth grade. All high school students are required to complete at least .5 credits of computer education, which can be met through a variety of courses. District-wide competencies and assessments have been written for these courses.

The Technology Plan Appendix includes a technology skills checklist for students in grades 3 – 5. The objectives cover a broad spectrum of technology concepts and applications, but not all objectives are specific enough to be measurable. For example, “Uses age appropriate keyboarding skills” doesn’t define the skills that should be mastered at each grade level.

The appendix also contains a listing of the concepts and competencies for the high school Information and Communications Technology course, which satisfies the state computer literacy requirement for graduation. These also are not measurable. This criterion was rated as partially adequate and is therefore inadequate.

Criterion 6: Ongoing Student Assessment (Inadequate)

As noted above, broad student goals for technology are listed in the technology plan, but no further reference to assessing student skills is made. This characteristic is inadequate.

Criterion 7: Ongoing Program Assessment (Adequate)

The Technology Plan states that the personnel designated to monitor the action steps of the plan “should undertake a discrepancy analysis of expected versus actual implementation performance. Mid-course corrections and possible re-designs will be communicated to the District Technology Committee.” The Manchester School District Technology Plan Progress Report (January 2013) provides an update on progress toward the Technology Plan goals. The Technology Strategic Plan Executive Summary and Technology Bond Budget Narrative (March 2013) outlines technology areas in need of improvement, prioritized upgrade goals, and a funding overview for the proposed technology bond. This criterion was met.

Criterion 8: Comprehensive Staff Training (Inadequate)

The Technology Strategic Plan Executive Summary and Technology Bond Narrative (March 2013) lists teacher and staff professional development as the first priority needed for improvement. The Technology Plan states that the Manchester School District offers a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators, and other staff members in technology use and its integration into the curriculum, information management, and administrative computing. However, continuing infrastructure issues and the lack of district-wide focus and depth of training impede technology usage and integration into the curriculum.

Training has been provided for implementation of the student information system (Aspen X2) and the accounting and requisition system (MUNIS). Training in the use of email and productivity tools is offered informally and varies from school to school.

Teaching strategies and technology integration support are offered through the Greater Manchester Professional Development Center (GMPDC). GMPDC also offers a virtual learning platform for Professional Learning Communities. Principals also have access to an online professional development library (PD 360). However, district personnel did not mention accessing these resources during interviews. This characteristic was rated as inadequate.

Criterion 9: School Site Equipment Standards (Inadequate)

The State Department of Education’s School Approval Site Visit Report Summary (April 2012) stated the following: “There is some evidence that existing technology has been acquired through various grants and that

were not guided by an overall technology plan. The result is a hodgepodge of different equipment of varying ages and condition.”

The Technology Plan Progress Report (2013) identified the need for setting single standards for software, hardware, networks, and interactive whiteboard equipment: “We are working toward standardizing our software and hardware platforms . . .” This criterion was not yet met.

Criterion 10: Internet Access Standards (Adequate)

At the time of the audit visit, the district was in the process of outfitting each elementary school with dedicated high speed internet access. All dedicated internet connections with firewalls had recently been installed in the middle schools and high schools.

Board of School Committee Instruction Policies 141 and 147 provide detailed expectations for safe and appropriate use of the intranet/internet to support educational goals and objectives. The Technology Plan also includes the *Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA)* on which the board policies are based. This criterion was met.

Criterion 11: Role of School Library (Adequate)

The job description for the Library Media Generalist describes expectations for the implementation of new technology. Included in the Corrective Action Plan for four elementary schools (December 2012) was a plan for Professional Development for Library Media Specialists. The objective was to develop the expertise of Library Media Specialists in the use of technology across the curriculum so as to support K-5 teachers in the development of technology portfolios. This characteristic is adequate.

Criterion 12: Implementation Budget (Adequate)

The technology plan identifies a three-year implementation budget and possible sources of funding. The Technology Plan Progress Report describes the formula used for allocating budget funds. The Technology Strategic Plan Executive Summary and Technology Bond Narrative include a preliminary technology bond funding budget. This criterion was met.

Criterion 13: Maintenance Budget (Adequate)

The progress report states that 20 percent of budgeted funds are allocated for upgrades and ongoing technical support: “We will not consider the purchase of more hardware and networks than the district can support with its technical support capacity.” The technology plan states the following: “A fully funded equipment and software refreshment plan is needed to ensure current equipment (is functional) in the schools.” This characteristic is adequate.

Criterion 14: Technology Site Plans (Inadequate)

School improvement plans are not required to have a technology component aligned to the district plan (see [Finding 1.2](#)). In reviewing school plans, the auditors noted that only a few school plans referenced goals for the implementation of technology. A disconnect exists between district and school-based technology planning. This characteristic was rated as inadequate.

As part of the current strategic planning initiative, district stakeholders were asked to complete a survey that included ranking Manchester School District’s “Greatest Challenges and Issues.”

- Forty-nine (49) percent of the respondents listed “Updating and integrating technology in schools” as a challenge and ranked it fourth out of 13 choices.
- Almost 47 percent of stakeholders listed “Updating technology to meet or exceed today’s standards” as an issue and ranked it sixth out of the 13 choices.

During an online informal survey, 217 teachers responded to a question regarding the alignment of technology software to the curriculum. [Exhibit 5.4.3](#) presents their perceptions.

Exhibit 5.4.3

Teachers' Perceptions of Technology Software Alignment to Curriculum Manchester School District March 2013

Technology software is selected based on strong alignment to district curriculum objectives and state assessments.		
Answer Options	Response Percentage	Response Count
Strongly Agree	2.8	6
Agree	15.2	33
Neutral	17.5	38
Disagree	14.7	32
Strongly Disagree	30.4	66
Don't Know	19.4	42
	answered question	217
	skipped question	22
<i>Source: Online Curriculum Management Teacher Survey</i>		

[Exhibit 5.4.3](#) indicates the following:

- Only 18 percent of the responses indicated that teachers agreed or strongly agreed that instructional technology software was aligned with district curriculum objectives and assessments.
- Over 45 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that software was aligned with the curriculum.

Many teachers responded to the survey question with additional comments, such as the following representative samples:

- "What technology software?"
- "Appropriate technology is nonexistent."
- "I don't have ready access to computers or software."
- "Access to modern technology is probably one of Manchester's weakest areas."

During interviews with teachers, administrators, and board members, several individuals commented on the fragmented approach to technology implementation.

- "Technology is all over the place. Every school has different technology due to donations." (Administrator)
- "The history in the district is technology based on donations. The result has been a hodgepodge of hardware and systems." (Administrator)
- "We don't have the technology infrastructure to support the student information system." (Administrator)
- "Technology is years behind and requires infrastructure and network improvements." (Board Member)

Several people expressed concerns about the negative impact the lack of functional technology may have on the instructional program.

- "We need to have technology to participate in the systems available with the Common Core Standards." (Administrator)
- "I'm worried about the upcoming Smarter Balanced Assessments. Our kids might not have the keyboarding skills needed." (Administrator)

- “The school library software is incredibly slow.” (Teacher)
- “Our computers are too old to use in class.” (Teacher)
- “The internet doesn’t work on most days.” (Teacher)

Some comments were made about future district technology goals.

- “Our highest priority is to build infrastructure to support a wired network, a wireless network, and internet access.” (Administrator)
- “The overall goal is to infuse technology into all subject areas. We plan for what the infrastructure would look like to support full integration of technology into all courses.” (Administrator)
- “We are improving accessibility of technology for our teachers. Phase One is to get new computers on teachers’ desks. Phase Two will be to get them to the special education teachers.” (Administrator)
- “Our infrastructure is being built to access information in the cloud. This is more cost effective.” (Administrator)

Summary

The auditors found a technology program hampered by an aging infrastructure, inadequate funding, and the absence of a cohesive approach across the school district. Currently, district schools have a variety of different computers and uneven access to technology. Not surprisingly, during brief school visits the auditors found infrequent student usage of technology in their educational program. The technology bond proposal presents a funding approach designed to provide students with more equitable access to technology.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PDK-CMSI CURRICULUM AUDIT™ TEAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE MANCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Based on the three streams of data derived from interviews, documents, and site visits, the PDK-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.

Where the PDK-CMSi audit team views a problem as wholly or partly a policy and monitoring matter, the recommendations are formulated for the Board of School Committee. Where the problem is distinctly an operational or administrative matter, the recommendations are directed to the superintendent of schools as the chief executive officer of the school system. In many cases, the PDK-CMSi audit team directs recommendations to both the board and the superintendent, because it is clear that policy and operations are related, and both entities are involved in a proposed change. In some cases, there are no recommendations to the superintendent when only policy is involved or none to the board when the recommendations deal only with administration.

Audit recommendations are presented as follows: The overarching goals for the board and/or the superintendent, followed by the specific objectives to carry out the overarching goals. The latter are designated "Governance Functions" and "Administrative Functions."

Recommendation 1: Develop, revise, adopt, and implement board policies to provide for a sound local system of curriculum management and quality control.

A comprehensive set of board policies is a prerequisite for sound curriculum management and local quality control. Without definitive policies, a board of education cannot ensure program focus, effectiveness, or consistency. Policies promote constancy of purpose in district operations by providing reference points for recurring decisions. Sound board policies accomplish the following:

- Establish clear direction for the system;
- Provide for consistency of actions over time as members of the board change office, establishing a historical base for the district;
- Guide professional staff in their efforts to improve direction in the school district;
- Establish a framework for monitoring progress in the attainment of district learning goals; and
- Provide a framework for the evaluation of district employees.

The policies adopted by the Manchester School District Board of School Committee (BOSC) do not provide clear expectations or adequate direction for a sound system of curriculum management and quality control; only 26 percent of the policies were considered adequate (see Finding 1.1). Almost 65 percent of the board policies are at least 10 years old and do not reflect current expectations. Policies are reviewed by the board on an as needed basis rather than on a regular schedule of policy review.

References to curriculum and assessment are found throughout various policies, but they do not provide direction for a consistent educational program throughout the school district. Direction for these critical areas needs to be specific and easily accessible. Establishing clear direction for district operations and curriculum management will require the BOSC to revise some existing policies and to create additional policies.

Among the policies that are missing or need revision are policies that provide direction for district long-range and school improvement planning (see Finding 1.2); require written curriculum for all subjects and courses

taught at all grade levels (see [Finding 2.2](#)); require a student assessment system that includes both formative and summative measures (see [Finding 4.1](#)); require supplemental program alignment with the curriculum (see [Findings 2.4 and 4.1](#)); provide for a consistent system of monitoring the delivery of the curriculum (see [Finding 3.3](#)); and require the use of data in all areas of decision making (see [Findings 1.3 and 4.4](#)).

Review and revision of board policies should be completed within one year. After the board revises or adopts new policies, the policies need to be clearly communicated to all staff members. Strategies need to be identified to ensure policy implementation.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Board of School Committee:

G. 1.1: Adopt a policy that requires a five-year cycle of systematic review of all board policies to keep policies current. Eliminate or revise outdated or duplicative policies.

G.1.2: Direct the superintendent to prepare for board consideration and adoption drafts of the following policies:

Policies that Provide for Control

- Adopt a policy that requires an aligned written, taught, and assessed curriculum for all courses and subject areas that are taught throughout the school district. The policy should also:
 - Require alignment of the curriculum to both state and national standards and
 - Describe a philosophical approach to curriculum development.
- Revise *BOSC Administration Policy 101: School Superintendent* so it is congruent with the job description and appraisal process and includes duties and responsibilities relative to long-range planning, data-driven decision making, and an organizational chart that is reviewed annually and presented to the board (see [Recommendations 2, 5, and 10](#)).
- Adopt a policy that requires a job description for each employee that is updated regularly and meets audit criteria (see [Finding 1.3](#) and [Recommendation 10](#)).
- Adopt a policy that clearly delineates the curriculum management decisions that are to be made centrally and those that are to be made at the school level (see [Recommendation 7](#)).
- Direct that job descriptions include accountability for the design and delivery of the curriculum.
- Link professional appraisal processes with job accountability functions and to gains in student achievement.
- Adopt a policy that directs the development of a system-wide long-range plan that is updated annually, incorporates system-wide student achievement targets, and is evaluated by formative and summative measures (see [Recommendation 2](#)).
- Adopt a policy that directs the development of school improvement plans that are aligned with the district plan, incorporate student achievement targets, and are evaluated using formative and summative measures.

Policies that Provide for Direction

- Adopt a policy that requires the development of a curriculum management plan that provides direction for the design and delivery of the written, taught, and tested curricula (see [Recommendation 4](#)). The policy should accomplish the following:
 - Specify the components to be included in the written curriculum, such as:
 - Curriculum objectives that specify how students will demonstrate mastery;
 - Assessment instruments for alignment to curriculum objectives in content, context, and cognitive type;

- Prerequisite skills that identify the skills needed to be successful on each objective;
- Resources that align with curricular objectives and assessments in content, context, and cognitive type; and
- Suggested instructional approaches for teaching key objectives.
- Direct alignment of textbook adoption with curriculum revision procedures.
- Require development of formative and summative review of the written curriculum for all grade levels and content areas.
- Require that new programs be reviewed for alignment to the curriculum.
- Require the development of written procedures for formative and summative evaluation of programs based on improved student achievement (see [Recommendations 4 and 5](#)).

Policies that Provide for Connectivity and Equity

- Include in the above curriculum management plan policy the following requirements:
 - Vertical articulation of the curriculum across grade levels and horizontal coordination at a given grade level for the core content areas (see [Recommendation 4](#));
 - Expected instructional strategies to be used in delivering the curriculum; and
 - Actions that constitute monitoring the delivery of the curriculum.
- Revise *BOSC Personnel Policy 118: Professional Staff Orientation and Training* to include the following components (see [Recommendation 6](#)):
 - The requirement for a comprehensive professional development plan that coordinates the delivery of the curriculum across the district and is linked to the Strategic Plan and
 - The requirement of a process for coaching over time in the implementation of professional development initiatives.

Policies that Provide for Feedback

- Adopt a policy that requires the development of a district student assessment process for all content areas and includes formative and summative measures (see [Recommendation 5](#)).
- Adopt a policy that directs the student assessment and program evaluation process to link with the Strategic Plan and school improvement plans.
- Adopt a policy that requires a periodic review of each supplemental program to determine whether the program needs to be extended, modified, or terminated.
- Adopt a policy that directs data disaggregation and analysis at the school, classroom, and student level and the use of data to determine program/curricular effectiveness.
- Adopt a policy that requires teachers to track and document student mastery in the core content areas.

Policies that Provide for Productivity

- Revise *BOSC Fiscal Policy 101: Annual Budget* to include the following:
 - Implementation of a program-centered budgeting process that includes incremental funding possibilities, a process for evaluating options, and the use of program evaluation data linked to budget allocations (see [Recommendation 8](#)).
 - A budget that allocates resources according to documented system needs, assessment data, and district curriculum and program goals and measurable results.

- Adopt a policy that provides direction for facilities that support teaching and learning (see Recommendation 9). Include the following components:
 - The expectation for a multi-year facilities, maintenance, and renovation plan to support the delivery of the curriculum and program priorities and
 - Facilities planning linked to the teaching and learning environment described in the district mission and vision statements.
- Adopt a policy that focuses support services on the district's mission and the educational program.
- Adopt a policy that provides direction for a data-driven school system (see Recommendation 5). Include the following elements:
 - Specific requirements for data analyses that lead to improved student learning in all core and enrichment curriculum areas and
 - Specific requirements for data analyses that lead to improvement in all district operations.
- Adopt a policy that requires that district, school, and department plans include the identification of strategies, grounded in assessment data, to be used to ensure long-term institutionalization of change and improved results or performance.

G.1.3: Direct the superintendent to establish procedures for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of policies.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District's Superintendent:

A.1.1: Submit drafts of the recommended policies for board consideration and option.

A.1.2: Develop or revise written administrative procedures to direct policy implementation in areas that require guidance beyond policy.

A.1.3: Design and implement an ongoing system for training administrators and other appropriate staff on policy expectations and implementation. In particular, focus on the relationship between central policy decisions and school-based policy decisions.

A.1.4: Include in the administrator appraisal system requirements related to implementation of policy and responsibility for keeping staff, various committees, and the BOSC aware of and following policy.

Recommendation 2: Revise the planning process to provide clear direction for district initiatives, improve system connectivity, and enhance implementation of goals.

Effective planning is essential for focusing and organizing district resources to meet changing student needs. Long-range planning provides a systemic means to sustain constancy of purpose as a district works towards achieving its goals. Planning efforts that are comprehensive and clearly focused benefit students by increasing the probability that effective programs, practices, and facilities will be in place to support the educational program. Coordination, prioritization, and sequencing of multiple plans that emerge within a complex system are essential in ensuring that planning efforts reinforce each other toward the achievement of district goals.

The auditors found that the Manchester School District board policies fail to provide sufficient direction for comprehensive, long-range system-wide planning or for school improvement planning (see Finding 1.2). Annual district and school improvement plans have been developed, but the plans have not provided for a consistent educational program, driven system change, or improved student performance. Minimal progress has been made on the two overarching goals that have been district goals for the past several years: 1) Develop district-wide consistency in the delivery of standards-based curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention to support individual students' growth towards proficiency; and 2) Develop and implement effective and timely communication processes that will increase collective ownership among district leadership, faculty/

staff members, parents/guardians, student, and community members to provide an environment conducive to improved student achievement.

Goal #1: The auditors found minimal consistency in the educational program as it is implemented in the Manchester School District (see Findings 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 5.2, and 5.4). Twenty-two (22) individual schools make decisions about curriculum, assessment, supplemental programs, professional development, instructional strategies, monitoring, and the implementation of the English Language Learners, special education, and technology programs. Achievement trends and dropout data indicate that such practices have not supported student success. Connected, comprehensive long-term planning is needed in the areas mentioned above as a critical step toward the development of a coherent district-wide educational program.

Goal #2: During interviews and school visits, the auditors found that communication issues are prevalent at all levels of the organization. Communication issues were noted among BOSC members BOSC and central office administration, district and school administrators, schools and parents, the district and parents, and, BOSC and administration with elementary school districts (see Findings 1.4, 3.4, and 5.2 and Recommendation 10).

As district stakeholders complete the strategic planning process, the auditors offer the following recommendations designed to improve system planning for the successful accomplishment of district goals.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Board of School Committee:

G.2.1: Adopt a policy to provide direction for a full scope of long- and short-range planning. The policy should address district, school, and department plan development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, relationship to the budget planning process, and public reporting procedures.

G.2.2: Direct the superintendent to develop a Strategic Plan that includes a manageable number of goals and corresponding action plans to drive all district initiatives. Include the criteria listed in Exhibits 1.2.2 and 1.2.3 of this report. Require the linkage of school improvement plans and curriculum management, student and program assessment, staff development, technology, facilities, and budget planning to the district's Strategic Plan (see Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9).

G.2.3: Develop district goals to be included in the long-range plan that are based on critical analyses of data about all facets of the school district, are measurable, have corresponding action plans, designate financial and other resources needed, and have formative and summative evaluation components.

G.2.4: Establish the centrality of the Strategic Plan and require the superintendent to operationalize and implement the plan by focusing district resources to achieve its goals and objectives.

G.2.5: Develop a policy to provide direction for school improvement plans that are connected to the district plan, include a feasible number of goals and strategies, and are based on the criteria outlined in Exhibit 1.2.4.

G.2.6: Adopt a policy that provides direction for a comprehensive curriculum management plan that includes the elements listed in Exhibit 2.1.2 (see Recommendation 4).

G.2.7: Direct the superintendent to develop a district professional development plan that is aligned with the curriculum management plan and includes the characteristics displayed in Exhibit 3.1.2 (see Recommendation 6).

G.2.8: Adopt a policy to provide guidance for the assessment of student achievement and educational programs, including the components listed in Exhibit 4.1.4 (see Recommendations 1 and 5).

- The policies should set forth a purpose, scope, and direction for assessing curriculum at all grade levels in all subject areas.
- The policies should include procedures for adopting, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating grants and programs so that they are aligned with system priorities and student learning goals.

G.2.9: Require the superintendent to establish and implement procedures for monitoring progress toward accomplishment of the goals and objectives of all plans and making appropriate adjustments for emergent issues.

G.2.10: Direct the superintendent to prepare regular reports to the board on all district plans and their results as they pertain to the attainment of district goals and objectives.

G.2.11: Commit adequate resources for the effective implementation of district planning efforts and determine the allocation of such resources within the budget process in a timely manner to support planning decisions.

G.2.12: Require revision of job descriptions and personnel appraisal procedures to include specific responsibilities for developing, implementing, and evaluating plans. Hold administrators accountable for achieving results on the plans in their control.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Superintendent:

A.2.1: Assist the BOSC in the development of the recommended policies and present drafts for their consideration and adoption.

A.2.2: Develop administrative procedures to guide policy implementation in areas that require guidance beyond board policy.

A.2.3: Develop a Strategic Plan to provide long-range planning, to drive district goals and initiatives, and to meet the criteria provided in Exhibits 1.2.2 and 1.2.3 of this report.

- Focus on a few major district initiatives for change, such as the existing goals of full district-wide implementation of an aligned Pre-K-12 curriculum and the improvement of communication throughout all levels of the organization.
- Develop an action plan that includes objectives, timelines, persons responsible, and monitoring and evaluation procedures. Include only a reasonable number of objectives and strategies.

A.2.4: Provide training for all administrators and key instructional staff relative to the following:

- Building staff members' capacity to address the critical components of an effecting planning process as they assess school or department needs,
- Designing strategies for developing stakeholder input and support,
- Using multiple data sources for formative and summative evaluation of student needs to drive planning efforts to improve student learning and close achievement gaps,
- Setting realistic goals and developing targeted activities designed to have the highest probability of success, and
- Monitoring progress and reporting results in ways that clearly indicate what has or has not been accomplished.

A.2.5: Develop school improvement plans to provide long-range planning and focus on a feasible number of goals and strategies linked to the district's mission and goals. Design a consistent format for school improvement plans that includes the following components:

- Measurable goals based on district priorities and the analysis of student achievement data that precisely identify objectives within content areas where students are least successful;
- Strategies that address goals to be accomplished, including actions that address achievement gaps and evaluation of progress at frequent intervals;
- Resources and funding for each strategy;
- Measurable methods of evaluating progress toward each goal;

- Identification of persons responsible for implementing the strategies;
- Professional development needed to help attain the goals; and
- An accountability link between goal attainment from year to year and use of that information to guide the next planning cycle.

A.2.6: Revise the principal's job description and appraisal instrument to include responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating progress toward achieving school improvement plan goals (see [Recommendations 1](#) and [10](#)).

A.2.7: Design a comprehensive curriculum management plan that includes the elements listed in [Exhibit 2.1.2](#) and [Recommendation 4](#).

A.2.8: Create a district professional development plan to provide district-wide focus on achieving the district's mission and goals and the delivery of the curriculum (see [Recommendation 5](#)). Align district staff development goals for technology with the plan.

A.2.9: Develop a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan that provides clear direction as to how assessment data are to be collected, disaggregated, analyzed, and the results disseminated in a form that can readily be used as feedback for decisions about the design and delivery of curriculum and for all district operations (see [Recommendation 4](#)).

A.2.10: Develop procedures to promote system-wide communication, coordination, and integration of plans and planning efforts. Include a procedure for analyzing the potential impact of the various plans on district resources (personnel, time, and funds) so that, in entirety, they are manageable and maintain focus on district goals and priorities.

A.2.11: Develop procedures to include ongoing monitoring and evaluation of supporting plans, such as curriculum management, staff development, technology, assessment, facilities, budgeting, and school improvement plans, to ensure that these plans are aligned with the priorities of the district plan and progress is being made toward those goals.

A.2.12: Develop a budget plan and administrative procedures to monitor the budgeting process to ensure that district planning priorities are reflected in budgeting and spending (see [Recommendation 8](#)).

A.2.13: Prepare regular reports to the board, staff, and community regarding the implementation and evaluation of the full range of district planning.

A.2.14: Expect that all future actions and decision making in the district will be clearly linked to the Strategic Plan, coordinated with other system-wide efforts, and prioritized and sequenced to allow for successful implementation given existing resources.

Recommendation 3: Adhere to existing policies to strengthen governance responsibilities of the board in directing and overseeing organizational operations and system goals.

Board responsibilities by necessity and by law need to be clearly defined and carried out for appropriate system functioning, harmony, efficiency, and goal attainment. An effective organizational environment requires those in leadership roles to be cognizant of their actions and the impact their actions have on the perceptions and actions of the educational community. Administrators, staff, parents, and community members need to be able to sense a positive tone throughout the district, emanating from the Board of School Committee. The board should be viewed as a cohesive entity that focuses on the needs of students and the provision of the support necessary to ensure their success.

The auditors found that the board structure, board functioning, disharmony, and lack of teamwork hinder the district's ability to accomplish its goals (see [Finding 1.4](#)). A 15-member board can be an unwieldy decision making body. Seven operating board subcommittees at times become involved in administrative operations, resulting in inefficiency and dilution of administrative authority. Two-year terms, with all board positions up for election/re-election at one time, compromise organizational stability.

Board of School Committee policies clearly delineate the appropriate roles and responsibilities of board members (see [Finding 1.1](#)). However, the auditors found that adherence to the existing policies is inconsistent and sometimes violated. *BOSC Policy 109* states that policy-making is the primary function of the board, and *BOSC Policy 119* states that the board considers policy development its chief function, along with providing resources for the effective operation of the schools. However, only 26 percent of board policies were found to be adequate (see [Finding 1.1](#)).

BOSC Administration Policy 109 states that the administration of the district shall be delegated to the superintendent. *BOSC Administration Policy 119* requires all personnel to refer matters requiring administrative action to the administrator immediately in charge of the area in which the issue occurs. *BOSC Administration Policy 102* states that an individual board member, including the chairperson, has power only when the board, by vote, has delegated that authority to him/her. However, individuals interviewed described instances of board members intervening inappropriately in management operations and activities, thus circumventing the chain of command. Board members are then plied by vested interests to undermine the administration. If a board member exercises authority in management activities, other board members and administrators may find this disruptive or serving self-interest. Manipulative behaviors and power politics may result.

BOSC Policy 124 requires that a workshop be provided to orient new board members to the board's functions, policies, and procedures. The auditors learned during interviews that such training never took place.

Many persons interviewed said that they believed that negative relationships among board members and with administrative staff contribute to community perceptions of dysfunction. It is very difficult, and often risky, for district employees to openly confront the ideas and opinions of board members, especially in public settings. Results can then be skewed within such an environment.

Given these organizational consequences, system effectiveness is better served when board member roles and responsibilities are focused on governance.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Board of School Committee:

G.3.1: Adhere to policies that establish policy adoption as the board's primary function and delegation of management functions to the superintendent and appropriate staff. Consider adding the following board responsibilities to *BOSC Policy 119*:

- Planning, development, and establishment of organizational direction;
- Defining vision and expectations for the system based on measured needs;
- Approving long-range plans and goals for the school system;
- Advocating for the school district and focusing and obtaining resources to support priority district initiatives; and
- Supervising and holding accountable the superintendent by avoiding interference in the operations and activities of the organization.

G.3.2: Strengthen and adopt policies to provide for a sound system of curriculum management and quality control (see [Recommendation 1](#)).

G.3.3: Adhere to *BOSC Administration Policy 105*, which establishes that problems requiring administrative action need to be referred to the administrator in charge of the appropriate area.

G.3.4: Utilize an outside expert to provide team building and training activities for all board members.

G.3.5: Work with appropriate city staff to evaluate the benefits and negatives of a 15-member board; the roles, responsibilities, and operating procedures of board sub-committees; and the Mayor/Board Chairperson position in terms of improving system effectiveness.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Superintendent:

A.3.1: Prepare draft policies on the topics indicate above for board consideration.

A.3.2: Hold staff accountable for the adherence to BOSC policies, particularly *BOSC Administration Policy 105* that describes the chain of command for resolving issues.

A.3.3: Assist the board in defining the purposes of board sub-committees and establishing procedures for their functioning.

A.3.4: Establish procedures with the board for superintendent/administrative team and board communications so that information can be requested and provided in an appropriate time frame.

A.3.5: Assist with arrangements to conduct team building and training activities.

Given these policy requirements and board compliance with the precepts of sound governance activities, the Manchester Board of School Committee, district administration, staff, and community will benefit from smoother and more effective school system operations, particularly teaching and learning.

Recommendation 4: Design and implement a comprehensive curriculum management system to direct the design, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of a district-wide curriculum and to promote consistency and quality control across all schools and grade levels.

The goal of every school district is to provide quality instruction to each student. In order to achieve this goal, a district must focus time, energy, and the necessary resources to ensure that each student within the district has equal access to a quality education. A school system with a strong curriculum management system has a written plan that provides a systemic means for curriculum development, adoption, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and revision for all courses of study. It also ensures that supplemental programs are aligned with the curriculum.

A quality curriculum document is based on a written, taught, and tested curriculum that is aligned in content, context, and cognitive types. Therefore, when a curriculum is deeply aligned, the content (what is taught) is aligned with the context (how a concept is learned and practiced), and with the cognitive types (thought process and knowledge dimensions required to accomplish the task).

A consistent format for curriculum documents across grade levels and content areas further ensures that the following key components of an aligned curriculum are provided:

- Objectives that specify the content to be taught;
- Prerequisite skills and knowledge needed for new learning so teachers know what has been taught previously and what will be taught at the next level;
- Suggestions for classroom strategies to teach the content as well as the contexts necessary for students to attain mastery and the desired cognitive type for student engagement;
- Formative, diagnostic assessments and sample test items that are aligned with district and state tests that enable teachers to know when objectives have been mastered; and
- Instructional resources, technology, and texts that support the objectives.

When a quality curriculum is in place, learning is not left to chance but becomes an intentional, focused effort with clear direction for teachers and access to the same learning for all students across the district.

Managing the delivery of the curriculum involves staff development that includes training in the district expectations for the instructional strategies to be used. Monitoring classroom instruction supports curriculum implementation and provides feedback to promote effective delivery. Supplemental programs and interventions need to align with and support the curriculum.

In the Manchester School District, auditors found that district staff members are aware of the need to strengthen curriculum management in the district. Currently, individual schools make decisions about curriculum, staff

development, assessment, monitoring, and supplemental programs, resulting in an inconsistent educational program district-wide (see [Findings 2.1, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, and 4.4](#)). Policy direction for curriculum management functions is inadequate (see [Finding 1.1](#)). Auditors found some components of curriculum management planning located in various documents, but they found no system-wide, comprehensive plan to direct all aspects of curriculum management across the district (see [Finding 2.1](#)). The scope of the K-12 written curriculum is inadequate; not all courses and subjects are supported by board-adopted curricula (see [Finding 2.2](#)). The existing curriculum documents do not provide enough guidance to ensure continuity of curriculum delivery across schools and articulation and coordination between grade levels (see [Finding 2.3](#)).

Expectations for instructional practices are communicated in various documents (see [Findings 2.3 and 3.2](#)), but curriculum documents do not reflect those expectations, nor do student artifacts reflect the rigor described in expectations for classroom instruction. Professional development is largely school-based and not coordinated across the district. Monitoring practices vary in quantity and quality among school principals (see [Finding 3.3](#)). Technology implementation is dependent on school infrastructure and access to functioning technology (see [Finding 5.4](#)).

The leaders of the Manchester School District need to develop and implement a comprehensive curriculum management system to establish and maintain a quality, deeply aligned curriculum that is implemented effectively in every classroom across the school district. The curriculum management system should be guided by a written plan that directs curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, monitoring, and revision and is coordinated with district-wide staff development, assessment measures, monitoring procedures, and a process for selecting, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating supplemental programs.

The auditors recommend the following steps to help district leaders prioritize the work that needs to be done and focus all involved personnel on common goals. The recommended steps are organized into the following sections: Curriculum Management Planning, Curriculum Design and Development, Curriculum Implementation, and Supplemental Programs and Interventions.

Curriculum Management Planning

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Board of School Committee:

G.4.1: Adopt policies that define the roles and responsibilities of the board of education, district administrators, and teachers regarding curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, and monitoring (see [Recommendations 1, 5, 6, 7, and 10](#)).

G.4.2: Adopt a policy that requires the development and implementation of a comprehensive, system-wide curriculum management plan to guide the design, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of an aligned written, taught, and assessed curriculum (see [Recommendation 1](#)). The policy should include the criteria listed in [Exhibit 2.3.2](#) as well as the following:

- A delineation of the curriculum management-related functions that are central decisions and those that are school-based (see [Recommendation 7](#));
- The expectation of K-12 articulation of learning goals, benchmarks, and objectives aligned with the Common Core Standards;
- A requirement that all courses offered be supported by quality written curriculum; and
- Formal board adoption of all curricula prior to implementation.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Superintendent:

A.4.1: Assist the board in developing policies that define the roles of the board, district administrators, and teachers regarding curriculum. For example, the board is primarily responsible for adopting curriculum; administrators are responsible for overseeing its development, evaluation, and revision, as well as for monitoring

its implementation; teachers are responsible for delivering the adopted curriculum and sometimes assisting in the writing or reviewing of the curriculum, with assistance from outside consultants or district administrators.

A.4.2: Develop a curriculum management plan for directing the design, delivery, monitoring, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. The plan should address the following areas (see also [Exhibit 2.1.3](#)):

- **A philosophical framework for the design of the curriculum:** Defining the beliefs and philosophy establishes the foundation for what curriculum should look like, specifies what the district's and schools' respective roles are in providing each child with a quality education, and relates a picture of what an effective, engaging classroom might look like. Defining the philosophical framework must take place before defining an instructional model.
- **Timing, scope, and procedures for a periodic cycle of curriculum review/development:** This ensures that every content area is addressed and has written curriculum guides that facilitate effective, rigorous instruction, and that curriculum is kept up-to-date, particularly with changes in state standards or requirements as well as testing modifications or changes. The cycle should also include procedures for conveying the revised/new curriculum and performance expectations to teachers and for reviewing the alignment of adopted resources and materials for revision or replacement.
- **Stages of curriculum development:** This specifies the stages in designing and developing written curriculum guides, including backloading and released item analysis; review for alignment with external/target assessments in all three dimensions (content, context, cognition); assessment of the complexity, rigor, and measurability of objectives; placement of objectives in an articulated, Pre-K-12 sequence that expects mastery of content six to nine months before it is encountered on high stakes tests; mastery-level projects and activities with accompanying rubrics; validation of the existing objectives, materials, and resources against multiple external sources (such as AP standards, Common Core standards, etc.) or for rigor, cultural relevance, and student-centered, active learning; and a bank of high quality assessment items and diagnostic assessment instruments to support differentiated, individualized instruction.
- **Staff roles and responsibilities for curriculum management:** This aspect of the plan delineates which tasks are primarily classroom-based, which are school-based, which are district-based, and which are board-based. Monitoring of classroom activities should be accomplished by principals and other supervisors to identify and promote productive practices that support learning, correct or eliminate practices that do not, and identify professional development needs.
- **A format components for curriculum guides:** What does the guide need to look like? Which aspects/components should be consistent for every content area, and which aspects can be "fluid"? The format should include, minimally, the criteria presented in [Exhibit 2.3.2](#) and in [A.4.4](#).
- **Direction for how state and national standards will be included in the curriculum:** This includes whether or not to use a backloaded approach, in which the curriculum is derived from high-stakes tested learnings (topological and deep alignment), and/or frontloaded approach, which derives the curriculum from national, state, or local learnings.
- **Require for every content area a focused set of precise student objectives/student expectations and standards:** These should be reasonable in number so the student has adequate time to master the content, very specific so teachers clearly understand what mastery of these objectives looks like and what the standard of performance is, and measurable (written in measurable terms).
- **Assessment beliefs and procedures to determine curriculum effectiveness and use of data:** What are the instruments that will be used to measure progress toward meeting goals, including the goal of students mastering curriculum objectives? How the data will be used, who will use them, and how they will be collected, analyzed, and disseminated to teachers, administrators, and concerned stakeholders should all be defined.
- **Design of curriculum to support differentiation and other expectations for delivery:** Directs curriculum to be designed so that it supports teachers' differentiation of instructional approaches and

the selection of student objectives at the right level of difficulty. This ensures that those students who need prerequisite concepts, knowledge, and skills are moved ahead at an accelerated pace in order to catch up, and that students who have already mastered the objectives are also moved ahead at a challenging pace.

- **Approaches for using diagnostic, formative, and summative test results to plan instruction, evaluate programs, and design interventions at all levels:** What are the instruments that will be used to measure progress toward meeting goals, including the goal of student mastering curriculum objectives? How will the data be used, who will use them, and how will they be collected, analyzed, and disseminated to teachers, administrators, and concerned stakeholders? (see [Recommendation 5](#)).
- **A staff development program linked to curriculum design and delivery:** Professional development should prepare teachers to deliver the curriculum in accordance with the board's performance expectations. This includes support in the classroom to ensure that training and curriculum materials are properly used (see [Recommendation 6](#)).
- **Monitoring the delivery of curriculum:** Presents the procedures, philosophy, and intent for monitoring the delivery of curriculum in the classroom
- **Communication plan:** A plan is established for communicating among and across schools and departments regarding the process of curriculum design and delivery (which also includes professional development and assessment) to maintain constancy of effort, focus, and continuity (see [Recommendations 3 and 10](#)).

A.4.3: Make periodic reports to the Board of School Committee regarding progress in managing curriculum district-wide, using data from formative and summative assessments, as well as from monitoring practices.

Curriculum Design and Development

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Board of School Committee:

G.4.3: Require that efforts to revise the written curriculum documents begin immediately; require that decisions regarding which content areas receive priority be data-based (for example, if math is an area of concern and there is little consistency in its delivery, focusing on that content area first might be prudent). ELA and mathematics may need priority due to the transition to Common Core standards.

G.4.4: Review and adopt the curriculum prior to its implementation, based on a thorough consideration of documentation and staff advice. The following are minimum components needed in every guide (see [A.4.4](#)):

- Aligned, specific learner objectives (based on state/Common Core standards);
- A scope and sequence defining prerequisites;
- Assessment instruments and sample test items;
- Instructional resources; and
- Suggested strategies and approaches for teaching the objectives.

These are only minimum components; internal alignment, evidence of rigor, clear descriptions of mastery, and clear connections to an aligned formative assessment system are all additional elements to be considered for quality guides.

Administrative Function: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Superintendent:

A.4.4: Define what a “model” curriculum guide looks like. The following components are minimum requirements:

1. **Objectives:** Objectives should be “refinements” of the state standards or Common Core standards: a specific restatement of the intended skill or knowledge to be learned, the contexts in which it is to be learned and practiced, and the standard of performance by which a teacher knows mastery of

that skill or knowledge has been achieved. These should also relate to the student expectations in the state standards and benchmarks/Common Core standards, but these specific learner objectives give the teacher more precise information of what mastery looks like and clearly define which objectives are assigned to which grade or instructional level (because the first grade objective is clearly different from the second, and so on). The number of objectives included in the guide must also be manageable. Focus on fewer objectives and address them more “deeply” instead of including a battery of objectives that teachers “might” touch on. Review all objectives for evidence of rigor (see Bloom’s Taxonomy in Exhibit 2.3.5).

2. **Assessment:** Specific examples of how each objective will be assessed must be included in the guide. District formative assessments must be cross-referenced throughout, specifying when, how, and with which instrument each objective will be evaluated. Relying on released test items is insufficient; the sample items to be included should be items based on deconstructed, released test items that have been altered and “deepened” to provide students with a challenge level to ensure their success on a multitude of test items related to the same content.
3. **Prerequisites/Scope and Sequence:** Place the learner objectives (Pre-K-12) in a scope and sequence document to allow teachers to easily discern what content and skills students have been taught, and what content and skills they are responsible for seeing students leave their class with. Such a document helps eliminate gaps and overlaps in student learning. This will also facilitate greater articulation of the curriculum from one level to the next and assure greater coordination across a single level or course, as the mapping out of objectives is already completed and misinterpretation of the nonspecific state standards/Common Core standards is avoided.
4. **Suggested Strategies and Approaches:** This item is a critical part of ensuring high expectations for students and achieving deep alignment. It provides teachers with support in deciding ways to teach the assigned objectives. Flexibility is always allowed in how teachers approach a given objective, but this component provides teachers with research-proven suggestions. Suggested strategies should also incorporate those contexts and cognitive types known to be part of the tests in use, and these strategies and suggested student activities and projects allow students to become familiar with the context and cognitive type before encountering them on the high stakes tests.
5. **Resources and Materials:** Every book, recommended professional resource, audiovisual aid, technological enhancement or program, and other resource is listed in the guide and referenced by objective/strategy. Suggested materials and resources have been analyzed for deep alignment to the curriculum and the tests in use; modifications are also included in the guide to improve alignment.

A.4.5: Include in the design of the curriculum the expectation that instruction will be differentiated to accommodate individual student academic needs and learning styles. This requires suggestions for remediation as well as enrichment within the guides themselves.

A.4.6: In written curriculum guides, also include the following:

- Integration of instructional technology.
- Inclusion of strategies for meeting the needs of English Language Learners, special education students, and gifted students.

During the curriculum development process:

- Obtain feedback from a curriculum review team.
- Use external consultants as “critical friends” to critique the process and products during the design stage.

A.4.7: Engage in a deep alignment analysis to ensure that the objectives, resources, and strategies included in curriculum guides are deeply aligned to the tests in use. Through research and/or training, develop the skills necessary to analyze and deconstruct released test items, to successfully prepare for current and future tests in

use, and to more successfully anticipate the direction in which the test is moving. This will assist the district in predicting where the state assessments and other external assessment are going and increase student success on current and future forms of the tests in use, ensuring that the content, context, and cognitive types encountered on any tests are an integral part of daily instruction without compromising rigor, active student engagement, and hands-on problem solving.

A.4.8: Revise current formative assessments to more deeply align with the Common Core standards and to more closely reflect the levels of cognition and type of student performance desired by district leaders (see [Recommendation 5](#)). These assessments will provide teachers with diagnostic data on the skills, concepts, and knowledge students have mastered or are still lacking, so that instructional decisions may be made that target those deficiencies and so that teaching is never redundant. Include diagnostic assessments that target specific skills to round out the battery of assessments teachers can use to constantly monitor student progress toward mastery of a discrete concept, skill, or objective. All assessment used in the district, whether classroom-based or district-level, should integrate a variety of student modes of response and performance-based items, as well as multiple types of cognition.

The assessments should be concise and yield the needed information in a very brief span of time, a few days at the most. Ideally, the assessments could be quickly scored at each school, so teachers receive the data immediately and can adjust instruction accordingly. In addition, continue to return benchmark assessment data to teachers in a timely manner. These formative assessments also allow teachers to monitor individual students' progress toward mastering the intended curriculum, and each student's performance on the state tests will no longer be a surprise or a guessing game.

Conduct a statistical analysis on the data from the benchmark assessment to determine the degree to which performance on these assessments correlates with performance on the *NECAP* tests. This analysis will clarify how well benchmark assessment data can predict student success on the high stakes tests.

A.4.9: Establish a process to ensure that curriculum guides, texts, and instructional materials for all courses, including intervention courses and programs, are presented to the board for adoption.

A.4.10: Work in concert with staff development personnel to prepare trainings for teachers in using and effectively implementing the new curriculum, using the instructional model as the context for delivering the new curriculum.

Curriculum Implementation

Instruction

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Board of School Committee:

G.4.6: Direct the superintendent (or designee) to review research-supported instructional strategies that are effective with linguistically, culturally, and economically diverse student populations. Require this review of research to focus especially on those characteristics that have been shown to decrease dropout rates and improve student attitudes regarding schooling. Many districts have found that the more challenging and engaging instruction is, the more students stay in school, come to class, and complete assignments (see [Recommendation 7](#)).

G.4.7: Direct the superintendent (or designee) to develop administrative regulations that define the instructional model to be adopted in classrooms throughout the district. Use the documents presented and discussed in [Exhibit 2.3.4](#) and in [Finding 3.2](#) for a summary of Manchester School District expectations taken from multiple documents.

G.4.8: Direct the superintendent (or designee) to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery of curriculum across the district. Such an evaluation should use data from multiple sources: formative assessments, summative assessments, monitoring data from both principals and program specialists, and formal teacher observations.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Superintendent:

A.4.11: Prepare for curriculum implementation. At least six months to one year prior to implementing any new curriculum, consider doing the following:

- Field-test the curriculum. Pilot the resource materials, assessments, and any other supporting materials.
- Collect preliminary data concerning the pilot curriculum's effectiveness in terms of student achievement.
- Submit the curriculum for adoption by the board.

Provide written curriculum guides for all teachers and extensively train them in its content and in the suggested strategies and approaches, within the context of the recommended instructional model.

A.4.12: Define the instructional model expected to be used in classrooms across the district. This is not intended to be a prescriptive requirement. Rather, the instructional model is intended to provide a clear picture of what district leaders want and expect effective and rigorous instruction to look like.

Describe the ways in which the district-adopted curriculum is expected to be delivered. In other words, the types of teaching practices district leadership expects to see and that are proven effective should be specifically described in writing and adopted in policy to ensure implementation. Suggested practices should be research-based, developmentally appropriate, as well as relevant, and might include the following:

- Implementing higher-order questioning that helps students see the “big picture” of the concepts, knowledge, and skills being taught and facilitates a deeper understanding on the part of students;
- Using small group activities, paired tasks, and cooperative learning strategies;
- Comparing/contrasting new concepts, knowledge, and skills with concepts, skills, and experiences already familiar to students;
- Engaging students in experimental inquiry, problem-solving, and investigation, hands-on methods of applying or discovering new knowledge and concepts;
- Having students set their own learning goals, develop strategies for attaining them, and monitor their own progress toward meeting those goals;
- Engaging students in meta-cognitive activities, whereby they analyze their own thought processes in approaching test questions, assignments, new information, etc.; and
- Tailoring instruction to the cultural, economic, and linguistic diversity present in every classroom, recognizing and valuing differences and similarities, and emphasizing the benefits of cultural pluralism.

Require the monitoring of curriculum delivery to include monitoring the teaching strategies and practices expected to be used in the classroom. The aim is to provide teachers with specific feedback and support regarding the type of strategies they use, their effectiveness, and how those strategies could have been more effective or how the strategies promoted student success.

A.4.13: As part of the instructional model, incorporate the expectation for differentiating instruction in the classroom to meet individual student needs. Differentiation occurs in two important ways: differentiating the content or objective an individual student needs to learn based on where they are in the overall sequence of learning, and differentiating the types of activity or performance product the student is expected to accomplish or create. Both types of differentiation are important, but teachers must learn the difference and apply one or the other or both based on the students' needs. A critical part of differentiating effectively is having a battery of skill-specific diagnostic assessments that give teachers key information on whether a student has mastered a targeted concept or skill.

A.4.14: Communicate the expectations for adherence to the instructional model. Integrate throughout all discussions and meetings concerning curriculum delivery the need to not only verbally espouse high expectations

for all students and respect and appreciation for cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and economic diversity, but to model them in every classroom.

Monitoring

Monitoring is the primary means by which district leaders evaluate the degree to which curriculum is delivered with fidelity and the instructional model is reflected in classroom activities and instruction.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Board of School Committee:

G.4.9: Direct the superintendent to draft a policy requiring board policy and principals' and program specialists' job descriptions to include expectations for monitoring. These expectations need to do the following:

- Define all purposes of monitoring and the behaviors that constitute monitoring in the Manchester School District;
- Specify what type of data are to be collected for each purpose, and with what methods; and
- Indicate which data are intended to be collected district-wide for district-level feedback (such as for determining the effectiveness of a staff development initiative), and which data are to be used for teacher evaluation, coaching, and instructional improvement within the building.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Superintendent:

A.4.15: Require monitoring to be the primary responsibility of building administrators. In monitoring, district leaders should not only keep learner objectives in mind, but the instructional model as well, focusing reflective questions on those aspects of the model the administrators deem appropriate or desirable.

A.4.16: Use a classroom observation process (in addition to walk-throughs) to specifically evaluate the student artifacts and objectives being used in each classroom, in a collaborative, non-threatening context. Consider having teachers and building leaders gauge the level of student work in the school and determine if it is appropriately on-level and cognitively challenging. This process will also assist teachers in evaluating the work they assign in their classrooms, particularly those activities and resources that are commercially-produced.

Supplemental Programs and Interventions

As previously stated (see Finding 2.4), an effective school system carefully identifies and selects programs and interventions that align with the curriculum in response to needs assessments that are based on student performance data. Evaluation strategies for any program or intervention should be determined in advance, and the implementation of the intervention should be monitored at regular intervals. Progress reports are completed and submitted to the designated staff member, administrator, or department on a periodic basis to give feedback concerning the effectiveness of the intervention and whether it requires modification, expansion, or elimination. Well-planned interventions are also adequately funded.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Board of School Committee:

G.4.10: Direct the superintendent to draft a policy outlining criteria for selection and evaluation of programs or interventions at the district and school levels. Include criteria for piloting, modifying, continuing, or eliminating interventions. All programs/interventions must first and foremost align to and, in some demonstrated fashion, support the adopted curriculum (see Recommendation 5).

G.4.11: Require through the policy that a schedule be established for reporting evidence of the effectiveness of programs/interventions to the board and other decision makers. Require that effectiveness be calculated in terms of impact on student achievement.

G.4.12: Approve funding for interventions based on complete needs assessments, information regarding alignment with curriculum, and student performance data.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Superintendent:

A.4.17: Draft the policy recommended in **G.4.10** above.

A.4.18: Establish administrative regulations for developing, adopting, implementing, and monitoring interventions that are aligned to district priorities and student learning goals and are responsive to student assessment data. Innovation proposals should include the following components:

- A description of the intervention that states the purpose, students served, and costs per student;
- Needs assessment and/or other performance data supporting the need for the intervention;
- A statement of alignment with established district priorities and clear alignment with the district curriculum;
- Relationship to other programs operating in the district;
- A listing of required resources and funding sources that includes space needs, staffing and materials costs, and potential for long-term funding;
- A budget for the proposed intervention that includes implementation costs as well as sustained costs;
- A plan for professional development for all staff responsible for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the program. This plan should include both initial professional development costs as well as costs to maintain delivery effectiveness over time;
- A method of evaluation for both formative monitoring and summative purposes; and
- Evaluation results reported on a regular basis to staff and the board.

A.4.19: Design an evaluation and reporting system for interventions that includes the following components:

- The source of student performance data used for evaluation of the intervention,
- Alignment of the curriculum goals to program assessments,
- The criteria used to measure effective implementation, and
- The data analyses applied to measure program effectiveness based on student performance data.

A.4.20: Establish an annual schedule for the review of program evaluations.

Recommendation 5: Design and implement a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan that directs a process for the collection and use of data to monitor the effectiveness of the district's work at all levels, from the academic progress of individual students to the long-term effectiveness of district-wide programs.

Members of effective school systems, including teachers, administrators, parents, board members, and students, frequently ask such questions as:

- “Is what we’re doing working?”
- “How can we do it better?”
- “Should we be doing something else?”

With high-quality feedback about the effectiveness of a school district's work, leaders can make decisions that assure the greatest improvements in learning for all of the district's students. High-quality feedback is generated when the district has a well-designed and skillfully executed planning process for student assessment and program evaluation.

In the Manchester School District, the audit team did not find central administrative control of student assessment processes, and there is no comprehensive written plan or cohesive set of district-wide procedures designed to assure high-quality, consistent feedback at all levels of the system for all students (see [Finding 4.1](#)).

Board policy requires evaluation of the district's supplemental programs, but that expectation is not being met (see [Finding 1.1](#)). The district's programs are not formally evaluated outside of mandated reports to funding agencies that emphasize procedural compliance (see [Findings 2.4](#) and [4.4](#)). School improvement plans include overall outcome data that do not, in most cases, provide feedback about specific programs or strategies (see [Finding 1.2](#)).

The scope of assessment is inadequate, with only a fraction of the courses taught in the district formally assessed. Therefore, the district lacks the data to adequately evaluate whether the curriculum is producing the desired results (see [Finding 4.2](#)).

Formal assessments consist primarily of state required tests along with some locally developed tests for additional formative or summative use. Student assessment results do not show a steady pattern of improvement (see [Finding 4.3](#)). Gaps persist in achievement among some student subpopulations (see [Findings 3.4](#) and [5.2](#)).

The student assessment effort has not provided the necessary link between assessment results and instructional decision making at the school and district level (see [Findings 4.2](#) and [4.4](#)). There is district-wide interest in aligning assessments with standards and competencies, but the execution of that interest is managed at the building level. Central office administrators have established an outline of procedures for using assessment data to inform instruction, but carrying out the procedures depends almost entirely on the skills and interests of building principals (see [Finding 4.4](#)).

Establishing a process for assuring consistent, high-quality feedback is critical for the district to assure an equitable education to all of its students, including those who traditionally experience barriers to learning and those who move from school to school within the district. Without that feedback, the district's leaders will not be able to align their resources and efforts to provide a consistent educational program across the district and improve student achievement.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Board of School Committee:

G.5.1: Adopt a policy that includes the expectation that data need to be systematically collected, analyzed, and used in decision making throughout the school district.

G.5.2: Direct the superintendent to draft a policy for board consideration and adoption requiring the development of a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan. Include in the policy specific direction to staff regarding the purpose of assessments, expected scope of assessments, approaches for assessing curriculum at all grade levels and subject areas, and direction and accountability for the evaluation of programs and interventions.

G.5.3: Require all program interventions to show a link between district and school goals and objectives as well as coordination with other improvement efforts and alignment with the curriculum.

G.5.4: Make explicit in policy that programs/interventions be evaluated at least once every three years and include a cost analysis and program effectiveness based on student achievement and recommendations for future action based on the data analysis.

G.5.5: Require periodic reports on the evaluation of programs and interventions, including the cost and the effectiveness (student gains).

G.5.6: Commit adequate resources to support the development and maintenance of a comprehensive system of student assessment and program evaluation, including sufficient resources to assure the capacity to analyze and report the data generated by the system. In particular, see [Finding 1.3](#) and [Recommendation 10](#) related to providing additional staffing resources for data analysis and leadership on data use throughout the district.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Superintendent:

A.5.1: Develop and present to the board for consideration and adoption the policies recommended in [G.5.1](#), [G.5.2](#), and [G.5.4](#), above.

A.5.2: Develop administrative regulations and procedures to support implementation of the student assessment plan described in G.5.2, above, that include the following elements:

- Describes the philosophical framework for the student assessment plan, considering factors such as overall purposes and goals of student assessment, alignment to mission and curriculum, scope of assessment, types and uses of assessments, quality of assessment instruments, standards for professional development for assessment, management of the assessment process, and standards for analysis and dissemination of test results;
- Specifies the roles and responsibilities of central office staff, building administrators, teachers, and others for the use of data in decisions and in carrying out the components of the student assessment plan;
- Specifies the assessment information that will be included in curriculum guides;
- Specifies how assessment data will be analyzed and the how the results will be presented for the various uses of outcome data;
- Specifies how test results will be disseminated so that appropriate data are provided in usable formats to each person who makes decisions at every level of the system (individual students, classrooms, curriculum design, programs, buildings, and district);
- Establishes expectations and procedures for administrators and teachers to use student outcome data to improve the curriculum and the design of courses of instruction at all grade levels and in all subjects, and provides professional development to support this function;
- Requires data analysis to identify bias and inequity and an action plan to eliminate them;
- Requires a written report of the findings related to equity and bias and specifies the frequency and distribution of the report;
- Establishes protocols for professional development to support all elements of the student assessment plan;
- Specifies the procedures and personnel for managing the logistics of assessment to assure that results are accurate, complete, and secure, including storage of assessment instruments, distribution of testing materials, monitoring of test administrations, and gathering and scoring of answer sheets or management of computer-based response formats;
- Specifies the steps and timelines of the budget process to assure that all elements of student assessment have adequate resources;
- Specifies the procedures by which the implementation of the student assessment plan will be monitored and by which district-wide consistency will be assured;
- Specifies the frequency, content, and dissemination of progress reports about the implementation and effectiveness of the student assessment plan; and
- Specifies the procedures and timelines for reviewing and amending the student assessment plan.

A.5.3: Develop administrative regulations and procedures to support implementation of the program evaluation plan described in G.5.2, above, that include the following attributes:

- Describes the philosophical framework for the program evaluation plan, considering factors such as purposes and goals of program evaluation, alignment to mission and curriculum, scope and frequency of program evaluation, types and sources of data used for program evaluation, methods for data analysis, responsibility action based on program evaluations, standards for professional development for program evaluation, and content and quality of program evaluation reports;
- Specifies the roles and responsibilities of central office staff, building administrators, teachers, and others for carrying out the components of the program evaluation plan;

- Specifies the professional development to be provided to staff who are responsible for components of the program evaluation plan to assure consistent quality of execution and uniformity of process;
- Specifies which programs will be evaluated in which years;
- Specifies the content to be included and outline to be followed for written program evaluation reports. A list of program evaluation report characteristics is included in Appendix C;
- Outlines the decision-making process based on program evaluation reports, including the timelines and protocols for making decisions about program adoption, continuation, and termination; participants in the decision-making process; documentation of the decisions made; and dissemination of the decisions;
- Specifies expected the timeline, personnel responsible, and protocol for monitoring and reporting follow-up actions based on decisions made in response to program evaluation reports;
- Includes a provision for avoiding de facto continuation of programs that are not achieving results proportional to the resources invested;
- Specifies the steps and timelines of the budget process to assure that all elements of program evaluation have adequate resources;
- Specifies the procedures by which the implementation of the program evaluation plan will be monitored;
- Specifies the frequency, content, and dissemination of progress reports about the implementation and effectiveness of the program evaluation plan; and
- Specifies the procedures and timelines for reviewing and amending the program evaluation plan.

A.5.4: Identify a process for facilitating the development of the plans described in G.5.2, above, that assures representation of all interested stakeholder groups through participation or through structured input procedures.

Recommendation 6: Design and implement a coordinated, system-wide professional development program that supports effective delivery of the district curriculum and focuses on improved student achievement.

The mission of a quality professional development program is to increase student achievement. This is accomplished by developing the skills of teachers, administrators, and support personnel in the effective delivery and monitoring of the curriculum. A coordinated professional development plan provides for the implementation of the district's curriculum, integration of the teaching strategies to appropriately deliver the curriculum, and evaluation of the professional development approaches and content to determine if student achievement has improved based on those practices. An effective professional development system is also linked to monitoring procedures and to a teacher appraisal program designed to provide teachers with constructive feedback to improve classroom instruction. A comprehensive professional development program is long-term, is based on district goals and the curriculum, and is aligned with a curriculum management plan (see Recommendation 4).

The auditors found that professional development in the Manchester School District is primarily school-based, is not coordinated across the school district, and has not impacted teacher performance and student learning (see Findings 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 4.3). The Professional Development Master Plan does not provide for district-wide coordination and support for district and curricular priorities.

Board policies require staff development, and job descriptions identify responsibilities relative to staff development (see Findings 1.1 and 1.3). District and School Improvement Plans and the Education Technology Plan describe staff development activities but are not linked to the Master Plan (see Findings 1.2 and 5.4). Documents presented to the auditors fail to address how fiscal support would be provided to implement professional development efforts. Interviewed staff at all levels expressed concerns that funding constraints impeded the provision of district-wide staff development offerings.

In addition, documents do not suggest that the purpose of professional development is to bring about organizational level change other than by incremental, teacher-by-teacher performance improvement. Auditors determined

that the major function of the Professional Development Master Plan is to ensure that educators can satisfy state requirements for continuing education units.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Board of School Committee:

G.6.1: Revise *BOSC Personnel Policies 118* and *119* to require the development of a comprehensive, long-term professional development plan that is system-wide in approach; adequately supports district goals and the curriculum; and addresses the identified needs of all district personnel. The policy should:

- Define the purpose of professional development in terms of student achievement;
- Require congruence of curricular objectives, budgetary priorities, and professional development goals;
- Clarify individual and organizational professional development responsibilities, resources, and accountability procedures at all levels of the school system (board of education, superintendent, central office staff, school administrators, teachers, and support staff) (see [Recommendation 10](#));
- Provide for coordination of school-based professional development activities with central office efforts;
- Require that professional development activities be evaluated primarily in terms of demonstrated teacher competence in the classroom and improved student performance; and
- Link professional development programs and committed funding so they are prioritized, planned, timed, and funded to carry out the intent of district leadership.

G.6.2: Direct the superintendent to revise the Professional Development Master Plan to meet audit criteria (see [Exhibit 3.1.2](#)) and coordinate with the Strategic Plan, district and school improvement plans, and the Education Technology Plan.

G.6.3: Direct the superintendent to revise teacher and principal appraisal instruments to provide focus on the improvement of instruction and follow-through with professional development training.

G.6.4: Allocate funds to support district-wide professional development to promote consistency in the educational program.

G.6.5: Monitor annual reports to the board concerning the improvement of instruction and its impact on student achievement.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Superintendent:

A.6.1: Develop a draft for board consideration of a comprehensive professional development policy for all employees to support the design and delivery of curriculum and district priorities.

A.6.2: Develop administrative regulations to implement the above policy, including an administrative procedure that provides guidelines for monitoring the quality of instruction.

A.6.3: Assign to the Director of Federal Projects and Professional Development the responsibility for overall coordination of district and school-based staff development, the development of a comprehensive professional development plan based on audit criteria, and the establishment of a clearinghouse function. Revise the job description for this position.

A.6.4: Revise the Professional Development Master Plan to build staff capacity, support district priorities, provide district-wide coordination, and increase student achievement. The plan should include the 18 audit criteria for professional development provided in [Exhibit 3.1.2](#). The plan should accomplish the following:

- Limit professional development to three to five major topics over a time period of three to five years. Consider topics such as a focus on curriculum implementation, expected instructional strategies, student engagement, the use of technology to support the delivery of the curriculum, and the use of formative and summative assessment data to inform lesson planning to increase student achievement

(see [Recommendations 4 and 5](#)). Such training should be required of all administrators, teachers, and appropriate support staff with corresponding follow-up procedures.

- Provide guidelines to principals clarifying how central office and school-based professional development efforts will be integrated to support curricular, technological, organizational, and instructional initiatives.
- Require evaluation of the effectiveness of staff development activities to determine if they are cost effective in increasing teacher capacity and in improving student achievement.
- Make provisions for follow-up training to reinforce teachers' mastery of instructional strategies learned in staff development activities.

A.6.5: Align the professional development plan with the Strategic Plan, school improvement plans, the Education Technology Plan, and the curriculum management plan (see [Recommendations 3 and 4](#)).

A.6.6: Revise job descriptions to define professional development responsibilities (see [Recommendation 10](#)).

A.6.7: Analyze how training will be delivered:

- Determine who will be the trainers and how training will be managed if school-site personnel are utilized.
- Provide trainers with extensive training in curriculum content, in the instructional strategies teachers are to emulate, and in group presentation skills.
- Use training strategies that model competencies and methodology that teachers are to utilize with students, including follow-up application of learned skills or strategies.
- Include instructional strategies to meet differential needs of all disaggregated groups of students without lowering expectations.

A.6.8: Provide training to district and school administrators in monitoring the delivery of the curriculum and in supporting professional development efforts (see [Recommendation 4](#)). Include training in a comprehensive walk-through process, that includes the following characteristics:

- It is a research-based model that addresses the difference in the skill levels of teachers through direct, dependent, and independent responses.
- It utilizes frequent, short classroom observations.
- It is not dependent upon an activity checklist.
- It provides for reflective thought and dialogue.

Hold administrators accountable for monitoring through their performance evaluations.

A.6.9: To effectively monitor the implementation of the professional development plan and training activities, consider the following:

- Provide central office oversight of all training efforts by district departments, schools, and individual staff members. A district clearinghouse function is vital to consistent and coordinated professional development. Develop a comprehensive tracking system to enable district personnel to attain all professional development session information.
- Revise training content and strategies as the written curriculum is updated. Supervise the trainers' presentation of content and methodology.
- Hold building level professional development teams accountable for maintaining a professional development schedule and training content and for ensuring that district professional development takes place. Finally, hold individual employees accountable for attending, participating, and using the training information.

A.6.10: Evaluate the professional development program using the following information:

- Collect sustained and coordinated personnel needs assessments for all employee groups.
- Utilize the supervisor findings as employees are monitored through consistent walk-through instruments and employee appraisal systems.
- Collect disaggregated student achievement data by class, grade, school, district, and subgroup.
- Perform program evaluations based on student data over meaningful periods of time.
- Require comprehensive training evaluation data from participants and trainers.

A.6.11: Report annually to the Board of School Committee on the impact of professional development and teacher appraisal on student achievement.

Recommendation 7: Provide equal access to comparable programs, services, and opportunities to impact student achievement. Eliminate the achievement gap among student subgroups. Take further steps to allocate resources based on student needs.

Successful school districts are characterized by a coherent school system, rather than by a system of separate schools. A well-managed school system provides all students with equal access to an aligned district curriculum, programs, services, and opportunities provided by the district. Fairness to all students is apparent in areas such as access to challenging course offerings, placement in special programs, and consistency in disciplinary actions. School districts that serve diverse communities have students who require differentiated resources if all learners are to be given an equal opportunity to experience success in the educational program.

The Manchester School District's vision and mission statements, board policies, and planning documents reference providing all students with a quality educational program and embracing the diversity of its student population (see [Findings 1.1](#), [1.2](#), and [3.4](#)). The challenge for district leadership is to translate the policies and goals into actions that make a difference for Manchester students. Aggressive action needs to take place throughout the district to eliminate barriers to student success, to improve student achievement, and to decrease student achievement gaps.

Despite the intent to meet the needs of all students, instances of inequality and inequity take place. Site-based decision making has contributed to an inconsistent educational program (see [Findings 2.1](#) and [3.4](#)). Therefore, the educational program a Manchester School District student receives depends upon the school he/she attends. The curriculum lacks articulation and coordination, which contributes to inconsistent delivery of the curriculum from classroom to classroom and from school to school (see [Findings 2.1](#), [2.3](#), [3.2](#), [3.3](#), and [3.4](#)). Inequalities exist in access to the curriculum, the full-day kindergarten program, and advanced courses/programs (see [Finding 3.4](#)). Performance data indicate gaps relative to ethnicity, socioeconomic, English Language Learner Status, and special education status (see [Findings 4.3](#) and [5.2](#)). Efforts to close the gaps have not exhibited a sufficient rate of progress (see [Findings 3.4](#) and [4.3](#)). Various programs and initiatives have been implemented to address student needs, but far too many students continue to drop out of school before graduation. Gender and ethnic representation among district staff are disproportionate to that of the student enrollment (see [Finding 3.4](#)).

The auditors found several factors that contribute to the inequitable allocation of resources. Student assessment data are generally not considered in staffing allocations or in the budget development process (see [Findings 3.4](#) and [5.1](#)). School-based decision making, availability of grants, and PTA/booster club fundraising also contribute to inequities in the distribution of resources.

In order not to perpetuate but rather to overcome the relative disadvantages that some students bring to the educational system, the following recommendations are presented.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School Districts Board of School Committee:

G.7.1: Establish the improvement of student achievement as the primary district priority and adopt a policy framework that focuses all district operations on supporting achievement. Include the following elements:

- District long-range planning (see Recommendation 2);
- School improvement planning (see Recommendation 2);
- Curriculum design and delivery (see Recommendation 4);
- Professional development (see Recommendation 6);
- Assessment (see Recommendation 5);
- Program selection, adoption, monitoring, and evaluation (see Recommendation 5);
- Equal access and equitable distribution of resources;
- Budget planning and district priorities (see Recommendation 8);
- Technology implementation (see Recommendations 4 and 9); and
- Expectations for staff performance (see Recommendations 4, 5, and 6).

G.7.2: Adopt a policy that makes a commitment to end the achievement gap based on socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Establish high expectations for all students to achieve, and authorize the administration to take whatever steps necessary to change any practice that inhibits the district's response to increasing student achievement and eliminating achievement gaps.

G.7.3: Adopt a policy that makes a commitment to reduce the student dropout rate. Direct the superintendent to hold principals and teachers accountable for student success through the appraisal process.

G.7.4: Involve stakeholders in developing a definition of equal access and of equity. Establish and communicate a commitment to provide equal access to programs and services and equitable distribution of resources through board policy.

G.7.5: Revise *BOSC Administration Policy 106* to provide specific guidance for school-based decision making. Clearly delineate the curriculum management decisions that are to be made at the district level and those that are to be made at the schools. Ensure that curriculum and assessment are district level decisions.

G.7.6: Incorporate the following responsibilities into the superintendent's description:

- Review curriculum areas, supplemental programs, and interventions to determine equality of access and equitable distribution of resources using achievement data and cost-benefit analyses,
- Develop a recruiting plan to attract and retain minority and male teachers,
- Review personnel and budget allocation formulas, grants, and fundraising efforts to provide for an equitable educational program throughout the district,
- Monitor all reports, the budget, planning documents, assessment data, and programming plans to ascertain the equitable treatment of all school sites and all students, and,
- Provide annual updates regarding efforts and progress in eliminating inequalities and inequities within the district.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Superintendent:

A.7.1: Prepare drafts of the suggested policies for board consideration and adoption.

A.7.2: Assist the board in obtaining stakeholders' commitment to equal access and equitable allocation of resources. Take steps to ensure that all students can succeed regardless of ethnicity, primary language, mobility, or socioeconomic status. Establish linkage to the budget process (see [Recommendation 8](#)).

A.7.3: Develop a comprehensive curriculum, program, and assessment plan to provide the framework for a consistent educational program, including the components noted in [Recommendations 4, 5 and 6](#).

A.7.4: Develop and implement consistent curriculum and procedures for the English Language Learner and special education programs across the school district.

A.7.5: Require regular analysis of disaggregated data pertaining to all district practices (e.g., student assessment, program enrollment, course offerings, disciplinary actions, and interventions) to determine disparities and inequities (see [Recommendation 5](#)).

- Locate student achievement deficiencies by school and grade level.
- Focus the Strategic Plan, district and school improvement plans, professional development plans, and personnel evaluations on student achievement goals.

A.7.6: Expect and ensure through the appraisal process strong leadership from central office and school administrators in directing, communicating, and monitoring the alignment of the written, taught, and tested district curriculum.

A.7.7: Supervise and monitor the implementation of the intended curriculum and expected instructional strategies so that all students have access to comparable instructional and curricular experiences (see [Recommendations 4 and 6](#)).

- Hold teachers accountable through the appraisal process for the implementation of differentiated instructional strategies to meet diverse student needs.
- Require the use of teaching strategies in which students are actively engaged and challenged.
- Expect that teachers implement strategies to meet the needs of English Language Learners.

A.7.8: Require regular analysis of formative assessments to serve as the basis for lesson planning and instructional decision making.

A.7.9: Coordinate supporting programs and initiatives. Include the following:

- Develop a process for terminating ineffective programs and interventions and continuing effective ones (see [Recommendation 5](#)).
- Focus on the implementation of a small number of research-based initiatives most likely to increase student success.
- Provide several levels of professional development for staff in priority areas (see [Recommendation 6](#)).
- Monitor program delivery for fidelity of implementation.

A.7.10: Monitor placements in special programs for disparities in participation among subgroups.

A.7.11: Revise teacher and administrator recruitment procedures to do the following:

- Provide appropriate incentives to attract minority and male teachers to the district.
- Include minority staff and community members as part of the recruitment team.
- Recruit in high minority, declining enrollment districts.
- Establish relationships with human resource staff in declining enrollment minority school districts so they recommend the Manchester School District when reducing their teacher work force.
- Assign minority mentors to newly hired minority staff members.

A.7.12: Provide annual reports to the board that report progress on the demonstrated equitable treatment of all students.

Recommendation 8: Design and implement a multi-year budget planning process that fully aligns district and building level resources to curricular goals and priorities and includes cost-benefit analysis to assure that funded efforts are producing the desired results.

Effective school districts establish and maintain a strong linkage between the annual budget process and district long-range planning. A well-planned and implemented curriculum-driven budgeting process can provide the board and superintendent with an effective and efficient process for allocating district resources so that district goals can be accomplished and priorities addressed, while maintaining fiscal integrity and equity. The annual allocation of resources to programs also needs to include an evaluation of program results so district personnel can judge which efforts provide the highest possible benefits at the lowest possible costs. This is of critical importance in difficult economic times when school districts are challenged to provide even basic financial support to their core programs.

The Manchester Board of School Committee and the administration use a traditional line item budget that includes a process for reviewing budget needs by examining current budget commitments and attempting to balance requests for new programs and the costs of expanding or maintaining existing efforts given projections for future revenue (see [Finding 5.1](#)). Data inputs to the process include enrollment projections and student attendance patterns, detailed salary projections based on union contracts, and analysis of current expenditures and revenues as well as projections for coming year revenue. Pursuant to policy, the superintendent is expected to work closely with the principals and other administrators to assess the needs of the schools. The Manchester School District also works with the City of Manchester Mayor and Board of Aldermen, as this body has the authority to approve or reject the budget request.

Auditors did not find that the budget process reflects a direct connection between the resources provided and the criticality of the goals toward which those resources are directed. There was no evidence of a system-wide effort to achieve greater productivity by making budgetary decisions that assure adequate resources are allocated to those program efforts that are most closely linked to school system goals and outcomes and that can demonstrate success in meeting those goals and outcomes (see [Finding 4.4](#)). Instead, efforts to support ongoing programs in fiscally challenging times consist of attempting to negotiate concessions from unions, making reductions to the workforce, targeting specific programs perceived to be too costly, or transferring resources to expendable trusts as a way to carry forward funding from the previous fiscal year.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Board of School Committee:

G.8.1: Direct the superintendent to design and prepare for board adoption a comprehensive, detailed set of curriculum-based budget policies that conform to the audit criteria found in [Finding 5.1](#). Include assessment of curricular and instructional needs based on the strategic goals and objectives. A preliminary step should be the development of policy supporting the implementation of a performance evaluation process for all major district programs and activities using a comprehensive assessment system such as a combination of district developed and state mandated tests (see [Findings 1.1, 1.2, 4.1, and 4.4](#)).

G.8.2: Use a planned approach in the transition to a curriculum-driven budget by setting reasonable timelines to address the change. In succeeding years, additional program areas can be added to the process. Budgeting for purchased goods and services should begin at zero and allocations justified on the basis of need, cost-savings, and elimination of redundant activities.

G.8.3: Adopt policies that require a continuous audit of the district's financial status, including a link between budget allocations and their impact on individual instructional programs (actual costs and benefits are thus assigned to instructional programs to provide a more detailed basis for fiscal decision making and planning).

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Superintendent:

A.8.1: Prepare drafts of the policies recommended above for board consideration and adoption.

A.8.2: Establish regularly scheduled meetings between the budget officers and the program evaluation personnel to share and coordinate program budget cost information, student achievement data, and overall effectiveness evaluations. Such linkages will facilitate cost-benefit analyses of programs and allow the use of these data to drive budgeting decisions.

A.8.3: Use an overall strategic planning process to:

1. Identify curricular programs and interventions and group them into broad areas of need or purpose served.
2. Assign a budget/program manager to each program or budget request. Direct them to prepare a concise budget package for their respective areas.
3. Attach a goal statement to each program area or budget request that explains the program's linkage to established goals and priorities, its purpose, the criteria for identifying success, and how these will be evaluated and reported. Each budget request should be described so as to permit evaluation of the consequences of funding or non-funding in terms of performance results. Principal and program director involvement in this responsibility is critical.
4. Compile the goal/linkage statements and budget packages and give them to appropriate staff to gather data that best describe needed service levels, program outcomes, and cost-benefits.
5. Define program performance expectations and accountability with the involvement of staff (including principals, teachers, and support staff). Current results, often in terms of student learning, should be compared to desired expectations and related service level requirements. For example, to be successful, a specific program may need to be established at 110 percent of previous spending levels. This will necessitate a comparable reduction from some other program/budget judged to be of lesser consequence.
6. Prepare guidelines and recommendations and submit to budget/program managers who will then combine all recommendations into a single budget proposal.
7. Compile past cost information, especially expenditure percentages of budget, with performance data and recommendations to guide preliminary budget estimates.
8. Appoint a budget planning team, determined by the superintendent, to study the goals, priorities, and parameters inherent in decisions made in developing program budgets. Discussions of cost-benefit information are critical at this stage. Where needed, budget plans should be extended over a minimum of five years to assure consistency of effort and focus.
9. The superintendent's team then evaluates and ranks the budget packages. Budget requests need to compete with each other for funding based upon data derived from a determination of their priorities of need and level of program effectiveness.
10. Compile the results of the evaluation and ranking and publish them in a tentative budget with programs listed in priority order. Use this draft with administrators for input before a draft is prepared for use as the presentation document.
11. Finalize budget allocations based on revenues available, the appropriation levels to be authorized, and program funding priorities and rankings. Prepare the recommended budget to be taken to public hearing before the board.
12. Use the public hearing process to communicate broadly the financial planning link with student needs, program priorities, and the results sought through program activities. Allow time for individual comments and questions before the budget adoption meeting. Prepare the final document after considering public and board comments and seek adoption.

13. Establish the final program and services to be funded at the level approved by the Board of School Committee and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and set the budget in place.

A.8.4: Identify key budget and instructional personnel and require that curriculum budget areas be constructed based on the priorities for specific curriculum improvement plans. To facilitate sound decisions, each budget request should be linked to an evaluation of its past performance and expenditures. Require all staff members who submit budget requests to present an explanation of how dollar allocations will permit accomplishment of the goals, objectives, and priorities of the improvement plan in measurable term (see [Findings 1.1](#), [4.1](#), and [5.1](#)).

A.8.5: Require that administrators and teachers use student performance data, budget data, and curricular program evaluations to define current and desired service and program objectives.

A.8.6: After grouping and compiling all budgets within each program area, business department personnel should prepare a tentative curriculum budget for each school. The budgeted curricular areas, including costs, should be compiled into a worksheet with instructions for evaluating and ranking by the curriculum areas.

A.8.7: Give budgets to the appropriate central office administrators and all building administrative staff for evaluation and ranking. This process includes:

- Detailed hearings and justification by program administrators,
- Written explanation of the program evaluations, and
- Ranking by the administrators and staff based on alignment to district goals and evidence of cost-effectiveness.

A.8.8: Compile results with curriculum budget allocations ranked by priority and present them to the Board of School Committee and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen with a detailed cost-effectiveness evaluation in support of the recommendations.

A.8.9: Following budget adoption by the Board of School Committee and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, ensure through systematic monitoring that the budget staff works in concert with the program and evaluation staff to monitor program expenditures and effectiveness as measured by completion of objectives, overall goal performance, and the cost-benefit factors. Monthly reviews of expenditures and quarterly evaluation of progress on goals and objectives are reported to the building administrators, staff, and board for program modifications as warranted.

Given attention to these recommendations, the leadership of Manchester School District will be better able to establish tangible connections between organizational goals and expectations and the resource allocation process, resulting in an ongoing process of improved program outcomes and aligned budget allocations. This recommendation should be implemented in conjunction with the assessment recommendation (see [Recommendation 5](#)), which will provide information vital to the budget decision-making process. This recommendation may take several years to fully implement.

Recommendation 9: Develop a comprehensive long-term facilities plan incorporating educational specifications in order to assure equitable facilities support to the district instructional program in all schools, fully functioning physical infrastructure, and safe and healthy building environments throughout the district.

School systems and the communities they serve share the responsibility for providing schools that are safe, clean, well-maintained, and adequate in space and design to support the educational program. A comprehensive long-range facilities plan provides the administration and board with the information necessary for them to plan and maintain educational facilities to meet the needs of the community and the goals of the district and to allocate the financial resources necessary to support the facilities plan.

The district board and staff face significant challenges with regard to the school facilities (see [Finding 5.3](#)). The district continues to maintain 15- to 122-year-old schools, resulting in challenges such as inadequate and failing HVAC systems, water damage from roof leaks, safety code concerns, and other issues associated with the upkeep of aging facilities. Technology challenges include infrastructure issues at a time when technology

is becoming a major vehicle of instructional delivery (see [Finding 5.4](#)). Budget pressures have resulted in the extension of deferred maintenance schedules, leading to more frequent system failures.

The district is required to care for these facilities but neither owns them nor has the capacity to obtain long-term debt for major capital projects. Facilities maintenance and related costs amount to approximately six percent of the annual district budget. The district is clearly not exempted from new requirements from the various governmental agencies and must address these requirements with the same level of compliance as a district with state of the art facilities. In addition, the district is experiencing demographic changes such as a multi-year net reduction in student enrollment and a change in the instructional requirements of the incoming students. While elementary populations have remained somewhat stable for the past eight years, the high school population, which includes students from neighboring elementary districts, has been decreasing. Decisions by these districts to send their students elsewhere or build their own high school would accelerate this problem.

District and City of Manchester efforts to address these situations have ranged from major renovation projects, such as the Design-Built projects of over a decade ago, to a work-order system of repair. While systems of preventive maintenance are used in the district, they are not systematically applied. Instead, the district by default uses a deferred maintenance approach in which unfunded facilities needs are placed on a list and prioritized. Prioritized items then wait for funding availability. The priority list itself changes as particular items gain the attention of the district board and administration (see [Finding 1.4](#)).

The purpose of a comprehensive plan as recommended here is to represent a pre-established, predictable, and credible response to changing facility needs developed by a wide range of community stakeholders and endorsed by the major constituencies of the community.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Board of School Committee:

G.9.1: Adopt a policy that requires the development of a comprehensive, long-range facilities and maintenance plan that includes the following elements:

- Ongoing demographic studies and population growth projections,
- Methods for monitoring facilities' conditions and maintenance needs,
- Standards for prioritizing renovations and replacement projects,
- Procedures for adjusting school boundaries and reconsidering school grade ranges in response to changing enrollment patterns,
- A comprehensive set of educational specifications for school construction and renovation that includes specific facilities provisions for disabled students, and
- Priorities for allocating funding for capital purposes and procedures for equitably implementing educational specifications in all schools.

G.9.2: Direct the superintendent to develop a comprehensive long-range facilities plan that addresses the criteria listed above and in [Exhibit 5.3.1](#).

G.9.3: Direct the superintendent to include a plan for preventative maintenance in the facilities plan. The maintenance plan should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Painting,
- Carpet cleaning and/or replacement,
- HVAC repair or replacement, and
- Roof repair or replacement.

G.9.4: Provide sufficient budgetary support for implementation of the facilities plan.

G.9.5: Direct the superintendent to provide periodic reports on facilities projects in progress and as planning occurs for subsequent phases of the facilities plan.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Superintendent:

A.9.1: Prepare, for board consideration and adoption, a draft of a policy framework for a comprehensive long-term facility planning process.

A.9.2: Direct the development of the facilities plan by coordinating all facilities planning efforts, including the involvement of district personnel, parents, community members, and various community entities such as foundations, business and industry groups, and governmental agencies. Consolidate all elements of the plan, including existing components, such as revised education specifications, technology deployment, and accessibility requirements, into a single document.

Components of the plan should include the following:

- A philosophy statement that reviews the community aspirations and the educational mission and strategic goals in relation to the short- and long-term facilities goals;
- Enrollment data and school enrollment patterns (both current and projected) that take into account any known circumstances that may cause significant changes in the school age population over the next three to ten years, such as changes in local elementary districts' high school attendance patterns;
- A detailed description of the current organizational pattern of the schools (pattern of grade levels and programs by facility, such as described in the 2013 Restructuring Proposal) and the identification of possible organizational changes or alternatives that may be necessary to support the educational program in response to projected facilities demand;
- Identification of educational program needs, including the needs of the special education and English Language Learners population, and other factors that need to be considered by designers of capital projects, such as the design and construction of new schools, school renovations, building additions, or replacement of school facilities;
- An updated, detailed evaluation of each district facility, including those facilities providing support to the schools, so as to include an assessment of structural integrity, mechanical systems condition and efficiency, capacity for supporting open-ended technology deployment, energy efficiency, flexibility to support current instructional practices and student grouping strategies, space utilization, and conditions related to environmental health, safety, and security;
- Renovation and long-term maintenance schedules for each facility, including building age, dates of previous renovations or major maintenance projects, estimated costs of maintenance projects for budget purposes, number of students currently served, and total student capacity in terms of classroom space and infrastructure support;
- Prioritization of needs for renovation of existing facilities and a comprehensive process for determining the need for new facilities;
- Cost analysis to determine the fiscal viability of maintaining older facilities, including the cost of modifying them to meet the educational needs of the district's students and the identification of funding sources to carry out such projects; and
- Procedures for achieving greater involvement of all stakeholders in the development and ongoing evaluation of the facilities plan.

A.9.3: Assign the following responsibilities to the appropriate administrative staff:

- Overall review, enforcement, and revision of educational specifications documents;

- Coordination of all district planning efforts to assure that site level plans are coordinated with and integrated into the long-range facilities plan and that the latest enrollment scenarios/projections/school attendance patterns are also reflected in these plans;
- Development of a critical needs capital replacement schedule for all retained facilities to address major infrastructure components such as HVAC, plumbing, electrical systems, and security components;
- Coordination with campus leaders and local communities to implement an improved safety and security plan for schools, especially those employing portable or detached classrooms;
- Assessment and determination of appropriate and consistent standards for custodial and maintenance services, taking into consideration the age and condition of each facility, usage pattern, number of students and staff served by the facility, and facility square feet; and
- Development and communication of a consistently applied priority system for all maintenance work order requests based on highest priority for life and safety and protection of investment factors.

Recommendation 10: Revise the table of organization to be consistent with sound organizational management principles. Ensure that all essential functions are included, especially those that support the design and delivery of a seamless educational program, assessment, and data management and analysis. Revise job descriptions to clearly outline current responsibilities and relationships within the district.

Successful organizations have a table of organization and accompanying job descriptions that provide the structure and working parameters for a well organized, focused, and efficient administrative team. Quality control and productivity depend upon the clear communication of responsibilities and relationships within the organization.

The auditors found that the Manchester School District lacks adequate policies for managing the table of organization and related job descriptions (see [Findings 1.1](#) and [1.3](#)). The table of organization does not meet all the audit principles for sound organizational design (see [Finding 1.3](#)). The auditors' analysis revealed issues related to span of control, logical grouping of functions, scalar relationships, and full inclusion.

The organization and supervision of schools by separate levels (elementary, middle, and high school) does not support seamless curriculum and student services delivery, preschool through grade 12. Positions to fully support district-wide, data-based decision making and curriculum management functions are missing.

Most of the positions depicted on the table of organization have job descriptions. However, some of the job descriptions for key positions do not match the duties currently expected, such as for the use of data in decision making, curriculum management functions, and school improvement planning (see [Findings 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 3.4, and 4.4](#)).

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District Board of School Committee:

G.10.1: Adopt a revised job description for the Superintendent of Schools that includes the responsibility for developing a table of organization that is reviewed annually and presented to the board.

G.10.2: Authorizes the superintendent to prepare and design a revised table of organization for effective administration (see [Exhibit R.10.1](#)).

G.10.3: Adopt a policy that states the expectation for up-to-date job descriptions for all employees that meet audit criteria. Require a review of job descriptions every two years to ensure that they are accurate, complete, and consistent with the table of organization (see [Finding 1.3](#)).

G.10.4: Direct the superintendent to align job descriptions and appraisal instruments for all employees.

G.10.5: Direct the superintendent to prepare annual reports to the Board of School Committee on the table of organization as it pertains to the following:

- Accuracy in depicting reporting relationships,

- Effectiveness in improving student achievement, and
- Cost-benefit analysis.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Manchester School District's Superintendent:

A.10.1: Assist the board with the development of the recommended policies.

A.10.2: Revise the table of organization to comply with audit criteria for sound organizational management (see Exhibit 1.3.2). A proposed table of organization is presented in Exhibit R.10.1.

Consider the recommended table of organization presented in Exhibit R.10.1, which includes the following changes:

- Establish a position of Assistant Superintendent for Planning and Community Relations with management responsibilities to include:
 - District and school level planning;
 - Monitoring, promoting, assisting, and advising all other departments on equity and diversity needs;
 - Providing services to parents, students, community members, and employees relative to diversity and equity issues;
 - Working with foundations, grants, and business partnerships;
 - Increasing parent involvement; and
 - Increasing public communication via a district newsletter, television, print media, district web pages, and publications.
- Assign to the Assistant Superintendent for Planning and Community Relations, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and to the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services the supervision of 7 or 8 Pre-K-12 principals each (organized by feeder patterns to the extent possible) to provide a seamless Pre-K-12 educational program by feeder pattern.
- Establish a Director of Pre-K-12 Curriculum position to facilitate the development of an aligned Pre-K-12 written, taught, and assessed curriculum. Have the following positions report to this administrator: Pre-K-12 Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies Specialists and a K-12 Coordinator of Gifted and Talented.
- Establish a full-time Director of Assessment/Data Analyst position with responsibilities to include the development and implementation of a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan linked to the curriculum management plan, oversight of the development of K-12 formative and summative assessments for all courses, and the evaluation of supplemental programs.
- Establish a Coordinator of District Communications to develop, coordinate, and implement internal and external communication processes and increase parent and community awareness and involvement in school and district activities.
- Establish a K-12 Coordinator of a Gifted and Talented program position to develop and implement a program to meet the needs of gifted students.
- Change the Elementary, Middle School, and High School Special Education Coordinator positions to three Pre-K-12 Special Education Coordinator positions to each work with a Pre-K-12 feeder pattern of schools.

A.10.3: Review the table of organization and job descriptions and prepare an annual report to the board as recommended in G.10.6.

A.10.4: Develop or revise job descriptions for all employees consistent with audit standards; establish a process for keeping job descriptions current; and submit new and/or revised job descriptions for approval to the board. Job descriptions should include the following minimum components:

- The date approved and/or most recently revised;
- Titles that are descriptive of the duties associated with the position;
- The physical demands of the position;
- The position's Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) status;
- The qualifications required for the position;
- The position's chain of command (no employee should have more than one supervisor);
- A detailed explanation of the functions, duties, and responsibilities of the position; and
- A description of the position's relationship to the curriculum where relevant (i.e., expectations regarding the design and delivery of the curriculum) and accountability for improved student achievement.

A.10.5: Revise the superintendent's job description to include responsibilities for long-term, district-wide planning; instructional leadership; data-based decision making; and the development of a table of organization. Increase responsibilities for the supervision, support, and coaching of principals as they work to improve curricular monitoring and teacher evaluation practices to impact teaching and learning.

A.10.6: Revise the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction's job description to include responsibility for the development and implementation of a comprehensive curriculum management plan (see [Recommendation 4](#)).

A.10.7: Refocus the roles of the building principal and assistant principal on instructional leadership.

- Revise the principal's and assistant principal's job descriptions and appraisal instruments to include responsibilities for school improvement planning, monitoring the delivery of the curriculum, and using student assessment and program evaluation data in decision making (see [Recommendation 5](#)).
- Include a description of the behaviors and activities that constitute monitoring in the Manchester School District.

A.10.8: Revise the job descriptions for the superintendent's administrative team and all department directors to include responsibility for the use of data in decision making.

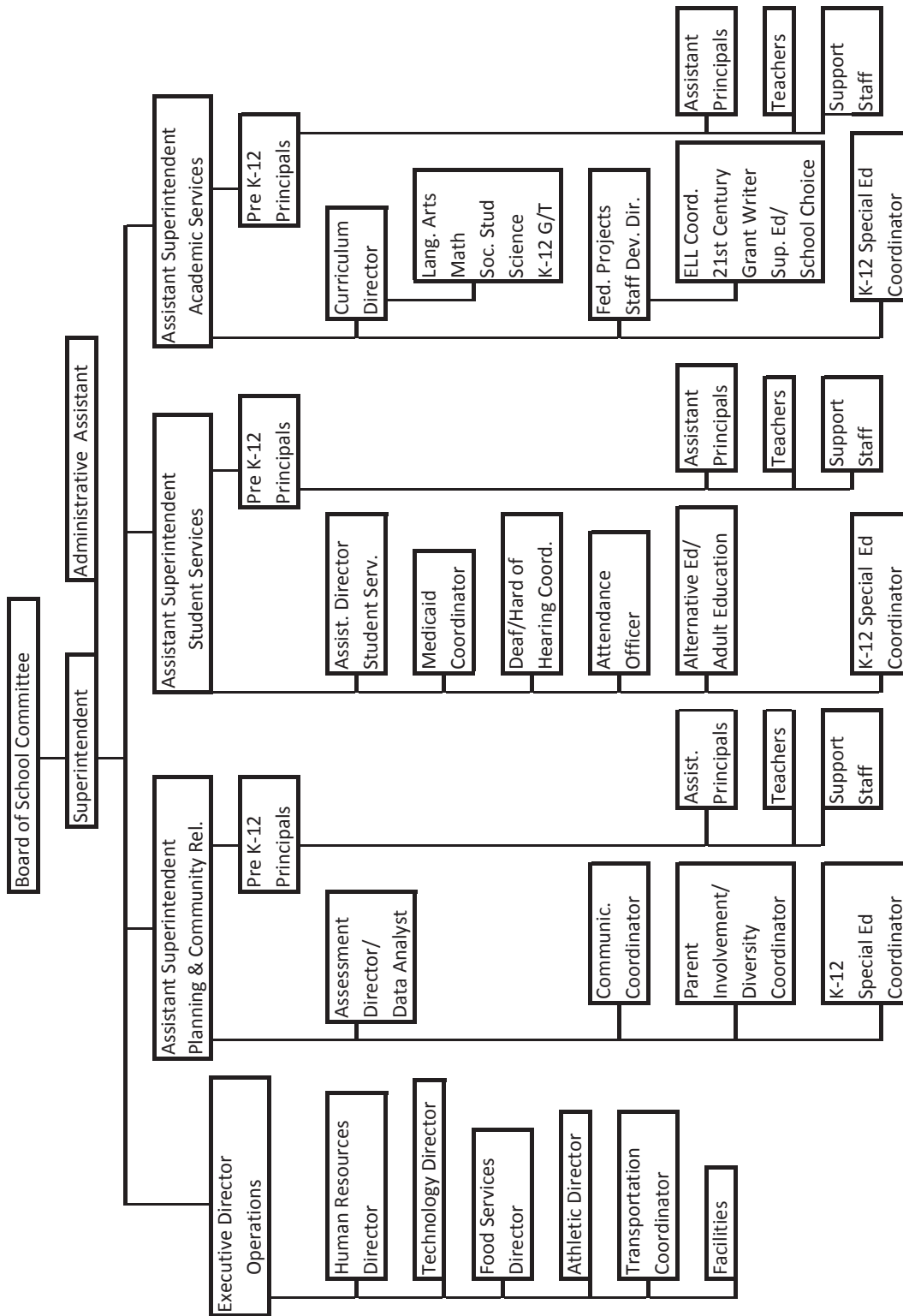
A.10.9: Revise the teachers' job descriptions to include expectations for the use of formative assessments, data in instructional planning, technology, and district expected instructional strategies (see [Recommendation 4](#)).

A.10.10: Align board policies, administrators' and teachers' job descriptions, and appraisal instruments so that expectations for duties and responsibilities are congruent among the documents.

Phase in the recommended table of organization over the next two years. Revisions to the job descriptions should be completed within the next 12 to 18 months.

Exhibit R.10.1

Recommended Table of Organization Manchester School District March 2013



V. SUMMARY

A Curriculum Audit™ is basically an “exception” report. That is, it does not give a summative, overall view of the suitability of a system. Rather, it holds the system up to scrutiny against the predetermined standards of quality, notes relevant findings about the system, and cites discrepancies from audit standards. Recommendations are then provided accordingly to help the district improve its quality in the areas of noted deficiency.

The Manchester School District Board of School Committee undertook the Curriculum Audit™ as a source of direction as it develops a long-term strategic plan. The request for an external review provided by the Curriculum Audit™ is timely and reflects a commitment by the Board of School Committee to ongoing system improvement.

The intent of this audit report is to identify areas in which the educational program and district operations do not meet audit criteria for effectiveness and to offer reasonable recommendations for improvement relative to the areas of need. The report includes 20 findings and 10 comprehensive recommendations to help achieve congruence with audit standards.

The auditors found that the Manchester School District’s staff includes teachers, support staff, administrators, and board members who possess the motivation and skills to serve the district well. Many staff members are a product of the district schools, still live in the community, and enjoy working in the district. Community members have supported the school district with donations of time, talent, and resources.

At the time of the audit visit, the Board of School Committee had initiated a strategic planning process that will be completed after a new superintendent is selected. A bond issue was being planned to upgrade technology deficiencies.

A number of major challenges have confronted district leadership for the past several years. Declining student enrollment, funding reductions, board disharmony, aging school facilities, and disparities in student performance have been long-standing issues facing the district. The high number of students that drop out of school prior to graduation indicates that the educational program has not served the needs of all students. “The need to do better” and the need for “high expectations” for students were espoused by many staff and community members. Now it is time to translate “high expectations” into an aggressive agenda for improvement.

Efforts are being made to address student needs, but the district lacks focus and control of the educational program. Decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, staff development, programs, and interventions have been largely relegated to the school sites. Therefore, the educational program a student experiences at one school may differ widely from the education a student receives at another school. School improvement efforts have been implemented, but they have not been coordinated across the district to provide a seamless transition for students as they move from grade level to grade level or from school to school and have generally not led to improved student performance.

A theme that cuts across all audit findings and recommendations is the need for written policies, plans, and procedures to provide a foundation for a consistent educational program. Manchester needs to become a “school system” with all parts working together focused on improving student success, rather than “a system of 22 schools” each working diligently but not producing the desired results.

Board policies drive practice. Manchester School District board policies do not provide the focus and adequate guidance for effective decision making at all levels of the organization. Policies must reflect the expectations set by the Board of School Committee and focus the resources of the district toward specific goals. Board policies need to clarify the relationship between centrally-based and school-based decision making and establish a framework for the design and delivery of an aligned, written, taught, and tested curriculum. They must provide the structure for board members and staff to be rational in their decisions, foster congruence over time as board members and staff change, and help board members understand their appropriate role. Board members and staff need to be held accountable for the implementation of the policies so that decision making is not left to the discretion of individuals or special interests.

When completed, the strategic plan needs to drive system change. It needs to direct all future decision making and actions, be coordinated with other system-wide efforts, and maintain focus on achieving district goals and priorities. The audit recommends developing a reasonable three- to five-year plan, selecting a small number of system-wide goals, focusing district efforts on them for several years, and holding staff accountable for implementation. School improvement efforts have been initiated, but they have not been coordinated across the district to provide a seamless transition for students as they move from grade level to grade level or from school to school and have generally not led to improved student performance.

For students to perform well on accountability measures, strong alignment is needed between the written, taught, and tested curricula Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12. A comprehensive curriculum management plan is needed to unify these areas. Not all subjects and courses taught in the district have corresponding written curriculum. The available curriculum documents do not have the specificity needed to provide clear direction for lesson planning and teaching. Model lessons or specific examples are needed on how to teach key concepts. Technology and complex thinking experiences need to be integrated into the curriculum. Expectations for instruction and monitoring the delivery of the curriculum in the classroom must be clearly defined to ensure that high quality curriculum and instruction are available to all students. Until the written, taught, and tested curricula are aligned, the potential for gains in achievement for all students will not be fully realized.

Brief classroom visits conducted by the auditors indicated that district expectations for student engagement and active learning are generally not being met. A review of artifacts being used in classroom instruction did not indicate expected levels of rigor and challenge.

Professional development has been largely school-based, and coordination of these efforts has been inadequate to maximize the benefit of improved teaching and learning. Professional development needs to be targeted on district goals and the design and delivery of the curriculum.

To supplement the curriculum, programs and interventions have been implemented to address various student needs. However, the district lacks a process for selecting, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and conducting cost-benefit analyses of programs. Too many programs and interventions can divert attention and human and financial resources away from the development of a strong district-wide curriculum. Supplemental programs need careful, long-term planning and procedures so they will be implemented to their full potential and positively impact teaching and learning.

The district lacks comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation planning. Formal student assessment is limited, so the board, staff, parents, and students do not have reliable information about student learning in all curricular areas. District formative assessments need to be developed for all subjects taught at all grade levels to provide adequate feedback for decision making. Aggregate student performance on state assessments remains below state averages, and some student subgroups perform consistently less well than other students.

Program evaluation has generally been limited to compliance reports associated with grants or state mandates. Program evaluations that include cost-benefit analyses need to be developed. Data-based decision making needs to be practiced in all district functions and operations.

Despite the programs and initiatives that have been implemented to improve student success, inequalities and inequities persist in a number of areas. Economically disadvantaged and minority students are not achieving at the level of other students, and their current rate of progress is insufficient. A disturbing number of district students leave the school system between grades 9 and 12. The English Language Learners and special education programs lack articulation and coordination across the district.

The auditors determined that the current budget process is not closely linked to district planning, and decisions relative to the allocation of resources are not based on student assessment data or cost-benefit analyses. For a district to be considered productive, academic achievement needs to increase over time within the same cost parameters.

District schools are generally clean, with custodial staff efforts well regarded in most schools. A large number of facilities deficiencies were identified in aging schools. Issues include leaky roofs, defective HVAC systems, and safety concerns.

A myriad of technology issues have frustrated district personnel over the past several years. A lack of funding has prevented the district from providing adequate hardware and software upgrades, hindering the implementation of technology to enhance the educational program and the use of data in district-wide decision making.

All large organizations face challenges related to communication. However, improving communication within the district and with the public has been an ongoing and unmet goal of the District Improvement Plan for several years. The auditors noted issues relative to board, central office, school, parent, neighboring elementary districts, and community communication procedures that are not contributing to a well-articulated educational program or increased awareness and engagement of stakeholders. A recommendation is made to consider a Pre-K-12 system of feeder schools to provide for a more seamless transition as students move through the system. Efforts need to be made by all district board and staff members to rebuild trust with each other and with the community and to create transparency and coordination in district operations.

While it is a time of challenge for the Manchester School District, it is also a time of opportunity. Board members, district and school administrators, and teachers have indicated the desire to move the district to the next level and set the standard for high quality educational opportunities for all of its students. Undertaking the Curriculum Audit™ is evidence of such commitment. Future progress will depend, in part, on the board's and district leadership's efforts to address the issues presented in the audit.

It is hoped that this Curriculum Audit™ report will provide the stimulus for the board, the administration, teachers, parents, and community members to develop a consensus for systemic change and improvement. If that process yields the kind of quality and consistency envisioned in the recommendations of the audit, there is every reason to be optimistic about the future of the Manchester School District.

VI. APPENDICES

Appendix A

Auditors' Biographical Data



Judy Birmingham, Ph.D., Senior Lead Auditor

Dr. Judy Birmingham is an educational consultant with a diverse background in public school education. She was formerly the Associate Superintendent for Instructional Services with the Anoka-Hennepin School District in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She served as an area superintendent for elementary, middle, and high schools and supervised the departments of curriculum and instruction, student assessment, professional development, special education, student services, vocational and federal programs. She has also served as an elementary principal, classroom teacher, and special educator.

Dr. Birmingham received her undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and her master's degree in curriculum and instruction and her doctorate in educational administration from the University of Minnesota. She has participated in 67 curriculum management audits since receiving her audit training in Chicago in 1993. She is a Senior Lead Auditor and a trainer for Curriculum Management Systems, Inc.



Larry Hunt, CAS, Auditor

Larry Hunt is a District Data Coordinator with the Onondaga-Cortland-Madison Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in Syracuse, NY. He provides data and assessment support to districts in Central New York, including the management of district data and the analysis and application of data for school improvement. His prior experience involves coordinating technical assistance for school improvement in schools that were cited as Schools in Need of Improvement under No Child Left Behind. His teaching experience

involves classroom teaching in both alternative education and higher education settings.

Mr. Hunt completed his Certificate of Advanced Study in Educational Administration at SUNY Brockport. He has a master's degree in Applied Linguistics from UCLA, a Bachelor of Music degree from DePauw University, and has completed additional graduate work in mathematics and statistics at Rochester Institute of Technology. He completed his audit training in 2007.



David Lutkemeier, Ed.D., Auditor

Dr. David Lutkemeier has served in a number of public school administrative as well as university teaching roles over the years, most recently as a special education director in an Arizona school district and as a superintendent of schools in northern California. Prior to that, he served as assistant superintendent for Planning, Research, and Evaluation for Pasadena Unified School District. In addition to those assignments, David has provided leadership in a variety of school district governance and administrative roles including school finance, government relations, staff development, student assessment, grants management,

and service on a school board. Prior to his work in the public schools, he was a faculty member in the Arizona State University Department of Special Education.

Dr. Lutkemeier received his undergraduate degree in psychology and master's degree in developmental psychology. He received his doctorate from the University of Cincinnati in Special Education and Psychology. Dr. Lutkemeier received curriculum management audit training in 1991 in San Diego, California and has served on 24 curriculum audit teams in 14 states.

Appendix A (continued)
Auditors' Biographical Data



Sarah Mitchell, Ed.D., Auditor

Dr. Sarah Mitchell is the Director of Secondary Education for the Frontier Regional and Union #38 School Districts. She has 25 years of professional experience in the field of education, including teaching students in grades PK through college. In her current role as the Director of Secondary Education, Dr. Mitchell supervises curriculum development, student assessment and testing programs, district professional development, and is responsible for writing and managing her district's state and federal grants. At the University of Massachusetts, Dr. Mitchell received her B.S. in Animal Science, her Master's degree in Environmental Health Sciences, and her Doctorate in Education, Policy, and Administration. She completed her Curriculum Management Audit training in Arizona in 2007 and has served on audit teams in Alabama, Massachusetts, and Texas.

Appendix B

List of Documents Reviewed by the Manchester School District Audit Team

21st Century Community Learning Centers Information Sheet (2011-12)
21st Century Community Learning Centers Supplemental Education Services Program
Accreditation Information (2003-2012)
Administrative Organizational Chart (2013)
Audit Informal Teacher Survey (March 2013)
Audit of Educational Effectiveness (2000)
Bargaining Agreements (2009-2013)
Board of School Committee Policy Manual (2010-2012)
Board of School Committee Sub-Committee Minutes (2011-13)
City of Manchester Comprehensive Annual Reports (2010-13)
Class Size Data (2012-2013)
Collaborative Review of English Language Learner Services Program – WestEd (8/10)
Common Core State Standards Initiative – Mathematics (1/18/13)
Common Core/State Standards (2010)
Computers by School, Type, Age (2013)
Content Specifications for Summative Assessment of the Common Core State Standards (2011)
Corrective Action Plans for Northwest, Beech Street, Henry Wilson, and Hallsville Elementary Schools (6/29/1
Course Descriptions for High Schools (2012-2013)
District Improvement Goals (2012-2013)
District Improvement Plan Progress Report and 2012-2013 Action Plan
District Improvement Plans (2011-2012)
District Schools and Principals (2013)
Educator Evaluation Plans (2011)
Elementary Math Curriculum (2008)
Engineering Evaluation of School Buildings (Oct. 1, 2000)
Enrollment by Ethnicity, Gender, Grade (2012)
Enrollment Report (February 2013)
Ethnicity and Gender of District Staff Members (2012)
Federal Programs (2012-2013)
First Class Email: High School Competencies
Five-Year Progress Report of West High School for New England Assoc. of Schools and Colleges (4/21/09)
High School Course Selections and Registration Forms (2012-2013)
Job Descriptions

Appendix B (continued)
List of Documents Reviewed
by the
Manchester School District Audit Team

Language Arts Curriculum (2008)

Long-Range Facilities Plan (Nov. 1, 1999)

Long-Range Facilities Planning (July 1, 2004)

Manchester City Charter

Manchester School District Annual Financial Report (FY2009, FY2010, FY2011)

Manchester School District Assessment Calendar (2011)

Manchester School District Budget (FY2011, FY2012, FY2013)

Manchester School District Budget Planning Process (2011)

Manchester School District Curriculum Documents

Manchester School District Data Analysis Calendar (2011)

Manchester School District DOE – 25

Manchester School District Education Technology Plan (2010-2013)

Manchester School District History

Manchester School District Professional Development Master Plan (2011-2016)

Manchester School District Redistricting Proposal (2013)

Manchester School District School Capacity and Redistricting (2/9/11)

Manchester School District Table of Organization

Manchester School District Technology Plan Progress (1/24/13)

Manchester School District Technology Strategic Plan Executive Summary and Technology Bond Narrative (3/13/13)

Manchester School District Vision Statement

Manchester School of Technology Career and Technical Programs (2010-11)

Master Schedule for Elementary-Secondary Schools (2012-2013)

Maximizing Educational Opportunities (2012)

Mission Statement and Goals

NECAP Math and Reading Test Data (2007-2011)

NECAP Released Item Support Materials (2012)

NESDEC Enrollment Projections (2007-2012)

New Hampshire Board of Education Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities (Ed1100)

New Hampshire Department of Education Common Assessment Program (4/22/13)

New Hampshire Department of Education Outline of NH's New Accountability System (1/18/13)

New Hampshire Department of Education Task Force on Effective Teaching (October 2011)

New Hampshire Department of Education Task Force on Effective Teaching – Phase I Report (October 2011)

New Hampshire Special Education District Report (2010-11)

Participation in ACCESS for English Language Learners

Professional Development for Library Media Specialists (12/12)

Appendix B (continued)
List of Documents Reviewed
by the
Manchester School District Audit Team

Programmatic Assessment of School Buildings (Dec. 1, 2000)

Rules of the Board of School Committee (2012)

School Approval Site Visit Reports (2012)

School Board Meeting Minutes (2012 - 2013)

School Board Members Length of Tenure

School Emergency Procedures (2012-2013)

School Enrollments (1998-2012)

School Improvement Progress Report and 2012-13 Action Plan for Memorial High School (4/12)

School Match Audit of Educational Effectiveness (5/15/00)

School Principals' Pages, Mission and Vision (2012-2013)

School Suspensions by School

Science Curriculum (2007)

Self- Study Survey Results for Central High School for New England Assoc. of Schools and Colleges (1/2012)

Social Studies Curriculum (2010)

Special Grants for Special Schools (2010-2011)

Special Programs Funded (2012-2013)

Staff Development Plan (2011-2016)

Staff/Faculty Handbooks (2012-2013)

State of New Hampshire Common Core Standards Implementation Framework (July 23, 2012)

Strategic Plan Overview and Timeline (1/30/13)

Strategic Plan Staff and Community Survey Results (1/30/13)

Student Attendance Rate Data and Dropout Data (2011-2012)

Student Code of Conduct (2010)

Student Handbooks (2012-2013)

Student Retention by Grade (2009-2012)

Superintendents with Tenure Dates

Textbook/Instructional Resource Adoption Procedures (2000)

The Essential Elements of Guided Reading

Tri Math Assessment K-5 (2013)

U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2009-10)

Writing Rubric – Grades 6-12

Appendix C

Curriculum Management Improvement Model Program Evaluation Report Criteria

The Program Evaluation Report...	
1.	Describes why this program was selected to be evaluated, with reasons that suggest an expected evaluation outcome.
2.	Presents a description of the program goals, objectives, activities, individuals served, context, funding source, staffing patterns, and expected outcomes.
3.	Uses multiple measures of data collection, resulting in both quantitative and qualitative data. The report describes what data were collected from what sources and the collection methodology.
4.	Outcome data in the report are correlated with measures of the fidelity of implementation of the program's key elements.
5.	Clearly describes the program evaluation procedures, findings, and recommendations.
6.	Clearly describes procedures used in the evaluation process.
7.	Program evaluation designs are practical, ethical, cost effective, and adequately address relevant political issues.
8.	Is provided in a timely manner so that timely decisions regarding program effectiveness and continuation can be made.
9.	If a sampling technique was used, it was adequate to support the conclusions that were drawn or any generalizations made to different settings or populations.
10.	Individuals responsible for the program evaluation were "independent" or, if not, there is no evidence of an attempt to control the evaluation results.
11.	Findings of the evaluation are supported by the evidence reported in the evaluation document.
12.	Recommendations are supported by the findings and are practical in that they are within the capacity of the organization to implement.
13.	The document contains only substantive and related information.