



Colorado Springs School District 11

Sixth Biennial Review of the Comprehensive District
Performance Plan

FINAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2016

PCG | *Education*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Consistent with the Mill Levy Election Ballot question approved on November 7, 2000, Colorado Springs School District 11 (D11) entered into a contract with Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) to conduct an audit of the Comprehensive District Performance Plan, a 7-element Business Plan that acts as the umbrella for the District's four critical underlying plans: the Instructional Plan, Financial Plan, Technology Plan, and Mill Levy Override (MLO) Plan. Similar to previous independent reviews, the objective was to report on the District's progress toward stated goals since the last audit, assess the effectiveness and the alignment between components of the Comprehensive Business Plan, and determine whether the MLO management program and structure is still meeting the original intent of the 2000 MLO Tax Ballot questions. In addition to completing the requirements associated with this biennial review, PCG was asked to conduct an assessment of three priority instructional areas: Wonders (a McGraw-Hill Education program) K-5 Literacy Curriculum, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and the High School (HS) Tutoring Program.

The overall review includes:

- An examination of numerous documents and reports provided by D11, such as: previous Mill Levy audits, the Financial Plan, Technology Plan, the Superintendent's Business Plan, Mill Levy Program Implementation Plan Summaries, budget information, and town hall meeting notes.
- An analysis of student achievement and demographic data, as provided by the Colorado Department of Education
- Site visits by PCG to conduct focus groups and interviews with various stakeholders
- A survey administered to District staff

The PCG team reviewed progress made on the three instructional priority areas using the Sustainable Reform framework. This framework, developed by the United States Department of Education, includes a Sustainability Rubric for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) designed to help assess the sustainability of one or more specific priority reform efforts—that is, a body of work that an LEA is undertaking in order to achieve two or more priority goals for student outcomes. The rubric consists of 19 elements of sustainability which are grouped under three major categories: Context for Sustaining Reform, System Capacity, and Performance Management.¹ The copy of the full rubric can also be found in the Appendix.

The following underlying research questions, important to the educational community and tax payers of D11, guided PCG's work:

- To what extent are investment dollars in D11 yielding the desired results? Is funding sufficient to sustain the progress made?
- What progress has been made toward improving systems and processes that lead to better school outcomes?
- What is the fidelity of implementation for the three instructional programs?
- What supports, structures, and resources are needed to sustain the three instructional programs?

¹ <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/resources.html>

Approach

Findings and recommendations related to programs, policies, and practices for the Wonders, PLC, and HS Tutoring programs, in addition to the alignment of the Comprehensive Plan, resulted from an analysis of three data sources. The first component involved the analysis of student outcomes, achievement trends, and patterns (Outcome Analysis). The second component focused on the systemic organizational and program factors that have an impact on program effectiveness and student outcomes (Organizational and Program Analysis). The analyses conducted for these two components drew from the third component, the Research and Practice Literature. The literature identifies the organizational factors, the program elements and practices, and the implementation conditions associated with program effectiveness and positive student outcomes.



We conducted a sequential mixed method study, involving both qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches, and emphasized the participation of multiple stakeholders. The assessment included three phases.

Phase I: Project Organization- Preparing for Success (April 2016)

During the establishment of initial organizational tasks, PCG began work with the Audit/Mill Levy Override (MLO) committee and individuals on the District's leadership team and delivered a preliminary Project Work Plan. PCG also led a project kick-off meeting, which was used to fine tune the data collection methodology, define the available artifacts, and develop a shared definition of success for the project across stakeholder groups.

Phase II: Collecting the Data (May 2016- June 2016)

This project was driven by the awareness that there are many moving parts that contribute to an effective school system and that to provide a comprehensive review there must be multiple data sources. As such, the collection of the data required a systematic approach. The review began with the acquisition of those data identified in Phase 1 and readily available. These were artifacts of current policies and the associated outcomes, many of which were available on the D11 website. In an effort to triangulate the data and to provide a complete portrait on those areas of the plan that are not easily captured by the available data, PCG conducted a series of interviews and job-alike focus groups with over 125 stakeholders, including district officials and staff, teachers, and students.

These data were then further rounded out by observational data (e.g., observing classrooms in which Wonders is being implemented, attending PLC meetings, and HS Tutoring sessions). PCG also provided an online survey for staff to complete. PCG received 450 responses to this survey. Data collected from stakeholders during this phase were the basis for Phase 3.

Phase III: Data Analysis and Report Writing (July- August 2016)

During this phase, PCG staff analyzed available data and prepared this final report for distribution to D11 staff and stakeholders. PCG reviewed the data through the lens of the Reform Support Network's *Sustainability Rubric for Local Educational Issues* (June 2015), hereafter referenced as the "Sustainability Framework." The Sustainability Framework provides school districts a mechanism for measuring their efforts, impact, and outcomes by taking into account the complexity of regulatory policies, pedagogical practices, financial realities, resource demands, and existing organizational cultural behaviors. PCG used the Sustainability Framework to explore the ways in which the school governance (e.g., D11 Business Plan, MLO, etc.) converge with instructional initiatives (i.e., Wonders literacy instruction; PLCs; and, HS Tutoring centers). PCG used the perspectives shared in the interviews and focus groups as well as, observations of practices, and analyses of documents. In the sections below, data support the linkages between the Sustainability Framework, the instructional programs, and MLO Program Improvement Plans (PIPs).

Sustaining reform "...requires constant attention to changing circumstances to manage a balance between persistence adherence to attaining goals and responsive adaptation to address the real challenges of implementation."² This type of change requires a program or system to be adapted to address a specific theory of change and set of strategies. That is, sustainable change is not achieved through an adoption of product or process, but the ways in which those products and process support a theory of action/change in school and classroom practices. The Sustainable Reform Framework is broken into three major categories:

1. Context for Sustaining Reform
2. System Capacity
3. Performance Management

Per the guidance for using the framework, PCG used these as guide posts and not absolutes. Specifically, PCG was looking for how well each MLO PIP and reviewed-instructional initiative were aligned in these categories. With this in mind, PCG attempted to examine the extent to which D11 built or is prepared for maintaining sustainability of each initiative. To produce transformative, sustainable improvement in student achievement, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and schools, with the support of State Education Agencies (SEAs), must focus on and commit to improving student outcomes in ways that extend beyond any singular program or funding stream. Sustainable changes are "durable, adaptive, persistently focused on priority goals for improved student growth in the face of changing conditions."³

² Reform Support Network, (2015). Sustainability Rubric for Local Educational Agencies, p. 6.

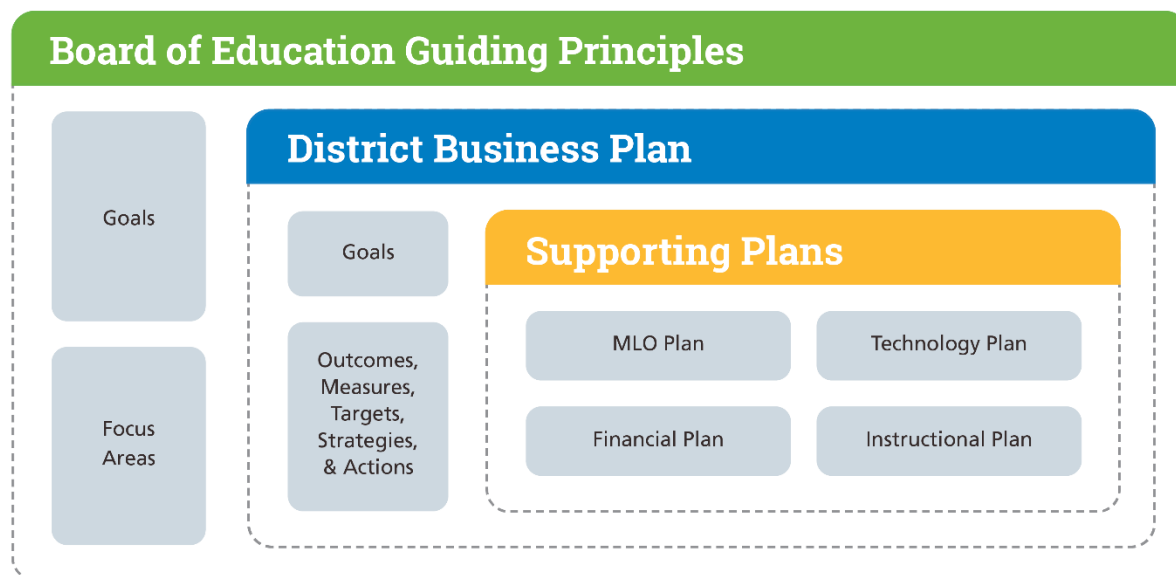
³ id.

II. REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS PLAN

Background

The demographics and financial picture of D11 are an ever changing landscape, which is governed and led by the elected (i.e., the School Board) and appointed (i.e., the superintendent) leadership. Today, the District closely follows and monitors its Comprehensive District Performance Plan, known to most staff as the Superintendent's Business Plan. This plan, which is updated annually, incorporates Superintendent's overarching Guiding Principles, Goals, and Focus Areas and details the District's annual Goals with Outcomes, Measures, Targets, Strategies, and Actions. The Business Plan also includes the underlying MLO, Technology, Financial, and Instructional Plans.

While the District does not have a visual graphic to display its strategic framework and plans, PCG developed the following image in an effort to convey the interdependence of the various components that converge to shape practices in the classroom/school and contribute to the outcomes of students. Additionally, the graphic serves to support the structure of this report, which provides context on the Business Plan and the Supporting Plans.



Context: Mill Levy Override Funding

In November 2000, District taxpayers sent a message of support to their schools by approving a \$26.9 million ballot issue (Ballot Issue #3B) to supplement educational funding in D11. To minimize the impact on property owners, the MLO funding was phased in over several years. The District began to receive the full additional annual funding of \$26,998,822 in 2009. This money was to be used to fund the following ballot items, termed “elements,” related to improving education in the District:

1. Reduction in class size
2. Attraction and retention of superior teachers and support staff
3. Core academic subjects such as mathematics, reading, writing, and science
4. Purchase of classroom instructional materials and supplies
5. Increase in teacher training
6. Expansion in student assessment and interventional support

7. Library support
8. School safety and security
9. School start times
10. Technology integration in the classroom
11. Citizens oversight committee to develop independent comprehensive performance plan

The District adopted a spending plan, which broadened these 11 targeted areas into 24 specific program improvement plans (PIPs). These PIPs include budget codes, budget amount, item description, quantification of costs, a history of implementation costs, and a breakout of full-time equivalent (FTE) personnel according to employee group to be hired. Also included are any plan amendments, PIP relationship to the election questions and how each PIP fits into the current D11 Business Plan. The District began collecting monies in early 2001. All PIPs were expected to be implemented in 8 to 10 years as the MLO funding was phased in. The 24 programs corresponding to the eleven targeted elements were intended to receive some form of funding through MLO dollars by 2010.

One of the targeted areas on the ballot (Element #11) called for a formation of a citizens' oversight committee to monitor implementation performance and use of the new MLO funding. After full implementation of the MLO funds in 2009, the committee was merged with the District 11 Board of Education Audit Advisory Committee to continue citizens' monitoring of the spending plans. Once those components were in place, the District created an annual MLO PIP summary report. The most recent addition was the development of key performance indicators to ensure that each spending plan item was thoroughly analyzed for results. Additionally, a biennial review is conducted every two years⁴ by an external organization to ensure appropriate and efficient spending. A dedicated page on the District's website was created to report all the figures and house prior reviews.⁵

As stated on the D11 website, the Audit Committee meets monthly at the D11 administration complex, 1115 North El Paso Street, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Committee members are asked to perform the following:

- Monitor MLO spending plan progress
- Make recommendations regarding any program modifications
- Familiarize themselves with the MLO spending plan and the D-11 business plan and mission
- Participate in periodic public briefings to inform the community about implementation progress
- Attend regular meetings, at least six per year

In November 2014, the District, in recognition of its innovative MLO governance and accountability system, was named a national "District of Distinction" by *District Administration Magazine*. The District was among 49 others that were honored in the inaugural round of "Districts of Distinction," the magazine's new national recognition program.⁶

The District Today

With the passage of time, D11 of 2016 is a much different place than it was in 2000. Demographic shifts and financial uncertainty (i.e., changes in state funding converging with the economic health of the local community) are converging to create a more challenging environment for the D11 elected and professional leadership. The increasing need for technology in the classroom, coupled with the change in federal education laws, a movement toward newly adopted standards (e.g., Common Core State Standards) and 21st century learning, plus a decrease

⁴ On April 22, 2015, the Board of Education approved by vote to extend the frequency of the performance reviews from biennially to at least every three years to more effectively utilize resources.

⁵ <http://d11.org/MILO/Pages/default.aspx>

⁶ <http://www.districtadministration.com/dod/awards/colorado-springs-school-district-11-mill-levy-override-governance-system>

in Colorado school district funding statewide prompted by the national recession, is shaping the operational reality for D11 schools. The District remains the largest one in the Pikes Peak region, serving nearly 28,000 students in 60 schools with over 3,700 employees. Still, there has been a steady decline in student enrollment, which is expected to continue in the near term. The student count in Fall 2000 was 32,699; the student count in Fall 2015 was 27,937.⁷ This change represents a nearly 4,700 student count decrease.

As staff reported during focus groups and interviews, this trend is expected to continue and can be attributed in part to geographic constraints. With 17 school districts within El Paso County, D11 serves the long-developed center of Colorado Springs and is one of the oldest districts. Unlike some of the surrounding communities, there is very little open space for new residential or commercial development within D11. As a result, there are few new housing developments. In contrast, surrounding communities offer open space for larger homes with more land. The result is that fewer families are relocating to within the D11 boundaries, selecting other areas instead. In the 2012-13 school year, the Board of Education voted to close two elementary schools and repurpose a traditional high school. Elementary and high school boundaries were also redrawn. The latest available population data estimate from the American Community Service (2014) only 20.2% of the Colorado Springs community is of school age (i.e., between the ages of 5 and 19).⁸ These data suggest that as many as 80% of households within the District boundaries do not have children in the school system.

Demographics

The demographics of the District have changed considerably since the passage of the MLO in 2000. The District's 2014-15 Annual Report to the Public noted that there are 70+ different languages spoken by the student population, requiring a new focus on community and parent outreach that is sensitive to cultural and linguistic differences.⁹ Data show that the District's Hispanic and multi-race populations have increased significantly, while the number of white students has decreased.

Student Population by Ethnic/Racial Group (2000 to 2014)¹⁰

	2000	2014	% Change
White	70.0%	51.7%	-18.3%
Hispanic	16.2%	30.5%	+14.3%
Black	9.3%	7.3%	-2.0%
Pacific Islander/Asian	2.7%	2.2%	-0.5%
American Indian	1.2%	0.8%	-0.4%
Two or More Races	0.6%	7.5%	+6.9%

The District reported that 59.9% of students qualified for free or reduced-priced meals in the 2014-15 school year. The data contained in the following chart demonstrates this increase.

Student Population Receiving Free and Reduced-Price Meals (2003 to 2014)¹¹

	2003	2014	% Change
PK-12 Free and Reduced-Priced Meal Population	34.8%	59.9%	+25.1%

⁷ <http://cde.state.co.us/cdereval/pupilcurrentdistrict>

⁸ <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

⁹ <http://d11.org/AnnualReport/Pages/Default.aspx>

¹⁰ Fall 2000 Membership by County, District and Ethnic/Racial Group (<http://cde.state.co.us/cdereval/rv2000pmlinks>)

¹¹ <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/rv2003pmlinks>. Data from 2000 was not publically available; 2003 was the first year provided.

The District has seen an over 25 percentage point increase (which equates to a 72% increase from the 2003 baseline) in this population since 2003. Staff also anecdotally reported that this percent has increased significantly over time, suggesting that students today are coming to school backed by fewer home resources to equip them for school success. Staff also reported serving an increasing number of homeless students, who tend to be very transient. Ultimately, D11 is facing an increasing student population impacted by chronic stress and poverty, which can translate into a form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and affect learning.¹²

¹² <http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/what-poverty-does-to-the-young-brain>

Achievement

The District continues to develop and enhance its quality educational opportunities for all students, seeking to “provide excellent, distinctive educational experiences that equip students for success today and in the future” and prepare students for a “world yet to be imagined.”¹³ Highlights of the District’s award winning academic programs since 2000 are too extensive to list, though some recent noteworthy ones as cited in their Annual Reports include: the development of an Early College High School, expansion of Career and Technical Education Programs and Career Pathways, and the integration of Next Generation Learning, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) programs into the curriculum.¹⁴

Overall, academic achievement challenges remain a priority for D11. The District’s official accreditation rating for the 2014-15 school year, which is based on the 3 Year District Performance Framework, is “Accredited with Improvement Plan.”¹⁵ Districts are designated an accreditation category based on the overall percent of points earned for the official year. Performance Indicators show that the District met finance, safety, and test participation requirements but earned only 57.7 out of 100 points for academic progress.

Colorado Springs School District Accreditation Rating (2014-15)¹⁶

Performance Indicators	Rating	% of Points Earned out of Points Eligible
Academic Achievement	Approaching	58.3% (8.7 out of 15 points)
Academic Growth	Meets Requirements	64.3% (22.5 out of 35 points)
Academic Growth Gaps	Approaching	52.8% (7.9 out of 15 points)
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	Approaching	53.1% (18.6 out of 35 points)
Test Participation	Meets 95% Participation Rate	-
Finance	Meets Requirements	-
Safety	Meets Requirements	-
TOTAL	57.7% (57.7 out of 100 points)	

While the District will need at least a score of 64% to move into the higher accreditation category, it should be noted that the District has improved its ranking, from 52% in the 2013-14 school year to 57.7% in the 2014-15 school year, and reached its “stretch target” for Goal #1 (“Schools are high performing”) of the Business Plan.¹⁷

Finances

While D11 administrators have done an admirable job in aligning available budgetary resources to the tenets of the Business Plan, the District’s financial situation, like that of other Colorado districts over the past several years, has been challenging. As noted on the District’s website, for the last six years, school funding in D11 has been reduced a cumulative \$183.9M, due, in part, to the Negative Factor, a “budget stabilization” effort that the legislation added to the School Finance Act formula in 2009 in order to make across-the-board cuts from all districts.¹⁸ In essence, the legislature reinterpreted Amendment 23,¹⁹ approved by voters in 2000, “to mean that only the base amount was

¹³ 2012-13 Annual Report to the Public (<http://d11.org/AnnualReport/Pages/Default.aspx>)

¹⁴ <http://d11.org/AnnualReport/Pages/Default.aspx>

¹⁵ <http://cde.state.co.us/>

¹⁶ Fall 2000 Membership by County, District and Ethnic/Racial Group (<http://cde.state.co.us/cdereval/rv2000pmlinks>)

¹⁷ <http://d11.org/BusinessPlan/Pages/default.aspx>

¹⁸ <http://d11.org/BOE/Pages/NegativeFactor.aspx>

¹⁹ Amendment 23: “mandates that “base” per pupil funding increase each year by the rate of inflation. To determine how much each district will receive under the School Finance Act, that “base” is run through a complex formula that includes variables

covered by the mandatory increases — not the factors. Under this interpretation, the legislature could (and did) cut total spending from one year to the next and claim compliance with Amendment 23 — despite voter intent to increase funding.”²⁰

The Negative Factor was responsible for a \$1,276 reduction in per pupil funding statewide in the 2013-14 school year, resulting in funding for schools statewide that was about \$1 billion below what Amendment 23 required. These cuts, coming from the factors, which are designed to make school funding more fair and equitable, “exacerbate inequities in Colorado’s school finance structure, making educational opportunities even more dependent upon a student’s zip code.”²¹ In September 2015, the Colorado Supreme Court, in the case of *Dwyer v. State of Colorado*, upheld the legislature’s interpretation of Amendment 23, thereby guaranteeing that the Negative Factor will not be phased out in the foreseeable future.²² During this same time period, the legislature also passed the Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act, the Education Accountability Act of 2009, the Educator Effectiveness Law, and the Colorado READ Act, all of which imposed additional unfunded obligations on school districts already burdened by reduced funding.

These new legislative requirements, coupled with the Negative Factor, have had a significant impact on D11’s operations. According to D11’s analysis, without the Negative Factor, the District would have received an additional 12.94% (\$28,595,325) in the 2011-12 school year, an additional 16.09% (\$37,322,501) in the 2012-13 school year, and an additional 15.49% (\$36,268,184) in the 2013-14 school year. Absent these funds, the District has had to: increase class sizes; reduce benefits for staff; freeze pay for some staff; cut pay for other staff and furlough them for three consecutive years; close and repurpose schools; reduce instructional programs like summer school, tutoring, and at-risk programs; defer maintenance on schools, facilities, vehicles, and grounds; and, defer capital replacement on schools, facilities, buses, support vehicles, and technology. While MLO funds are accounted for separately, the overall reduction of general funds has had an impact on the administration of initiatives approved by the MLO.

Planning the Future: District Business Plan

The Business Plan serves as the primary strategic planning document for District staff and the community. It includes goals and outcomes the District expects to attain each year, along with the specific strategies and actions undertaken to achieve them. The Business Plan is designed to be an “all inclusive,” progressive document that helps to create a collective efficacy for all staff and clarify the top priorities for the school year. As was reported by many D11 staff, they can often feel paralyzed with too much to do and too many disparate initiatives to juggle. The Business Plan is meant to clarify expectations and provide focus.

such as school district size, local cost of living, and the number of ‘at-risk’ kids in a district. These variables are called “factors” and they substantially increase average per pupil funding received by school districts to reflect the very different costs districts experience.” (<http://www.greateducation.org/news/2014/02/negative-factor/>)

²⁰ <http://www.greateducation.org/news/2014/02/negative-factor/>

²¹ id.

²² <https://www.i2i.org/colorado-supreme-court-nixes-negative-factor-challenge/>. The D11 Board of Education passed a resolution in May 2014 agreeing to participate as a plaintiff in this litigation against the State of Colorado (Resolution 2014-37: Support of Litigation Regarding the Interpretation of Amendment 23 and the Negative Factor), and wrote numerous letters to state legislators.

In development of the annual Business Plan, the Superintendent seeks input from each area of the organization during the spring time for the subsequent school year's plan. The executive leadership of each office works with their staff members to develop the strategies and action items for each of the following seven goals, including the outcomes to be measured:

Achievement

- Demonstrate improvement of student achievement

Team

- Demonstrate a high-performing team

Innovation

- Embrace a culture of constant innovation

Engagement

- Communicate and engage frequently with our customers

Environment

- Provide a safe learning and working environment

Efficiencies

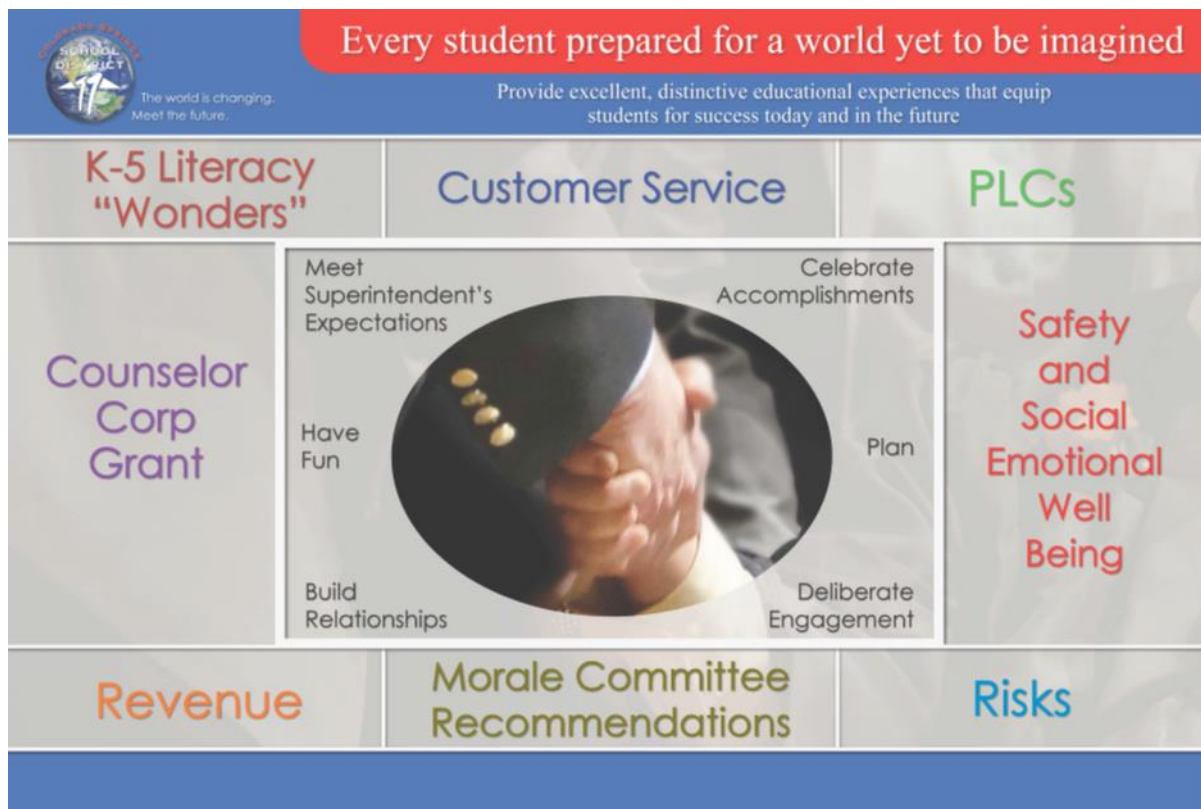
- Demonstrate operational efficiencies

Finance

- Demonstrate fiscal prudence and financial responsibility

As part of this process, staff also must take into account the progress made on the MLO Plan, Technology Plan, Financial Plan, and the Instructional Plan and incorporate specific information from them into the overarching Business Plan. All priorities must align to the District's goals. A snapshot of the next year's Business Plan is then given to the School Board in May for discussion and approval.

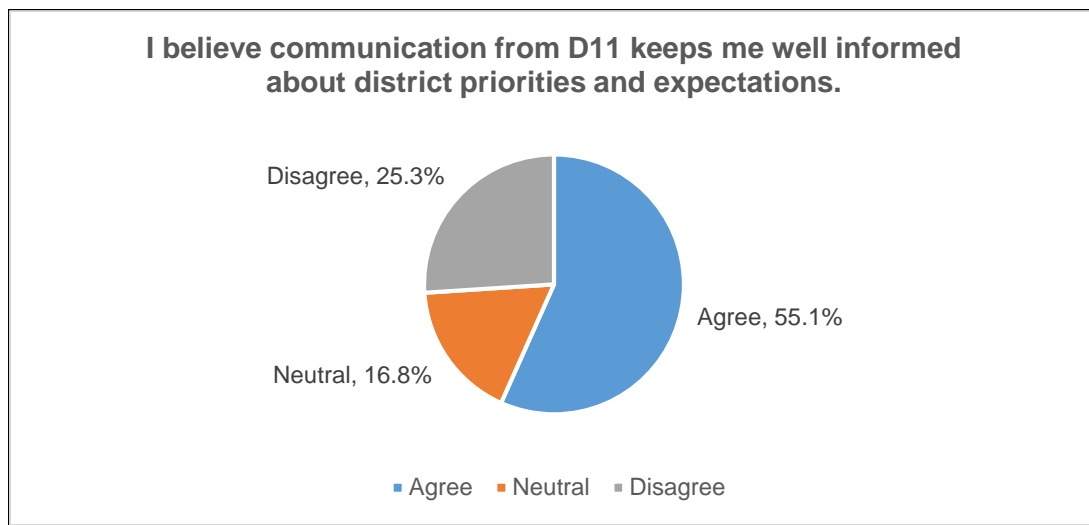
The front cover of the Business Plan contains a graphic with the key priorities for the year. This graphic is on display throughout the District, at the entrance to all schools and the administrative building and on the back of every staff members' employee ID badge. The initiatives listed are also explained in the "What will we do this school year?" section of the Business Plan. The 2015-16 graphic is included below, and includes two of the three academic areas that PCG was specifically asked to review (i.e., Wonders and PLCs):



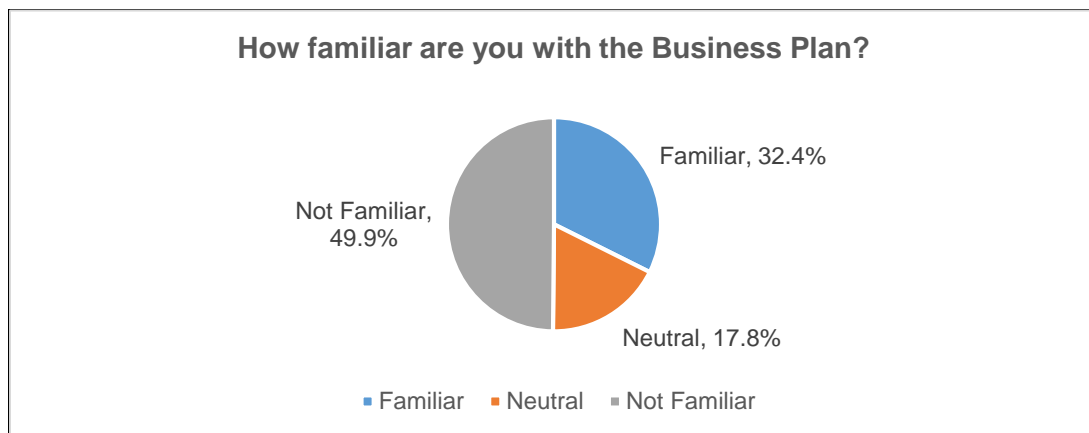
Stakeholder Feedback

A strategic plan serves as the beacon for a school district, guiding the organization toward a future vision. For some, the strategic planning brings to mind a disciplined and thoughtful process that links the values, mission, and goals of a school system with a set of coherent strategies and tasks designed to achieve those goals. For others, the term induces a cringe brought about by memories of endless meetings, fact-free debates, three-ring binders, and dozens of objectives, tasks, strategies, plans, and goals—all left undone after the plan was completed.

By most accounts, the Business Plan for D11 falls into the first category, serving as a comprehensive and action-oriented plan for all staff. That is not to say, however, that all staff are clear about the role of the Business Plan and how it relates to their daily work. As part of this review, PCG conducted a staff survey, containing questions designed to capture perspectives on the three instructional programs and provide a litmus test on an across-the-board understanding of the Business Plan. The following are some of the data collected about the Business Plan.

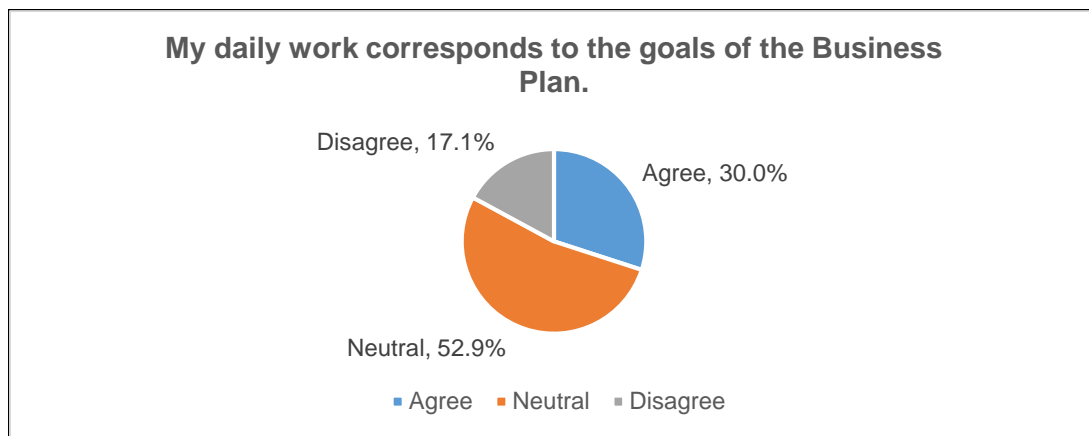


With regards to how well the District keeps staff informed of priorities and expectations, over half (55.1%) agree. A quarter (25.3%) of respondents do not agree with this statement.



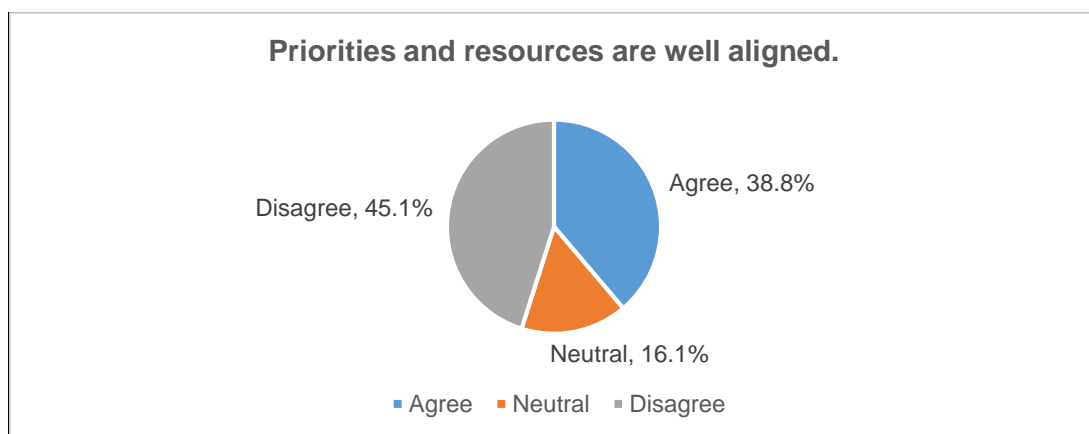
When asked if staff are familiar with the Business Plan, nearly half (49.9%) respond that they not familiar with it. These data correspond to themes heard during focus group sessions and contradict findings from the last biennial audit in 2014, which concluded that there is “broad organizational awareness with the District organization of the existence of the DBP and the role the DBP is intended to play as the primary strategic document of the organization,” (p. 14).²³ Further, when asked if their daily work corresponds to the goals of the Business Plan, as demonstrated by the chart below, less than a third agree. Interestingly, the majority of respondents neither agreed or disagreed with the statement.

²³ 5th Biennial Review- Comprehensive Performance Plan (January 22, 2014), Delta Solutions & Strategies, LLC



There could be several factors that influence these responses, from staff turnover to a lack of clarity about the term “Business Plan” (perhaps believing that their work as educators is not a “business”). Staff participating in focus groups readily cited that Wonders and PLCs were focus areas for the 2015-16 school year, but expressed concern that they would not remain a priority going forward. These data demonstrate that the communication around the Business Plan and the need to make connections for all staff are never ending, requiring routine updates and reinforcement throughout the school year.

Recommendation #1: The District should explore ways to involve all staff in the Business Plan development process to ensure they make the connections between the District’s strategic vision and their daily work.



When asked about priorities and resources, 45.1% disagreed with the statement that they are well aligned.

Recommendation #2: The District should further assess ways in which initiatives and required funding commitments can be better articulated to staff and community members.

Survey respondents were also asked to rank which challenges prevent D11 from exceeding expectations. The top 5 ranking responses were:

1. Hiring and retaining quality educators in a competitive job market

2. Addressing the economic/financial stress on the D11 caused by reduction in state and local funding
3. Keeping up-to-date with technology hardware, software, and applications and associated support
4. Meeting the broad academic and social needs of an increasingly diverse student population
5. Maintaining the physical facilities as they age

Focus groups participants shared these same challenges, which strongly correspond to the rationale in the Vision 2030 plan for a MLO and/or bond question on the 2016 ballot.

Points of Pride

It is worth noting that the D11 remains committed to achieving their goals as established as part of the Business Plan. Specifically, D11 makes every effort to apply decision making through a lens of how the decision will impact their ability to meet their goals. There is evidence that such a process is contributing to improvements, as expressed by staff, despite the many challenges that D11 has faces. Staff participating in focus groups offered many positive and enlightening descriptions of what is going well with the District. Participants shared the following affirmative insights:

- Great staff and families. They want what is best. There is lots of community support.
- I feel supported by everyone (all colleagues and D11 administration as well).
- It doesn't feel like a big district. Everyone feels connected.
- When you call for help, people really do help.
- Renovations are happening, and there is more modern technology (e.g., iPads, Promethium boards, more modern furniture).
- There are programs to support a variety of learners. Gifted/Talented and special education are well funded. There are behavior consultants and lots of assistance for students.
- There are a lot of learning opportunities and lots of supports (i.e., classes; TLC in every building; offer a lot that other districts don't).
- It was a bold step to implement Wonders in one year.
- The administration has had town hall meetings – to listen to people and get input into decision-making. They are trying to listen to teachers.
- The idea and philosophy at this school is that everyone has a place.
- We have a strong academic high school in D11- we lead in Advanced Placement courses, have a strong performing arts program, and have a nationally recognized robotics team.
- Our athletic teams are successful and excelling.
- We function at a high level across the board.
- We do great things- if you send your kid here we will find a way for him/her to be successful
- We have a strong inclusion program and keep students in their neighborhood schools to the extent possible.
- We make students successful there; they are not in self-contained classes.
- The instruction folks in D11 see the special education team as part of everything we do. Special education is a piece of the instruction focus.
- Everyone tries to own every student.
- There are district resources schools can call on when there is a challenge in a school: 4 instructional coaches who focus on progress monitoring, and 4 behavior consultants.
- Every elementary school is on the same reading series, which is a big help. Mobility is high. There used to be big holes in student learning, especially in special education.
- We have strong financial transparency.
- The RTI process at Palmer High School is good.

- We are innovative and forward thinking for a big district—we are in the forefront.
- District support of intervention is extraordinary.
- There is staff comradery and a nice culture.
- We think outside the box.
- We differentiate throughout the district.
- We use the focus on our vision and core mission to drive decision-making.
- We manage money well and maximize the potential to provide educational opportunities.
- Staff are very flexible.
- We truly try to meet the needs of every student. There is such a wide range of things we do to individualize and personalize learning.
- I'm proud of the choices students have in the district, at any level and at any school. The richness of what offer kids is unparalleled.
- The District provides resources for what really works.
- The District isn't afraid of hard decisions or to get rid of things that aren't working.
- District strengths: diversity of student body; feel supported by administration (even in "lean" times); a lot of opportunities for children and appreciate what is offered for kids; staff have had a lot of opportunities to grow as professionals; staff support each other; administration is genuinely caring and want what is best for kids.

Vision 2030: 2016 Bond/Mill Levy Override

In the spring of 2015, D11 launched Vision 2030, a campaign to educate the community about the District's academic priorities and budget and lay the groundwork for a potential bond, MLO, or combination of both on the November 2016 ballot. In light of current financial constraints and expectations to continue improving its academic standing, D11 views the passage of an MLO and/or bond measure as critical to its future. As noted on their webpage:

today's preschool students will be the class of 2030, and the D11 Board wants to prepare their way to a successful future. As our children prepare to become the leaders of tomorrow, what skills and resources will they need to lead the way? The D11 Board of Education is looking ahead to determine the needs of the school district and our community, in order to prepare students for a world yet to be imagined.²⁴

To start this process, D11 launched an internal survey for district staff, administrators, teachers, support personnel, and PTA members. Over 1,000 respondents from 46 schools completed the survey, of which over 99% supported a potential tax increase. Respondents noted the challenge of getting an MLO and/or bond issued passed, citing the following areas of concern: convincing childless residents to support it, ensuring the stewardship of resources, and developing clear communication strategies. Since that time, the District has developed additional materials (talking points for schools, PowerPoint presentations, etc.) and held over 200 employee, community, parent/guardian forums to collect feedback.²⁵ The Colorado School Public Relations Association awarded the District with the prestigious Golden Achievement Award for communication excellence on phase one of the Vision 2030 communications plan.

²⁴ <http://d11.org/vision2030/Pages/default.aspx>

²⁵ id.

The District has identified the following reasons why the passage of a bond and/or MLO is important to the community:

Bond	MLO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the ten years since the last D11 bond issue, the District has lost significant ground in terms of maintaining and improving school facilities, due to state funding reductions. • Building safety, including access and security camera systems, need to be updated to help maintain and improve the safety of students and employees. • The District's buildings, technology, and vehicles continue to age each year and the available funding cannot keep up with annual maintenance and replacement costs. • While no new schools are needed at this time, the average age of D11 schools is 50 years old. Improvements and updates are needed for D11 school and building infrastructure. • Learning spaces need to be updated to offer students distinctive educational experiences that will equip them for success today and in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student achievement initiatives such as summer literacy, tutoring, and targeted intervention strategies for students will help to prepare students for world yet to be imagined. • Increased safety of students, staff, and community • Ongoing facilities maintenance and vehicle replacements, thus reducing the long term cost to taxpayers • Attracting, recruiting, and retaining quality educators and staff • Reduction in class size, allowing teachers to personalize instruction • Enhanced instructional supplies and materials, including technology and curriculum, which supports students' ability to compete in a global market

It is anticipated that a committee of stakeholders will ultimately make a recommendation to the District's Board of Education for consideration. The decision to propose a bond issue and/or MLO does not need to be made until September 1 of each year, but, as was noted during focus group and interview sessions, it is fully expected that this will occur. If the District decides to proceed with a ballot questions, or questions, it will rely on the "Friends of District 11," an independent citizen-led organization that is focused on helping educate the community about the District's need for this funding and how additional financial resources would be used.

III. REVIEW OF THE SUPPORTING PLANS

Mill Levy Override Plan

A Mill Levy Override is a voter-approval to add mills to the property tax bills of homeowners. District 11 voters passed a Mill Levy Override ballot issue in November 2000, which added nearly \$27 million in targeted funding. The ballot included ten explicit districtwide elements (i.e., initiatives) toward which the funding would be allocated and a requirement for a biennial review of the District's performance. With each biennial review, there has been a steady evolution of the elements and the degree to which they are funded. In an early review, the reviewers noted that the elements were not necessarily held together by a set of common principles and strategic outcomes. In subsequent years, D11 built a set of plans around their core principles, eventually developing a Business Plan, Technology Plan, Instructional Plan, and Financial Plan. Since his arrival in 2009, Superintendent Gledich has been guiding the District toward a Business Plan of strategic goals and informed by "principles for relationships that lead to success."²⁶ The MLO elements also evolved from the original 10 to 24 Program Implementation Plans, and the District has continued to add additional management structures to ensure the appropriate use and tracking of the MLO funding.

Action Taken on Previous MLO Audit Recommendations

The 2014 Biennial Audit report, conducted by Delta Solutions and Strategies, listed four key areas of recommendations for the District. As evidenced by the detailed reports and information gathered during focus groups and interviews, the District has established an effective and robust management process to ensure that annual MLO taxes received for D11 are allocated to fund educational efforts in accordance with the MLO ballot Election Questions passed in 2000. Over the past 16 years, the District has refined these management processes and should be commended for its continuous improvement.

This section provides a summary of the actions taken by the District to follow through on the 2014 recommendations. The District completed those that the organization had the capacity to do or saw a value in completing.

Summary of Actions	
1. Modify the current DBP format and manner that information is presented as follows:	
a. <i>Group the Goal-Objective-Strategy/Action (GOS/A) sequence together in summary charts, ideally on one or two pages maximum.</i>	Not Completed: After reviewing the 2015-16 Business Plan, it does not appear that the District has grouped the Goals-Objectives-Strategy-Action (GOS/A) together as recommended or provided a summary (1-2 page) document.
b. <i>More closely connect each Goal-Objective pairings in the DBP with a list of specific Strategies/Actions steps using a sequential numbering system. Define these Strategies/Action steps in greater detail so "rank and file" District staff personnel especially at the mid-manager and below level can more easily understand how the District intends to operationally achieve each DBP GOS/A sequence and what their</i>	Completed: The 2015-16 Business Plan has a sequential number system that allows for staff to see the connection between the GOS/A.

²⁶ <http://d11.org/Pages/default.aspx>

Summary of Actions	
<i>individual and department's roles and responsibilities will be in that effort.</i>	
c. <i>Include applicable Key Performance Indicator (KPI) statements in the DBP and list those KPIs immediately under each associated Strategies/Actions statement in the aforementioned DBP GOS/A Alignment Charts.</i>	Partially Completed: The 2015-16 Business Plan now includes Measures and Targets associated with each Goal/Objective. However, they were not relabeled as "Key Performance Indicators" or listed immediately after each associated Strategy/Action as recommended.
2. Incorporate the following modifications to the current MLO program to create a more practice and streamlined management process while still maintaining accountability and detailed oversight:	
a. <i>Consolidate the 21 MLO Program Implementation Plans (PIPs) into a fewer number based on major funding categories to produce a more easily understood and streamlined MLO management structure</i>	Completed: In the MLO PIP Summary for 2014-15, the District has grouped the PIPs under major categories.
b. <i>Maintain the current tracking system of MLO funds via budget codes, budget summary sheets, PIP item descriptions, history of MLO expenditures, quantification of annual costs and other established procedures to provide the required level of detail for oversight of the MLO program by the Audit/MLO Committee for the senior District leadership and other key stakeholders.</i>	Completed: The MLO PIP Financial Packet for 2014-15 contains this information.
c. <i>Retain the current MLO management practice of assigning oversight responsibilities for each PIP to senior District leaders (i.e., the District Division Heads currently listed in the MLO Plan).</i>	Completed: The MLO PIP Financial Packet for 2014-15 contains this information.
3. Improve the alignment of the Technology Plan (TP) with that of the DBP as follows:	
a. <i>Restate the current TP goals as objectives that support specific DBP goals</i>	Not Completed: The 2015-16 Business Plan does not have the Technology Plan goals listed as objects that support specific Business Plan goals.
b. <i>Transform the current stand-alone technology plan into a complementary and detailed action plan derived from the DBP objective to implement the District's current 21st Century Personalized Learning Vision in order to more closely align the District's technology efforts with the Business Plan while retaining format and plan elements needed to meet Colorado educational technology directives and requirements.</i>	Not Completed: The Technology Plan is still a stand-alone document that is not referenced in the Business Plan. The Business Plan references "technology" three times – as related to the District Commitment ACHIEVE (E= "Effective, efficient user of information technology"), new revenue needs, and ensuring a "safe and protected technology environment" under Goal 5- but is not related to 21st Century Personalized Learning.

Summary of Actions	
4. Improve upon or revise the following existing District organizational practices and processes:	
a. Establish a more formal process and schedule of feedback forums or meetings that more fully engages and involves more of the District staff to provide mid-year assessments on progress towards DBP goal achievement for senior District leadership review and potential corrective action.	Partially Completed: The Superintendent and executive cabinet leaders held Town Hall meetings in January and February 2016 to assess the implementation fidelity for Wonders and PLCs, two of the Business Plan priority areas for the year.

MLO: Financial Alignment to PIPS

The table which follows identifies the specific allocation from the MLO to each of the 24 PIPs for the 2014-15 school year. The \$27 million is spread across the 24 PIPs in an attempt to bring about the best outcomes for the District. Several of the PIPs receive no funding. A PIP which is no longer funded may have been completed (i.e., the goal has been achieved) or too little money was available to adequately fund. At the time the MLO was passed, there had been plans for addressing inflation. Despite this, inflation has had an impact on the District's ability to fully meet all of the PIP initiatives. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' CPI Inflation Calculator, the nearly \$27 million dollars of 2000 would be equivalent to roughly \$52 million in 2016.²⁷ As such, the \$27 million buys far less in change elements in 2016 than it had in 2000. The MLO dollars today are able to contribute to roughly half of what they were able to contribute to sixteen years ago.

Recommendation #3: The current MLO is inadequate to supplement the operating expenses of the District. Inflation has eroded its value and potential to have a substantial impact through the PIPs. The District should prioritize the initiatives (e.g., reduce the number of PIPs) and specify the required funding.

Alignment with PIPs	2014-15 Adopted Budget Amount
<u>Compensation Program Implementation Plans Summary</u>	
PIP #1: Teacher and ESP Wages and Benefits	\$6,610,000
PIP #15: Other General Education	\$250,000
PIP #16: Beginning Teacher Salary	\$400,000
Total	\$7,260,000
<u>Class Size Reduction Program</u>	
PIP #2B: Class Size Reduction	\$1,395,399
PIP #2C: Middle School Implementation	\$2,813,000
Total	\$4,208,399
<u>Instructional Staffing Enhancements Program Implementation Plans</u>	
PIP #6: Literacy (LRT) (TLC)	\$2,129,770
PIP #12: ESL, Special Education, and Gifted and Talented	\$933,700
PIP #22: Assessment Support Staffing	\$110,000
Total	\$3,173,470

²⁷ See http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)

Alignment with PIPs	2014-15 Adopted Budget Amount
<u>Instructional Program Implementation Plans</u>	
PIP #5: Instructional Supplies and Materials	\$1,774,030
PIP #14: Research Based Interventions/Full Day Kindergarten	\$2,400,550
Total	\$4,174,580
<u>Technology Program Implementation Plans</u>	
PIP #7B: Teacher Staff Development and Technology Training	\$400,000
PIP #9: School Library Services- LTEs and LTTs	\$2,200,000
PIP #11: Technology Support	\$3,600,000
PIP #17: Software Upgrades	\$75,000
PIP #20: Align DALT (Terra Nova) (MAP)	\$200,000
Total	\$6,475,000
<u>Safety and Security Program Implementation Plans</u>	
PIP #18: Security	\$220,322
PIP #19: Crossing Guards	\$100,000
Total	\$320,322
<u>Other Program Implementation Plans</u>	
PIP #8A: Start times	\$0
PIP #21: Charter Schools	\$1,287,051
PIP #23: Student Achievement Performance Review	\$100,000
PIP #24: MLO Contingency Reserve	\$0
Total	\$1,387,051
<u>GRAND TOTAL</u>	\$26,998,822

MLO: Through the Sustainability Framework

In addition to the prior analyses, PCG examined the PIPs through the lens of the Sustainability Framework. Specifically, PCG was interested in determining to what extent the PIPs had characteristics reflected, or were built to be sustained, per community-wide support, increased organizational capacity, and managed through a clear set of metrics.

PIP / Sustainability Framework	
PIPS	Evidence (Statements from focus groups and observations)
<i>Context for Sustaining Reform/PIP</i>	
<i>Alignment to community-wide system</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The Business Plan and MLO are aligned and reflect much of the original ten MLO elements. + The MLO and Business Plan are regularly socialized with the community and D11 staff.
<i>Public value</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The District has transparency around the use of MLO funds.

PIP / Sustainability Framework	
System Capacity	
<i>Align human capital</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Although D11 resources were dedicated to TLCs for the Wonders implementation, only 25% of staff surveyed believed the TLCs were beneficial in implementing Wonders. + There is evidence that Mr. Kosolak, a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), was tasked with leading the implementation of the PLC and High School Tutoring program. + The evidence that the HS Tutoring program was a priority in the Business Plan or the MLO funding was unclear.
<i>Culture of continuous improvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + There is evidence that the Business Plan supports continuous improvement through the Wonders, PLCs, and HS Tutoring Programs. + During many interviews and focus groups, concern was expressed that during the upcoming school year more would be added for the staff to implement that would stretch the resources for a new implementation and limit the resources on the current initiatives.
<i>Align organizational structures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + There was clear evidence that the organizational structure and subsequent resources were aligned to support the Wonders implementation. + There was less evidence that the organizational structure and subsequent resources were aligned to support the PLCs. + There was evidence that the resources to support the High School Tutoring was not designed in a structured way for all high schools, but rather decisions were made by individual staff members at each school where the program was in place.
<i>Extend capacity through partnerships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + There was evidence that the District secured support from external organizations to support Wonders training and coaching.
<i>Extend capacity in the field</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + There is evidence that D11 made a priority of focusing the TLCs, funded mainly out of the MLO, on the Wonders implementation.

PIP / Sustainability Framework	
<i>Performance Management</i>	
<i>Clarity of outcomes and theory of action/change</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Financial outcome targets are set and measured throughout the year. Administrative staff are responsible to collect data to benchmark performance in meeting the targets. + The Business Plan provides theory of action and strategies that are funded in part by the MLO. + The Business Plan is not revealed to staff including administrative staff until August. This leaves department heads having to adjust their staff's resources to meet the new focus areas right as school is about to begin. + It is unclear if during the budget development process, the instructional focus areas in the Business Plan and subsequent strategies have been finalized. + During a focus group session/interview, it was discussed that the School Board had to make a budget adjustment to cover a shortage in the Wonders implementation.

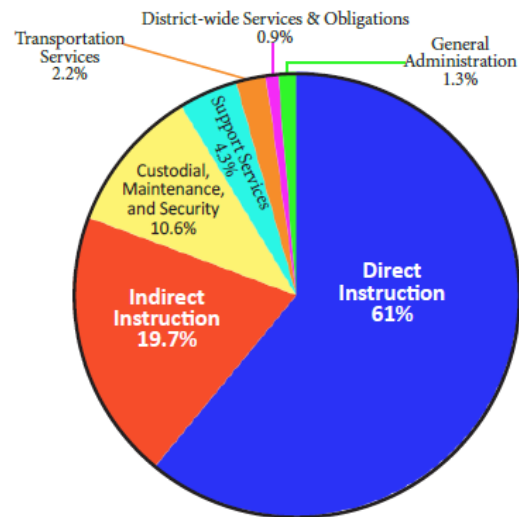
PIP / Sustainability Framework	
<i>Alignment of resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + PIP#6 funded 27 TLC positions to support elementary implementation of Wonder, which aligns to the Business Plan. The MLO funded 97% of this line item with the other 3% being funded through the general fund. The FTE was reduced from 42 leaving no support for middle and high schools. + No direct funding in PIP #6 for additional staff to support PLC initiative. Focus groups and staff interviews revealed that with over 450 PLCs throughout D11, the staffing resources were not sufficient to provide consistent implementation support. + D11 provided financial resources required to implement Wonders from multiple sources including the MLO, federal grants, and district funds. Focus groups and staff interviewed believed Wonders was well funded for a successful implementation. + MLO allocates \$475,000 for 5 library media specialists to provide support for a tech issues district-wide. Focus groups suggested that technology issues were ever present. District staff believed the problems with technology had improved over the past few years. + There is an effort to provide resources to support increased understanding data use, but the funding only provides 1 staff member tasked to provide professional development to all teachers within D11. + During staff interviews, it was stated that there is a greater need for more PD on using data as it would support the PLC initiative, but limited staffing does not make that possible. + Positions that are funded through the MLO since 2000 have either been reduced or have required a higher contribution from the general fund as personnel costs have risen. The MLO is no longer sufficient for full funding. + Many data systems in D11 are not integrated, but are improving. Funding is not available in the MLO to support upgrades in the data systems by teachers during PLCs.

PIP / Sustainability Framework	
<i>Collection and use of data</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + D11 has implemented an effective system that collects and reports data on the alignment of the MLO, PIPs, and Business Plan. + There was clear evidence that the data collected is an important driver in how financial decisions are made + There was also clear evidence that due to past audit reports, D11 made it a priority to explicitly align the Business Plan to the MLO and PIPs. This alignment provides a transparency for all stakeholders. + It was unclear that D11 is collecting financial data on the implementation of the three initiatives. + The Wonders implementation had the most explicit alignment between budget line items in the MLO. + There was evidence of data collected on the implementation of the MLO funded items and its relationship to the Business Plan.
<i>Accountability for results</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + There was evidence that financial data reports were used to ensure funds were being spent as they were intended and when necessary budget line items were adjusted.

Financial Plan: Budget

The District takes financial transparency seriously, posting all budget information on the website and holding public forums in which the Superintendent and CFO answer questions that the public may have about the budget. As part of the Vision 2030 initiative, the District posted the following summary of 2015-16 expenditures, which is inclusive of MLO dollars.²⁸

2015-16 EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM



Service	Expenditures	% of Spending
<u>Direct Instruction</u> Teachers, supplies, and equipment for regular and special education programs	\$140,374,188	61.0%
<u>Indirect Instruction</u> Special student services, instructional services, school administration (area administrators, principals, and assistant principals)	\$40,374,188	19.7%
<u>Custodial, Maintenance, and Security</u> Maintenance, operations, utilities, custodial services, and security	\$24,543,343	10.6%
<u>Support Services</u> Fiscal and community services, purchasing, warehouse, human resources, technology, other central services, and construction services	\$9,925,791	4.3%
<u>Transportation Services</u> Pupil transportation services	\$4,965,413	2.2%
<u>District-wide Services and Obligations</u> Post-employment benefits and other services	\$2,103,305	0.9%
<u>General Administration</u> Board of Education, executive administration, communication services	\$3,005,560	1.3%
<u>Budget before reserves</u>	\$230,287,963	100.0%
<u>Non-recurring reserves</u>	\$19,581,822	7.8%
GRAND TOTAL BUDGET: \$249,869,785		

²⁸ <http://d11.org/Vision2030/Overview/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

The MLO dollars (\$26,998,822) represent approximately 10.5% of the District's total \$249,869,785 budget. In 2000, the MLO dollars were meant to be supplemental so that the District could afford to make progress in various areas. With the advent of the Negative Factor and the increasing demands on districts to provide high quality and rigorous 21st Century learning opportunities, MLO funds can no longer be viewed as supplemental to the core budget. If the MLO dollars were no longer available, the District reports that it would have to cut positions, shutter schools, and eliminate programs. As one focus group participant said, "it went from being a gift to being a needed part of the budget." Still, in an effort to focus on continuous improvement, the administration, as reported by another focus group participant, has attempted to "keep cuts as far away from the classroom as possible."

The Colorado School Finance Project, which has well documented the impact of the Negative Factor on schools in the state, surveyed districts in July 2016 about their FY 17 projections.²⁹ As part of these draft budget conversations, D11 stated:

We are looking at minimal compensation increases. We cannot afford to fund our salary schedules so we are looking at some combination of a minimal across the board pay raise and potentially a small one-time bonus/payment. In past years (FY09 to FY13) \$5 to \$7 million of reserves have been used. Initial planning for FY17 has recurring budgeted expenditures to exceed recurring budgeted revenues by \$2-3 million. However actual expenditures are usually under budgeted expenditures by 2%. So actual use of reserves to cover operating expenditures is normally not required.

In other words, while the District is not yet faced with massive lay-offs or significant program reductions, its stagnant revenue and growing costs have the potential to further reduce reserves. Additionally, this means that the District does not have the financial capacity to undertake substantial and innovative initiatives, such as wholesale improving the technology infrastructure, renovating buildings, or increasing staff salaries so that they are competitive. As one administrator noted, the passage of time erodes the district's ability to fund the same number of people with the same dollars.

The expected outcomes of Goal #7 of the Business Plan state that: 1) "School District 11 will prove a high level of fiscal prudence and financial responsibility to stakeholders," and 2) "School District 11 resources are aligned to the District's Business Plan." Outcome #2 directly correlates to the MLO, specifically:

- Appropriate MLO spending plan items will have KPIs matching the Business Plan format
Current: 100% tracked within the KPI Quarterly Report Target: 100%
- The District will report annually percentage of MLO funds identified to each Business Plan element.
Current: 100% Target: 100%

Recommendation #4: The Business Plan reporting should be presented with supporting supplemental plans to include the Financial Plan, the MLO Plan and other supplemental plans together so alignment between them is clearer.

Instructional Plan

The District is required to adopt and implement a Unified District Improvement Plan (UDIP) that ensures all students in the state reach proficiency in English language arts/reading and mathematics and exit the *K-12 education system ready for postsecondary education, and/or to be successful in the workforce (earning a living wage immediately*

²⁹ <http://www.cosfp.org/>

upon graduation).³⁰ For the 2015-16 UIP, D11 conducted analysis and self-identified the following root causes and suggested strategies for improving academic outcomes.

The following is a summary of the analysis D11 completed for the instructional improvement plan.

How are students performing? Where will the district focus attention?

- **Below 50th percentile:** Low (under the 50th percentile cut point) and decreasing reading, math and writing scores at the elementary level and low (under the 50th percentile cut point) and decreasing scores in reading and writing at the middle school level. Scores in science are relatively stable, but are below the 50th percentile cut point in elementary and high school.
- **Gifted/Talented (G/T) Math:** Decreasing scores on math assessment for G/T students and disaggregated G/T subgroups.
- **Low Growth:** Low growth in Math across all grade spans, low growth in Writing at elementary and MS levels, and decreasing growth in ELL at the MS level.
- **Growing Growth Gaps:** Growth gaps in Reading, Math and Writing are widening in all grade spans with differences, with IEP students showing the greatest gaps.
- **Graduation:** Rates lower than state expectation of 80% overall, especially for subgroups (Free and Reduced Lunch and IEP classified students in particular).
- **Colorado ACT:** While ACT scores are increasing, still below state expectation of 20.
- **Title III Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs):** D11 has made AMAO 3 (English Learners Making Sufficient Academic Growth-TCAP Reading, Writing, Math and Graduation Rate) targets one of three times over the past three years. D11 did not meet AMAO 3 in the 2013-2014 school year.
- **Significant Reading Deficiency (SRD):** In elementary, increasing numbers of students are being identified as eligible for SRD from fall to spring.

Why Does the District continue to have these challenges?

- **Tiered Instruction:** For Tiered Instruction, improving standards implementation, delivering approved curriculum with quality instructional practices, utilizing assessment results, and sharing responsibility and accountability for improved results has continued, but is not fully and systematically deployed district wide.
- **Scaffolding for At-Risk:** Scaffolded, data-informed instruction/intervention/enrichment for “at risk” students is not delineated/supported adequately and systematically.
- **Community-wide Belief System:** There is not a pervasive community-wide belief system that supports a culture of achievement and high expectations for all, driven by collective efficacy and persistence.
- **Gifted/Talented (GT) Depth of Knowledge (DOK):** GT Students are not receiving explicit instruction in DOK 2 and 3 mathematics.
- **English Language Development:** There is not a balance of systematic English Language Development instruction and sheltering of core content instruction daily for all English Learners. Students are being taught literacy skills as opposed to language acquisition in some cases and in others the focus is more on English Language Development and little on Core Content Access. English Learner teachers reported that they need more professional development surrounding data analysis, setting learning targets for students, aligning English language development lesson and assessments.

What action is the district taking to eliminate these challenges?

- **Instruction, intervention and/or enrichment for at-risk students:** Provide professional development supports for administrators and teachers to systematically scaffold data-informed instruction, intervention and/or enrichment for “at-risk” students.

³⁰ <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performanceframeworks>

- **Professional Development Supports:** Provide professional development supports for administrators and teachers to create a collaborative culture focused on improving standards implementation, delivering approved curriculum with quality instructional practices, utilizing assessment results, and sharing responsibility and accountability for improved results.
- **Provide opportunities for community members:** Provide opportunities for community members (parents/guardians, District 11 residents and businesses) and District 11 staff to come together to build a community-wide belief system that supports a culture of achievement and high expectations driven by collective efficacy and persistence.
- **English Language Learners:** Provide a balanced program of services to all English Language Learner students to support both English Language Development instruction and sheltered core content instruction throughout the school day.
- **G/T Growth:** Quantitatively identified elementary school level students shall be pretested for mastery of math units before classroom teacher plans for math instruction.

As the District works to improve its accreditation standing and student outcomes, it will be critical to continue aligning the priorities cited in the UDIP with the Business Plan and all other supporting plans and to ensure District funding is allocated accordingly. In some cases, they appear aligned and in others they do not. For example, there are detailed strategies for tiered interventions in both the UDIP and the Business Plan. However, the UDIP focuses on the gifted/talented and English Learners, supports needed to increase the achievement levels of these groups specifically are not mentioned in the Business Plan. Additionally, D11 needs to incorporate mechanisms to address increasingly vulnerable students, who come to school in stressed-induced survival mode rather than learning readiness.

Recommendation #5: The District should align UDIP priorities with the Business Plan and other supporting plans to ensure funding is allocated appropriately and incorporate mechanisms to address increasingly vulnerable students.

Technology Plan

Though the 2015-2020 Technology Plan refers to the Business Plan and states it is in support of the achievement goal specifically, the document serves as a stand-alone plan with its own set of goals.³¹ The stated goals are:

- Technology Availability
- Service to People
- Relentless Innovation
- Accountable Stewardship
- Safety and Security

The Technology Plan was developed by the Division of Technology Services in collaboration with the Division of Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Services. This plan is in effect until 2020 and is reviewed annually. The goals listed in the Technology Plan have little or no connection to the Business Plan, and vice versa (the Business Plan makes limited mention of technology in general). This could be in part because the Technology Plan was written in 2015, while the Business Plan is updated with new initiatives annually. This plan is viewed as supportive to the operations and instructional areas of the District, but it appears to lack the prominence it needs if it is to stand independent and make a case for necessary resource commitment.

The Technology budget included approximately \$6.4M in MLO funding for the 2014-15 school year to fund PIP initiatives in the following categories:

³¹ <http://d11.org/Technology/Pages/TechnologyPlan.aspx>

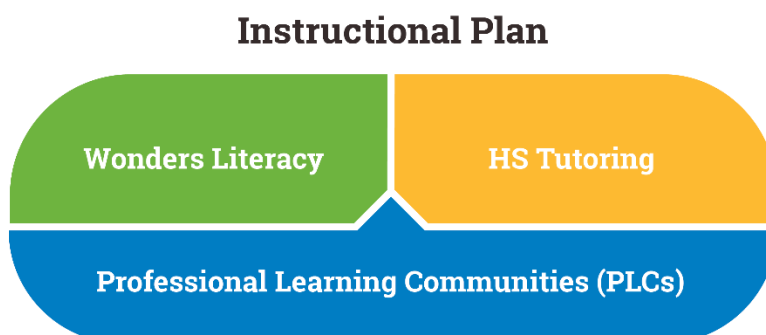
Technology Program Implementation Plan

- PIP #7B: Teacher Staff Development and Technology Training
- PIP #9: School Library Services- LTEs and LTTs
- PIP #11: Technology Support
- PIP #17: Software Upgrades
- PIP #20: Align DALT (Terra Nova) (MAP)

However, given the limited funding that comes from the MLO for these initiatives, the District has chosen to approach these PIPs strategically to make the most of the funding. For example, D11 is staying with older software with updates rather than upgrading to new software in many cases.

Recommendation #6: The District should demonstrate the relationship between Technology Plan and the Business Plan in order to link the two plans together.

IV. INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM REVIEW



At the heart of the D11 Business Plan is a focus on the needs of every child. The District website prominently displays: “Every student prepared for a world yet to be imagined. School District 11 is meeting the demands of the 21st century by delivering personalized learning for every student, every day, in every classroom.” Supporting the work of teachers and administrators are guiding documents “The Playbook,”³² pacing guides³³, and the Colorado Academic Standards. Moreover, the District invested in several interdependent instructional programs and projects intended to fulfill the vision by unifying the literacy instruction in kindergarten through grade five, supported by teachers collaborating through structured professional learning communities, and building upon the success and expanding the HS Tutoring program. Each of these programs is evaluated here through the lens of the Sustainability Framework.

Wonders Integrated Literacy Instruction

In 2015–16, D11 adopted and implemented McGraw Hill’s Wonders instructional materials as part of a system-wide approach to K-5 literacy instruction. The program was adopted to bring unity of materials across the District to address K-5 literacy and language arts through reading, writing, and oral communication. By adopting a single program, D11 hoped to have consistency of practices and experiences for students in the elementary schools. The Wonders adoption was identified as “one” thing that could be done quickly to effect change and help support a very transient population. Wonders had a secondary benefit which was to focus teachers on the most essential literacy development skills, meant to ensure that the students would progress into the upper grades with greater competence and confidence when encountering content–area subject matter.

Wonders implementation has been supported by district-provided professional development, extensive digital resources, and district, job-embedded coaches (i.e., Teaching and Learning Coaches, TLCs). Nevertheless, there is some evidence that the Wonders implementation was uneven in its first year. The Superintendent noted that there were some complaints at the beginning of the year as training and materials were still being distributed. This is not surprising given the size of the district and the breadth of the work in bringing a new program to the classroom. Despite efforts to better manage the distribution of the materials, through barcoded books, there were some complaints that appeared to be based on a perception of missing or inaccessible materials.

³² See http://www.d11.org/Instruction/PlayBook/BEFORE_DURING_AFTER%20TEACHER%20HRR.pdf and/or http://www.d11.org/Instruction/PlayBook/BEFORE_DURING_AFTER%20PRINCIPAL%20HRR.pdf.

³³ <http://www.d11.org/Instruction/Pages/PacingGuide.aspx>

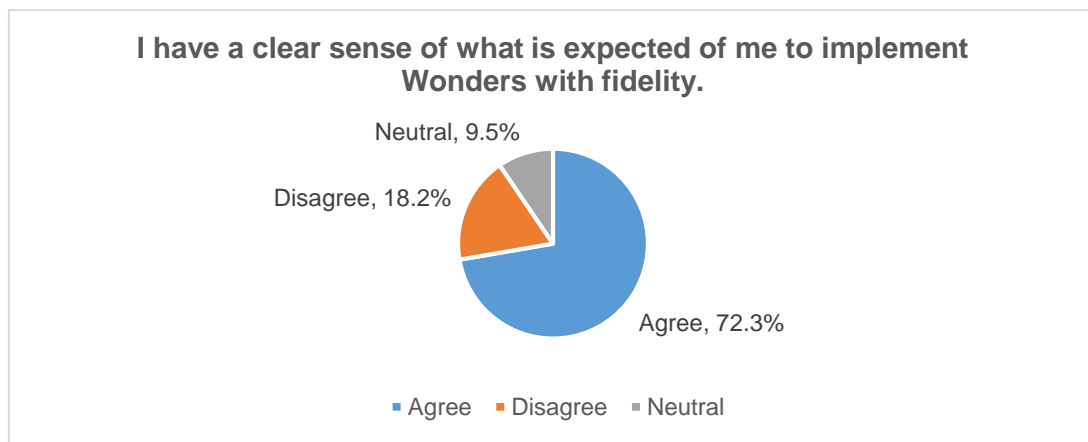
PCG used coaching observation tools that were designed specifically for identifying essential elements in the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom. Using the observation protocol, PCG looked for evidence of students engaged in consumption (listening and reading) and production (speaking and writing) in their literacy activities. PCG also observed as students interacted with the myriad of materials available to them. This included students working independently on the computer, reading small books, gathering in small reading groups supported by the teacher, and large group activities. PCG was looking for evidence that the Wonders materials, the teacher, and their student converged in such a way to build the literacy skills of each child.

Wonders Literacy Program	Examples of Evidence (Statements from focus groups and observations)
Context for Sustaining Reform/PIP	
Alignment to community-wide system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Increased level of rigor meant to improve overall student outcomes + "There used to be 5 different curriculums. The newest materials were from 1996."
Public value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + "Wonders roll out was the best implementation seen on any new initiative." + "Ideally the evidence of a successful Wonders implementation will be: higher test scores, engaging kids and having them demonstrate their learning."
System Capacity	
Align human capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Ongoing professional development and job-embedded coaching. + "The District needs a long-term professional development plan, especially for new teachers."
Culture of continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Elementary principals would like to keep focusing on implementation of Wonders and PLCs and allow schools to "get good at them." It would be nice to have a year to "hone the craft." + Teacher expressed hopefulness that the implementation gets better next year.
Align organizational structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The Wonders implementation was a non-negotiable at the district level. It was a district-wide priority and was expected to be consistently delivered in all schools. "Though the Wonders implementation was a district-wide initiative, it didn't feel regimented by the central office. Schools were allowed to make decisions about what was best for them."
Extend capacity through partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + McGraw Hill coach is available to teachers. + Special education staff noted that their role was intermittent and their training incomplete. As partners with general education classroom teachers, special education staff need, and have expressed a desire, to be familiar with the differentiation opportunities provided in WondersWorks, and also need a solid understanding of the core components of Wonders. Ideally, training and support should be required of

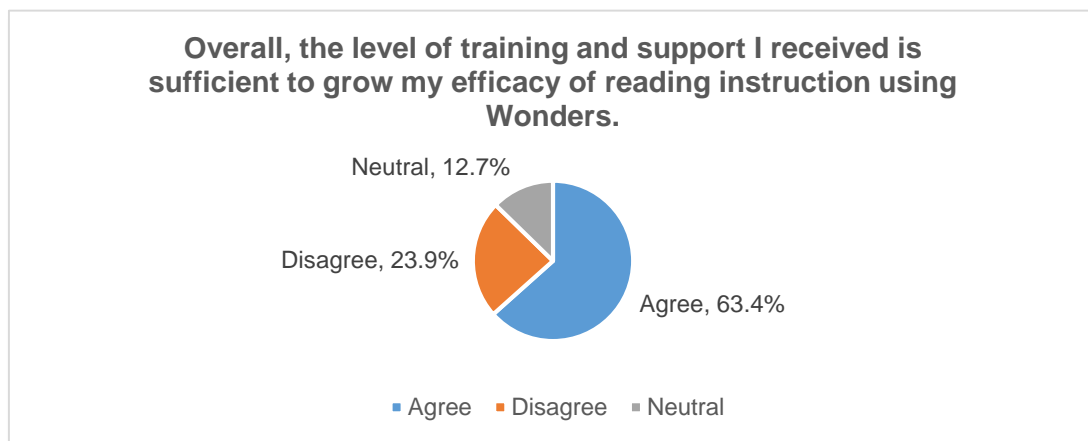
Wonders Literacy Program	Examples of Evidence (Statements from focus groups and observations)
	any teachers who might be providing literacy instruction in grades K-5.
<i>Extend capacity in the field</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + By using D11 TLCs who have both literacy and data experience, the District is hoping to extend the capacity of the teachers and building administrators. The TLCs are looking to build their own coaching skills going forward as they work with the McGraw Hill coach to improve their understanding of the program. + Coaching is more effective than “just” training.
Performance Management	
<i>Clarity of outcomes and theory of action/change</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Wonders helps to “get kids talking so they (the teachers) can let go of control” and foster independence. + “Students like the engaging texts and having lots of texts on the same topic.” + “Students love the interactive games.” + The programmatic “non-negotiables” vary by school. The district had established a set of common expectations across classrooms using the Wonders program, allowing principals flexibility to the building level leadership. The top 3 focus areas for consistency during Year 1 were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sound spelling wall cards up in all grades (Consistency across schools so students don’t have to learn to decode another set of sound cards when they to other buildings. Extra sets are available if teachers want a set to hang and not have to pull them down for instruction.) 2. Shared research boards, which serve as a metacognitive representation of the learning taking place in the room. 3. Days 1-2 are to build the skills to access complex texts. Days 3-5 are to use those skills to access the complex texts, including Analytical Writing. <p>Still, these were not identified by participating teachers, nor were they especially discernable in observed classrooms. Reminding teachers of the consistent elements by tying each to their pedagogical purpose might promote the practices without being punitive.</p>
<i>Alignment of resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Drawing upon funding from the MLO and additional READ fund dollars, D11 worked to ensure that each classroom has access to the necessary materials and training. + Technology may become an issue. There are teachers that were challenged by the inconsistent experience with the functionality, and there is a heavy burden on the District to maintain an infrastructure for technology that supports not only Wonders but other technology-heavy initiatives. + Expand the number of people trained on Wonders

Wonders Literacy Program	Examples of Evidence (Statements from focus groups and observations)
	+ Principals and TLCs need additional training on Wonders.
Collection and use of data	+ As the Wonders implementation enters its second year, TLCs would like to have model classrooms to have teachers see how best to use the curriculum. A "model" classroom would have: students talking to one another (collaborative conversations embedded in the lesson); less teacher led instruction; solid use of the materials; research and inquiry (a partners' collaborative or teams collaborating); projects built on the lesson.
Accountability for results	+ Embedded assessments in Wonders.

Stakeholder Feedback



The majority of respondents (72.3%) indicate that they are clear of expectations to deliver the Wonders curriculum.



Further, over 63% of respondents reported that the level of training and support they received is sufficient to grow their efficacy of reading instruction using Wonders.

Respondents reported that the following top 5 items were the most useful with implementing Wonders:

1. Teacher's manual for Wonders
2. Online resources
3. District professional development
4. Support from TLCs
5. PLCs

Recommendation #7: The District has made much progress in launching the new literacy program, Wonders. The District needs to continue to invest materials, training, and ongoing support to sustain change.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

In 2015–16 academic year, D11 reestablished its commitment to supporting professional learning communities, a project more than a decade earlier. D11 increased the resources devoted to this initiative so that all teachers could participate in a professional learning community; thereby, encouraging professional growth and collaborative support of the teachers. Specifically, the PLC project is meant to provide space and time for teachers to problem solve for the needs of students through “critical conversations.” PLCs fits into the PIP for hiring and retaining the best personnel by ensuring that they have high quality professional development and structured collaboration time. D11 has over 450 PLC teams. There has been effort to establish the right tone at these meetings. Focus is on how teachers interact with data to change instructional behaviors to improve student outcomes.

The D11 website provides a primer on the PLCs.³⁴ PLCs are “the ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve”³⁵ They provide the ideal environment for professional learning, purposeful collaboration around student work, and responsible innovation. Working as a PLC ultimately builds a team’s collective capacity to deliver upon the promise that all students can learn at high levels when provided the opportunity, extra time, support and enrichment.”³⁶

PLCs are designed to create space in which teachers share struggles and opportunities for addressing students’ academic needs based on data and best practices. In these settings, teachers are encouraged to work jointly on identifying an area of opportunity for growth, plan instruction with support of others, and reflect on practices. D11 considers the work of PLCs to be important enough to have been included in the Master Agreement between the Board of Education of Colorado Springs District 11 and the Colorado Springs Education Association (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2017). The following text appears under the section on the teaching duties (p. 44):

Article X. 3. e. A Professional Learning Community (PLC) is a collaborative inquiry process focused on identifying and responding to the specific learning needs of all students across sites, settings and disciplines. To ensure successful PLCs,

- Initial and ongoing training opportunities will be provided;
- PLC site support will be made available as needed or requested;
- Time will be identified specifically and solely for PLC;
- Leadership will be shared by administrators and teachers.

The outcome of each PLC’s work will be the ongoing demonstration of professional learning.

³⁴ <http://www.d11.org/Instruction/plc/Pages/default.aspx>.

³⁵ Dufour, DuFour, Eaker & Many: Learning by Doing, 2010

³⁶ id.

In the course of PLCs, teachers are converting data to action. PCG interviewed PLC participants, administrators, and observed PLCs in action. In one observed PLC, the focus was on ensuring that every student successfully completes the course of study, planning for individual interventions, but also allowing time to discuss enrichment for those students who already mastered the content. PCG looked for group norms, agendas, guiding protocols, and processes applied. In addition, PCG looked for evidence that the PLCs focused on student data and eventual outcomes. In this regard, PCG expected to observe the use of common assessments and their related data to drive conversation about instructional practices. Lastly, PCG looked for evidence of follow up activities and planning for the refinement of classroom instruction or intervention on behalf of one or more students.

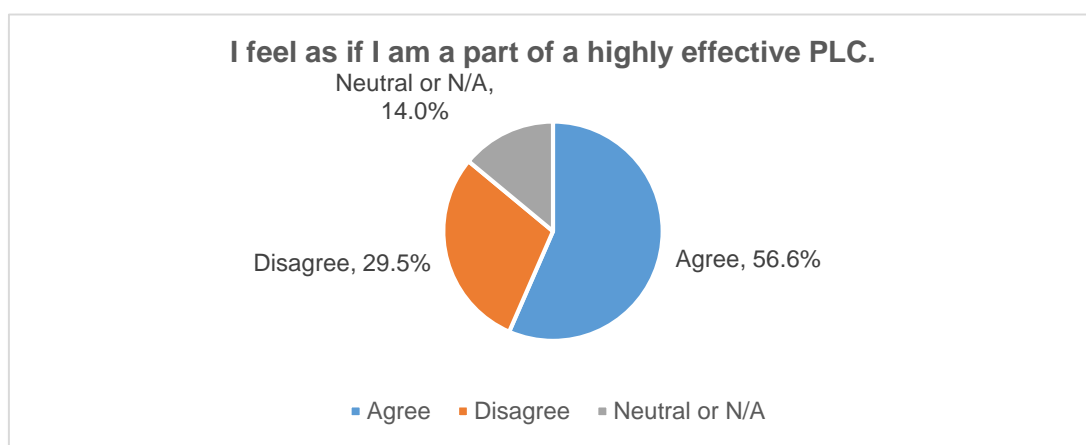
While there are areas for improvement within individual PLCs, there is also much promise in the activities that PCG observed. Teachers are meeting regularly to discuss instruction and adjusting their teaching based on data points. While the exact nature of these conversations is sometimes strained, forced, or undefined—wherein the teachers are still feeling their way through the process—they are meeting and talking about relevant instructional issues and outcomes. There are opportunities for greater cross-building collaboration; inclusive of additional administration participation and support; and, more cross-district conversations about common components.

Professional Learning Communities	Evidence (Statements from focus groups and observations)
Context for Sustaining Reform/PIP	
Alignment to community-wide system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + “We energize one another with solutions collectively tackled; people are less alone” + “Would be nice to have funding that doesn’t come out of our school budget.” + “I’m a singleton—we talk and share with (NAME), but it would be great to go see another school and other places to bring ideas back...” + “We understand what PLC means—it’s not just a meeting among teachers; we know its kid centered and talking about data; common assessments are very intentional conversation about data.” + PLCs need to be called out in the Business Plan chart to demonstrate the commitment. + The District needs to continue to make the financial commitment to maintain the PLCs.
Public value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + “Challenge ourselves to meet the needs of all students and focus on what they are learning.”
System Capacity	
Align human capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Need additional leadership support in the form of building coaches and/or principals who can support the teams. + There are some reluctant participants (teachers) and concern about the size of the demand on their time. + Finding a place for specialist teachers and staff to contribute meaningfully is a possible improvement for the future. + “More training around relationships and group dynamics—lack of facilitation skills can inhibit groups’ progress.”

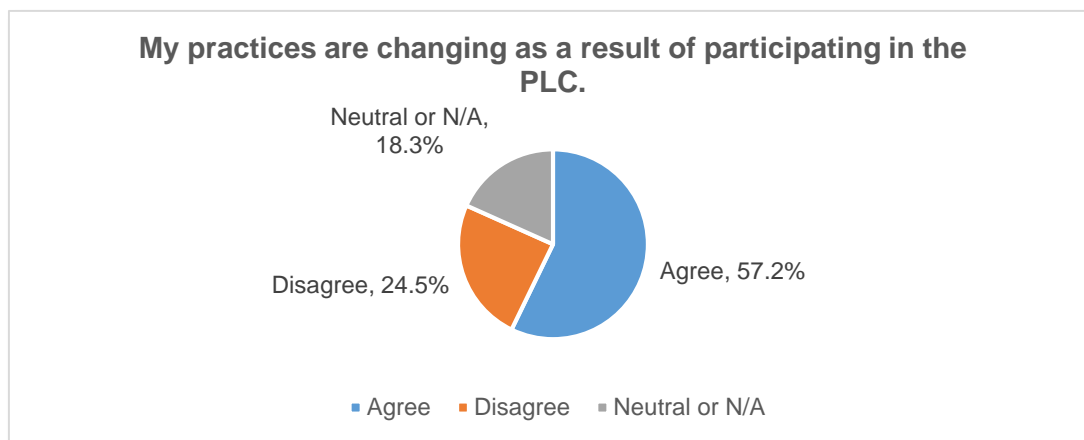
Professional Learning Communities	Evidence (Statements from focus groups and observations)
<i>Culture of continuous improvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The PLCs helped teachers to recognize the expertise in their own buildings and teams and created a culture of collaboration. + “This didn’t change what we were doing, but (PLCs) changes how we’re talking and what we know we need to do.” + “One way we know conversation is going in the right direction—increasing requests to complete formative assessments; that’s an indicator; they need more data to have conversations; suddenly instantaneous understanding that they need better data.”
<i>Align organizational structures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + “PLCs are organized by content area or grade level. Grade level content or grade level. Leaders are chosen by teams—principals set out expectations of what is expected of PLC leaders, some self- selected. Teams are teacher led, often by a tenured veteran teacher. Others didn’t have leaders per se but recognized that facilitation skills. School leadership team is comprised of one member from each PLC. HS is different, fresh teachers, intervention forced them to align themselves because otherwise couldn’t have successful intervention.”
<i>Extend capacity through partnerships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + “3-day PLC (training) put on by Dufour and Solution Tree.” + External coaching has been useful, but “what’s the plan for the next three years? How can we cultivate leaders and trainers?” The number of PLCs in any given building can be quite sizable.
<i>Extend capacity in the field</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + PLC’s need to be modeled in a way that makes sense and can be replicated across the district. Some PLC teams are following a set of norms and covering off a set of required activities without seeing changes in classroom practice because they are not drawing connections between PLC work and classroom instruction. + “Have PLC leaders still honing PLC leadership skills; would be nice to have beginner’s level, through facilitators training.” + Principals would like to be more well-versed in data protocols; “it’s hard to lead something you haven’t been trained in;” need more tools to bring to teachers along; need to see more models in practice.
Performance Management	
<i>Clarity of outcomes and theory of action/change</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + “There’s a lot more to PLCs than just looking at data which is all we’ve heard; it can be student work and solving a behavior problem; it can be powerful, would like to hear more if that message got out; it’s not all about the numbers; we only do data once a week for that reason.”

Professional Learning Communities	Evidence (Statements from focus groups and observations)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + PLC process should look the same across the schools, but the content and approach to the classroom practices would look different. + Some teachers expressed frustration that PLC presented as “one size fits all” with a set of non-negotiables. + PLCs aren’t “going away, it’s been woven into all conversations.”
Alignment of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + PLC is not an MLO direct expense; costs are absorbed through the general fund. + “One hour per week isn’t enough to do PLCs well.” + Aligning school schedules to allow for team meetings. + TLCs need expanded role in PLCs to make better connections to Wonders and other instructional initiatives. + With over 450 PLCs, it can be challenging for the district to the demand for additional supports.
Collection and use of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + PLC offers opportunity to examine student data to guide conversations. + Observed PLCs in which student data were the basis for conversations. + “For us it was about having a common assessment, having a path from 7-12 in essay writing, in math, etc.; mapping forward- easier for us to look at data that way;”
Accountability for results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + “Identified issue in our building is the alignment of rigor-- what are we asking students to do? Using common assessments district wide would be helpful so we can benchmark against them—if rigor isn’t there, we want to have people to talk to that.” + Creating safe environment when sharing data

Stakeholder Feedback



Though nearly 30% of respondents disagree that they are part of a highly effective PLC, the majority (56.6%) believe their PLC is highly functioning.



The majority of the respondents (57.2%) agree that their practices are changing as a result of participating in the PLC.

Respondents cited the following top five areas supports as the most useful in implementing PLCs:

1. District professional development
2. Professional books/research
3. Online resources
4. Support from an external PLC consultant
5. Support from central office

Recommendation #8: PLCs are an integral element to ensuring the success of the other instructional initiatives (e.g., Wonders, HS Tutoring). The District should continue to support their implementation through modeling and additional support. To the extent possible, the District should continue to protect the PLC time so that it is not co-opted for other department or grade-level priorities.

High School Tutoring Center

PCG reviewed two high school tutoring centers in D11, one at Palmer High School and at Coronado High School.

Over the past several years, D11's Jeremy Koselak and Brad Lyall developed and implemented a new model for student tutoring at Palmer High School.³⁷ Initially, Mr. Koselak and Mr. Lyall were working to support the successful completion of math studies for students in grades nine and ten. The embedded Tutoring Center is designed to encourage collaboration among teachers to focus on the achievement of individual students, while also providing a mechanism for supportive peer tutoring. In practical terms, the Tutoring Center, which has expanded to include English Language Arts and other high school campuses, including Coronado High School, is organized around the needs of individual students in real time of their needs.

"Open to all, a directive for some," the Tutoring Center requires identified struggling students to attend during their scheduled study hall; while others can utilize the services on a drop-in basis. This means that extensive work goes into the scheduling of faculty, tutors, and PLCs to ensure that there is up-to-date data on each child and that

³⁷See Koselak and Lyall (2016). *The Revitalized Tutoring Center: A Guide to Transforming School Culture*

interventions can be given in real time. This structure was explicitly organized and visible at Palmer. The Tutoring Center is also open for drop in visitors. The Palmer Tutoring Center estimates that it sees between 200 and 300 students every day or about 18,000 visits a year. Since the center is staffed by faculty and community volunteers, as well as students, it is conceivably saving D11 money that would be spent for additional remedial services and addressing increases in behavioral problems.

The essential components of the Tutoring Center as it is implemented at Palmer High School are the staff (1.8 FTE)/subject area; volunteer tutors; space large enough to house the tutoring; computers and other basic classroom supplies necessary for the work; and, furniture for conferencing, etc. The Tutoring Center is also dependent upon high functioning PLCs in which specific students are identified as needing support. The Tutoring Center model also requires that all students have at least one scheduled study hall, during which time they can be sent to the center for help. This naturally requires the coordination of tutoring resources and student availability. Thus, the model requires a dedicated staff member to align schedules and invite the identified student during their study hall to the Tutoring Center. The commitment of Palmer staff to this model, from their demonstration of an academically optimistic viewpoint for all students to their organized and transparent data collection process, are noteworthy.

At Coronado High School, the Tutoring Center follows a similar model, with 1 FTE supervising in math and 0.5 FTE in English in a room that accommodates work tables for small groups, computers, a set of textbooks, and a separate area for test retakes. Staffing also includes over 50 upperclassmen who serve as tutors in math and English who receive course credit for their work, and faculty who serve a duty period once per week in place of study hall supervision. Students at Coronado get to the tutoring center in multiple ways, but one of the primary vehicles to be identified for support is through the daily math data review by the Tutoring Center director. Students are also recommended by teachers, come on their own to ask for help, or to make up tests as the center maintains a file of all recent assessments.

The Tutoring Center at Palmer has benefited the PLC teams in that it has provided a direct mechanism for applying their reflection on student data. Because the District set an early target of improving graduation rates and shrinking performance gaps in Palmer High School's math department, the math PLC teams and Tutoring Center become dependent upon one another. The result was improved student outcomes, even as the percentage of students in distress rose. The Tutoring Center and PLCs may be a contributing factor to on time graduation rates at Palmer that exceed the district and state averages in most subcategories. With the expansion of Tutoring Centers into the other high schools, we would expect to see similar results.

And indeed, the implementation of the tutoring center at Coronado has shown impressive results in improving the passing rate for freshman Algebra from 55% to 80%.

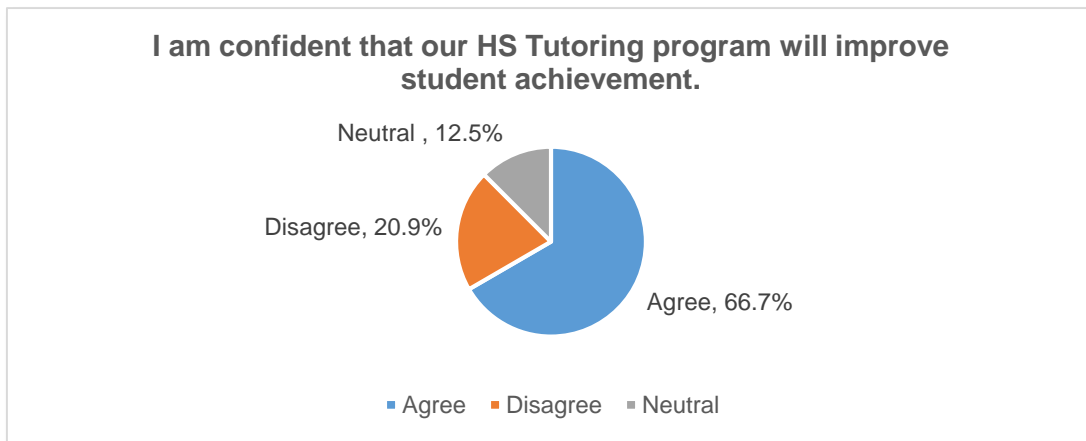
High School Tutoring	Evidence (Statements from focus groups and observations at Palmer and Coronado High School Tutoring Centers)
Context for Sustaining Reform/PIP	
Alignment to community-wide system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Students have an opportunity to see that poor performance is not the same as failure. "With this program hope to see a ripple effect; get (students) used to asking for help." + As students age, the upper class and upper level students are seeking support, which is normalizing the center (i.e., reducing stigma associated with "Tutoring").

High School Tutoring	Evidence (Statements from focus groups and observations at Palmer and Coronado High School Tutoring Centers)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + “Teachers feel like the bar is established with no regard for where kids come from or their background. Tutoring Center helps address this.” + “The Tutoring Center name implies ‘in addition to.’ Some would prefer to call it the intervention center instead.”
Public value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Students see the value and that success is possible. “After kids see that they’ve been successful it changes their perception.” + “Successful students go in religiously; those who struggled and then passed and now just utilize.” + Failure rate in math declined to a rate below all other D11 schools. Need to replicate in other schools.
System Capacity	
Align human capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Staff are at their limit. The Tutoring Center takes considerable amount of time. + Math teacher: “All of us spend 1 period a week in the room; instead of study hall; we spend a duty hour in there; tutoring at the same time; in the afternoon have 3 math teachers 3 days per week, each offers an hour.” + The head of the department is making it priority to know how each student is making progress in the course of study.
Culture of continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + “Tutoring is about problem solving” for the needs of individual students. It is not about the ego of the instructor, so they are constantly looking to match students to the best instructor for their needs. In addition, peer-instructors are constantly being trained on new material. + “Have to raise the level of concern. Need to feel sense of urgency. Administrator has to have this feeling of urgency and convey it to stay in order to change a culture.”
Align organizational structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Aligning schedules occurs in most cases in which students have study halls. Still there are some students who do not have a study hall making a tutoring session more challenging to schedule.
Extend capacity through partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The use of peer tutors (other students) is mutually beneficial. Tutors report how it has improved their own skills as well as their connectedness to peers. + “Students are more accepting of hearing [advice] from other students, they feel more typical when being helped by peers.”
Extend capacity in the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + “Our vision was to create an in-school tutoring program. (We) saw Palmer program and realized whatever PLC time should be used to follow their path” in attempt to replicate at other sites.

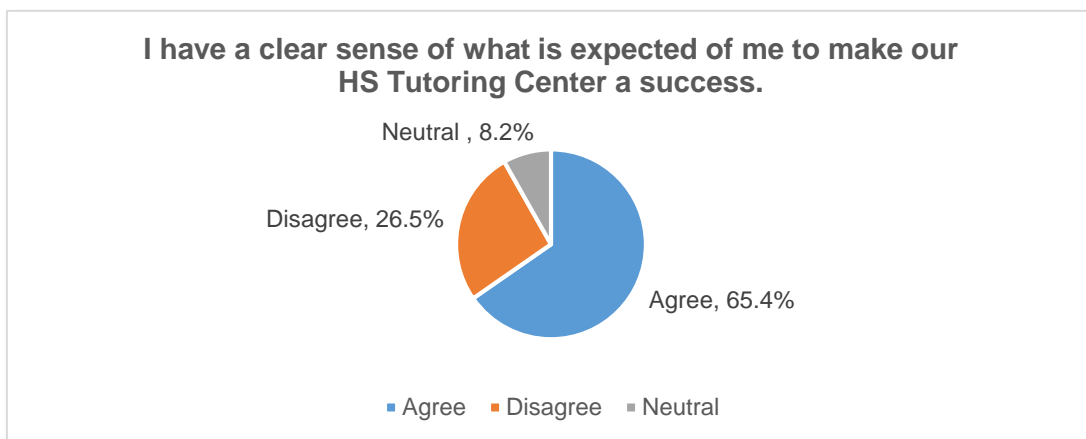
High School Tutoring	Evidence (Statements from focus groups and observations at Palmer and Coronado High School Tutoring Centers)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Not taking hold equally well in all sites: “They made a lot of assumptions about the model and “didn’t know what they didn’t know.”
Performance Management	
Clarity of outcomes and theory of action/change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Students develop a connectedness to their teachers and tutors in the tutoring center that doesn’t always develop in the classroom. + “One thing not settled on is the fact that it is an intervention and shouldn’t be forever—how do kids build to the point of not needing a tutoring center? How build self-confidence to help themselves and be independent and without need for tutors?” + “The Tutoring Center is first about relationship building on a 1-1 level with someone other than the teacher. It’s important to have multiple people in the students’ corner, who care about them.”
Alignment of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Space made available for Tutoring Center in math, English and to house study hall. Location and size of the room are important for creating a welcoming place for learning in which people can engage in conferencing. + Tutoring Centers might be subject to financial future of the district. + Attempting to make the model work across subjects is uneven because the resource allocations are dissimilar. (e.g., “English is the afterthought—resources aren’t there to make it function for English.”)
Collection and use of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The math team needed to figure out what to do when the center reached a saturation point. They used common assessment data to better identify kids for tutoring. + Daily review of math performance data (Coronado) to identify students in need of support.
Accountability for results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The tutoring center is about delivering tangible results to students. Students succeed there. + “A grade actually means something. It would be easy to inflate grades to get kids to pass, but even kids know it is empty.” The tutoring center is accountable for helping students to become competent with the material so that the grade reflects something meaningful. + From a peer tutor: “It’s gratifying to see (my) grades improve personally and seeing other kids improve.”

The HS Tutoring initiative seems to be the most vulnerable among the initiatives reviewed. First, while it aligns to the Business Plan, it is not specifically called out. Also, its success is tied to strong personalities and administrative support, which is not guaranteed year-to-year.

Stakeholder Feedback



Regarding the HS Tutoring program, nearly 67%, or 2/3 of respondents, believe that it will improve student achievement.



The majority of respondents (65.3%) are clear as to their role in the success of their school's HS Tutoring Center.

Recommendation #9: Expanding the Tutoring Project to other schools and subjects should be methodical and slow with time for reflection and course corrections. The District should also consider allowing high schools the flexibility to name their centers on a school-by-school basis to more accurately reflect the integral value that this service provides to students.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a summary of the recommendations made throughout this report. The order of the recommendations parallels the order in which they appear in the report and is not meant to convey priority or level of importance. One additional recommendation appears on this summary page to reflect the need for parent stakeholder input. The following is a list of recommendations for the District to consider:

Recommendation #1: The District should explore ways to involve all staff in the Business Plan development process to ensure they make the connections between the District's strategic vision and their daily work.

Recommendation #2: The District should further assess ways in which initiatives and required funding commitments can be better articulated to staff and community members.

Recommendation #3: The current MLO is inadequate to supplement the operating expenses of the District. Inflation has eroded its value and potential to have a substantial impact through the PIPs. The District should prioritize the initiatives (e.g., reduce the number of PIPs) and specify the required funding.

Recommendation #4: The Business Plan reporting should be presented with supporting supplemental plans to include the Financial Plan, the MLO Plan and other supplemental plans together so alignment between them is clearer.

Recommendation #5: The District should align UDIP priorities with the Business Plan and other supporting plans to ensure funding is allocated appropriately and incorporate mechanisms to address increasingly vulnerable students.

Recommendation #6: The District should demonstrate the relationship between Technology Plan and the Business Plan in order to link the two plans together.

Recommendation #7: The District has made much progress in launching the new literacy program, Wonders. The District needs to continue to invest materials, training, and ongoing support to sustain change.

Recommendation #8: PLCs are an integral element to ensuring the success of the other instructional initiatives (e.g., Wonders, HS Tutoring). The District should continue to support their implementation through modeling and additional support. To the extent possible, the District should continue to protect the PLC time so that it is not co-opted for other department or grade-level priorities.

Recommendation #9: Expanding the Tutoring Project to other schools and subjects should be methodical and slow with time for reflection and course corrections. The District should also consider allowing high schools the flexibility to name their centers on a school-by-school basis to more accurately reflect the integral value that this service provides to students.

Recommendation #10: Community and parental involvement is a pillar of successful school districts. District 11 does a phenomenal job of reaching out to parents and community members through a wide variety of communications vehicles. Although invited, parents and community members were noticeably absent from the data collection. Customer satisfaction surveys and feedback forums might be helpful to engage parents and community members regarding this report and recommendations.

VI. APPENDIX

PCG Staff

Dr. Stephen Kutno is a Director of Strategic Services at PCG Education. He served as the **Project Director** and lead facilitator for this engagement and was responsible for the overall success of this project through supporting the day-to-day responsibilities including leading focus groups, interviews with key stakeholders, engaging the District 11 leadership team, and overseeing all aspects of the community survey and outreach efforts.

Dr. Kutno is able to apply his varied education experiences, from classroom teaching to instructional product design and development as he leads groups in studying their current conditions and facilitates their exploration of other possibilities. He has worked with school districts as they conceptualized their possible future, as well as individual schools as they prepared to adopt and enact particular educational initiatives. Dr. Kutno is able to quickly explore disparate ideas of participants and synthesize into areas of consensus. Regardless of the circumstances, Dr. Kutno assists schools in tapping their collective experiences and depth in solving their problems. Dr. Kutno has worked from worked schools in broad terms (e.g., five-year strategic planning) and on specific plans (e.g., literacy development, Response to Intervention, 21st century teaching and learning, etc.). Dr. Kutno holds a BA from Rutgers and a doctorate from the University of Buffalo.

Dr. Jennifer Meller, a Senior Consultant in Public Consulting Group's Denver office, served as the **Project Manager and Colorado State Lead** on this project. Dr. Meller is responsible for the education practice area work in the states Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming and for special education reviews and evaluations nationwide. She has 15 years of experience in project management, training, and educational policy. In her current work at PCG, she leads district-level school projects for special education data management and consulting management practices to engage educators and communities to strengthen their student outcomes. Prior to joining PCG, she was the Director of Operations in the School District of Philadelphia's Office of Specialized Instructional Services, where she focused on building programs that supported student's social and emotional growth, implemented student-focused data management systems, supervised federal and state reporting, and oversaw several multi-million dollar federal grants. She also served on multiple district-wide leadership committees including the Grant and Research Committee, Evaluation and Assessment Committee, Imagine 2014 Five Year Strategic Planning Committee, and the Weighted Student Funding Committee. Jennifer earned her Ed.D. in Educational and Organizational Leadership and MS.Ed. in Higher Education Management, both from the University of Pennsylvania. She also has a B.A. in English from Dickinson College. Jennifer's blend of project management skills, knowledge of best public educational practices, communications strategies, extensive training background, and excellent client support allows her to successfully manage a wide variety of complex projects. She brings a knowledge of Colorado's education legislative initiatives and an understanding of the educational landscape in the state.

Mary Ellen Hannon and Dr. Christine Donis-Keller served as **Project Advisors** in this engagement. They bring extensive expertise in community engagement and knowledge of best practices and innovations in K-12 education, and will provide guidance and support the team for activities including, but not limited to, additional on-site support for focus group and community forum facilitation as well as work product collaborators, evaluators, and reviewers.

Mary Ellen Hannon has over 30 years of successful educational systems experience, including extensive understanding in school leadership, data analysis, curriculum design, and school improvement management. She leads PCG's school improvement and leadership coaching services nationwide. Ms. Hannon has served as an executive coach and facilitator for the *Florida Rural Turnaround Leadership* project. Her responsibilities included developing and facilitating training for superintendents, school board members and district leaders on turning

around low performing schools and districts. Prior to working at PCG, Mary Ellen served as a superintendent of schools in a NH district. She has a M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from Notre Dame College and a B.S. in Elementary Education from Keene State College. She also holds Elementary Teacher (K-8), Principal (K-12), and Superintendent of Schools licensures.

Dr. Christine Donis-Keller, has worked in the field of evaluation and education research for nearly 20 years. Recent research and evaluation work includes a three-year, statewide evaluation of an academic coaching initiative in Tennessee to support struggling schools, a statewide professional development project for charter school teachers and administrators in Florida, and an evaluation of an arts integration initiative in Hartford, CT. Dr. Donis-Keller is a sociologist of education who has led evaluations of a range of school reforms including the Annenberg Challenge grant to New York City to foster the growth of small learning environments, and a national school reform model focused on early childhood literacy. She has also evaluated the implementation of an inclusion program for students with autism in New York City public schools. She holds a Ph.D. in the Sociology of Education from New York University and a B.A. in Anthropology from Barnard College.

Survey

Dear D11 Colleagues,

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input is valuable and valued.

This survey is being conducted as part of a review of the 2016 Mill Levy Override Audit and District's Business Plan.

Your responses will provide important information to ensure that District 11 resources are used to best meet the needs of our students, staff, parents, and the community.

Please complete the survey even if you participated in the recent focus groups related to the Audit. All responses provided through this survey are anonymous.

The survey should take less about 5 minutes to complete.

Thank you!

The following questions are about working in District 11:

1. I believe that communication from D11 keeps me well informed about district priorities and expectations.
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
2. Priorities and resources are well aligned.
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
3. How familiar are you with the Business Plan?
 - ☐ Very familiar
 - ☐ Somewhat familiar
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Somewhat unfamiliar
 - ☐ Very unfamiliar
4. My daily work corresponds to the goals of the Business Plan:
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree

5. Of the following, what challenges prevent D11 from exceeding expectations? (select up to 3)
- a. Challenging/supporting each student at an appropriate level
 - b. Hiring and retaining quality educators in competitive job market
 - c. Having ample opportunities to collaborate with colleagues
 - d. Meeting the broad academic and social needs of an increasingly diverse student population
 - e. Addressing the economic/financial stress on the D11 caused by reduction in state and local funding
 - f. Keeping up-to-date with technology hardware, software, and applications and associated support
 - g. Leading and encouraging innovation
 - h. Providing and maintaining a variety of desired programs through shifting enrollment
 - i. Maintaining the physical facilities as buildings age
 - j. Meeting the needs of special education students
 - k. Meeting the Colorado Academic Standards established by the state for student performance
 - l. Meeting the health (including nutritional demands) of students
 - m. Meeting the needs of second language learner
 - n. Maintaining a safe and orderly environment that is conducive to learning
 - o. Addressing the growing outside stressors on families
 - p. Addressing shifting expectations and priorities
6. I believe that D11 fosters a spirit of *innovation* that is aimed at meeting the goals established in the district Business Plan.
- o Strongly agree
 - o Somewhat agree
 - o Neutral
 - o Somewhat disagree
 - o Strongly disagree
7. I believe that D11 fosters a spirit of *collaboration* that is aimed at meeting the goals established in the district Business Plan.
- o Strongly agree
 - o Somewhat agree
 - o Neutral
 - o Somewhat disagree
 - o Strongly disagree
8. I am currently employed by D11 in the following role:
- o Central Administrator (not attached to any single school)
 - o Building Administrator
 - o Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA)
 - o Teacher/educator
 - o Other professional staff (e.g., social worker; psychologist; therapists; etc.)
 - o Technology Learning Consultant (TLC)
 - o Other: ___ (please specify)
9. I work primarily (where you spend most of your time) in:
- o Elementary Grades (K-2)
 - o Elementary Grades (3-5)
 - o Middle School (6-8)

- High School (9-12)

The next set of questions are about Wonders (K-5 Literacy).

10. Are you responsible for either teaching or supporting the Wonders (K-5 Literacy) curriculum?

- Yes
- No

(If no, skip to Question #21)

11. Do you teach reading?

Y/N

12. Please rank the top three elements for the successfully implementation of the Wonders literacy program.

- Well organized scope and sequence/Pace of instruction
- Ability to select and adopt materials
- Teacher autonomy in implementation
- Support from colleagues
- McGraw-Hill online resources
- Support from TOSAs
- Support from PLCs
- Support from TLCs
- Whole group activities
- Small Group activities
- Digitally delivered instruction to students
- Age-appropriate and engaging materials for students
- Fosters differentiation of instruction
- Other: (please describe)

13. I have a clear sense of what is expected of me to implement Wonders with fidelity.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

14. Please indicate what kinds of support (up to 3) have been most useful in implementing Wonders?

- District professional development
- Teacher's Manual
- Online resources
- Support from Wonders consultant (McGraw Hill)
- Support from Central office
- Support from TOSA
- Support from TLC
- PLCs
- Other: [please specify]

15. I understand how the Wonders curriculum supports the goals of the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS).

- Strongly agree

- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

16. Overall, the level of training and support I received is sufficient to grow the efficacy of reading instruction using Wonders.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

17. This year, I have been able to implement most components of Wonders.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

18. What are the greatest challenges to full implementation of Wonders in your classroom? (limit to 80 characters)

19. The level of support I receive from my principal for Wonders is sufficient to grow my efficacy.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

20. I have a clear sense of what my principal expects of me for Wonders.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

The next set of questions are about the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

21. Are you responsible for either participating in or supporting the Professional Learning Communities?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

(If no, skip to question #30)

22. I have a clear sense of what is expected of me for PLC participation.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

23. I understand how PLCs support the goals of the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS).

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

24. I feel as if I am a part of a highly effective PLC.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- N/A

25. The level of training and support I received is sufficient to grow the efficacy of our PLC.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

26. My practices are changing as a result of participating in the PLC.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- N/A

27. Please indicate what kinds of support (up to 3) have been most useful in implementing PLCs?

- District professional development
- Professional books/research
- Online resources
- Support from external PLC consultant
- Support from Central office
- Support from TOSA
- Support from building principals
- Support from colleagues
- Support from TLC
- Other: [please specify]

28. The level of support I receive from my principal for PLCs is sufficient to grow my efficacy.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

29. I have a clear sense of what my principal expects of me for PLCs.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

The next set of questions are about the HS Tutoring Program.

30. Are you responsible for either participating in or supporting the HS Tutoring Program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

(If no, skip to question #37.)

31. I have a clear sense of what is expected of me to make our HS Tutoring center a success.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

32. I have a clear sense of D11's model for implementing a successful HS Tutoring program.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

33. I think it is important to have HS Tutoring in support of the following subjects:

- ☐ English
- ☐ Math
- ☐ Social Studies
- ☐ Science
- ☐ Global Languages
- ☐ Other (please specify)

34. I am confident that our HS Tutoring program will improve student achievement.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neutral

- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

35. The level of support I receive from my principal for HS Tutoring is sufficient to grow my efficacy.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- N/A

36. I have a clear sense of what my principal expects of me with regards to supporting HS Tutoring.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- N/A

Thank you for completing the survey. The next questions are optional.

37. Please indicate the name of your school.

38. Please indicate the length of time (years) in the district.

39. Additional comments (character limit= 300)

Sustainability Rubric

Elements	Guiding Questions
1. CONTEXT FOR SUSTAINING REFORM	
A. Alignment of the Community-Wide System	
i. Align the policy agenda and implementation with priority reforms	Are the right policies in place across the LEA—in board policy, local government policy, budgets—to facilitate and enable priority reforms and goals?
B. Public Value	
i. Build education stakeholder support for priority goals and reforms	Is there a critical mass of relevant stakeholder groups who understand and support our priority goals and priority reforms?
ii. Build broad public support for priority goals and reforms	Is there strong, self-sustaining public support for priority goals and reforms in our LEA and community?
2. SYSTEM CAPACITY	
A. LEA Capacity	
i. Align human capital decisions with priority goals and reforms	Do our staff members understand how their work supports the LEA's priority goals and reforms, and are they held accountable for this?
ii. Build a culture of continuous improvement toward priority goals	Does our LEA have a culture of continuous improvement that is anchored in formative feedback and drives robust professional learning for all staff in the LEA?
iii. Align organizational structure with priority goals and reforms	Does the organizational structure of our LEA facilitate partnership with LEAs to implement priority reforms and achieve priority goals?
B. Community Capacity	
i. Extend capacity through partnerships	Do the LEA's ongoing relationships with external stakeholder groups give it the necessary capacity to achieve priority goals and implement priority reforms?
ii. Extend capacity in the field	Do we ensure that the field—schools, leaders and educators—is empowered and equipped to deliver on the LEA's priority goals by implementing its priority reforms?
3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	
A. Clarity of Outcomes and Theory of Action	
i. Set student outcome targets to achieve priority goals	Have we articulated student outcome goals that our reforms are supposed to achieve, and have we set specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic and time-bound targets to quantify those goals?
ii. Establish a theory of action and strategies for implementing priority reforms	Do we have specific strategies for implementing each of our interconnected reforms, and do we have a clear theory of action that ties them to our goals?
iii. Develop plans that align strategies with priority goals	Do we have a plan or set of plans that clearly show how we will implement our strategies at the necessary scale to achieve our goals?
B. Alignment of Resources (People, Time, Technology, and Money)	
i. Direct resources to priority reforms	Are the vast majority of our resources consistently aligned to our strategies to implement priority reforms?
ii. Establish clear leadership of priority goals and reforms	Have we assigned clear and accountable leadership for each of our priority goals and reforms?
C. Collection and Use of Data	
i. Ensure quality data on performance	Do we, the field and the public all have access to valid, frequent and useful data on performance against our goals?
ii. Ensure quality data on implementation	Do we have feedback loops in place that help us to understand whether our reforms are being carried out faithfully in the field and that our strategies are impacting our goals?
iii. Use data to review progress and make mid-course corrections	Do we hold regular dialogues about performance and implementation quality, using the data that we collect to drive improvements and adjustments to our strategies?
D. Accountability for Results	
i. Link internal accountability to results	Do the data on performance and implementation quality have real consequences for our LEA and the individuals and teams who work there?
ii. Link external accountability to results	Do the data on performance and implementation quality have real consequences for schools and other partners who are accountable for this work?
iii. Engage stakeholders about results	Do stakeholder groups and the public understand and support the implications of current performance for their work? Do we hold ourselves accountable for receiving and implementing their feedback on performance?



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