

## Executive Summary



# TASA-CMSi Curriculum Audit™ of Lake Travis Independent School District

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## **This Audit Report is comprised of two sections:**

The **Executive Summary** provides an overview of the audit findings and recommendations in a short, graphic format.

The **Expanded Report** gives a more complete discussion of audit methodology and discusses the findings and recommendations at length. The Expanded Report also presents the extensive data analyzed and an explanation of what those data demonstrated in the context of the audit.

# Lake Travis ISD Curriculum Audit by the numbers

Site Visit Date:  
February 28 - March 3, 2022

59

interviews conducted with  
teachers, board members,  
district administrators,  
principals, assistant principals,  
instructional coaches, and ESL  
instructional support teachers



43

documents  
collected for review



269

classrooms observed



2,368

survey responses from parents,  
teachers, and administrators



1,598

student work  
artifacts evaluated

# Introduction: The CMSi Curriculum Audit



This document constitutes the Executive Summary of a Curriculum Audit of Lake Travis Independent School District in Austin, Texas. A Curriculum Audit is designed to reveal the extent to which leaders and personnel of a school district have developed and implemented a coordinated, valid, and comprehensive system to manage the design, development, implementation, evaluation, and support of curriculum. Curriculum is defined as the set of learnings students are expected to master over the course of their years in the district. The system to manage this curriculum, when implemented effectively and in alignment with the district's vision for student engagement, will yield improved student learning and achievement over time if all its related processes and components are operating in coordination with one another. The effectiveness of curriculum management results as well in increased efficiency and assures district taxpayers that all fiscal support is optimized within the conditions under which the district functions.

## District Background

Lake Travis Independent School District is a fast-growth district consisting of 11,304 students

in grades PreK–12 and 1,280 employees. A 6A district, Lake Travis currently has seven elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school. Student demographics include 65.86% White, 19.86% Hispanic, 7.29% Asian, 5.01% Two or More Races, 1.6% African American, 0.29% American Indian, and 0.1% Pacific Islander. Economically Disadvantaged students make up 9.67%, Special Education 10.79%, and English Learners 7.17%. These percentage points have increased only slightly in the past 10 years, with Special Education increasing 2.8%, and Economically Disadvantaged students and English Learners increasing less than 1% each. State accountability test scores are well above state average, and college entrance exam scores are above the national average. The district received a demographic study in 2020-21 that projected an increase in growth in the next 10 years from the current 11,640 in 2021-22 to 15,286 by the 2030-31 school year; this would be a 31.3% increase.

## System Purpose for Conducting the Audit

The purpose for the audit is multifaceted. Lake Travis ISD hired a new superintendent, Paul Norton, in the fall of 2020. In 2021, Mr. Norton



hired a new assistant superintendent of C&I, Stefani Allen. District leaders recognize that although the district test scores on state and national tests are above average, rapid growth in the district could explain a recent slight decline in some test scores. There is also a concern that as the district grows, systems are not in place to ensure consistency in district functions and efficient operations. There are no fully developed curriculum documents, and teachers have had no district guidance to help them in planning instruction, leaving them on their own to find resources. Schools in the district operate as silos, largely independent in decision making. A statement from district leadership expresses the reason for the audit: “In order to best meet the needs of the students of Lake Travis ISD, it was decided to conduct a curriculum audit. In the audit, we hope to improve our curriculum quality and equity in order to improve learning for all students.”

District leaders also indicated plans regarding audit results. “When the audit results are returned to LTISD, an audit committee composed of district and campus leadership will analyze the results. We will look for our highest impact levers in which to focus. We will then create a Plan of Action that will span several years with a focus on progress monitoring of the items.”

## CMSi Audit History

The Curriculum Audit™ has established itself as a process of integrity and candor in assessing public school districts. Over the last 40 years, it has become recognized internationally as an important, viable, and valid tool for the improvement of educational institutions and for the improvement of curriculum design and delivery.

The Curriculum Audit represents a “systems” approach to educational improvement; that is, it considers the system as a whole rather than a collection of separate, discrete parts. Auditors closely examine and evaluate the interrelationships of system departments, levels, and related processes to determine their impact

on the overall quality of the organization in accomplishing its primary purpose of improving student learning.

The audit process was first developed by Dr. Fenwick W. English and implemented in 1979 in the Columbus Public School District in Columbus, Ohio. The audit is based upon generally-accepted concepts pertaining to effective instruction and curricular design and delivery, some of which have been popularly referred to as the “effective schools research.” An audit is an independent examination of four data sources: documents, interviews, online surveys, and site visits. These are gathered and triangulated to reveal the extent to which a school district is meeting its goals and objectives related to improving student learning and achievement. The process culminates in a comprehensive written report to district leaders that summarizes district strengths, audit findings, and the auditors’ recommended actions for improvement.

Curriculum Audits have been performed in hundreds of school systems in more than 46 states, the District of Columbia, and several other countries, including Canada, Saudi Arabia, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Bermuda. Details about the methodology employed in the audit process and biographical information about the audit team are covered in the Appendices.

## Audit Scope of Work



The audit's scope is centered on curriculum and instruction, as well as any aspect of operations within a school system that enhances or hinders curriculum design and/or delivery. The audit is an intensive and focused "snapshot" evaluation of how well a school system such as Lake Travis ISD has been able to set valid directions for pupil accomplishment and well-being; concentrate its resources to accomplish those directions; and improve its performance, however contextually defined or measured, over time.

The Curriculum Audit does not examine any aspect of school system operations unless it pertains to the design and delivery of curriculum. For example, auditors would not examine the cafeteria function unless students were going hungry and were, therefore, unable to learn. In some cases, ancillary findings from a Curriculum Audit are so interconnected with the capability of a school system to attain its central objectives that they become major, interactive forces that, if not addressed, will severely compromise the ability of the school system to successfully meet student needs.

The Curriculum Audit centers its focus on the main business of schools: teaching, curriculum, and learning. Auditors use five focus areas against which to compare, verify, and comment upon a district's existing curricular management practices. The focus areas reflect a management system that is ideal, but not unattainable. They describe working characteristics that any complex work organization should possess in achieving stated organizational goals while being responsive to the unique needs of its clients.

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

The five focus areas employed in the TASA-CMSi Curriculum Audit™ are:

- 1 **District Vision and Accountability:** The school district has a clear vision and demonstrates its control of resources, programs, and personnel.
- 2 **Curriculum:** The school district has established clear and valid objectives for students and clientele.
- 3 **Consistency and Equity:** The school district demonstrates internal consistency and rational equity in its program development and implementation.
- 4 **Feedback:** The school district uses the results from district-designed or adopted assessments to adjust, improve, or terminate ineffective practices or programs.
- 5 **Productivity:** The school district has improved its productivity and efficiency, particularly in the use of resources.

The auditors report where and how district practices, policies, and processes have met or not met the criteria and expectations related to each focus area and what specific action steps are recommended for revising areas needing improvement. These findings and their corresponding recommendations are presented in detail in the expanded report.

# Lake Travis ISD Strengths

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Lake Travis ISD, located about 20 miles west of Austin, Texas, is a high-achieving district that is committed to continuing to serve a fast-growing community with excellence in educational opportunities. Auditors noted several areas of strength in the district:

- 1 Community and District Relationships and Support
- 2 Advance Planning for Curriculum Development
- 3 Openness of Administrators to Systems Development
- 4 Strong Career and Technology Education and Fine Arts Offerings at Middle and High School Levels
- 5 High Achieving on Multiple Measures
- 6 Abundance of Resources and Technology





## 1 Community and District Relationships and Support

Lake Travis ISD has a strong sense of community with high expectations. Comments on teacher and administrator surveys mentioned strengths such as great family vibe, high expectations of staff and students, nice facilities, generous community, good reputation, good kids, and supportive parents. One stated, “This district holds a very high reputation and is well liked and sought after.” Many mentioned, “great community support.” Teachers also noted, “administration support for teachers,” and “the culture of the district is excellent – everyone from the top down is approachable and committed to ensuring that this is a great place to work.” Parents who responded to both the English and Spanish surveys noted the great reputation, excellent teachers, high standards, excellent resources, and good communication. Comments were overwhelmingly favorable in all of the surveys regarding the excellent relationships and support across the community, schools, and administration.

## 2 Advance Planning for Curriculum Development

Although the district does not currently have fully developed curriculum guides, the commitment to that development is evident. Instructional coaches have been hired and have recently received training in the curriculum writing process. Efforts have begun to develop curriculum and house it in a central Curriculum and Instruction online hub where it is easily accessible to teachers and administrators. Already developed for most courses are scope and sequence charts that divide the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills into teaching units to ensure articulation across the district. Coaches have also linked resources to the various grade levels and subject areas in the hub to provide a one-stop location for teachers to access resources. Through training, coaches understand the components of a quality

curriculum and are collaborating with teachers to begin the work of fleshing out curriculum guides.

## 3 Openness of Administrators to Systems Development

District and campus administrators recognize that with the fast growth of the district, systems are becoming outdated or do not exist. One administrator commented, “We are a 6A school district with 4A systems.” Numerous administrators expressed in interviews and in the survey their concern regarding a lack of systems. The need is recognized, and administrators are willing to begin developing new systems to make their work and the functions of the district more consistent and efficient. Plans have already begun to revive the district strategic plan, which was begun about two years ago before the pandemic. New commitment is evident for developing a strategic plan, which will include detailed systems to improve district functioning.

## 4 Strong Career and Technology Education and Fine Arts Offerings at Middle and High School Levels

Auditors noted the multiple opportunities that middle and high school students have for career and technology education as well as fine arts courses. The middle schools all offer the same courses, including video broadcast, audio-visual technology, digital media, graphic design, and engineering as well as technology applications and computer science. Fine arts offerings at middle schools include music, band, choir, theater, and dance. Auditors noted during observations the large enrollment and the active participation of students in those classes. The high school offers 143 different courses in career and technology education and 41 courses in fine arts. Parents expressed on the surveys their approval of the wide variety and broad range of choices their students have for coursework.

## 5 High Achieving on Multiple Measures

Lake Travis ISD is a high-achieving district on multiple measures. The district consistently scores higher than the state on the *STAAR* state tests and above the national average on college entrance exams. Lake Travis High School recognized 71 seniors under the National Merit Scholarship program in the current year. Eight of those seniors are National Merit Semifinalists, 35 are Commended Scholars, 28 are National Hispanic Scholars, and four are National Indigenous Scholars. In addition to academics, the district has multiple awards in athletics, fine arts, and Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA).

## 6 Abundance of Resources and Technology

One of the strengths of the district expressed by teachers, administrators, and parents is the abundance of resources and technology available to teachers and students for instruction and learning. If vetted for alignment and appropriately referenced in the curriculum, these resources can be invaluable to teachers. District instructional coaches have recently cataloged over 150 of the district's available resources and evaluated them for alignment, cost, and language availability. They still have more work to do to complete this task because of the numerous resources available, but the process has started. Accomplishing this task will allow the coaches and teachers to reference the resources more effectively into the curriculum documents as they are developed. Technology use can also be referenced in the curriculum documents in appropriate places, because the district has provided every student with a Chromebook for their use in class and at home.



# Key Focus Areas

1

**District Vision and Accountability:** Vision is foundational for establishing a framework for all decision making throughout the district and for ensuring that those decisions move the district in a single direction toward its established mission and goals. These goals and expectations must be clearly defined in policy to establish the parameters within which decisions across the various levels, departments, and campuses/schools are made. A functional organizational structure is also needed to assure that all personnel have defined responsibilities that do not overlap and to assure accountability at all levels. Accountability is essential in coordinating efforts and supporting efficacy across the system.

2

**Curriculum:** Written curriculum, as the most critical tool to support high quality teaching and learning, not only defines high levels of student learning, but also supports teachers with suggestions on how to deliver differentiated, student-centered instruction that is responsive to students' needs, backgrounds, and perspectives. A strong curriculum assists teachers in meeting the needs of their students more effectively by prioritizing and defining the essential learning targets in measurable terms and providing the formative assessment tools needed to diagnose and monitor student learning. Strong written curriculum also promotes equity by clarifying for teachers what on-level learning looks like.

3

**Consistency and Equity:** All students in the system should have equal access to programs and services, and no students should be excluded from the regular classroom environment at rates that are not commensurate with their peers. Equity refers to students being treated in accordance with need, rather than the same as everyone else. Allocating resources and supports equitably is necessary if all students are to be equally successful academically. Under Consistency and Equity, auditors also examine the degree to which the educational program and its supporting programs, such as ELL, Special Education, or Gifted, are defined and implemented with consistency across the system.

4

**Feedback:** Within the context of student learning expectations and a clear vision for how students should be engaged and demonstrate their learning in the classroom, having aligned assessments that measure progress and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the system is of prime importance. The audit expects school systems to have common, aligned formative assessment tools that provide teachers and building leaders with clear and specific feedback regarding student progress and learning needs. A coordinated system must be in place for data to be collected, interpreted, and accessed by teachers so that they have valid information for planning instruction.

5

**Productivity:** When all aspects of system operations are functional and effective, productivity should be evident within existing financial constraints. Over time, as the system improves and each department and school within the district builds stronger components that work in coordination, these systems improve leaders' efforts to allocate resources more effectively and adjust programming so that ineffective initiatives are terminated or modified in accordance with data. Support systems necessary for effective operations are clearly tied to district goals and vision, and district facilities are likewise supportive of the educational program.

## What We Found

The site visit for the Lake Travis Independent School District was conducted February 28-March 3, 2022, by a team of four auditors whose biographical sketches are provided in **Appendix A**. One additional auditor provided off-site analysis of student work artifacts. The auditors reviewed and analyzed 43 different documents, many with multiple editions (e.g., board policies, curriculum documents, student work artifacts) prior to, during, and after the site visit. A copy of the list of documents is provided in **Appendix B**. While in the district, the auditors visited 269 classrooms in 11 schools and personally interviewed 59 district stakeholders, including the superintendent, board members, district administrators, principals, assistant principals, teachers, instructional coaches, and ESL instructional support teachers. The auditors also administered online surveys to parents, teachers, and administrators for which they received 2,368 responses.

The auditors triangulated information from these sources of data to arrive at 12 findings and 4 recommendations based on the 5 audit areas of focus. The findings provide Lake Travis ISD with specific details about the current and potential barriers and challenges that internal stakeholders face in their efforts to move the district forward toward achieving its mission and goals, centered on increased quality of student learning. The recommendations provide detailed action steps for removing those barriers. [Note: Each of the recommendations covers multiple findings. All recommendations should be completed in one to four years.]

**“We welcome this curriculum audit because we have no curriculum.”  
(Campus Administrator)**

A summary of the audit findings within the five focus areas included in the Lake Travis Independent School District full report follows:

### Focus Area One: District Vision and Accountability

When reviewing the current status of Lake Travis ISD in relationship to the principles of **Focus Area One**, which addresses system control and oversight of resources, programs, and personnel, the auditors found the Lake Travis ISD board policies and regulations did not meet audit criteria to provide a foundation to guide all necessary aspects of curriculum management and the overall educational program. Few policies or local regulations provide guidance for day-to-day operations and decision making. Although the district is in the process of reviving the strategic plan, district plans are at this point incomplete and do not provide enough direction to guide implementation of district functions. Interviews and survey responses revealed inconsistent understanding or use of district or campus improvement plans by district personnel for making decisions (see **Finding 1.1**).

**“I am very excited about the strategic planning because the community drove the definition of the pillars. We will include community members as we develop the plan to make sure we are driving in the right direction.”  
(Board Member)**

The auditors found that although the district values their employees as noted in interviews and survey responses, inconsistencies regarding span of control, chain of command, scalar relationships, and full inclusion exist between the district’s current organizational chart and job descriptions. Job descriptions are not routinely updated, limiting control of human



capital available within the district. Systems for guiding the functions of the district are not in place, causing confusion among personnel regarding performing their job duties efficiently and effectively (see **Finding 1.2**).

**“Overall, having district systems in place is happening little by little this year. That is encouraging.”  
(District Administrator)**

### **Focus Area Two: Curriculum**

Under **Focus Area Two**, the auditors examined Lake Travis ISD’s direction for teaching and learning. They looked for systematic curriculum management planning, representation of curriculum offerings in high quality written curriculum guides, and clear alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum.

The auditors found that Lake Travis ISD needs a comprehensive written plan to coordinate the development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum. Although some elements of curriculum management planning were evident, they lack the specificity needed to provide direction for the design and delivery of the curriculum to achieve the district’s student achievement goals (see **Finding 2.1**).

Auditors found the scope of written curriculum does not meet audit expectations for any grade level K-12 or subject area in core and non-core content. In analyzing the quality of curriculum documents provided to auditors, they found minimal basic components needed to provide a quality curriculum that is highly focused, consistent, rigorous, and aligned. Finally, the auditors found inconsistent use of the district’s curriculum by teachers as evidenced in survey and interview data from teachers and campus administrators (see **Finding 2.2**).

### **Focus Area Three: Consistency and Equity**

Under **Focus Area Three**, the auditors looked for predictable consistency for curriculum delivery, high quality student work, professional development based on monitoring of curriculum and instruction, and equity in course access and opportunities for students.

The auditors found during 269 classroom observations that current instructional practices do not reflect district expectations for rigorous and collaborative learning. The most common teacher behavior was assisting students as they did independent work or large group teacher-centered instruction. Auditors observed students working on computers as a dominant activity more than any other student activity observed. Classroom activities that required lower levels of thinking were observed in the majority of classrooms (see **Finding 3.1**).

**“It is hard in a high-performing district to have them look at data in a different way.”  
(District Administrator)**

Auditors also analyzed 1,598 student work artifacts. Artifacts were sometimes not aligned to standards, and cognitive demand was generally low in mathematics, science, and social studies. Contexts were of the least engaging type. Artifacts also showed disparities in curriculum among schools, overlaps in objectives between grade levels, and multiple interpretations of mastery in evidence. Artifacts also did not reflect the rich diversity of the district (see **Finding 3.2**).

Auditors examine the relationship among professional development, implementation of instructional strategies, and monitoring of curriculum and instruction to improve teacher capacity and student learning. Auditors found no written professional development plan in

place to guide this relationship, but professional development opportunities are provided in the district that teachers and administrators generally find helpful. There is no connection between professional development and monitoring of curriculum and instruction. Monitoring is primarily done in Lake Travis ISD as a part of the formal teacher evaluation system, and not for informal feedback or to inform professional development activities to improve instruction (see **Finding 3.3**).

In examining possible equity issues, auditors found some concerns worthy of further investigation by district leaders. Auditors found discrepancies among campuses in enrollment of at-risk, economically disadvantaged, and emergent bilingual students compared to the district average. In addition, interviews with district and campus leaders revealed concerns over access to support for the emergent bilingual program. Auditors also found an inverse relationship between the percentages of students identified for Gifted and Talented and Special Education programs by campus (see **Finding 3.4**).

**“We believe there is a lack of rigor, and our kids can handle more.”**  
**(District Administrator)**

#### **Focus Area Four: Feedback**

**Focus Area Four** emphasizes the use of feedback data from various student assessment activities and program evaluations. The auditors found Lake Travis ISD does not have an assessment plan to provide adequate direction for effective student assessment planning. The overall scope of student assessments is not adequate to guide instructional decision making. Auditors found no district-developed formative curriculum-based assessments in place to inform teachers of student progress in a timely manner. The auditors also did not find a formal process to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-benefit of district programs (see **Findings 4.1** and **4.2**).

**“We have technology, but it’s often hard for the students to complete tasks with the equipment we have.” (Teacher)**

#### **Focus Area Five: Productivity**

Included in **Focus Area 5** is the district’s choice of specific means to improve instruction and learning, such as implementation of a technology program. Auditors focused here on the district’s technology program and budget development. Auditors found the district has an outdated technology plan that does not provide adequate direction for effective implementation. The district has provided every student with a Chromebook through the 1 to 1 initiative. During classroom observations, auditors found teachers using technology only passively and students using technology actively. Teachers were found using technology at the substitution level of the SAMR Model. During interviews and on survey comments, auditors found administrators had concerns regarding the overuse of computers in the classrooms in place of deep discussions and collaborative learning. Teachers expressed concerns that the equipment was outdated and slow. Administrators also noted a need to provide teachers laptops for collaborative planning of instruction (see **Finding 5.1**).

**“We need structured PD. There is no plan driving PD now.”**  
**(District Administrator)**

Auditors found the budgeting process in Lake Travis ISD does not ensure increased productivity in the allocation of financial resources. Programmatic budgeting is not in practice, leaving the district without systems to allocate financial resources based on performance-based principles that incorporate cost-benefit data gained from comprehensive program analysis.

“

We have strong teachers, a supportive community, and excellent students. (Campus Administrator)

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Many [job descriptions] are very general in nature and may not adequately describe what the person really does. (District Administrator)

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Campuses have the skills but do not have clearly designed systems. (Campus Administrator)

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A housed curriculum needs to be established. Teachers don't have an established curriculum that they can rely on, and they have to make things up as they go. (Campus Administrator)

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We need more ideas for hands-on activities to get away from the excess of using worksheets. (Teacher)

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For the best PD, I've had to go find it myself and search for topics that actually are related to my students. (Teacher)

”







# Key Recommendations

The auditors are confident that this audit report will provide the foundation for improvement efforts. However, future progress will depend, in part, on the district leadership's efforts to make the tough decisions incorporated in the audit recommendations, including the willingness of the governing board to allocate additional resources necessary to implement the recommendations.

1

Gain and maintain control of district resources through quality board policies, focused planning, the strategic deployment of personnel, and creation of systems for district functions.

2

Develop and implement quality written curriculum for all content areas taught at all grade levels, guided by a comprehensive curriculum management plan.

3

Promote effective instructional practices, rigorous student work associated with high levels of student achievement. Refine and expand efforts to develop the capacity of teachers through professional learning and monitoring instruction. Institutionalize a system aimed at ensuring equitable access to curriculum, support, and programs for all students.

4

Focus the value of student assessment and program evaluation, guided by a comprehensive assessment plan, on the systematic use of data for decision making. Develop a program-based budget.

District leaders and board members expressed their desire to begin making some improvements in district systems, including reviving the strategic long-range plan, creating additional plans and systems to clarify and guide their work, continuing to develop and improve curriculum documents, improving professional learning and monitoring processes to deepen the rigor of instruction, establishing curriculum-based assessments, and creating processes for using the resulting data. District leadership must be willing to commit to this work and to allocate additional resources necessary to implement the recommendations.

The district has begun efforts to create a long-range strategic plan and develop curriculum documents. Using the audit report recommendations for guidance, the district can continue these efforts to refine and develop quality policies, plans, systems, curriculum documents, instructional frameworks, and assessments that will provide a clear pathway forward for administrators and teachers to maintain and further the high level of excellence in teaching and learning in Lake Travis Independent School District.

**Recommendation 1: Review, revise and adopt board policies and the district strategic plan to provide clear direction and accountability for curriculum management. Develop comprehensive job descriptions and organizational charts that meet the principles of sound organizational management. Develop systems to guide critical district functions.**

The role of a governing board is to establish and maintain control of the foundation of the district's work. Well-written policies and regulations ensure long-term stability of the foundation. Additionally, an organizational chart that conforms to the principles of sound organizational management and job descriptions with clear linkage to duties and evaluation measures are critical to support the goals of the district. Well-written plans and established systems to guide and coordinate the functions

of the district provide district leadership with control of district direction and decision making.

**Recommendation 2: Develop and implement a comprehensive curriculum management plan to provide system-wide direction for the design, delivery, and evaluation of the curriculum. Complete the scope of the written curriculum and revise existing curriculum documents to define, prioritize, sequence, and pace student learning and to provide suggestions for how to deliver learning most effectively. Specify expectations for use of the written curriculum.**

Quality curriculum planning requires a comprehensive curriculum management plan and written curriculum documents to focus the system on efforts to achieve a quality, deeply aligned curriculum with strong delivery and evaluation components. A curriculum management plan provides for instructional resources, strategies, and assessments aligned to the content, context, and cognitive type for each objective taught. The curriculum management plan should be directed by school board policies that delineate processes for curriculum development and review, roles and responsibilities of staff, and procedures for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the district curriculum.

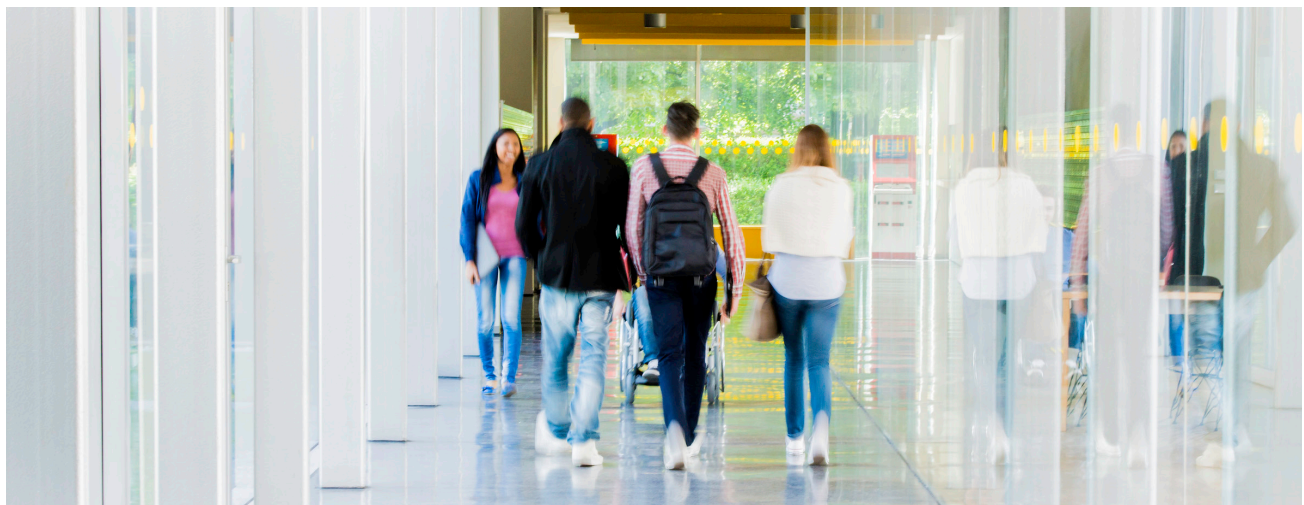
**Recommendation 3: Develop a comprehensive professional development plan that supports the instructional capacity of teachers and leadership capacity of administrators. The plan should illustrate how professional development is supported through the monitoring of instruction, and, in turn, provides the means to improve instructional delivery, student work, the use of technology, and address equity concerns.**

Although quality curriculum documents are crucial to student success, effective instructional practices are required to deliver the quality curriculum. Effective districts utilize current research to determine the most effective instructional practices to meet varied learning needs so curriculum comes to life in students' daily learning activities and work products.

Building capacity for teachers and district/campus administrators is essential to continued improvement of teaching and learning. A comprehensive professional development plan is necessary to accomplish the intended purpose of improving performance and achieving desired student achievement outcomes. Monitoring instructional delivery and resulting student work is a key component of the improvement process for teachers, providing an authentic evaluation of professional learning efforts through teacher demonstration via on-the-job application. An effective district has a comprehensive professional development plan based on a cycle that includes focused professional development opportunities related to district goals, an expectation that new learnings will be utilized in the classroom, ongoing instructional monitoring to determine fidelity of delivery and quality of student work, and targeted evaluation to determine if the professional learning is achieving desired outcomes. This cycle applies also to large-scale district initiatives, such as technology implementation, in order to ensure that cost-benefit is achieved according to district expectations. The cycle also provides district leadership the opportunity to examine monitoring data campus-by-campus to ensure all students are receiving equitable opportunities for access to curriculum and participation in district programs.

**Recommendation 4: Develop and implement a comprehensive system for student assessment and program evaluation that will provide meaningful opportunities to analyze data for decision making and support improved student achievement. Develop, implement, and use results of aligned, formative, and diagnostic assessments at all levels to monitor student learning on a continuous basis and inform individualized, differentiated, and effective instruction. Develop and implement a performance-based budget that allocates resources according to needs determined through program evaluation and provides efficient use of resources.**

Effective school districts have a plan that clearly identifies student learning expectations based on the adopted curriculum and state standards. The plan not only identifies the expectations but includes what they look like when mastered, what tools are used to determine mastery of those expectations, how to interpret the data from the assessment tools, and what to do when mastery is not achieved. Additionally, effective school districts have tightly-held district level formal assessments for all subjects and at all grade levels to monitor student mastery of objectives and provide feedback data to inform teaching and learning. Performance-based budgeting allows districts to flexibly allocate funding based on need and to improve productivity.





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