

**A Curriculum Audit™**  
of the  
**Delivery of the Curriculum in Knightdale High School**  
**WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM**  
**Raleigh, North Carolina**



*Students at work in a lab setting at Knightdale High school*

**Conducted Under the Auspices of  
Curriculum Management Systems, Inc.**

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**Date Audit Presented: July 2013**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This document constitutes the final report of a Curriculum Audit™ of the Delivery of Curriculum for Knightdale High School in the Wake County Public School System. The audit was commissioned by the superintendent within the scope of his administrative authority. It was conducted during the time period of March 4-8, 2013. Document analysis was performed off site, as was the detailed analysis of findings and site visit data.

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

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

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

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

A two-person Curriculum Management Services, Inc. audit team interviewed school stakeholders and observed in and collected data from all Hodge Road classrooms that were available during March 4-8. The CMSi-licensed curriculum auditors for the Hodge Road Elementary School audit were:

Holly Kaptain, PHD, Executive Director, Curriculum Management Systems, inc.

Heather Boesch, B.A., Independent Consultant, Urbandale, IA.

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

## **System Purpose for Conducting the Audit**

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

## **Approach of the Audit**

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

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

## II. METHODOLOGY

### **The Model for the Curriculum Audit™**

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

### **A Schematic View of Curricular Quality Control**

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

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

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

### **Standards for the Auditors**

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

#### **Technical Expertise**

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

The Hodge Road Elementary School Curriculum Audit™ Team selected by the Curriculum Management Audit Center included auditors who have been school superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors, public educational systems in several locations.

#### **The Principle of Independence**

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

#### **The Principle of Objectivity**

Events and situations that comprise the data base for the Curriculum Audit™ are derived from documents, interviews, and site visits. Findings must be verifiable and grounded in the data base, though confidential interview data may not indicate the identity of such sources. Findings must be factually

triangulated with two or more sources of data, except when a document is unusually authoritative such as a court judgment, a labor contract signed and approved by all parties to the agreement, approved meeting minutes, which connote the accuracy of the content, or any other document whose verification is self-evident.

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

**The Principle of Consistency**

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

**The Principle of Materiality**

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

**The Principle of Full Disclosure**

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

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

- “Some school principals said that ... ”
- “Many teachers expressed concern that ... ”
- “There was widespread comment about ... ”

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

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

Descriptive Term	General Quantification Range
Some ... or a few ...	Less than a majority of the group interviewed and less than 30 percent

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

### **Data Sources of the Curriculum Audit™**

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

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

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

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

**Exhibit 0.1**

**Number of Staff Interviews, Surveys, and Classroom Observations Conducted  
Knightdale High School  
Wake County Public School System  
March 2013**

<b>School</b>	<b>Approximate No. Interviewed</b>	<b>No. of Surveys Returned</b>	<b>No. of Classroom Observations</b>
Knightdale High School	80	100	64

The following section presents the findings and recommendations from the Individual School Audit project.

### **III. SCOPE OF WORK**

#### **Standards for the Audit**

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

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

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

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

#### **Areas of Analysis**

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

##### **1) Direction for Curriculum Delivery**

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

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

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

##### **3) District Stakeholder Interviews and Interview Data Analysis**

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

Building administrators

Teachers

Academic administrators

Parents

Community members

Business leaders

Students

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

#### **4) Student Achievement Trends**

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

#### **5) SchoolView Data Collection**

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

#### **6) Staff Development Initiatives**

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

#### **7) Student Work Data Collection**

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

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

## IV. FINDINGS

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

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

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

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

#### ***What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Knightdale High School:***

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

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

#### ***What the Auditors Found in the Knightdale High School:***

Overall, Knightdale High School has strong leadership that is committed to student success and improved student achievement. There are many good initiatives and procedures in place; the auditors found that improved consistency in many of these areas, as well as additional district support and improved mentoring and training of new teachers, will strengthen staff efficacy.

**Finding 1: Despite a strong culture that promotes academic success and high expectations for all students, inconsistencies in monitoring, student discipline, and teacher expectations impede continuous improvement in student achievement. District-level issues with student support services and inequities in resource allocation contribute to building-level challenges.**

The most effective schools are those that have high gains in student achievement (and correspondingly high levels of student learning) despite demographic factors that might predict student difficulties in attaining academic success. These schools have in common a culture that is relentlessly focused on high student achievement, high expectations, cognitively challenging instruction, and strong collaboration among leadership and staff. This culture prevails despite students who have not formerly experienced academic success, and is maintained in the face of serious economic challenges.

School districts that are really focused on improving student learning for all children are dedicated to ensuring equity. Without the equitable distribution of resources to areas of greater need, the playing field cannot be leveled and students who come to school facing tremendous personal, economic, and academic challenges have less of a chance to succeed. It falls to schools to offer these students better opportunities and the highest quality educational experiences, to guarantee them a successful education that prepares them for their years beyond high school. It is an expectation of the CMSi Curriculum Audit that equity is maintained for all students, particularly for students who live in high poverty areas and attend schools that do not receive any Title I funds. Equity is also assured through the provision of the highest quality student ancillary services that at first glance may not relate to students' academic achievement, but in fact play a major background role. These services include facilities management, busing, technology maintenance and support, and food service. The audit attends to these ancillary services when they fail to support or perhaps even interfere with students' academic performance.

In order to determine the myriad factors that contribute to the strengths and weaknesses in Knightdale High Schools curriculum management practices, the auditors interviewed almost all core area classroom teachers, building administrators, and district-level administrators; collected surveys from 100 core and non-core classroom teachers; reviewed curriculum and procedure-related documents from the school and district; and observed in most classrooms where regularly scheduled instruction was taking place with the classroom teacher (no observations were recorded in classrooms where there were substitute teachers).

Overall, the auditors found an impressive commitment to high student achievement among building leaders and a philosophy characterized by the belief in every child's worth and every student's right to a successful educational program. Auditors found that behavior and discipline have improved and there is a clear focus from building leadership communicated to teachers each year for the improvement of instruction. The auditors also found a system in place to support new teachers and a strong system of departmental collaboration and support. These positive attributes persist in the face of tremendous challenges among the student population and community in general. The student body is ethnically and linguistically diverse, which is perceived as a strength in the building, but the majority of students are economically disadvantaged. Parents and families in the community work hard and work long hours, which results in low parental involvement and a community that is not as overtly committed to academic success as other communities across the county. The students face many challenges, including entering high school with gaps in their learning, particularly in the area of literacy and vocabulary.

These challenges are significant, to be sure, but not insurmountable. This is the attitude that prevails among building leadership and most staff members, but despite their good intentions, inconsistencies and a lack of cohesiveness persist in many areas that ultimately impede effectiveness. The issues noted within the building include the following areas, and will be addressed one by one, respectively: monitoring; behavioral expectations and student discipline; consistency, communication, and collaboration; and the lack of experience among teaching staff. Other complicating issues that are beyond school personnel's immediate control but are nevertheless important to mention include: community and parent support, equity in resources and staffing, and ancillary support services. Each of these issues will be addressed

and data will be presented concerning what aspects of each one are ultimately hindering greater effectiveness across the building.

## **Monitoring**

Monitoring is the most important function of building leadership in a school. Monitoring, when implemented correctly, has positive benefits on teacher performance, student behavior, and curriculum alignment. The focus of monitoring is not to inspect teachers or suggest evaluative measures; rather, monitoring is intended to provide instructional support to teachers, assist them in improving the alignment of what they're teaching with what students need to learn, improve consistency in behavioral expectations throughout the building, and increase visibility of leaders in the school. Monitoring can be a shared responsibility among the principal, assistant principals, teacher mentors, and department chairs. The most critical purpose of monitoring, however, is of the curriculum.

The auditors asked teachers and building administrators about expectations for monitoring and the frequency with which it occurs in the building. The auditors found that monitoring among the building administrators is inconsistent; although some of the Assistant Principals (APs) are frequently visible, others are not. There was no clearly-stated purpose for monitoring by building staff, nor were expectations for monitoring specifically defined in district documents beyond general guidelines.

Board policy included expectations for monitoring but did not give specific purposes and processes for doing so. *Policy 5100, Curriculum Management*, specifies the following responsibilities are assigned to the principal:

- E. The Principal shall: (1) Be responsible for the implementation of the curriculum; (2) Communicate to stakeholders the importance of effective curriculum and instructional practices on a regular basis; (3) Observe classes, monitor lessons and assessments; (4) Initiate reflective dialogue with teaching staff to improve instruction; and (5) Use, as a minimum, the following basic strategies to monitor curriculum:
- a. 45-minute observations,
  - b. Frequent walk-through observations,
  - c. Conduct or review minutes of curriculum planning meetings, and
  - d. Periodic review of curriculum documents.

There is a clear expectation in policy that principals are to be responsible for monitoring curriculum delivery for the purpose of improving instruction, using the suggested strategies. One of the strategies includes periodically reviewing curriculum documents, such as student artifacts or the C-MAPP. However, there is not specificity concerning what this review should entail, and whether it involves the calibration and evaluation of alignment of delivered curriculum with the written and tested curriculum (see finding 3). These strategies are critical to ensuring that students are not only being taught what they are supposed to be taught, but also with necessary contexts to ensure success on targeted assessments. The policy does not specify any other purposes of monitoring, such as for disciplinary consistency, teacher support, and instructional coaching.

In interviewing building administrators, they attested to the requirement that all teachers have objectives clearly posted in classrooms where they are visible to all. One administrator stated, "It's a requirement that the objective be written on the board, and what they're going to study." (Building staff member) The auditors did not find this expectation to be adhered to in every classroom, although the expectation itself is not a guarantee that that objective is indeed what teachers are teaching and students are learning. Those can only be determined by observation and collecting samples of student work.

Teachers reported seeing their building administrators inconsistently. When asked if students knew their administrators, responses were mixed. Comments included,

- “The principal walked in and they said, ‘who’s that woman.’ Some of the problem kids may have better contact with the principal—but the kids in the middle, it’s not as good. The average student, no.” (Building staff member)
- “Yes—kids know their administrators.” (Building staff member)
- “Kids know them very well—they know them. For better or worse, the kids know their administrators very well.” (Building staff member)

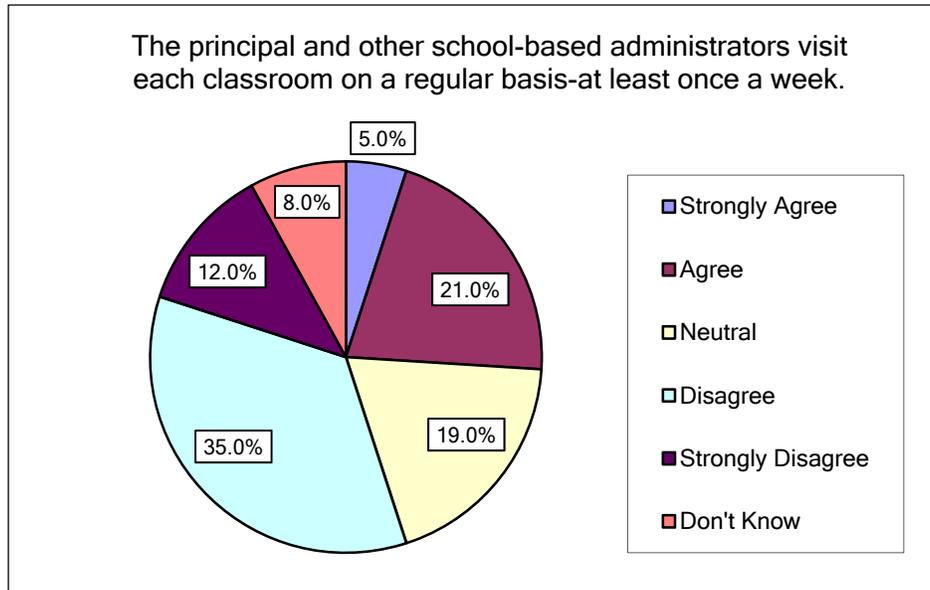
There were mixed reports from teachers regarding the frequency of administrators’ visiting their classrooms. These comments included:

- “Support? At least once every two weeks, I see [an administrator].” (Building staff member)
- “At the beginning of the year, often. Now, it’s more sparse. They are in the halls a lot—just making sure they are in the hallways—once every couple of weeks, every three weeks. More like just popping in, looking around. They do their evaluations—I’m on the career.” (Building staff member)
- “Visibility is the one thing that the principals need to pump up a bit more. [It varies]. For me, it’s pretty consistent. I will see people at the start of the new year. I will see the principal and a couple of APs. But as the year goes on, visibility goes down.” (Building staff member)
- “Not very often. Maybe once every two weeks, usually to extract someone.” (Building staff member)
- “It’s rare—maybe this semester I’ve seen an administrator three times. Two were observations that had to be done. The third was when you came in.” (Building staff member)
- “I have had an administrator four or five times since I’ve been teaching.” (Building staff member)

One teacher reported being told that not seeing an administrator in his or her classroom was a good thing, saying “I was told, ‘If administration is not in your room, then don’t worry—you are doing exactly what you are supposed to be doing.’”

Inconsistency in the frequency with which administrators were observed in classrooms was reported on the survey, as well. It should be noted that 100 staff members participated in the survey, and of those 100 teachers, 38 had two or less years’ experience. [Exhibit 1.1](#) presents the survey results on monitoring.

**Exhibit 1.1**  
**Frequency of Principal Visits to Classroom**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**June 2013**



As can be seen in [Exhibit 1.1](#), There is more disagreement than agreement with the statement, the principal and other school-based administrators visit each classroom on a regular basis—at least once a week. Only 26% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while 47% disagreed or strongly disagreed with it. A surprising 19% were neutral.

The auditors were provided data from walk-throughs; these were apparently observational data collected from 69 separate classroom visits. The auditors could not determine from the data over what time frame the observations were conducted, nor did they indicate the frequency of the visits. The content of these data are reported in [Finding 2](#). These data concerned instructional practices, not curriculum content and calibration.

In conclusion, teachers reported seeing administrators inconsistently but not with great frequency. When administrators are in the rooms, a few teachers reported it was for behavioral reasons, not for monitoring the curriculum.

### **Behavioral expectations and discipline**

Classroom management is a key component of maintaining a safe, productive learning environment. This involves engaging students in meaningful learning and activities, minimizing disruptions, and establishing respectful relationships with and among students. Effective schools have a centralized mission aimed at high student achievement. They prioritize, recognize, and reward positive behavior within a context that communicates positive expectations for every child, despite past behavior and performance. Consistency and these high expectations play a major role; these both demand strong communication between administration, teacher leaders, and teachers, and a school culture focused on the mission and goals of the building.

To determine what kind of expectations were in place at Knightdale High School and to ascertain the issues and successes in classroom management and student discipline, the auditors surveyed 100 teachers and staff members, interviewed almost all core content area teachers and building administrators, reviewed school and district documents, and observed in most classrooms. Overall, the auditors found

that building leaders have a very definite vision of student academic success and a strong commitment that reflects that vision. The vision statement for the building is as follows:

“Knightdale High School is a safe, supportive learning community that sets high expectations for all students.” Similarly, the mission also expects students to become productive citizens. There are ten corresponding values statements that echo the philosophy of the vision and mission of the school. These values statements describe the following characteristics school leaders expect to be present in the building:

- a rigorous educational experience for all students;
- a learning-focused environment;
- collaboration;
- positive relationships among students, staff, parents, and community members;
- evidence of pride in the school; and
- effective communication.

In addition, the auditors also found evidence in the school improvement plan that school climate, student behavior, and improved classroom management are a primary focus in the building. The third goal of the plan states that, “KHS will improve working conditions, as measured by the Teacher Working Conditions Survey....” The key processes for this goal are to 1) establish a framework that empowers teachers to become leaders within the school environment; and 2) Establish a framework that focuses on the intentional use of engaging instructional strategies to manage student behavior. Each key process has corresponding action steps; these include the following expected actions:

- Implement classroom management procedures that...reduce...discipline referrals....
- Implement the PBIS Model to increase school-wide consistency of expectations and consequences....
- Establish an expectation that all teachers will consistently utilize class starters and bell work....
- Provide differentiated staff development on highly engaging...activities....

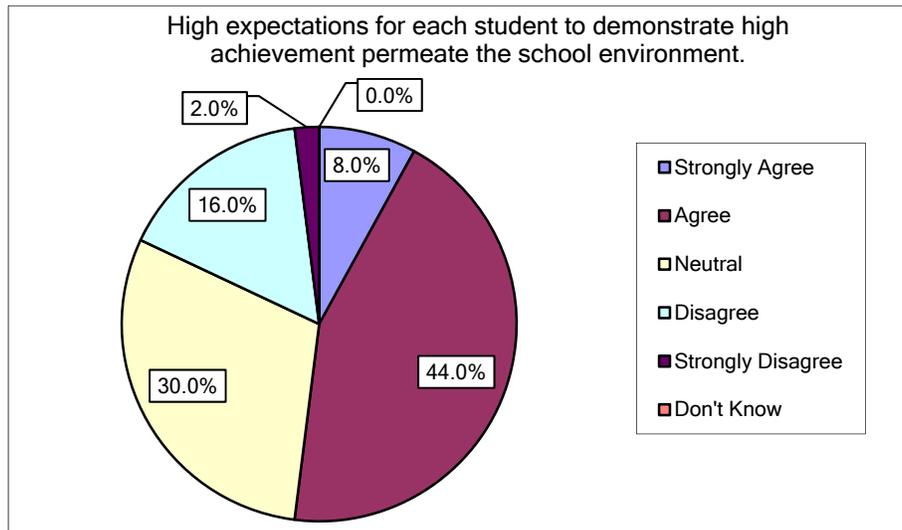
The auditors found clear expectations in school documents for improved student achievement, high expectations for student performance and behavior, and effective classroom management through the use of engaging strategies.

The auditors found that a number of teachers articulated the school vision for high expectations, verbally, although this was not consistently the case. On the survey, responses to the statement, there are high expectations for student achievement, were mixed. [Exhibit 1.2](#) displays these data:

### **Exhibit 1.2**

#### **Perception of High Expectations for High Student Achievement**

**Knightdale High School  
June 2013**



As can be seen in [Exhibit 1.2](#), more than half of all teachers agreed or strongly agreed that there are high expectations for each student to demonstrate high achievement that permeate the school environment. Almost one-third were neutral, and 18% disagreed. During interviews, teachers and parents confirmed the clear mission and emphasis on high expectations in the school:

- “If you push them and ask them, they’ll tell you, but they don’t harp on [the demographic challenges]. They say, ‘this is our challenge, this is the way it is.’ Because they think they can do better.” (Parent)
- “[Knightdale leaders] embrace [the demographic challenge], they recognize it, they work on it. Their school improvement plans reflect that—I don’t think they get enough credit for where their test scores were and where they are.” (Parent)
- “It sounds like there is a strong culture here—it’s very clearly defined. It is a good opportunity to indoctrinate people as far as the Knightdale way.” (Building staff member)

The auditors also heard many comments from building personnel regarding the need to make high expectations more consistent throughout the building. These comments included:

- “But I do believe expectations could be higher from everyone (all teachers!).” (Building staff member)
- “We need to focus on WHAT we WANT to see happen, not what do we see happen. Why don’t you approach it from what you WANT to see?” (Building staff member)
- “Do people really believe that kids can learn? Well, the kids in the east are all poor. What do you really believe?” (Building staff member)
- “If I could wave a magic wand and I would and have everyone believe the students can achieve and are capable.” (Building staff member)
- “I think the consistency thing is something I would hit on. I think a lot of time we lower expectations. My expectation is very different from other teachers in the building.” (Building staff member)
- “For me, the bar is so doggone low that I am going to trip over it. The kids rise to the expectations that are set for them.” (Building staff member)

- “I don’t think we do enough to motivate those students. I don’t think we do enough for those students who don’t really care.” (Building staff member)
- “You’ve got to motivate whatever group you’re dealing with. I don’t know what is going to motivate this community. But you could do more to engage them. We could do more to engage them in the classroom—do more group activities, more technology-based activities. Things that get them involved—get them moving up and around the classroom.” (Building staff member)

Comments regarding a lack of high expectations were also made on the teacher survey instrument. These comments included:

- Weakness? “Low academic expectations for students.” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “Teachers who only want to teach the high achievers.” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “We need to hold our students at higher standards in order for our reputation to become more positive.” (Building staff member)

There were other staff members and parents who spoke to the challenges within the student population, and the messages students have accepted or that they believe about themselves. This was described as a culture the students are caught in:

- “I agree—students come in there with the mentality, I am not good at math. I’ve never been good at math, but they’ve been passed on. The curse continues. I’ve never done anything, I’ve never learned anything. I’m not good at math, I’m never good at anything. They know that somehow, [those] things ... have been instilled in them.” (Building staff member)
- “We receive a large number of students that come with interventions or have been identified as astronomical compared to other buildings.” (Building staff member)
- “We do house a large population of students that have learning struggles.” (Building staff member)
- “[It’s] totally different from other schools—this culture. ... Their way of relating, in the halls—it’s very different.” (Building staff member)
- “I think [students] are not motivated. They have nothing motivating them to succeed.” (Building staff member)
- “If you’ve been told, you can’t do it, they’re not going to try and push themselves.” (Parent)
- “The kids don’t really utilize the resources they have—again, they have a label. ‘I can’t do that because I’m bad at reading.’” (Parent)
- “We aren’t teaching [students] the core structure of learning at an early grade.” (Parent)
- “I think our biggest problem is that we classify our kids too soon—that they’re AIG or not. They’ve been told by third grade—you’re smart, [or], I’m sorry, you’re slow.” (Parent)

Others described the frustration of trying to teach students to be learners, and to emphasize the importance of learning. These comments included:

- “I have very few kids who don’t try—a lot of them haven’t had that analytical thought process developed.” (Building staff member)
- “They have a lot of opportunities to make things up...they can come in early, it’s this constant trying to make them more responsible...what do we do?”
- “Right now I have 17 Fs in my English III class. And it’s not because they don’t understand the material, it’s because they are not doing the work.”

- “[It’s a big shift from, what was my grade, what grade did you give me to what did I learn.” (Building staff member)
- “I wish students could be better critical thinkers. They lack the ability to be critical thinkers.” (Building staff member)
- “When you look at my failure rates, it’s not students who don’t pass the test, it’s students not turning work in.” (Building staff member)
- “I think, really coming down hard and figuring out a way to deal with those non-learners would be so helpful to the school.” (Building staff member)
- “[How to] engage their students with learning is the greatest learning [for teachers]. So we were able to do this for an entire day—that is our greatest challenge, to do that kind of work. (Central office administrator)

Still some teachers shared a perspective that was not indicative of a belief in their students’ ability. These comments included:

- “We don’t really sit down with them and tell them if college is a realistic path for them. And I will tell them these are your options—you may need to go to community college first, and then college.” (Building staff member)
- “[We] don’t look at what our students have to offer and help them plan based on that.” (Building staff member)
- “You have kids that just get it—they were born with that analytical mind. Then you have those that aren’t, and they work, and they do it, and they are successful. And there are those that don’t have that background and they aren’t successful.” (Building staff member)
- “My African Americans are generally lower, percentage-wise, of what I would consider success.” (Building staff member)
- “We are told we are supposed to give them multiple multiple multiple opportunities to succeed. And the kids don’t have to do anything.” (Building staff member)
- “They need to know that this school is a *learning* environment—it needs to be advertised around the school. Almost like brainwashing—even if we have to say a brainwashing pledge.” (Building staff member)
- “[Students] get the vibe from part of the teachers, ‘I’m here to do my job.’” (Building staff member)
- “He said, you work here because you think it’s easy to work here—you have a built-in excuse.” (Building staff member)

There were also many frustrations shared by teachers via the survey regarding students’ apathy or lack of preparedness for their courses. Some of these comments would indicate a lack of belief in students’ ability to perform at high levels; others are simply frustrated, which may indicate the teacher’s perceived lack of success in motivating the students. These comments included:

- student motivation (lack of).
- Student desire and motivation are the greatest frustrations. The students don’t seem to have any core skills beyond what is tested every year.
- Students who have grown weary of reading or who have never developed a desire to read and therefore do not. Students who expect that showing up will be enough and do not want to put forth the effort to think, write, read or push themselves in any way.

- Kids today have issues with attention spans and instruction that doesn't deliver instant results. I find it frustrating that I sometimes almost feel like not only do I have to teach, but I have to entertain them in order for them to gravitate to learning.
- Students lack study skills and often a desire to learn. Many students arrive to KHS vastly underprepared and it is hard to catch them up while also teaching new content.
- Student apathy and lack of prior knowledge to build upon.
- Students lack the background to be successful in my class. It is very difficult to re-teach another subject while teaching them my academic goals. Students lack the discipline to consistently provide quality work. Large class sizes greatly hinder the ability to focus on students.
- Student retention and willingness to learn.
- The lack of motivation of students and the willingness just to pass. There is not a challenging of students, and when you begin to challenge them there are excuses made to stop challenging them.
- Students have been passed along with very few expectations and they are in shock when a teacher requests otherwise.
- Students not ready for grade-level materials.
- Students lack of retention of that knowledge and student focus.
- Students not motivated to learn, or eager to learn
- Student motivation.
- Students not being self-motivated.
- Poor work ethics from the students.
- Student motivation.
- Students lack of caring. Low expectations from students.

These comments reflected about one-fifth of all respondents. The auditors also asked students if teachers challenged them in the classroom. A few responses included:

- Do teachers challenge you? “Yes—depends on the class. I think that higher, honors or AP classes are a lot different from regular classes but it depends on what you’re taking.” (Student)
- Are you ever bored? “Yes, because the teacher has no enthusiasm, or they do nothing but worksheets.” (Student)
- “The kids say, ‘I do nothing in all my other classes. You’re the only class I have to do homework in.’ The kids communicate to us...that your expectation is so much higher than every other teacher. But they respond to us. The problem is when you are the only person giving that expectation.” (Building staff member)

Overall, there were a number of teachers who are working to engage and motivate students in meaningful ways, but this is not consistent across classrooms. Engaging strategies and activities were not consistently observed in classrooms, and there were different levels of off-task behavior, as well (see [Finding 2](#)).

The auditors also asked questions regarding discipline, classroom management, and student behavior. The auditors observed in the high school over a three day period, and students were well-behaved and orderly. It was reported to the auditors that the school has had a reputation for dangerous or violent behavior but that student behavior and safety has improved significantly over the last four or five years.

This was attributed to the Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies Model (PBIS), as noted in the School Improvement Plan. The school also recently implemented Sweep & Keep, a policy where students who enter a class tardy are immediately sent to in-school suspension (ISS). Staff members and students alike attested to Sweep & Keep improving order in the building, overall, although there were complaints about the lack of consistency with which it is applied. This same complaint was also heard from students regarding the rules in the building, which are ostensibly the same, but reportedly not consistently enforced. Comments about the inconsistency in enforcing the rules included:

- “The rules are the same but the ways they are enforced aren’t.”
- “Can you PLEASE make up the same rules?” (Student)
- “I’m coming from a different county, so one of the biggest things that I notice is the lack of consistency in discipline.
- “The teachers are so inconsistent—I wish they would all work together, do things together. One teacher tells you something and you have to remember—and then another teacher tells you something totally different. Write them down? They have a written set of rules that the teachers are supposed to follow, but they make their own rules.” (Student)
- “They (teachers, administrators) play favorites; they do play favorites. You get more consequences—consequences not applied consistently.” (Student)
- “I would say that there could be more consistency with discipline and a stricter discipline policy. We have a lot of really great kids at this school—and we have some intentional non-learners.” (Building staff member)
- “The rules are the same but the ways they are enforced aren’t.”
- “Can you PLEASE make up the same rules?” (Student)

The comments concerning Sweep & Keep included those who favor the concept, but not necessarily how it is enforced. Some students feel it’s too strict, particularly if they have no time for a bathroom break. They also complained of not having any clocks, which auditors also observed, and no way to know what time it is since they aren’t allowed to have cell phones out, either. Cell phone restrictions were also seen as frustrating or over-the-top. These comments included:

- Is Sweep and Keep applied consistently? “No—depends on the teacher.” (Student)
- “Even before and after school—no cell phones. They used to let you have it before class, then they stopped.” (Student)
- “Knightdale has gotten better in the four years I’ve been here. It used to be a whole lot worse. Some rules did need to be changed. Sweep and keep—it helps.” (Student)
- “I was standing right outside the door, was there on the last bell and they sent me to 1613 (In-school suspension).” (Student)
- “When I get here, and my car broke down, I would be sent to 1613.” (Student)
- The whole sweep and keep; I like the expectation to be on time, but I don’t like to miss the class.” (Student)
- “The mindset [of sweep and keep] is a good idea. You’re sitting in [ISS], either A, sleeping, on your phone, or... No one has ever said, yeah, I learned so much [in ISS].”
- “We had music in the hallways and it sped up when it was closer to class time. We want that back.” (Student)

- “[There are] barely any clocks in class—if they see your phone they take it. [Clocks] are like a minute off every day.” (Student)
- “Sweep and keep has helped—it’s helped a lot. But say, if you’re car broke down, you can’t get a pass. She decides if it’s excused or not.” (Student)
- “We can’t get passes from teachers any more. If you run out of passes you can’t go anywhere.” (Student)
- “If you lose [your sheet of passes], you can’t get any more. You have 16—total.” (Student)
- Bathroom during passing time? “NO—that’s where the Sweep and keep hurts you. Girls don’t get more passes—I had to use the bathroom really bad—I was in the doorway and he sent me to sweep and keep.” (Student)
- “Can’t use [cell phones] during the first 15 minutes or the last 15 minutes, or during instruction, so NEVER.” (Student)
- “The [building] environment has changed dramatically—the sweep and keep. As far as the kids doing the work—that’s not happening. I think that’s one of teacher frustrations.” (Building staff member)
- Sweep and keep—I don’t use the bathroom anymore. I can’t use the bathroom. I could be in the bathroom, and if I am in the bathroom, I am doing nothing for 89 minutes (because of being late and being sent to Sweep & Keep). It’s not beneficial to me. They don’t keep up their PB works website.” (Student)
- “Even before and after school—no cell phones. They used to let you have it before class, then they stopped.” (Student)

Students complained about ISS, stating that because teachers didn’t all keep their websites up-to-date with homework assignments or class notes, students in ISS can’t keep up on work or don’t have any work to do. One student stated, “Every time I’ve been there, I’ve done nothing. The kids that are in there, they’re on twitter. [In ISS] you get a break from school. [Other students] want to sit in there all day and not go to class. ‘I’m going to get skipped on purpose. Come with me! Let’s not go to class.’ It’s a modified way of skipping.”

Other students reported concerns regarding safety or inadequate monitoring by teachers in the halls, although all students agreed safety and order have greatly improved. They also reported not getting breaks during class, which are blocked, 90-minute periods, and not being allowed to stand up or stretch at lunch. Administration reported this policy was implemented because of behavior problems in the cafeteria. These comments included:

- “Both my brothers went here. They used to come home and tell me stories. It’s so much better now. Knightdale is so much better. There used to be lockdown every day.” (Student)
- “I feel like it’s easy for people to get on campus. Doors are open, there’s nobody there. Front doors and back doors are open—anyone can walk in.” (Student)
- “Another thing with lunch—we always have to sit down, can’t stand up. Why can’t we take a break and stretch, stand up?” (Student)
- Get breaks? “Nope. Stand up and move around? No—it depends on the teacher. In the cafeteria, they don’t let you stand at all.” (Student)
- “That whole middle stairs—that’s the problem. That’s where stuff happens. People bump you—stairs are not good.” (Student)

- Halls monitored? “No, not at all.” Teachers in the halls? “They stand out their doors—but out in the middle? No. Or they’re standing by the locker bays.” (Student)

The greatest concerns about behavior reported by teachers were classroom disruptions and disrespect. The auditors noted that one-fourth of all teachers at Knightdale High School have two or less years of experience. There was a notable connection between a teacher’s years of experience and the level of off-task behavior observed in classrooms during the auditors’ walk-throughs (see [Finding 2](#)). Comments heard during interviews regarding disciplinary concerns included:

- “Weakness—classroom disruption, behavioral-wise. Just because there are so many kids in one
- “I have some students who are challenges; they definitely need to work on their language.” (Building staff member)
- Weaknesses? “Disrespect. I feel like a lot of them are not motivated, not focused in class.” (Building staff member)
- “Our big focus is on disrespect—classroom disruption.” (Building staff member)
- “One of teachers’ biggest concerns was disrespect. No ifs ands or buts about it—disrespect.” (Building staff member)
- “I’ve always heard that kids don’t care what you know until they know you care.” (Building staff member)

There were also a number of disciplinary issues mentioned on the survey in response to the question regarding what frustrations teachers face when delivering instruction. One hundred staff members responded to the survey; thirty-eight of those 100 staff members had two or less years of experience. The comments included:

- student behavior
- Behavior issues in the classroom
- Attendance
- Complications with students: talking during class, disruptive comments, small altercations among students/groups of students.
- Sometimes I cannot get through a lesson due to behavior/discipline issues
- Students misbehaving in class and talking slow down classroom instruction
- Students not coming to school on a daily basis
- Talkative students
- Student cell phone use. When using laptops students visiting sites that do not correspond with instruction (twitter, YouTube). Maintaining engaging lessons while teaching 4 preps.
- Students who are consistently absent who miss the instruction
- student absenteeism
- Class disruptions. Students who know better are not disciplined, and acting out continues.
- Student apathy is one frustration I deal with; some students just don't seem to care about their education and just don't want to participate.

- I don't feel frustrated in delivering instruction. I understand that some kibitzing is bound to happen when 30 teenagers are in a room together, but when it gets to a level that is distracting to myself or others, and I ask the students to stop, they respectfully stop.
- Student apathy
- Unruly students
- Student Apathy
- Student motivation. There are some students that could care less about being in school, therefore they aren't willing to work which in turn they become a behavior issue.
- The most frustrating part of daily instruction is not being able to achieve 100% student involvement. There are always particular students who are late to become engaged due to their motivation in the classroom.
- Class room disruptions. Usually these are from students behaving badly.
- Student disinterest, inadequate technology resources
- Behavioral issues with students and lack of support and consistency with administrators, time constraints with curriculum
- Student apathy(failure to complete or turn in work), tardiness, absences
- Student behavior.
- Having to deal with behavioral problems.
- Student motivation.
- Student behavior disrupts classroom instruction.
- Non-intentional learners.
- Numerous interruptions, limited resources. Student behavior.

When asked about weaknesses in the building, in general, student discipline, consistency in enforcing rules were mentioned by almost one-fourth of all respondents. Their comments included:

- Dealing with discipline issues.
- No sense of identity; very little interaction among staff; discipline.
- Inconsistencies in discipline procedures.
- This school is extremely inconsistent in the implementation of policies and procedures, especially when it comes to discipline.
- I feel the discipline and grading procedures could be improved. Specifically the severity of punishment in regards to the frequency of offenses. Consistency of rule enforcement.
- Poor disciplinary tactics.
- Poor consistency with discipline.
- Consistency in following rules and expectations.
- Some teachers follow the rules for dress, hats, food, gum. Procedures can be inconsistent. Lack of teacher support for discipline issues.

- Disciplinary support is not always present and/or quick. Students can be disruptive in class but not escorted out until class is almost over. Prep time is not always given when meetings are scheduled.
- As a school, our tireless attempt to work with students who exhibit consistent, disruptive behavior often negativity affects those who are studious and who desire to learn.
- Enforcement of behavioral expectations; maintaining high standards of student discipline.
- Inconsistency in discipline.
- Culture of consistency across the school with policies on procedures especially when enforcing rules on students.
- Discipline.
- Consistent discipline—turnover.
- Discipline is lax in the hallways and in between classes, making for an environment that is rowdy and unpredictable.
- Implementation of rules for cell phone use.
- Student apathy, lack of consistent discipline among teachers.
- Appropriate discipline.
- Inconsistent discipline practices.
- Enforced discipline and support from administration.

There were many concerns made by teachers concerning consistency in enforcing the rules, which are the same across the building, but reportedly not consistently enforced. Clearly, discipline, consistency in enforcing rules, and student behavior are all concerns for building personnel, despite the significant improvement in behavior over the last several years. One teacher indicated a desire for some kind of incentives for good behavior and academic success, stating, “We don’t have a good reward system in place. We don’t have an assembly, enrichment.” Another noted that additional resource officers would be helpful. This person commented, “What I would like to have is a student resource officer all the time. I don’t know all the kids, but they walk through, you say hello, they just look [at you]. [We need] an official that greets the kids all the time. But there’s only one.” Another teacher commented on the difficulty in maintaining order with such crowded classes, sometimes not even having enough seats for the number of students. He commented, “Too many in a room—30 or more. It’s challenging keeping up with that number. You’re struggling to find seats for everybody.”

In summary, the auditors found that there has been a significant improvement in disciplinary issues over the last several years. Current frustrations over student behavior are typically focused on student disrespect, perceived apathy, or lack of motivation. There were many comments made by both building personnel and students that there are inconsistencies in how rules across the building are enforced. The consistency issue is exacerbated by the high percentage of inexperienced, new teachers.

### **Consistency, communication, and collaboration**

Effective schools are characterized by teachers, students, and administrators all working toward shared goals that are common across the building. When building stakeholders are not all focused on the same goals, a fragmentation of effort results, which then diminishes the likelihood of attaining those goals. Therefore, consistency in procedures, goals, efforts, and initiatives at all levels within a school is critical. An important key to maintaining consistency is effective communication and collaboration. These are the key processes by which consistency is maintained. Collaboration involves working cooperatively in

selecting and defining goals, which increases involvement and ownership throughout the building, and involves defining any procedures, processes or related actions that are necessary to attaining those goals. Communication then is the means by which goals, procedures, and related actions are made clear to all constituents, and is an ongoing process to assure clarity in interpretation and consistency in implementation. Monitoring is then another critical aspect of ensuring consistency in implementation, since misinterpretation of the information may have resulted and require correction.

It is not unusual to hear about inconsistencies in communication and building procedures in a school the size of Knightdale. With over 100 teachers, effective communication can be difficult and consistency equally so. To determine whether inconsistencies were perceived as a current weakness at Knightdale High School, the auditors interviewed and surveyed most of the teachers and administrators in the building. The auditors heard from a number of individuals about perceived inconsistencies. The first, already addressed in the previous section, concerns student behavior and discipline. There were several comments regarding overall lack of consistency and continuity in the building, which in turn is not beneficial for new teachers.

- “Main goal—consistency. Making sure that you follow through the plans laid out, for example, three strikes you’re out. To make sure it’s not meaningless.” (Building staff member)
- “There’s just a lack of communication, organization...which makes it very difficult for the BTs.” (Building staff member)

There was a large number of responses to the survey question, what are overall weaknesses in the building. These comments indicated a lack of consistency and inadequate communication. Responses included:

- Often there seems to be a lack of cohesion and clarity in regards to policies, procedures, and discipline.
- Need more inter-related communication across dept.
- Weakness? Consistency.
- Administration (Not all), consistency!, different points of view for evaluating teachers, not doing something about the few "bad" teachers that are here
- Weakness? Communication.
- Weakness? Communication.
- Weakness? Sometimes communication.
- Getting all teachers to buy into what is requested from the administrative staff.
- Weakness? Consistency. Communication.
- Teachers who do not follow procedures and rules.
- At times there is poor communication, all staff members do not perform assigned duties.
- Lack of consistency, communication.
- Weakness? Communication in some divisions.
- Overall lack of leadership and organization by administration.
- Support from administration, challenging teachers.
- Communication, overall morale.
- Communication.

- Consistency.
- Inconsistencies among administrators, inconsistencies among staff
- Consistency. We often do not tweak ideas. We simply scrap the whole plan and begin anew. Sometimes we have so many things stopping and starting; it creates confusion.
- Inter-communication between departments.
- Administration follow ups.
- Lack of communication, lack of consistency with administrators, minimal administrative support, weak BT program.
- There is a lack of consistency. Every year we have huge numbers of teachers leave, even in the middle of the year, due to the lack of support for new teachers and the overwhelming requirements on teachers. I don't know if the school is to blame or education and our county in general. I do know we have a habit here of hiring inexperienced teachers who are not prepared for our students--and those are the teachers who are leaving, forcing our school into a status of constant instability.
- Communications & Consistency
- Lack of communication
- Interdepartmental collaboration. Inconsistent implementation of policies by teachers and administration. Poor parental involvement.

In addition to the concerns about a lack of consistency and communication, almost a third of the staff members mentioned a lack of continuity in the building focus from year to year, which is perceived as either too ambitious, too demanding or frustrating for new teachers, and ultimately counterproductive to maintaining consistency.

- “We...try too many things at once (STEM, 10 Daily Habits, watch lists), too demanding on teachers, no student and parent accountability for academics, too little parent involvement.” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “Continuity.” (Building staff member)
- “There are many "on the fly" changes. Each year there is a new focus, a new program, new software. We never give anything a chance to work before we move on to the next big idea. Teachers are not always supported when they want to express questions or concerns.” (Building staff member)
- “Lack of consistency, lack of fidelity to any one project or programs Too many extra duties that run past the normal school day Too many additional things being asked of us to do.” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “Shifting priorities.” (Building staff member)
- “We have to stick with something long enough to see if it’s going to work. The culture of consistency—that’s what I’d like to see across the board.” (Building staff member)
- “There are a lot of great ideas, great people. Not coming together to make it happen. So much work, so much to do.” (Building staff member)
- “Here we put something in place and they aren’t enforcing it.” (Parent)

Despite clear building goals, a clear mission and vision, teachers are still reporting frustration with a lack of consistency, inadequate communication, and insufficient continuity. It is also true that Knightdale is a

complex building with a high percentage of new, inexperienced teachers, as well as recent changes and initiatives all made in an effort to improve the overall educational experience for all students. All these factors may contribute to diminished focus and consistency building-wide.

### Teacher attrition and lack of experience

Teacher experience is an important consideration when determining curricular needs, support systems and professional development for teachers. Teachers with three or less years of experience are typically most likely to leave the teaching profession, and they are also the group that has the least experience in classroom management and the lowest familiarity with the prescribed curriculum. The auditors found that Knightdale High School has a very young, inexperienced staff that may be contributing to the overall challenges faced by all building stakeholders.

The auditors confirmed the high percentage of new teachers with the survey instrument. One hundred teachers completed the online survey, and [Exhibit 1.3](#) presents the data regarding years of experience for all respondents.

**Exhibit 1.3**  
**Teachers’ Years of Experience**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**June 2013**

Years of Experience	% of Respondents	# of Respondents
0-2 years	38.8%	38
3-5 years	25.5%	25
6-10 years	34.7%	34
10-20 years	0.0%	0
20+ years	1.0%	1
<i>answered question</i>		<b>98</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>2</b>

As can be seen in Exhibit 1.3, the majority of respondents to the survey had two or less years of experience. Over one-fourth had less than five, and the next largest group (35%) had 6 to 10 years. Two did not respond. School leaders confirmed that a full one-fourth of the building is classified as BT—Beginning Teacher. These teachers are involved in a BT program and have a mentor assigned, as well. There were concerns, however, over a recent shift in BT program leadership and what a few teachers perceived as a decrease in the effectiveness of the program. These comments included:

- “[There are] 24, 25 Beginning Teachers (BTs). I would say as a BT 1, I think we have a strong support system, between the BT program and the new teacher program. Which falls for anybody that’s new here. I feel like, between my mentor and my BT...I have good support.” (Building staff member)
- “No—demand for the same thing as common core [in the BT professional development] is not there. I don’t think that everyone in the building is as trained in it as they should be.” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “The lack of administrative support and push for growth in the BT program.” (Building staff member)
- lack of community involvement, teacher turnover, inexperienced teachers
- More support for beginning teachers. It is hard to know what you don't know and sometimes it isn't always obvious what we should be doing.”

- Weakness? “Lack of communication, lack of consistency with administrators, minimal administrative support, weak BT program.” (Building staff member)
- “I have seen a lot of stress in the beginning teachers. Not having a structured agenda, not having that same administrator that is over BT not be the same one observing you. There is a lack of push for BTs to grow.” (Building staff member)

Other teachers spoke to the high teacher turnover rate, which many attributed to the ease with which teachers can go to other buildings in the system. These comments included:

- “There is a lack of consistency. Every year we have huge numbers of teachers leave, even in the middle of the year, due to the lack of support for new teachers and the overwhelming requirements on teachers. I don't know if the school is to blame or education and our county in general. I do know we have a habit here of hiring inexperienced teachers who are not prepared for our students--and those are the teachers who are leaving, forcing our school into a status of constant instability.
- Weakness? “Turnover in teachers year-to-year.” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “Loss of experienced, good teachers.” (Building staff member)
- “Sometimes you get in a rut---the transfer policy makes it so easy. As long as you've worked in the system a certain number of years, you can go wherever.” (Building staff member)
- “We get really good teachers---they stay about 3 years, then they get siphoned off.” (Building staff member)
- “We need more teachers that can be more consistent. It's hard to have consistency when you are hiring new teachers every year.” (Building staff member)

A couple of new teachers commented favorably on the support they receive from their mentors or from administrators. There were many comments made to this effect; a few samples included:

- “If we need help, Ms. Jernagin has an open door policy. She's always allowed me to come in.” (Building staff member)
- “From the school, I feel that I can count on the school for everything. I have a mentor and she is with me all the time.” (Building staff member)

The auditors found no incentive program in place to retain teachers, beyond the existing programs for BTs and mentoring. The auditors also noted that teacher attrition, over time, has hovered between 18 and 25%, most recently at 20%. The high percentage of new teachers has also persisted for several years, remaining close to 24-25%.

Teachers' morale was positive, in most cases, particularly if departmental support was strong. A number of teachers commented on the positive interactions in their departments and the important role the senior teachers and department chairs play. As one teacher put it, “Departments are close—[there's] lots of help, sharing.” Conversely, other teachers spoke of the demands of being a mentor, citing the additional time it takes given the other everyday responsibilities they have. One teacher commented, “We have mentors, but they're overloaded – they're supposed to be 1 on 1, but they're more like 1 on 3. We don't actually have many mentors on staff, for a staff this size. It's too hard.”

### **District Support Services**

The auditors then turned their attention to those services in the high school that are provided by the district. In other words, these are services that school leaders do not have absolute control over, despite the large role they may play in students' academic career. These include allocation of resources, adequacy of resources, busing, food service, cleanliness and crowding of the facility.

Much of the data presented below are anecdotal in nature, which means auditors heard it during interviews or it was mentioned on the survey, but there was not necessarily any documentation to triangulate the information shared. In a few instances, the auditors observed some of the conditions first-hand, but these comments and allegations should be taken as an indication of a problem that deserves closer attention and analysis from within the district, since full triangulation (beyond verbal confirmation from multiple sources) was not possible.

As with the other three East Wake County schools audited, the auditors heard of the inadequacy of financial resources provided to Knightdale High School. There were several comments concerning the politics of resource allocation, indicating a perception that the schools with high-need, low-income populations, whose parents and community members are least likely to go before the School Board with demands, receive less than other buildings. These comments included:

- “It’s politics--it’s the politics of how we spend the money.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Basically, now that they start streaming the board meetings—[you can see] the groups that demand things for their schools. And you never hear people from the east stand up and demand something for their building.” (Building staff member)
- “So it is an issue—in terms of the allocation of resources. Their money given was roughly the same thing—it just was given at separate times. (Central office administrator)
- “[Improving East Wake schools] is going to require more money. I would give them more resources. (Central office administrator)

One district administrator agreed with the need for additional resources, but also noted, “It’s easy to say we need more resources. But with that, we need to know what to do with the resources.” This leader also said, “Paying subs for their teachers to come to the trainings, paying for presenters to come in; working with various funds. That’s what we need to continue doing.” At least one-half of all teachers commented on the need for more resources or the perceived shortage in resources, particularly those that support STEM teaching and technology. Some of these included:

- “It’s hard to be a STEM school when I can’t request STEM things. It’s so frustrating. I come up with an awesome little thing and the internet is down. We don’t have a book...little nuances like that add up over time. I would love to fix it.
- “The high school does not have as much [technology] as other schools.” (Building staff member)
- “We don’t have the supplies we need; we are supposed to be a STEM school and we don’t have the technology.” (Building staff member)
- “There are 20 mac computers and nobody is using them. Then the cart—the teacher has to have a whole week’s lesson plan to use the iPad—you have to sign up in advance. She keeps them in the classroom—half of them don’t even work in the cart; they don’t have chargers.” (Student)
- “Now I have to hunt down a set of speakers—tech-wise, the disparities are kind of big.” (Building staff member)
- “I have the resources I need; we have the iPad carts; we don’t have the smart boards. Other than that, pretty good.” (Building staff member)
- Weaknesses? “Inadequate textbooks, inadequate access to technology, transient student population.” (Building staff member)
- “Not enough computers.” (Building staff member)
- “Limited technology resources available on a daily basis.” (Building staff member)

- “A lack of classroom-level technology. Smart boards would be of great assistance in this age.” (Building staff member)
- “There's just a need for more technology in the classroom, but that is more of a district thing.” (Building staff member)
- “Since we became a STEM school we get a lot of technology but we never get any books.” (Student)
- “Work orders have been put in for *years*—it’s such a low priority. It’s not a safety issue; some of the screens don’t stay down, the water fountains don’t work, etc. We would love to see LCDs mounted.” (Building staff member)
- “I get told this every year—we’ve got \$8000. That’s for *everything* in the science department. \$8000 is a drop in the bucket—we have to buy our LCD projectors with that. We don’t have what we need to be effective.” (Building staff member)

There were general comments on the perceived inequitable distribution of funds across the County, by staff, students, and parents, and the corresponding lack of materials required for everyday teaching, such as paper:

- “We are a part of eastern Wake schools—so we don’t get as much funding as other schools. We didn’t get our senior breakfast.” (Student)
- “In our AP class, we don’t have enough books. I can’t always go online for my homework. It’s the same with a lot of my classes—there’s never enough books for everybody. You always have to share.” (Student)
- “I think the funding is not split up the way it should be.” (Student)
- “It’s resources—trying to make sure that our printer is consistently working, our copy machine.” (Building staff member)
- “Not all kids have access to online things at home.” (Building staff member)
- “We need more intervention specialist(s) due to demographics and population.” (Building staff member)
- “There seems to be a lack of resources and funding to adequately meet the needs of our students.” (Building staff member)
- “Not enough resources.” (Building staff member)
- “We do not have enough funding for textbooks for our courses.” (Building staff member)
- “[There is] not enough funding for our programs.” (Building staff member)
- “[There are] limited resources.” (Building staff member)
- “I know there is CMAPP, it is just really hard to teach without resources. Needing copies without paper—having to request things online, no paper.” (Building staff member)
- “I go buy [paper]—I always have. It’s not a costly thing—I go ahead and just bit the bullet.” (Building staff member)
- “Where is the paper shortage coming from? It becomes difficult to distribute information to students—they don’t have internet access at home, they don’t have a computer. I have to be able to give it to them.” (Building staff member)

- “We’re all going to be out of paper—I wouldn’t be surprised if it wasn’t by the end of the week.” (Building staff member)
- No paper? Go to administrator? “I wouldn’t feel comfortable going to an administrator and asking for more paper.” (Building staff member)
- What do you do? “Buy it yourself. We are currently dealing with no paper. And especially with common core not having a textbook—we’ve almost gone through that entire stash of colored paper. We will have to go purchase it at Wal-mart ourselves.” (Building staff member)
- “Ideally, I would ask for us to have our own classroom. One of the reasons we’re so close, we have a work area. All the rooms need to be standard if we have to float. A doc-cam, LCD projector that’s mounted to the ceiling, that type of thing.” (Building staff member)

### **Food Service**

Interestingly, at both East Wake Middle School and the high school, auditors heard many complaints regarding the food service, mostly with regard to insufficient time for lunch (because of so many kids needing to be served in a limited amount of time) and insufficient food, typically the main course. Students in particular complained of inadequate food and also strict rules on standing or eating in class. These comments included:

- “A lot of kids don’t have time to go [to the bathroom] during lunch because the lines are so long—you only get 30 minutes for lunch and it takes 30 minutes to get through the line.” (Student)
- “Sometimes they run out of food. If you have the last lunch—you get the leftovers.” (Student)
- “[You are] not supposed to eat in that classroom. If you have water, you get sent to 1613. If you have any sort of drink you get kicked out.” (Student)
- “Right now, the lunches are packed. Sometimes, there are no places to sit.” (Student)
- “[The lunch people] act like they don’t see you, like you aren’t there (when they run out of food).” (Student)
- When do they run out of food? “Always—a lot. The principal is always on the lunch people’s side.” (Student)
- “They run out of food a lot. People will go through the line and pile it up and have a mountain of food and there’s nothing left for you. The lunches (main course), the fries, and cookies every day [they run out of].” (Student)
- “I try to eat a salad and they don’t have any today. It’s supposed to be a parfait—and a salad.” (Student)
- “You have to get whatever is left. I make sure I am the first person—salads look like they’ve been frozen for a year.” (Student)

### **Busing**

Similarly, there were many complaints and concerns about busing, the most frequent one being that students don’t arrive to school on time. If a student arrives 20 minutes late to school every day for the school year, that student loses over 60 hours of instructional time by the end of the year. There were also comments about bus drivers going past students and not picking them up. These comments in

- “The bus routes can be forever, if you live out here [Zebulun]. [East Wake] schools were the least impacted by the healthy schools initiative. They are all poor.” (Central Office Administrator)

- “I was RIGHT at my driveway and the bus driver looked right at me and kept on going.” (Student)
- “I started riding the bus—a good 25 minutes. I can’t drive my car; my bus doesn’t get here until 4pm in the afternoon.” (Student)
- “At the beginning of the year, the girl would come in EVERY day 45 minutes late. Every single morning. We would expect her to come in late every single morning. Always a bus slip.” (Student)
- “My bus was always late so I just told my mom to take me to school.” (Student)
- “The buses are really crowded now—and we have to go to all these different places. It takes me until 4 to get home—I live pretty far away from the school.” (Student)
- Weakness? “Budget, transportation...” (Building staff member)
- “When the buses are full, there are three, four students in every seat.” (Building staff member)

Despite recent changes in busing and transportation county-wide, building leaders confirmed there are students who are dropped off late every day and buses that come late after school to take students home.

### **Crowding and Cleanliness**

The auditors noted that Knightdale High School is a newer facility, spacious and bright and attractive. However, it was also very dirty in places, despite its newness. These comments included:

- “Budget is killing us – the school is filthy. If I don’t clean my classroom, it stays dirty. My trash sometimes doesn’t get emptied. No one sweeps my floor.” (Building staff member)
- “One custodian hides, the others work hard.” (Building staff member)
- “[There is] pizza on the stairs – it will be there all week.” (Building staff member)

This last was actually observed (and confirmed) by the auditors. There was indeed pizza on the stairs and it was indeed there for several days. Students also complained about the bathrooms, and one or two teachers, too. These were reportedly dirty and frequently vandalized, and that hallway supervision was inadequate. These comments included:

- “The bathrooms—gross!! As we get older, we get put back in kindergarten.” (Student)
- “Some of the immature people—they trash the bathroom every week. I’ve never been walked in on before. [There are] no administrators—no teachers coming into the bathrooms.” (Student)
- “When people are skipping an administrator is walking by the bathroom and they can hear the people shouting—and [they] don’t go in.” (Student)
- Weaknesses? “Keeping restrooms clean.” (Building staff member)
- “That whole middle stairs—that’s the problem. That’s where stuff happens. People bump you—stairs are not good.” (Student)
- Halls monitored? “No, not at all.” Teachers in the halls? “They stand out their doors—but out in the middle? No. Or they’re standing by the locker bays.” (Student)

As far as crowding, the building itself is adequate, except for some overcrowding in certain common areas because of traffic flow inside. Classrooms are decent-sized, hallways wide, with low locker bays that allow straight lines of visibility. The auditors heard many complaints from teachers about certain classes having too many students for the number of seats available or classrooms that are overcrowded. It was also reported to them that this can be a function of scheduling that the departments themselves have

control over, although some also reported that the census, taken the tenth day of school, is often erroneous and therefore there may be an inadequate number of teachers or even courses to handle the number of students registered for the course. Almost all teachers who spoke of class size confirmed the benefits of having smaller classes. Sample comments included:

- “Smaller class sizes definitely helps.” (Building staff member)
- “I’ve had—a couple of times— more kids than seats. Last semester was a stretch—31, 32 kids in the classroom.” (Building staff member)
- Weaknesses? “Classroom sizes—number of kids in classes. I had 33, 34 and I only have seats for 32.” (Building staff member)
- [The] number of students in classrooms.
- Weakness? “Class sizes.” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “Standard classes are too large-typically 30 or more students.” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “Large class sizes, technology not evenly distributed.” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “[The] number of students in classrooms.” (Building staff member)

In summary, the auditors heard complaints regarding building cleanliness, food service, and busing issues. There was also an overarching perception that the high school does not receive resources commensurate with their need, and that current materials, supplies, and technology are in short supply and do not support the delivery of instruction.

### **Community Involvement**

The auditors met with school personnel, students, and parents during the ISA site visit. There were many comments made concerning the reputation of the school in the community and the need for increased parental involvement. This is seen as a major deterrent in brining and keeping students at the school. There were also concerns expressed that the only type of media coverage the school receives is negative. The comments included:

- “We want to see fewer Knightdale kids going to the magnet schools.” (Building staff member)
- “They think this is the ghetto school, some absolutely love the school. We had over 5 million dollars in scholarships last year—I don’t know if it every really reached outside our building.” (Building staff member)
- “If we can get these kids to establish pride in their school—we still don’t have that history, that culture. The kids should have pride in their school.” (Building staff member)
- “I heard about Knightdale high school from the community—it was completely different from what I expected.” (Building staff member)
- “I hear the negative perceptions, too—but when you come in, we’re just like any other school. I think the discipline is not as bad as the perception says it is.” (Building staff member)
- “This is our school. I just found we were average kids that need what average kids need. People get hyped up...we just have to be sure the truth be told.” (Building staff member)
- “As far as perception goes—I would like the perceptions to change. Perception is reality.” (Building staff member)
- “I would love to see more community involvement.” (Building staff member)

- “One reason it’s changed is there’s more information getting out to the community about what the school is doing.” (Building staff member)
- “Perception at first was not good. It mainly came from folks who did not have students here—those who had students here knew better.” (Building staff member)
- “We need to be more school spirited.” (Student)
- “Pep rally? Only one—this year.” (Student)
- Proud of coming here? “No—there’s always someone talking down about you. Knightdale is not that bad. If a fight breaks out here...it’s on the news. Now it’s calmed down. I’ve never been on lock down.” (Student)
- “My friends in Cary think we’re so bad—I tell them it’s a lie. I defend my school so much. There’s nothing wrong!” (Student)
- “The high school can get a bad rep just because of the city of Knightdale.” (Building staff member)
- “We had international ambassadors here at the building, from Dubai, but NO press coverage.” (Building staff member)
- “It’s a shame that we have this [bad reputation]—not enough gets out because it should get out. They don’t deserve to be under this shadow—this is time to break this.” (Building staff member)
- “There are a lot of politics in the eastern side of the county—a lot of suspicion no matter what you do. This school has a very negative persona outside in the community.” (Building staff member)
- “There’s a huge disconnect between the school and the community.” (Building staff member)
- “You lose students by 5th grade—and in middle school, there’s a big decline at the middle school.” (Parent)
- “You don’t see the tremendous effort that goes on behind the scenes.” (Parent)
- “The Eastern Wake News would call me every time there was drama, but not when there’s anything good.” (Parent)
- “There’s a class that send stuff to the paper every week—they choose what they put in there and what they don’t.” (Parent)
- “They listen and [parents] come. It makes it difficult for the teachers to get their support, too and to get hold of them. I think a lot of those things add to the negative perception, but we can’t fix that.” (Parent)
- “Community perception. I had one of the parents say to me that her kids are afraid to come here because of what the kids look like when they come out.” (Building staff member)
- “That’s our biggest challenge—fighting the *perception* of the community.” (Building staff member)
- “The biggest challenge that I see at Knightdale HS goes back to that perception problem. Sometimes that perception problem has a tendency to impact everybody—*our* perception is not based on what other people think but based on what you’ve experienced in the school.” (Building staff member)

**Comments concerning parental involvement included:**

- “We need more parent involvement.” (Building staff member)
- “We do have a group of parents that is very involved in the school.” (Building staff member)
- “There isn’t this consistent push. It’s gotten better—I’ve noticed more parent involvement.” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “Parent participation .” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “I feel community support of the school itself has always been a weakness -- primarily due to socio-economic status and demographics of the school .” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “This school sometimes struggles to get parents involved, but not for lack of effort .” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “Lack of parental involvement .” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “The lack of broad-based parental involvement .” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “Parental support .” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “High number of special need population. High number of free and reduced lunch [students].” (Building staff member)
- Weakness? “Community, Parent, & District support .” (Building staff member)
- “The main problem this school faces are outside societal factors, such as poverty that are not within our control .” (Building staff member)
- “And we do have some parents here that are involved.” (Building staff member)
- “[The] counselor does site visits—[it’s a] very transient population. Addresses change a lot, phones change a lot. I’ve noticed a lot of people—they’re section 8.” (Building staff member)
- Plan 2—how do we reach the parents that aren’t coming? ” (Building staff member)
- “Parent communication and parent involvement is a big issue, here.” (Building staff member)
- “I think the county is receptive, to change things for the parents. I brought it up to the PTA—we can get interpreters, they will send people. They will have them come out, to translate for parents. A lot of it is getting staff and PTA and other organizations to realize that the system has that to utilize.” (Parent)
- “We’re very aware of our population—we don’t ask for huge things. A lot of those things look like the school doesn’t have parental support. When they really do, to the best of their availability. And they can’t be here during the day to help out.” (Parent)
- “All of our schools have a low income—even those that are not free and reduced, almost all are middle class.” (Parent)
- “We don’t have the total support from the parents because the parents are struggling to survive day to day. Our parents can’t afford it, our community can’t afford it. We don’t have that—(a PTA with 100 parents).” (Parent)

In summary, there have been many improvements over the last several years in student discipline and the culture within the building, an improvement in students’ personal safety and conduct, improvement in the clarity of rules and expectations, and a tightening of expectations that has resulted in fewer tardies and improved behavior in the halls and common areas. However, there are still areas needing continuing attention. Despite the strong philosophy and beliefs that all students can succeed academically,

expectations for student performance are not all consistently high and there is frustration over students' perceived lack of motivation. Monitoring is inconsistent and not sufficiently focused on the content being delivered. Areas of focus within the building change too frequently and beginning teachers report feeling mentored, such as monitoring the delivery of curriculum, improving consistency throughout in enforcing building rules and managing student behavior in the classroom. There is a large percentage of new, inexperienced teachers that require support, and despite the mentoring and BT program, several teachers reported this contributes to challenges in consistency in the building (see also [Finding 2](#)).

Resources are perceived as inadequate to support student learning in the classroom, busing and food service issues do not consistently meet students' needs, and the school continues to battle a negative perception in the community that is marked by high economic need.

**Finding 2: Curriculum delivery is aligned with district curriculum but not consistently aligned with common core standards in context and cognitive type. The most frequently observed instructional approach was direct instruction, with.**

Academic success for students depends on many factors; most notably, a high-quality written curriculum that facilitates and focuses effective delivery, and effective curriculum delivery that maximizes student success and achievement. Effective delivery is a combination of effective strategies and approaches that are meaningful and effective for students, coupled with the objectives and content at each student's level to ensure their progress in mastering the continuum of learning. This is assured through frequent monitoring of classroom teaching and evidence of student work. A critical component of effective monitoring is having clear guidelines for what rigorous, high quality instruction looks like, which helps inform teachers and administrators the model they are all striving for.

To determine how effectively curriculum is delivered in classrooms at Knightdale High School, the auditors visited every classroom to note observational data, collected artifacts of student work, interviewed all classroom teachers and building administrators, and surveyed teachers regarding curriculum and instruction in the building. The auditors also reviewed district policy and other documentation to determine any expectations for instruction and curriculum delivery, as well as for monitoring that delivery.

In this finding, the auditors will address two main components of curriculum delivery: the monitoring of the curriculum; district expectations for instructional delivery in the building and whether or not observed teaching and learning practices during classroom visits align with these expectations; and the alignment of student work with district and Common Core curriculum. Overall, the auditors found clear expectations in several board policies, as well as in other district documents, for rigorous instruction and the use of data to inform instructional decisions. Classroom observations were characterized by a preponderance of direct, large group instruction and monitoring and activities generally fell within the lower portions of Bloom's Taxonomy. Auditors observed numerous instances of disengaged students.

**Calibration of Student Work Artifacts**

Classrooms represent a critical juncture for school districts: it is in the classroom that the written curriculum is executed, and it is the work of the classroom that is ultimately assessed to determine student achievement. What goes on in the classroom has repercussions for the entire system. If a district has high expectations for student learning but the classroom artifacts do not reflect these expectations, it is unlikely the district will achieve its goals. It is therefore of great importance that the content of student work artifacts be aligned to the written curriculum, and also that the rigor of the artifacts embody the high expectations of the district.

In order to determine the degree to which classroom resources and materials were aligned to the written curriculum, auditors visited nearly all classrooms in Knightdale High School. As they visited classrooms, auditors gathered more than 70 samples of student work artifacts used for instruction and student learning. Auditors then analyzed these artifacts at each grade level each content area to determine alignment with

the CMAPP, which currently comprises the district's curriculum. These artifacts were then calibrated against the curriculum to determine the actual grade level of the work represented by the artifact and the cognitive type and context of each artifact. Calibration is a process that is used to evaluate the observed objective for student learning determined from the artifact against the proposed student learning for that intended grade level. The auditors calibrate artifacts' content objectives against district or state standards to determine whether students are working at, above, or below their grade level. Due to individual learner needs, auditors are not suggesting that all student work should be at or above grade level all the time, but the analysis does allow district leaders to see if there might be an inordinate percentage of student work that is below grade level or of low cognitive demand.

As this was a random sample, auditors are not suggesting that these artifacts fully represent the level and cognitive type of all the work used over the course of a year in KHS classrooms. However, the analysis does provide insight into possible areas of weakness with regard to content, context, and cognitive type alignment.

Overall, auditors found that the CMAPP was inconsistently available. Some courses were very thorough with common core standards, pacing guides, and instructional resources, others were completely empty. Teacher usage of the CMAPP was inconsistent. Most artifacts calibrated to the purported grade level, with a few exceptions. Content mismatches between artifacts and the Language Arts CMAPP indicated that the CMAPP does not consistently reflect Common Core standards and benchmarks for Language Arts. Cognitive rigor for most artifacts was at the lower end of the taxonomy and contexts of artifacts were generally classroom activities and not well-aligned to the Smarter Balanced assessments.

### ***Objective Content Calibration***

Objective content refers to the knowledge, skills, processes and attitudes to be taught as expressed by a student learning objective. For this type of analysis, auditors calibrated the instructional level of the student artifact by comparing the content skill area or concept to be mastered to the CMAPP for that content area. From this, an actual grade level/course content specification can be determined for each artifact by curricular area. The actual grade level of each artifact is then tallied for each grade level to derive a percentage. For example, if grade four had six artifacts and three were determined to be at grade level and three were determined to be at one grade level below, we would say that 50% were at grade level; the remaining three artifacts were determined to be at one grade level below, so 50% are at the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level.

These data are then placed in a table showing the distribution of the actual grade level of the artifacts, as determined by the analysis. Then the calibrated grade levels are multiplied by the number of artifacts to determine the average level of difficulty for all artifacts in that grade level. For example, if grade 4 has 6 artifacts total and 3 are on grade level and 3 are at 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level, we multiply 3 by 3 for a score of 9 and 3 by 4 for a score of 12. These numbers are added together for a score of 21, then divided by the total number of artifacts for 4<sup>th</sup> grade: 21 divided by 6, for an average grade level score of 3.5. It is important to note that this is not a grade equivalent score; it merely reflects the average grade level that the artifacts represent. Additionally, it should be noted that it is the *activity* of the artifact that is evaluated, not a student's actual work. The student's actual work may represent an even lower, or higher, grade level than what the artifact itself expects. For high school, many courses may be taken by students in any of the four grade levels, so the appropriate grade level span is 9-12 and as long as artifacts calibrate within that span, they are considered on grade level. Some artifacts may fail to align with the written curriculum. These failures are considered content mismatches and may occur for a number of reasons, not least of which is that the CMAPP is still a work in progress and is inconsistently available for teachers to reference.

Exhibit 2.1 shows the calibration of language arts artifacts with the CMAPP.

### **Exhibit 2.1**

**Curriculum Calibration of Student Artifacts 9-12  
with Language Arts CMAPP  
Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

Grade Level from which Artifact was Collected	Percent of Student Artifacts compared with Grade Level Standards Distributed by Grade					Average Grade Level of Student Work
	6	7	8	9-12	CM	
9				50%	50%	9.0
10				100%		10.0
11					100%	0
12					100%	0

Exhibit 2.1 shows the following:

- Artifacts were collected from all grade levels.
- For 9th grade (English I), 50% of artifacts were determined to be a content mismatch; they did not align to the CMAPP. The other 50% were determined to be on grade level.
- In 10th grade, (English II), 100% of collected artifacts were determined to be on grade level.
- In grade 11 (English III), 100% of artifacts were a content mismatch: auditors could not find this content in the CMAPP. It should be noted, however, that the content was similar to the sort of content auditors would expect to find in an 11th grade language arts course. It is possible that the fault lies with the comprehensiveness (or lack thereof) of the CMAPP rather than the artifact.
- In grade 12, 100% of artifacts were a content mismatch. In this instance, 50% of artifacts were similar in content to what auditors would expect to see in a 12th grade history course. The other 50% of artifacts were what auditors would normally expect to see in a 9th grade language arts course. Since none appeared to correspond with objectives in the CMAPP at any grade level, auditors were unable to determine whether the fault lies with the CMAPP or with the artifacts.

Exhibit 2.2 shows the grade level calibration between language arts artifacts and the Common Core. The Common Core utilizes grade level bands at the high school level, so artifacts calibrate to either grades 9-10 or 11-12. These artifacts are given the lower grade level value when calculating average grade level.

**Exhibit 2.2**

**Curriculum Calibration of Student Artifacts 9-12  
With Language Arts Common Core**

**Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

Grade Level from which Artifact was Collected	Percent of Student Artifacts compared with Grade Level Standards Distributed by Grade						Average Grade Level of Student Work
	6	7	8	9-10	11-12	CM	
9	50%			50%			7.5
10				100%			9
11					100%		11
12			25%	25%	50%		9.8

Exhibit 2.2 shows the following:

- All artifacts collected in language arts were aligned to the Common Core.
- In grade 9, 50% of artifacts were determined to be on grade level. The remaining 50% were determined to be three grade levels below.
- In grades 10 and 11, 100% of artifacts were determined to be on grade level.
- In grade 12, 50% of artifacts were determined to be on grade level. Of the remaining artifacts, 25% were determined to be one grade level band below, and 25% were determined to be three grade levels below. It should also be noted that 50% of artifacts did align to the Common Core language arts standards as they apply to reading history (RH.11-12.1).

Exhibit 2.3 shows the calibration of Math artifacts with the CMAPP.

**Exhibit 2.3  
Curriculum Calibration of Student Artifacts 9-12  
With Math CMAPP  
Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

Course from which Artifact was Collected	Percent of Student Artifacts compared with Grade Level Standards Distributed by Grade					Average Grade Level of Student Work
	6	7	8	9-12	CM	
Alg II				100%		9-11
Geometry				100%*	*	9-10

\* the geometry artifact was a teacher-made artifact with errors in the visuals (two similar quadrilaterals).

Exhibit 2.3 shows the following:

In mathematics, three artifacts were collected from algebra II courses and one from geometry. All were found to be on-level; all were from the text or from the C-MAPP.

Exhibit 2.4 shows the alignment and calibration of math artifacts with the Common Core.

**Exhibit 2.4**  
**Curriculum Calibration of Student Artifacts 9-12**  
**With Math Common Core**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

Course from which Artifact was Collected	Percent of Student Artifacts compared with Grade Level Standards Distributed by Grade					Average Grade Level of Student Work
	6	7	8	9-12	CM	
<b>Alg II</b>				100%		9-11
<b>Geometry</b>				100%*	*	9-10

Exhibit 2.4 shows the following:

Math artifacts were all found to align in content with the Common Core. The auditors noted a great deal of similarity in what all Algebra II students were doing. However, the geometry artifact had errors in the visuals used, although the concepts align with the common core.

Exhibit 2.5 shows the alignment of Science artifacts with the CMAPP. Science courses are not grade-level specific. In order to determine grade level calibration, auditors assigned usual and customary grade levels to the artifacts collected. Courses and grade level assignments are specified in the analysis.

**Exhibit 2.5**  
**Curriculum Calibration of Student Artifacts 9-12**  
**With Science CMAPP**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

Grade Level from which Artifact was Collected	Percent of Student Artifacts compared with Grade Level Standards Distributed by Grade					Average Grade Level of Student Work
	6	7	8	9-12	CM	
<b>9</b>				100%		9
<b>10</b>				100%		10
<b>11-12</b>				100%		10

Exhibit 2.5 shows the following:

- For the purposes of grade level calibration, Earth Science and Physical Science were both assigned to 9th grade; Biology was assigned to 10th grade; Anatomy and Physiology was assigned to 11-12th grades.
- All artifacts at all levels were determined to be within the 9-12 grade levels. However, it should be noted that the Anatomy and Physiology artifact was keyed to a pair of biology standards in the CMAPP. These biology standards did not appear to be the same biology standards used for Biology; auditors were unable to determine the source of the Anatomy and Physiology standards.

- Because Anatomy and Physiology uses biology standards, the average grade level would be that of biology -- grade 10.

Exhibit 2.6 shows the alignment of Social Studies artifacts with the CMAPP. Social Studies is somewhat grade level specific; auditors assigned either usual and customary grade levels to courses, or used the grade level predominant in that particular course to determine grade level assignments.

**Exhibit 2.6**  
**Curriculum Calibration of Student Artifacts 9-12**  
**With Social Studies CMAPP**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

Grade Level from which Artifact was Collected	Percent of Student Artifacts compared with Grade Level Standards Distributed by Grade					Average Grade Level of Student Work
	6	7	8	9-12	CM	
9				100%		9
10						NA
11-12				70%	30%	11

Exhibit 2.6 shows the following:

- For the purposes of grade level calibration, auditors assigned usual and customary grade levels to the artifacts collected.
- In 9th grade, 100% of artifacts were determined to be on grade level. However, auditors noted that the standards and objectives in 9th grade courses were utilized over and over with little content specificity and almost no way to determine what mastery of specific content might look like. So while the artifacts appeared to be on grade level, it would be fair to say that a great many artifacts and a wide range of content might also have fit under the objectives given.
- For 11th and 12th grade, 70% of artifacts were determined to be on grade level and 30% were determined to be a content mismatch; they did not align to the CMAPP. Auditors noted that several courses made reference to standards in the CMAPP, but the actual standards and objectives were nowhere in evidence. In the absence of clearly specified objectives, it is impossible to say how mastery will look or how it will be measured. Teachers are, in essence, flying blind. Other courses had objectives and standards, but as in the 9th grade curriculum, these standards were vague and used repeatedly throughout the course. Since content was not specified and objectives were vague, auditors could not detect alignment between the collected artifacts and the CMAPP.

Exhibit 2.7 shows the alignment of World Languages artifacts with the CMAPP. Since language study is seldom grade-level specific, auditors used the level of the language learning in sequence -- I, II, III, etc.

**Exhibit 2.7**  
**Curriculum Calibration of Student Artifacts 9-12**  
**With World Languages CMAPP**

**Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

Level from which Artifact was Collected	Percent of Student Artifacts compared with Grade Level Standards Distributed by Grade						Average Grade Level of Student Work
	I	II	III	IV	AP	CM	
I	100%						I
II						100%	Unable to Determine
III							NA
IV							NA
AP				100%			IV

Exhibit 2.7 Shows the following:

- For level I, 100% of the artifacts collected were determined to be on grade level. However, the standards were very vague and the content of the artifacts was not specifically addressed. It was possible, though, for the content to fit under the given objectives, so auditors gave credit for alignment.
- For Level II, 100% of the artifacts were a content mismatch; they did not align with the CMAPP. This is because the CMAPP was empty for this course at this level.
- For AP, 100% of the content was determined to be at level IV. Auditors examined the AP curriculum on the CMAPP and could find no alignment with the artifacts collected. However, the content was addressed in level IV. It is unclear whether level IV and AP are considered commensurate or sequential courses; their curricula differ but the objectives contained in the CMAPP are similar.

Exhibit 2.8 shows the alignment of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) artifacts with the CMAPP. Because of the mostly non-sequential nature of CTE courses, it was not possible to determine an average grade level.

**Exhibit 2.8  
Curriculum Calibration of Student Artifacts 9-12  
With CTE CMAPP  
Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

Course	Aligned with CMAPP	
	Yes	No
<b>Foods I</b>	x	
<b>Apparel I</b>	x	
<b>Green Engineering</b>	x	
<b>Drafting I</b>	x	

Exhibit 2.8 shows the following:

- All artifacts from CTE courses aligned to the CMAPP
- Some objectives and standards given were vague; the content of the Foods I artifact was only minimally referred to in the CMAPP. Likewise, the standards for Drafting were sufficiently broad that it would be difficult to determine whether mastery of the standard had been achieved.

Interviews with staff indicated that use of CMAPP is inconsistent largely because the CMAPP has been inconsistently available or insufficiently detailed to facilitate use. Some interviewees indicated that CMAPP did not support instructional differentiation, especially for students arriving with sub-par reading skills. Representative comments included the following:

- "Some of it (CMAPP) is good. [My section] is ridiculous; the things they have for students to do are beyond what an MFA (Masters Fine Arts) would do. The whole thing needs to be altered." (Building staff member)
- "I haven't been to CMAPP in a while." (Building staff member)
- "CMAPP is good for planning but things aren't always there -- units weren't up when needed." (Building staff member)
- "I hate CMAPP. It's inconsistent (courses, units, some good, some bad). I find it frustrating. Nuggets of things are good, but there are gaps. It's organized weird, it's hard to navigate. Links are broken or missing. I like PB Works because I can upload stuff and it's there." (Building staff member)
- "I use it all the time. It's there for [my area] so that's good. [Other areas] need activities." (Building staff member)
- "CMAPP - English I is a gem. I love it. We follow that pacing very well. English III is terrible." (Building staff member)
- "It's supposed to be for teachers who don't have any idea what to use for resources, but the pacing of the benchmarks and CMAPP is not connected." (Building staff member)
- "It's more foundational for curriculum. It's not enriching a lesson, just laying the groundwork." (Building staff member)
- "If I have a hole to fill, I'll look there (CMAPP)." (Building staff member)
- "It's not there yet for [math]. We're doing everything from scratch." (Building staff member)
- "It's still being developed for my area." (Building staff member)
- "Electives aren't there yet." (Building staff member)
- "It's been a lifesaver for new teachers." (Building staff member)
- "It's a help for new teachers but it doesn't support differentiating." (Building staff member)
- "There's not much for AP." (Building staff member)
- "There are no resources [for brand new course] and links are outdated." (Building staff member)
- "They (C-MAPP lesson plans) are designed for kids who are reading on level." (Building staff member)

- "The CMAPP is made from the book—and it's very tied—you have to complete every assignment. You feel like you don't have time to do different things." (Building staff member)

Auditors noted that there were a variety of interpretations as to how CMAPP should be used. Some believed they were to follow it religiously these teachers often expressed frustration with the pacing. Others believed it was meant to be a loose guide to content and pacing and used it only to supplement what they were already doing. Many expressed frustration with broken links or missing content and several mentioned that the site was hard to navigate. Auditors noted that navigating the CMAPP was different depending on which course was being accessed. Some courses required the opening of pdf files, while others (depending on the operating system of the computer in use), might cause multiple windows to open, force the switching of applications already in use, or cause display issues. Issues such as these make it less likely that users will access all parts of the curriculum before developing activities. Auditors also noted that CMAPP timed users out after a certain period of time, necessitating that teachers log in again frequently. While timing users out is often a necessary security feature, timing them out too quickly increases frustration and diminishes the perceived user-friendliness of the application.

**Cognitive Types**

Cognitive Type is an indicator of the sort of thinking required to carry out a given task. Auditors expect that the thinking skills of the written, taught and tested curriculum will be congruent so that students are not surprised by the demands placed on them in high stakes testing situations. The various assignments and activities collected in classrooms across the district should reveal a range of cognitive demands, so that students have ample opportunity to practice the cognitive skills they will need to be successful on national, state and local assessments.

To provide an analysis of cognitive type, auditors used the framework based on the new Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive domains, as presented in [Exhibit 2.9](#).

**Exhibit 2.9**

**Bloom's Taxonomy  
Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

	<i>Remember</i>	<i>Understand</i>	<i>Apply</i>	<i>Analyze</i>	<i>Evaluate</i>	<i>Create</i>
<i>Fact</i>	Remember Facts	Understand Facts	Apply Facts	Analyze using facts, concepts, principles and procedures	Evaluated using facts, concepts, principles and procedures	Create using facts, concepts, principles and procedures
<i>Concept/ Principle</i>	Remember Concepts	Understand Concepts	Apply Concepts			
<i>Procedure</i>	Remember Procedures	Understand Procedures	Apply Procedures			
<i>Metacognitive</i>	Remember Metacognitive Strategies	Understand Metacognitive Strategies	Apply Metacognitive Strategies	Analyze Metacognitive Strategies	Evaluate Metacognitive Strategies	Create Metacognitive Strategies
	<i>Knowledge</i>		<i>Skill</i>	<i>Ability</i>		

In order to promote higher order thinking skills, activities would need to fall within the Ability range: that is, in analyzing, evaluating, and creating. [Exhibit 2.10](#) further clarifies and defines the sorts of activities which exemplify the various levels of the taxonomy.

**Exhibit 2.10**

**Bloom's Taxonomy Purposes and Exemplars  
Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

<b>Bloom's Taxonomy Sample Verbs and Purposes</b>			
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Sample Prompts</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Level</b>
Remember	Recognize, List, Describe, Retrieve, Name, Locate, Find, Highlight, Recall, Identify, Name	Memorize and recall facts	Lower
Understand	Interpret, Summarize, Infer, Paraphrase, Classify, Explain, Annotate, Estimate, Predict, Discuss, Translate	Understand and interpret meaning	
Apply	Implement, Use, Execute, Carry Out, Show, Apply, Solve, Correct, Demonstrate	Apply knowledge to new situations	
Analyze	Compare/Contrast, Organize, Deconstruct, Attribute, Outline, Integrate	Break down information into component parts; examine information	Higher
Evaluate	Hypothesize, Critique, Judge, Test, Rate, Check, Conclude, Defend, Rank, Debate	Judge or decide according to a set of criteria	
Create	Design, Construct, Plan, Invent, Produce, Make, Create, Compose	Combine elements into a new pattern or product	

In order to analyze the cognitive types of the various artifacts collected, a procedure similar to that used for Objective Content was utilized to construct a simple percentage chart. The auditors recorded the cognitive type of each artifact and used those totals, divided by the total number of artifacts, to determine the percentage of each. Data were organized by content area.

Exhibit 2.11 shows the cognitive types of student work artifacts in Language Arts.

**Exhibit 2.11  
Cognitive Type Analysis  
Student Work Artifacts - Language Arts**

**Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

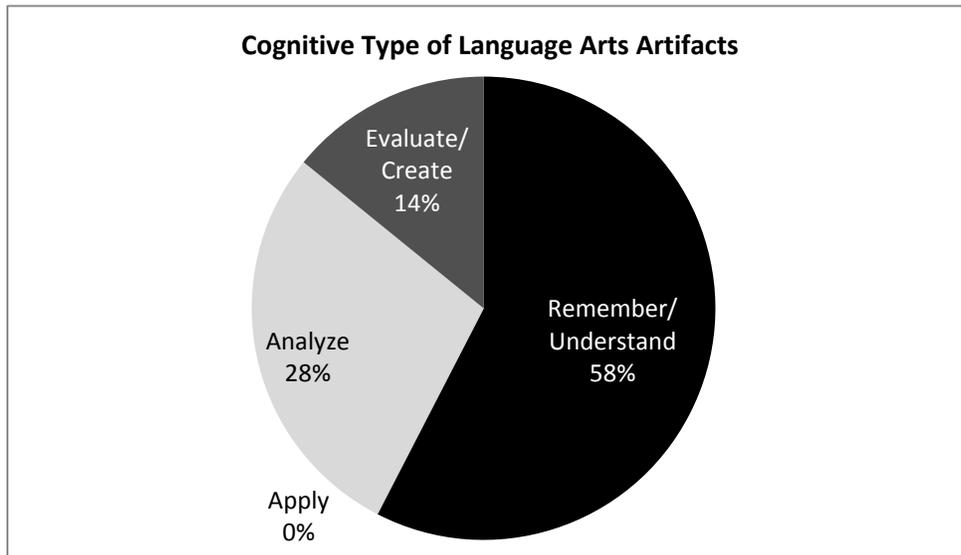


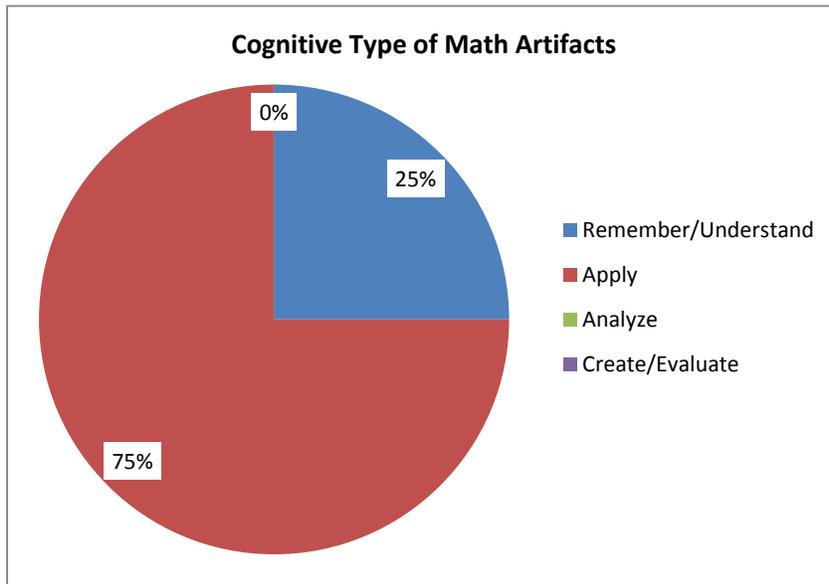
Exhibit 2.11 shows the following:

- More than half of all language arts artifacts (58%) fell in the Remember/Understand category.
- Of the higher-order thinking skills, only 14% fell within the Evaluate/Create category; the rest (28%) were analysis.
- Auditors noted many artifacts were merely comprehension questions over reading students had completed or were completing.
- Auditors also noted that only a small percentage of artifacts (14%) required students to write for an extended period of time.

Exhibit 2.12 shows the cognitive type of Math artifacts.

**Exhibit 2.12  
Cognitive Type Analysis  
Student Work Artifacts - Math**

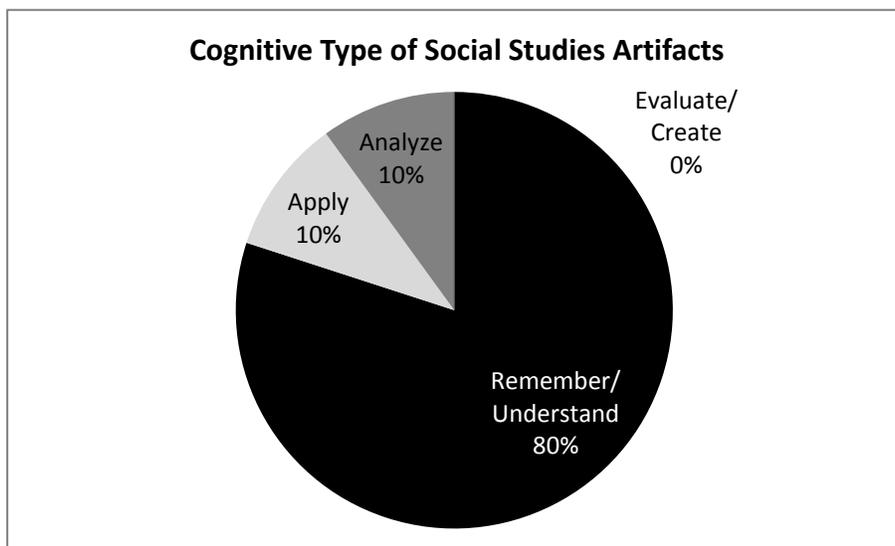
**Knightdale High School  
April 2013**



As can be seen in [Exhibit 2.12](#), seventy-five percent of all math artifacts were of the application type and twenty-five percent remembering/understanding type. There were no artifacts that engaged students in analyzing, creating, or evaluating.

[Exhibit 2.13](#) shows the cognitive type of Social Studies Artifacts.

**Exhibit 2.13  
Cognitive Type Analysis  
Student Work Artifacts - Social Studies**



From [Exhibit 2.13](#) the following may be noted:

- Of the artifacts collected, 80% were at the level of Remembering/Understanding and 10% were at the level of Applying. The result is that 90% of all artifacts collected fell within the lower-order thinking skills.
- Of the remaining artifacts, 10% were Analyzing; none were Evaluating/Creating. It is important to note that a robust body of research indicates that all students, including those who are struggling academically, improve their performance when they are asked to engage in higher-order thinking skills. While it is possible that higher-order thinking skills are being employed in other activities, such a high proportion of lower-order skills may indicate a need to increase the cognitive level of activities.

Exhibit 2.14 shows the cognitive type of Science artifacts.

**Exhibit 2.14**  
**Cognitive Type Analysis**  
**Student Work Artifacts - Science**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

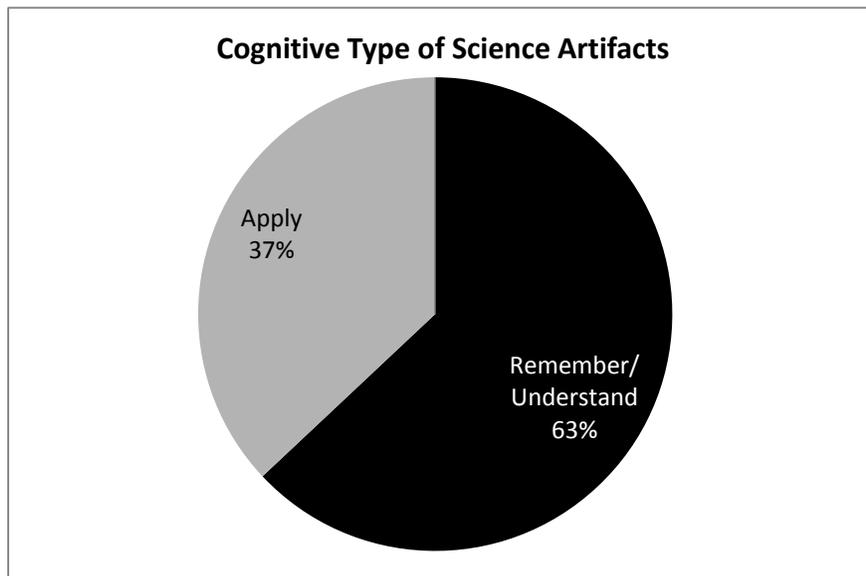


Exhibit 2.14 shows the following:

- Of the artifacts collected, 37% were Applying and 63% were Remembering/Understanding. This means that all of the artifacts (100%) fell within the lower-order thinking skills.
- No artifacts required students to utilize higher-order thinking skills. It is important to note that a robust body of research indicates that all students, including those who are struggling academically, improve their performance when they are asked to engage in higher-order thinking skills. While it is possible that higher-order thinking skills are being employed in other activities, such a high proportion of lower-order skills may indicate a need to increase the cognitive level of activities.

In summary, the auditors found that student work was mostly at the remembering and application types, with some analysis, particularly in language arts. In that content area, almost 40% was analysis and evaluate/create types. If what the auditors collected can be considered representative of the type of work students do on a regular basis, then the auditors determined that not all student work reflected the types of cognitive engagement described in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.

### ***Standard Redundancy and Lack of Specificity***

In many districts, the standards and benchmarks under which the district operates must be adapted from documents provided by the state or some other, external agency. In such cases, it becomes important for districts to assess the adopted material for redundancy, adequate specificity, logical sequencing of skills, and gaps so that they may insure appropriate spiraling of learnings through the grade levels and maximize student achievement. Adopting standards without vetting them first can perpetuate inadequacies in the curriculum and leave the door open to multiple interpretations of the curriculum as teachers try to decide what mastery of any given standard might look like. The Common Core's intention is to standardize objectives and skills for the entire nation and it is an ambitious document, but not without some serious flaws: an analysis of the Common Core reveals a number of gaps and overlaps in both math and language arts.

Exhibit 2.15 and 2.16 are intended to provide examples both of appropriate spiraling of the curriculum and redundancy of the standards within Common Core State Standards for Language Arts. While most of these examples are elementary in nature, the appropriate spiraling - or lack thereof - has repercussions for the entire strand. Content mastery not adequately specified in earlier grades becomes problematic for the secondary grade levels as students are expected to tackle more complex tasks. It will be necessary for districts to examine the Common Core in its entirety to ensure appropriate, explicit spiraling across grade levels.

#### **Exhibit 2.15**

#### **Appropriate Spiraling of Learning Common Core State Standards – Language Arts Knightdale High School April 2013**

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Description</b>
K	RL.K.3	With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.
1	RL.1.3	Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
2	RL.2.3	Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges
3	RL.3.3	Describe characters in a story (e.g. their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

From Exhibit 2.15, the following should be noted:

- The learning here is clearly spiraled from one grade to the next. The kindergarten standard employs the injunction to “identify characters, settings and major events” which marks it explicitly as an introductory standard, as does the qualifying statement that they do these things “with prompting and support”.
- First, second and third grade all build upon the introduction in Kindergarten: they must describe what they’ve learned to identify, then they must extend that to describe how those elements interact with each other. Finally, they must describe how the characters and their actions drive the story.

- Standards written with this level of specificity make it easy for teachers to decide what to teach and how to teach and to determine what mastery of the standard looks like.

**Exhibit 2.16**

**Standard Redundancy and Lack of Specificity  
Common Core State Standards – Language Arts  
Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

Grade Level	Standard	Description
3	W.3.3	<p>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.</li> <li>b. Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.</li> <li>c. Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.</li> <li>d. Provide a sense of closure.</li> </ol>
4	W.4.3	<p>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.</li> <li>b. Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.</li> <li>c. Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.</li> <li>d. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.</li> <li>e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.</li> </ol>
5	W.4.3	<p>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.</li> <li>b. Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, description, and pacing to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.</li> <li>c. Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.</li> <li>d. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.</li> <li>e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or</li> </ol>

		events.
6	W.6.3	<p>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured events sequences.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</li> <li>b. Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, and description to develop experiences, events and/or characters.</li> <li>c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.</li> <li>d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.</li> <li>e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.</li> </ol>
7	W.7.3	<p>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</li> <li>b) Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</li> <li>c) Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.</li> <li>d) Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</li> <li>e) Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.</li> </ol>
8	W.8.3	<p>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</li> <li>b) Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</li> <li>c) Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.</li> <li>d) Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</li> <li>e) Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.</li> </ol>
9-10	W.9-10.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using

		<p>effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.</li> <li>b) Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</li> <li>c) Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.</li> <li>d) Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.</li> <li>e) Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.</li> </ol>
11-12	W.11-12.3	<p>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.</li> <li>b) Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</li> <li>c) Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).</li> <li>d) Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.</li> <li>e) Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.</li> </ol>

From Exhibit 2.16, the following may be noted:

- Because Knightdale High School is responsible for the end product of this strand, it is important that teachers and curriculum specialists know what is meant to occur over the course of the entire strand. Gaps in content and areas that lack specificity that occur in the elementary grades may result in negative repercussions in the secondary grades. These must be ameliorated prior to the secondary years. Failing that amelioration, secondary teachers must at least be aware of areas which may need remediation.
- The basic objective of the standard is identical from grade level to grade level. The only difference between grades 3, 4, and 5 and grade 6 is the small change in the wording from “clear event sequences” to “well-structured event sequences.” After grade 6, the wording of the basic objective is identical right through grades 11-12. From a teaching standpoint, this distinction between grade 5 and grade 6 would be hard to quantify or to assess. Without clear examples, a teacher would have to navigate this standard by “feel;” this leaves the door open for multiple

interpretations, some of which may not conform to district expectations or align to district assessments.

- Sub point (a) does not differ materially from grade level to grade level. From a functional standpoint, there is no difference between “establish a situation” and “orient the reader by establishing a situation.” The intent and outcome of both are identical. Sixth grade requires the student to “engage” the reader, which could represent an extension or refinement of skill, but it is not specific enough to clarify how the student is to accomplish this engagement, nor how it will be assessed to determine mastery.
- Sub Point (b) is virtually identical from grade level to grade level. The only difference in the upper grades is the addition of the word “pacing,” but how pacing is to manifest itself in the writing is not specifically addressed. In the absence of specific guidelines, a teacher may guess wrongly, or teachers across schools may interpret differently, what mastery of this should look like. After grade 7, the upper grade levels require students to use reflection (all upper grades) and multiple plot lines (grades 9-12) to develop events, experiences and characters. The inclusion of multiple plot lines indicates that these writings are extended in nature: students must have ample time to produce writing of a length that can incorporate multiple plot lines.
- Sub point (c) shows some specificity from grade 3 to grade 4, where students move from “temporal words and phrases” to “a variety of transitional words,” but after that, the learning is functionally identical from grade level to grade level until grade 6. After grade 6, the spiral indicates that transitions must deal with both time, space, and relationships. By grade 9-10 transitions are to include a "variety of techniques" and by grade 11-12 those techniques must build toward "a particular tone or outcome." Transitions are one of the most complex writing skills for students to master, so additional specificity here would be highly desirable. When are transitions used? What should they accomplish? How should the mandate of the writing assignment change so that greater complexity which would require the use of transitions is evident? What, in the end, will mastery of this look like? What should be included in the "variety of techniques" demanded in the upper grades? It should be noted that in the context of writing, tone is not specifically addressed prior to grade 11-12; the standard implies familiarity with tone, and also with particular modes of writing such as mystery or suspense. However, none of these appears to have been practiced prior to this grade level band.
- Sub point (d) [not included in grade 3 ] is also functionally the same from grade level to grade level. In every case it requires sensory detail and concrete words to convey events. Only in grade 6 does the student also have to make sure s/he uses “relevant descriptive detail;” however, sensory details and concrete words are also forms of descriptive detail, so the material distinction here is lost. Likewise in the other secondary grades, the standard is not sufficiently differentiated to indicate any true spiraling of skills. The implication is that students will achieve a maturity of expression and description in their writing, but the specificity in the standard is lacking to show what mastery would look like. This is another standard that would have to be navigated by "feel" at the upper grades.
- All grade levels require the student to provide a conclusion. In grade 3, students must merely “provide a sense of closure,” while in grades 4, 5, and 6 they must “provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.” The standard is identical in grades 4-6. In the other secondary grades, the standard requires that the conclusion 'follow from and reflect on what is experienced, observed or resolved" but the wording is not much different from the earlier grades, save the notation that the conclusion should reflect on events. Conclusion, like transitions, is a more complex writing skill which often takes years to learn well, so greater specificity here to indicate the increasing complexity of this demand as students move up the grades would be of

great assistance to teachers. Otherwise, they will have to guess what mastery of this part of the standard looks like.

This sort of redundancy, where a standard is repeated from grade level to grade level without enough detail to distinguish between grades makes it challenging for teachers to determine what specific skills they need to teach and how students need to demonstrate those specific skills to ensure their success on current and future tests., and how the learning is going to be mastered. It also creates a problem when calibrating student work artifacts. Because of the repetitive nature of the standards, a work artifact from grade 6 could easily calibrate to grade 4 or lower. Auditors found that the Common Core State Standards often do not provide enough specificity with regard to discrete grade level objectives to ensure that mastery of the standards is clearly understood.

In a number of places, a standard appears in the Common Core worded in such a way that introduction of the concepts appears to have already taken place; however, no such introductory standard exists in the Common Core. An example of this comes from the second grade Math standards:

*2.MD.8: Solve word problems involving dollar bills, quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies, using \$ and ¢ symbols appropriately. Example: If you have 2 dimes and 3 pennies, how many cents do you have?*

From this standard, it appears that coins and their values and relationships to each other have already been introduced because to master this standard, students would need to be able to identify each type of coin, tell what it is worth, and know how many of each coin is needed to make up other coin values (5 nickels = 1 quarter, 1 dime = 10 pennies, etc.). Students have presumably mastered these concepts to the extent that they are now capable of solving word problems which require addition of different coins. However, there is no standard relating to money prior to the one in second grade. Likewise, mean and median do not appear in the Common Core before grade 6, but the standard is written in such a way that those concepts would have to be mastered prior to the grade 6 standard in order to proceed with the content of the standard. Other concepts, such as estimating sums, do not appear to be addressed in the Common Core State Standards for Math K-5. It is therefore critical that districts be aware of these gaps throughout the strands and address them in order to properly sequence learning for their students K-12 and adequately prepare them for state assessments.

### ***Context Analysis***

Content refers to the "what" of the curriculum; context refers to the "how." Context is the way in which a skill is assessed or measured. For example, multiple choice tests are a frequent context employed on many high stakes tests. Short answers, extended responses, essays, portfolios, projects -- all of these make up the context of how a particular objective may be measured to assess mastery. It is important for the classroom to replicate the contexts students are likely to encounter in high-stakes test situations so that they have ample practice prior to the test. Students who have never practiced filling in a bubble sheet or sorting through multiple choice distracters are less likely to do well than those who have. With the advent of the Common Core and its associated assessments, particularly Smarter Balanced, opportunities to practice contexts will be critical to student success on those assessments. That being said, assessments are not the sorts of activities most students will engage in once they leave the academic environment of high school. It is equally important that students have opportunities to experience "real world" contexts which they may encounter after graduation.

There is no right or wrong level for context, *per se*. Classroom Activity contexts are important for building foundational skills and practicing concepts; Test-like contexts are important for preparing for high-stakes tests. Real World and simulated real world contexts and Meaningful Writing are generally linked to greater cognitive engagement and help prepare students for the real world outside school. Analyzing student work artifacts for context can give the district insight as to how well it is providing practice for the kinds of contexts students will encounter on tests and in the real world, and can be a

window into how frequently they are providing opportunities to engage in more cognitively engaging work. Exhibit 2.17 gives an overview of the nature of the context types.

**Exhibit 2.17**  
**Context Types**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Real World/Simulated Real World</b>	<b>Test-like</b>	<b>Classroom Activity</b>	<b>Meaningful Writing</b>
<b>Explanation</b>	This type of context replicates activities found in the real world.	This context replicates activities and tasks from released test items or from other exit exams in use by the district, such as AP exams. It allows students to practice skills prior to the test. It is important to note that quizzes and tests from a classroom setting do not necessarily fall into this category.	This context is comprised of activities which are unlikely to be found outside a classroom.	This context requires students to use higher-order thinking skills to complete the writing.
<b>Examples</b>	Writing a business letter; building a ramp to measure acceleration and velocity; researching a historical period and designing costumes for a play set in that period; planning a travel itinerary; creating a budget using salary and expense information; learning songs in a target language.	Marking a bubble sheet; selecting from multiple choice items; constructing a short answer; writing an extended response; writing an essay.	Vocabulary worksheets; answering questions at the end of a chapter; solving math problems; marking geographical features on a map; labeling parts of a cell; locating examples of figurative language in a poem.	Researching, formulating and defending a position; analyzing and critiquing a piece of literature; hypothesizing, testing and evaluating a theory or premise.

In order to determine the contexts of student work artifacts at Knightdale High School, auditors categorized the collected artifacts and constructed a simple percentage chart to illustrate the degree to which each context was represented. The information was then organized by content area. It is important to remember that the collected artifacts represent only a few points in time and are not meant to represent all the activities which may be occurring in the district at any given time.

Exhibit 2.18 shows the results of the context analysis for Language Arts.

**Exhibit 2.18**  
**Context Type Analysis**  
**Language Arts**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

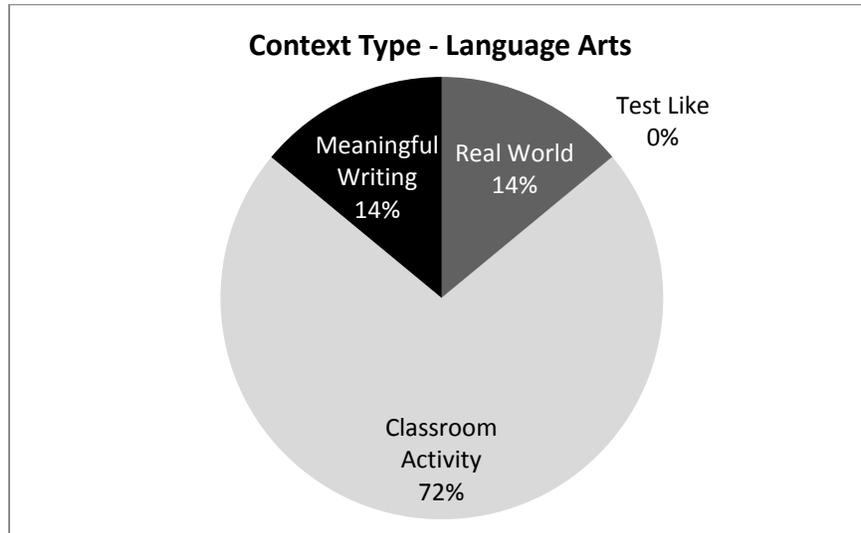


Exhibit 2.18 shows the following:

- Language Arts artifacts were primarily (72%) classroom activities: this means they are activities unlikely to occur outside a classroom setting.
- Real world contexts comprised 14% of artifacts. Because of their high level of cognitive engagement, real world activities are very desirable for districts seeking to maximize student success.
- Meaningful writing comprised 14% of artifacts.
- Test-like contexts were not present in any of the artifacts presented to auditors. Auditors would expect to see some test-like contexts which would enable students to practice the contexts they are likely to encounter on End of Grade exams or other district-wide exams such as Case 21. It is important to note that such practice may be occurring, but the nature of artifact collection is to examine only one or two points in time, so evidence of test-like contexts was not present in this data set.

Exhibit 2.19 shows the context types for Math artifacts.

**Exhibit 2.19**  
**Context Type Analysis: Math**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

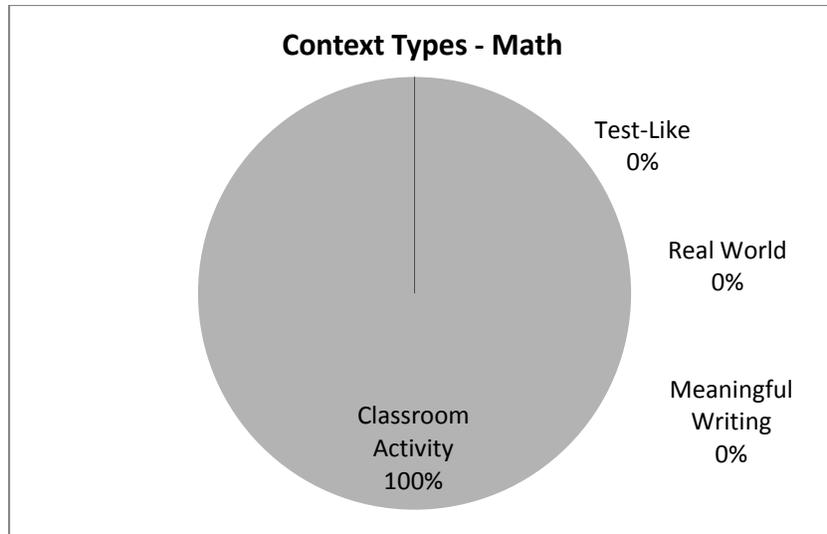


Exhibit 2.19 shows the following:

- All of the collected math artifacts (100%) were Classroom Activities. Normally, auditors would expect to see some variation in artifacts -- some test-like, some real world or simulated real world, some meaningful writing. It is possible that these types of activities are occurring since this analysis represents a single point in time, but such a complete preponderance of a single context type may be indicative of a need to provide practices in other contexts.
- Auditors noted that one artifact contained 74 problems, including equations, graph representations and word problems, on one side of a single sheet of paper. The font size for these problems was approximately 5 points. Since context encompasses the conditions under which learning is carried out, this particular condition may represent a real problem for students with uncorrected vision, or even those whose vision is good since the printing was miniscule.

Exhibit 2.20 shows the context types for Science.

**Exhibit 2.20**

**Context Type Analysis: Science  
Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

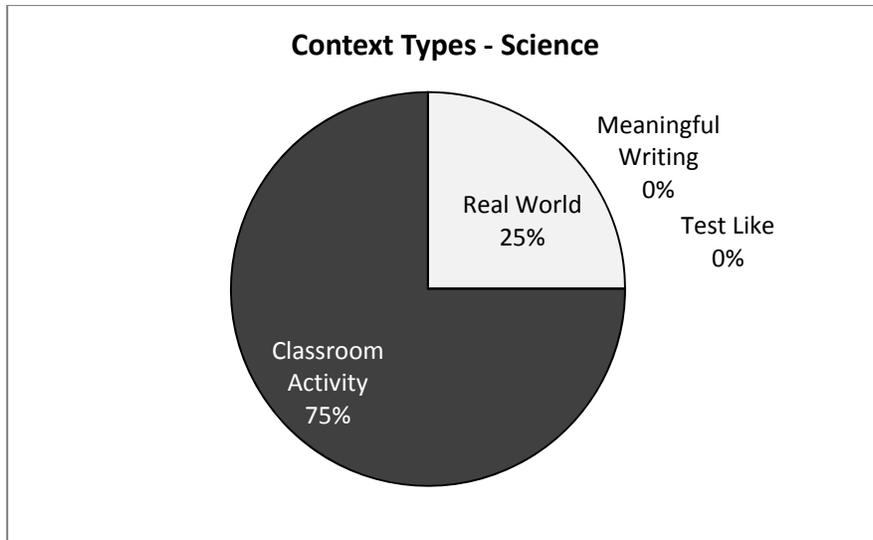


Exhibit 2.20 shows the following:

- About three-fourths (75%) of the artifacts were Classroom Activities; they are unlikely to be encountered outside a classroom setting.
- Twenty five percent of activities were Real World; they required students to engage in experiments using items from the real world. Real world activities are often the most cognitively engaging for students and because of this, highly desirable for districts wishing to maximize student achievement.
- None of the artifacts were Test-Like or Meaningful Writing. Auditors would normally expect to see some test-like contexts, and such practice may be occurring, but these practices were not evident in the data set.

Exhibit 2.21 shows the context type analysis for Social Studies.

**Exhibit 2.21**

**Context Type Analysis: Social Studies  
Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

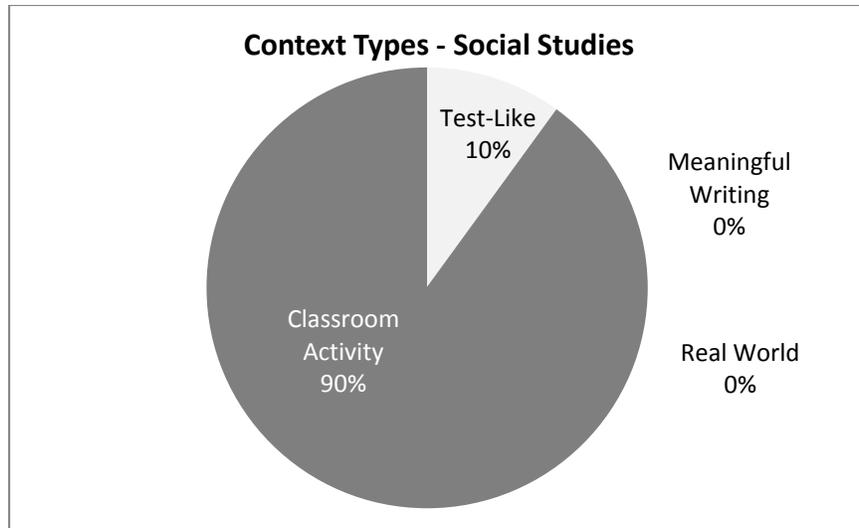


Exhibit 2.21 shows the following:

- Of the collected artifacts, 90% were Classroom Activity; they are unlikely to be encountered outside a classroom setting.
- Of the remaining artifacts, 10% were Test-Like; they contained some practice of test-like contexts.
- None of the artifacts were Meaningful Writing or Real World, which tend to be the most cognitively engaging of the context types. Normally, auditors would expect to see a mix of context types. While it is the nature of artifact analysis to capture a single point in time, and while it is possible that other contexts are occurring, the high proportion of Classroom Activities may indicate a need to ensure that students have opportunities to engage in the practice of other contexts.

### ***Context and the Smarter Balanced Assessments***

The doctrine of 'No Surprises' dictates that students be prepared ahead of time for the contexts they will likely encounter on state and national assessments. A multiple choice question differs greatly from an essay question; assessments which are taken online are different than those requiring bubble sheets and pencils. A problem requiring a single operation to reach the answer is different than a problem requiring multiple steps. In order to know what those contexts will be, districts must access released items from the assessments given in their state. The Smarter Balanced tests will be implemented in the 2014-2015 school year. In order to prepare students for these assessments, the district will need to access released items and analyze them for context and cognitive type so that students may practice these types of contexts in the classroom, for familiarity and preparedness prior to the assessments.

Auditors have provided a sample analysis in this section to assist building and district leaders in this task. The items used in the analysis are Language Arts. Many of the released Math items included pictures which were not reproducible in this report, Auditors noted that many of the released math items were multi-step problems requiring a number of operations to arrive at a correct answer. Additionally, many problems in both Language Arts and Math required students to evaluate all the possible responses for correctness, rather than choosing a single, correct answer as on a traditional multiple-choice test. Additionally, the Smarter Balanced assessments are computer based; students will not have paper booklets and pencils as on previous national assessments. This context alone will require a number of skills with which students may not be familiar. Exhibit 2.22 shows the analysis of released Language Arts items from the Smarter Balanced assessments.

**Exhibit 2.22**  
**Language Arts Sample Assessment Items**  
**Smarter Balanced Assessment**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

Common Core Standard Assessed	Stimulus Text	Assessment Prompt	Analysis										
RL.11-12.1 RL.11-12.3	<p><i>The following passage is an excerpt from the novel <u>A Journey to the Center of the Earth</u> by Jules Verne. In the story, a German professor takes his nephew, Axel, and a guide into the crater of an Icelandic volcano in hopes of reaching the center of the Earth. When this excerpt begins, the trio has already been underground for several weeks and Axel has just discovered that he has become separated from his uncle and their guide.</i></p> <p><b>Lost in the Bowels of the Earth</b>  <b>by Jules Verne</b></p> <p>To describe my despair would be impossible. No words could tell it. I was buried alive, with the prospect before me of dying of hunger and thirst. Mechanically I swept the ground with my hands. How dry and hard the rock seemed to me! But how had I left the course of the stream? For it was a terrible fact that it no longer ran at my side. Then I understood the reason of that fearful, silence, when for the last time I listened to hear if any sound from my companions could reach my ears.</p> <p>At the moment when I left the right road, I had not noticed the absence of the stream. It is evident that at that moment a deviation had presented itself before me, whilst the Hansbach [the stream], following the caprice of another incline, had gone with my</p>	<p>Item Prompt:</p> <p>For each claim, click on one sentence from the passage and drag it to the appropriate location on the chart. Sentences can be used more than once.</p> <p><b>Journey into the Center of the Earth</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="813 1010 1141 1890"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="813 1010 979 1108"></th> <th data-bbox="979 1010 1141 1108">Text Evidence</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 1108 979 1346">Axel believes he does not have a way to find food.</td> <td data-bbox="979 1108 1141 1346"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 1346 979 1583">Axel believes he will survive if he finds his uncle.</td> <td data-bbox="979 1346 1141 1583"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 1583 979 1820">Axel took a different path than his companions did.</td> <td data-bbox="979 1583 1141 1820"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 1820 979 1890">Axel is inclined to</td> <td data-bbox="979 1820 1141 1890"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Text Evidence	Axel believes he does not have a way to find food.		Axel believes he will survive if he finds his uncle.		Axel took a different path than his companions did.		Axel is inclined to		<p>In order to demonstrate mastery of this 11th grade item, the student must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have reading skills sufficient to comprehend a 19th century text with some archaic words and phrases, including some foreign words. In this instance, prior practice with other 19th century texts would be very helpful.</li> <li>• Smarter Balanced analysis of this item indicates that context is not sufficient for some terms to determine meaning; vocabulary is of a higher level and may not be familiar to some students. Prior vocabulary development well in advance of the test is necessary for students to succeed.</li> <li>• Know what inferences are.</li> <li>• Be able to analyze an unfamiliar text for evidence to support inferences</li> <li>• Have computer and mouse skills sufficient to highlight relevant</li> </ul>
	Text Evidence												
Axel believes he does not have a way to find food.													
Axel believes he will survive if he finds his uncle.													
Axel took a different path than his companions did.													
Axel is inclined to													

	<p>companions away into unknown depths.</p> <p>How was I to return? There was not a trace of their footsteps or of my own, for the foot left no mark upon the granite floor. I racked my brain for a solution of this impracticable problem. One word described my position. Lost!</p> <p>Lost at an immeasurable depth! Thirty leagues of rock seemed to weigh upon my shoulders with a dreadful pressure. I felt crushed.</p> <p>I tried to carry back my ideas to things on the surface of the earth. I could scarcely succeed. Hamburg, the house in the Königstrasse, my poor Gräuben, all that busy world underneath which I was wandering about, was passing in rapid confusion before my terrified memory. I could revive with vivid reality all the incidents of our voyage, Iceland, M. Fridrikssen, Snæfell. I said to myself that if, in such a position as I was now in, I was fool enough to cling to one glimpse of hope, it would be madness, and that the best thing I could do was to despair.</p> <p>What human power could restore me to the light of the sun by rending asunder the huge arches of rock which united over my head, buttressing each other with impregnable strength? Who could place my feet on the right path, and bring me back to my company?</p> <p>"Oh, my uncle!" burst from my lips in the tone of despair.</p> <p>It was my only word of reproach, for I knew how much he must be suffering in seeking me, wherever he might be.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 195 979 279">forgive his uncle.</td> <td data-bbox="979 195 1144 279"></td> </tr> </table>	forgive his uncle.		<p>text and drag and drop it into the correct spaces.</p>
forgive his uncle.					
<p>RL.9-10.5 RL.9-10.7</p>	<p><i>Read the following poem and then answer the question.</i></p>	<p>Item Prompt: The poet wrote this poem</p>	<p>In order to demonstrate mastery of this 9th grade</p>		

	<p><i>The following poem is based on a story from the Civil War. According to legend, when Major General Stonewall Jackson led Confederate troops through Frederick, Maryland, on September 6, 1862, Union supporter Barbara Frietchie waved the Union flag in protest.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Barbara Frietchie</b> by John Greenleaf Whittier</p> <p>UP from the meadows rich with corn, Clear in the cool September morn, The clustered spires of Frederick stand Green-walled by the hills of Maryland. Round about them orchards sweep, Apple and peach tree fruited deep, Fair as the garden of the Lord To the eyes of the famished rebel horde, On that pleasant morn of the early fall When Lee marched over the mountain-wall; Over the mountains winding down, Horse and foot, into Frederick town. Forty flags with their silver stars, Forty flags with their crimson bars, Flapped in the morning wind: the sun Of noon looked down, and saw not one. Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then, Bowed with her fourscore years and ten; Bravest of all in Frederick town, She took up the flag the men hauled down;</p>	<p>using couplets, paired rhyming lines with the same meter. Describe how this structure emphasizes what takes place in the poem. Support your answer using details from the poem.</p> <p><b>Scoring Rubric:</b></p> <p>(2) The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to analyze the impact of text structures on meaning</li> <li>• Includes specific descriptions that make clear reference to the text</li> <li>• Adequately supports the descriptions with clearly relevant examples from the text</li> </ul> <p>(1) The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives limited evidence of the ability to analyze the impact of text structures on meaning</li> <li>• Includes some descriptions that make reference to the text</li> <li>• Supports the descriptions with limited examples from the text</li> </ul> <p>(0) A response gets no credit if it provides no evidence of the ability to analyze the impact of text structures, includes no relevant information from the text, or is vague.</p>	<p>item, the student must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have reading skills sufficient to comprehend a 19th century poem containing abstract language, unfamiliar or archaic vocabulary, and unexplained references to historical figures. In this instance, the poem references events and people of the Civil War. Since this is a 9th grade assessment item, most if not all students will not have had U.S. History yet and may be confused by these references. While a working knowledge of the Civil War is not necessary, the ability to note allusions and determine their relative importance to the meaning of the text is.</li> <li>• An understanding of poetic forms and structures.</li> <li>• An understanding of imagery and figurative language.</li> <li>• An understanding of rhyme and meter and how they contribute to the meaning of the poem.</li> <li>• Writing skills sufficient to construct a short answer response analyzing the effectiveness of the structure of the poem incorporating textual examples to support conclusions.</li> <li>• Keyboarding skills which allow the student to type the response in</li> </ul>
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	<p>In her attic window the staff she set,  To show that one heart was loyal yet.  Up the street came the rebel tread,  Stonewall Jackson riding ahead  Under his slouched hat left and right  He glanced; the old flag met his sight  ‘Halt!’ –the dust-brown ranks stood  fast.  ‘Fire!’ –out blazed the rifle-blast.  It shivered the window, pane and  sash;  It rent the banner with seam and  gash.  Quick, as it fell, from the broken  staff  Dame Barbara snatched the silken  scarf.  She leaned far out on the window-  sill,  And shook it forth with a royal will.  ‘Shoot, if you must, this old gray  head,  But spare your country’s flag,’ she  said.  A shade of sadness, a blush of  shame,  Over the face of the leader came;  The nobler nature within him stirred  To life at that woman’s deed and  word;  ‘Who touches a hair of yon gray  head  Dies like a dog! March on!’ he said.  All day long through Frederick street  Sounded the tread of marching feet:  All day long that free flag tost  Over the heads of the rebel host.  Ever its torn folds rose and fell</p>		<p>the time allotted.</p>
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	<p>On the loyal winds that loved it well;          And through the hill-gaps sunset          light          Shone over it with a warm good-          night.          Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,          And the Rebel rides on his raids no          more.          Honor to her! and let a tear          Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's          bier.          Over Barbara Frietchie's grave,          Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!          Peace and order and beauty draw          Round thy symbol of light and law;          And ever the stars above look down          On thy stars below in Frederick          town!</p>						
<p>RL.9-10.5          RL.9-10.7</p>	<p><i>Read the following passage and then answer the question.</i></p> <p><b>Excerpt from <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>          by Jane Austen</b></p> <p>It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of someone or other of their daughters.</p> <p>"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"</p> <p>Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.</p> <p>"But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."</p> <p>Mr. Bennet made no answer.</p>	<p><i>Item Prompt:</i></p> <p>In paragraphs 1 and 2, the narrator provides two general observations about human behavior. Explain the effect this beginning has on the reader's interpretation of the interaction between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. Support your answer using details from the passage.</p> <p><i>Scoring Rubric:</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="813 1520 1154 1885"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="813 1520 919 1587">Score</th> <th data-bbox="919 1520 1154 1587"></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 1587 919 1885">3</td> <td data-bbox="919 1587 1154 1885"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to analyze the impact of text structure on meaning</li> <li>• Includes specific</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to analyze the impact of text structure on meaning</li> <li>• Includes specific</li> </ul>	<p>In order to demonstrate mastery of this 10th grade item, the student must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have reading skills sufficient to comprehend a 19th century text with some archaic words and expressions. There are a number of instances in this excerpt that students would have no familiarity with at all (<i>Michaelmas, five thousand a year, chaise and four</i>) and references to people not yet introduced to the reader which may prove distracting as students attempt to orient themselves within the story. Practicing analysis of unfamiliar text would</li> </ul>
Score							
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to analyze the impact of text structure on meaning</li> <li>• Includes specific</li> </ul>						

	<p>"Do you not want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently.</p> <p>"You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it."</p> <p>This was invitation enough. "Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it, that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week."</p> <p>"What is his name?"</p> <p>"Bingley."</p> <p>"Is he married or single?"</p> <p>"Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"</p> <p>"How so? How can it affect them?"</p> <p>"My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."</p> <p>"Is that his design in settling here?"</p> <p>"Design! Nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he may fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes."</p> <p>"I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley may like you the best of the party."</p> <p>"My dear, you flatter me. I certainly have had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman</p>	<p>explanations that make clear reference to the text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully supports the explanations with clearly relevant details from the text</li> </ul> <p><b>2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives some evidence of the ability to analyze the impact of text structure on meaning</li> <li>Includes some specific explanations that make reference to the text</li> <li>Adequately supports the explanations with relevant details from the text</li> </ul> <p><b>1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives limited evidence of the ability to analyze the impact of text structure on meaning</li> <li>Includes explanations but they are not explicit or make only vague references to the text</li> <li>Supports the explanations with at least one detail, but the relevance of that detail to the text must be inferred</li> </ul>	<p>be critical to success on items such as this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand characterization, prose structure, narration, dialogue, point of view.</li> <li>Be able to determine how structure and presentation affect meaning and characterization.</li> <li>Infer the nature of the relationship between the characters from their dialogue and the narrator's comments.</li> <li>Have writing skills sufficient to construct a response to the prompt which analyzes the structure of the text and how that structure guides the reader's interpretation of the characters and their relationship.</li> <li>Be able to identify and use evidence from the text to support conclusions.</li> <li>Have keyboarding skills sufficient to type the response within the time allotted.</li> </ul>
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<p>has five grown-up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty."</p> <p>"In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of."</p> <p>"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood."</p> <p>"It is more than I engage for, I assure you."</p> <p>"But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general, you know, they visit no newcomers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him if you do not."</p> <p>"You are over-scrupulous, surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy."</p> <p>"I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good-humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving her the preference."</p> <p>"They have none of them much to recommend them," replied he; "they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters."</p> <p>"Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion for my poor nerves."</p> <p>"You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They</p>	<p>0</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A response gets no credit if it provides no evidence of the ability to analyze the impact of text structure on meaning, includes no relevant information from the text, or is vague.</li> </ul>	
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	<p>are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these last twenty years at least."</p> <p>"Ah, you do not know what I suffer."</p> <p>"But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighbourhood."</p> <p>"It will be no use to us, if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them."</p> <p>"Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty, I will visit them all."</p> <p>Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. Her mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news.</p>		
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The following should be noted from Exhibit 2.22:

- Many of the excerpted texts in Language Arts were 19th century; the differences in expression and vocabulary will necessitate additional practice for students.
- The excerpts presented in this exhibit were selected because they were the shortest; many excerpts were considerably longer, requiring students to have reading skills sufficient to complete a fairly long piece of text before answering questions about it or constructing a short response.
- Excerpts often had multiple operations associated with them. For example, one excerpt might require both analysis to determine which sentences support inferences and then later might require students to use context to determine the best meaning of a particular vocabulary word.
- Responses varied from traditional multiple choice items (selected by computer) to drag and drop operations, to short answer construction, to essays. Some of the constructed responses would require several hundred words to answer thoroughly. Other items asked students to develop and deliver speeches using webcams. Some items required extended periods of time to complete.
- The computer presents a series of contexts separate from the content area being assessed. Auditors noted a number of skills which students will need to complete items: keyboarding, drag-and-drop, selecting/highlighting text, using a video player, operating a web cam, and delivering a speech into a webcam.

- It should be noted that the Smarter Balanced assessments present content issues for many districts. For example, the 9th grade assessment item covers elements of poetry such as rhyme, rhyme scheme, and meter. These are normally introduced in 9th grade. However, the curriculum management improvement model recommends that content be introduced 9-12 months prior to assessment. Therefore, in order to ensure mastery of the content by the time the assessment takes place, elements of poetry and poetic structure need to be introduced in grade eight.

***Classroom Observations***

Classroom observations are a valuable tool in monitoring the delivery of the curriculum and in determining whether the goals of the district are being met. In order to determine the degree to which classroom activities were aligned to district-expressed expectations for rigor and cognitive engagement for students, auditors visited 64 classrooms at the high school to ascertain the dominant teacher and student activities. Teacher activities may include the following: Monitoring Student Work, Large Group Instruction, Small Group Instruction, Individual Work (teacher is working with individual students), and Other. There are similar classifications used to describe the dominant student activities; the classifications for both are presented in Exhibit 2.23.

**Exhibit 2.23**

**Dominant Teacher and Student Activity Classifications  
Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

<b>Teacher Instructional Behaviors</b>	
Large Group Instruction	Refers to the teacher verbally leading the entire class through a learning activity, e.g., lecture, demonstration, overhead projector or Promethean Board, or questions and answers.
Small Group	Refers to a teacher working with a group of students that is less than approximately one-fourth of the number of students in the classroom. Examples include reading groups, centers, or tutoring a small group.
Individual Work	Refers to a teacher working with students individually for instruction, such as giving the student information about specific steps or actions the student(s) should use, or reviewing student work, not simply providing praise or feedback.
Monitoring	Refers to the teacher circulating about the classroom, visually monitoring the students as they work.
Other	Refers to an instructional activity not included in the classifications above, such as reading aloud or sitting at their desk. Auditors typically note what “other” refers to.
<b>Student Activities</b>	
Large Group Work	Refers to students involved as a whole class in a common activity that could include receiving direct instruction, listening to someone read aloud, listening to a lecture, watching a demonstration, etc.
Small Group Work	Refers to students working with a group that is less than approximately one-third of the total number of students in the classroom. Examples include reading groups, centers, students in groups trying to solve mathematical or science problems by deciphering information or analyzing data, pair work in a lab situation, or the teacher tutoring a small group.
Individual/Seat	Refers to students working at their desks doing some type of paper and pencil exercise

Work	or prepared worksheet.
Using Technology	Refers to any activity where students are learning about technology or using the technology to complete an activity or project.
Warm up/review	Refers to the class completing or being engaged in a warm-up activity in preparation for a lesson, text, or other activity.
Taking Assessment	Refers to students completing an assessment.

Auditors expect to see a mix of activities all related to instruction; a high percentage of monitoring may indicate an over-reliance on seatwork (worksheets, questions at the end of the chapter, etc.), which is often not cognitively engaging for students. In addition, students who are compliant, and completing work in the classroom, are not considered actively engaged.

Exhibit 2.23 shows the dominant teacher activities in use during the site visit.

**Exhibit 2.23**  
**Dominant Teacher Activity**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

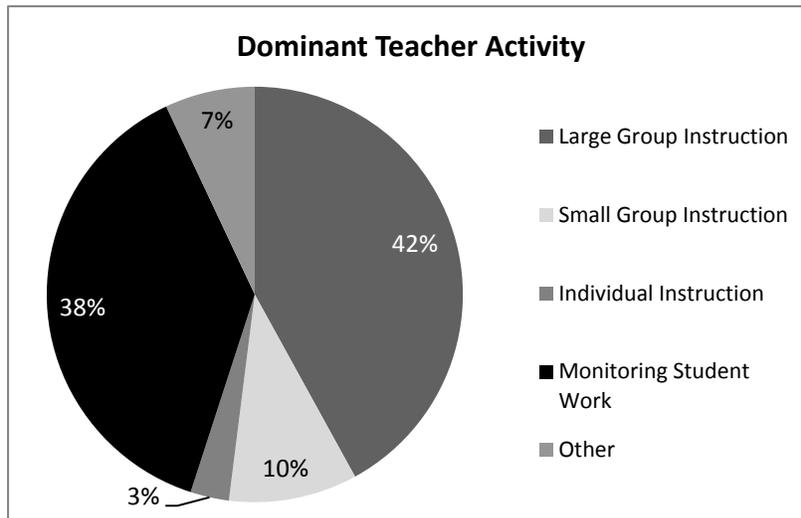


Exhibit 2.23 shows the following:

- The majority of teacher activity (42%) was made up of Large Group Instruction.
- Monitoring Student work made up 38% of teacher activity. For the purposes of this observation, monitoring indicated that teachers were clearly observing students, but not interacting actively with students. If a teacher was circulating around the room working actively with students, that was recorded under individual or small group instruction, depending upon the nature of the interaction.
- Small Group Instruction made up 10% of teacher activity while Individual Instruction made up 7%.
- Teacher activity not obviously related to instruction (Other) made up 3% of observed activities.
- It should be noted that teacher activity may vary widely from day to day; the nature of these observations is to preserve a single point in time. Snapshot observations like these should be

compared to a larger sample of observations conducted over a longer period of time to get the fullest possible picture of the nature of teacher activity on any given day .

Exhibit 2.25 shows the dominant student activity observed during the site visit.

**Exhibit 2.25**  
**Dominant Student Activity**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

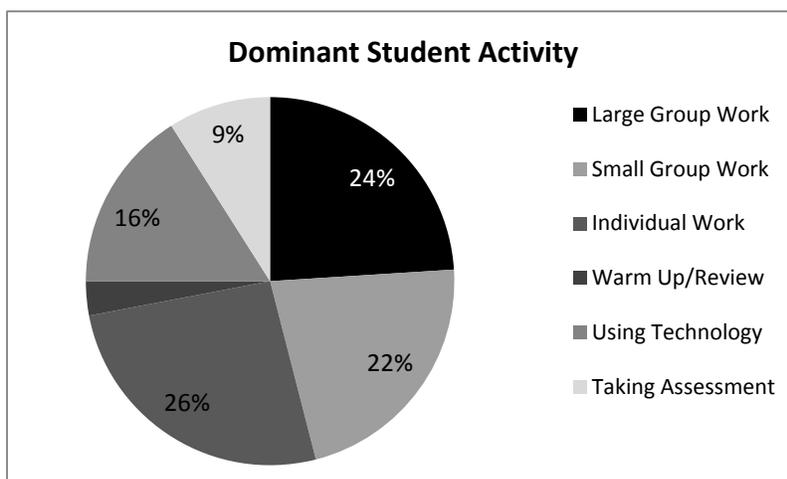


Exhibit 2.25 shows the following:

- The predominant student activity was Individual Work with 26%, closely followed by Large Group Work (24%) and Small Group Work (22%). To a lesser extent, students were Using Technology (16%), Taking Assessments (9%) or doing some sort of Warm Up/Review activity (3%).
- The higher percentage of individual work may indicate too great a reliance on seat work, i.e. the completion of worksheets, reading, packets, questions at the end of the chapter, etc. This type of work, while sometimes necessary, tends to be the least cognitively engaging for students and therefore the least motivating. While a single set of observations is not enough to state definitively that students are not being engaged to the degree they should be, the higher percentage of individual work is in keeping with auditors' observations of the preponderance of artifacts corresponding to the lowest levels of Bloom's taxonomy.

In summary, teachers were observed most frequently engaged in direct instruction with their students. Students were most frequently observed working individually at their seats, followed by large group activity, which is typically receiving direct instruction. In a few cases, auditors observed students working on problems (worksheets) that were different from one another, based on what they needed to complete. This is evidence of differentiation, but this was in only a few isolated instances.

The observation data are not necessarily representative of what happens every day at Knightdale High School; these data are meant to demonstrate what was observed over two days' time and give building leaders a snapshot view. More observation data is needed to determine if what auditors' observed is typical. The auditors did note that the majority of observations noted students in a passive mode, either receiving direct instruction or doing individual work at desks, not working collaboratively or thinking critically, with problem-based learning or student-centered projects.

The auditors were also presented with walk-through data for the period from December 2012 to March of 2013. These data consisted of 169 observations. These data, however, were checklist in nature and only

noted whether or not effective strategies were evident, somewhat evident, or not evident. Ninety percent of the observations were at the beginning or middle of the period, and less than 10% at the end of the period. Auditors expect to find the most on-task behavior at the beginning and middle of a period. Interestingly, these observations reported 90-100% of students on task in over 105 of the 169 observations. The two practices least in evidence were purposeful student movement (not evident in 45% of the 169 observations) and students using technology (not evident in 43% of the 169 observations). These observations do in fact correlate with auditors' findings; students were rarely seen using technology (16% of all observations) and students were also seated in apparently static arrangements. This appears to support what students commented on during interviews: that they do not get to move around or stand up enough during class (or lunch).

***Student Engagement***

Student engagement is an important aspect of student learning. Students who are present but not engaged are not learning; students may be compliant and passive but not engaged. These students are not, however, obvious to the teacher. Sometimes, there are students that are overtly disengaged from classroom activity. There are a number of possible reasons for a student to disengage from the activity of the classroom. He or she may be tired, hungry, or stressed. Sometimes a student is unable to use equipment necessary to complete an activity because there are not enough computers/sewing machines/Bunsen burners. Occasionally, students as a group may begin packing up well in advance of the bell. Or, a student may not be sufficiently cognitively engaged to participate; the activity of the classroom may be of such low interest or challenge that the student deems it not worth the time or effort to complete. Occasionally, students display this lack of engagement in the most obvious of ways: texting, sleeping or otherwise engaging in activities which are not what the rest of the class is doing.

Auditors noted instances of students obviously off task. These data are presented in Exhibit 2.25. The instances included in this data are classes in which at least 50% of students were not oriented to the work or auditors noted overt off task behavior, such as sleeping or texting.

**Exhibit 2.25**

**Percentage of Students Off-Task  
Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Instructional Type</b>	<b>Percentage of Classrooms with Students Off Task</b>
Language Arts	Large Group Instruction Using Technology	55%
Math	Taking Assessment Large Group Instruction	20%
Social Studies	Monitoring	25%
Science	Monitoring	10%
Non-Core	Monitoring Large Group Instruction Other	43%
<b>Total</b>		<b>38%</b>

The following should be noted from Exhibit 2.25:

- The total percentage of classrooms in which off-task student behavior was observed was 38%.

- Language Arts had the highest proportion of classrooms with students off-task (55%, or 5 of 9 observed classes). In all of the Language Arts classrooms in which auditors observed students off task, the teacher was engaging in large group instruction. In other words, the teacher was facing the students and could not fail to notice off-task behavior. In one instance, the students were using iPads, but one student was sleeping, another had his/her head down on the desk, and a third had his/her back to the teacher for the entirety of the observation. In another instance, the teacher was conducting a whole-class discussion; two students were obviously not engaged in the discussion or in reading, two had their heads down, and one was sleeping right next to the teacher. In a third classroom, the teacher was lecturing; six students didn't have books and were not following along while two more were sleeping. In the fourth instance, the teacher was giving instructions periodically; students had nothing with which to occupy themselves between instructions and were not oriented to any classroom activity.
- Of all math classrooms observed, 20% had students off-task (3 of 15 observed classrooms). In one instance observed, the students were completing an assessment. Two students were sleeping while the others finished the assessment.
- In Science, which had the lowest incidence of off-task behavior, the one incident observed was of a student sleeping in a class that was otherwise completely engaged.
- In Social Studies, 25% of observed classrooms (2 of 8) had at least half the students not engaged. In both of the observed incidences, the teacher was monitoring seatwork.
- In non-core courses, 43% of classrooms observed (9 of 21) had students obviously off-task. In one instance, the teacher appeared to be monitoring students, but 5 students were obviously off-task -- not engaged in what the rest of the class was doing. In another instance, a class in which students were using technology, one student was texting and two were sleeping. The teacher in that instance was engaged in activity not obviously related to instruction. In a third instance, half of the class was packed up and waiting for the bell. This occurred 6 minutes prior to the end of class. Yet another instance occurred because there were not enough stations to accommodate the number of students in the class; approximately half the class was engaged in the activity while the other half was unoccupied.
- Normally, auditors would expect to see off-task behavior near the end of the class period, but auditors noted that neither the time of day nor the section of the lesson observed had any impact on off-task behavior. Off-task behavior was observed early in the period, in the middle of class, and at the end equally. Likewise, students were observed sleeping in both morning and afternoon classes in approximately equal proportions.
- It should be noted that in almost every instance of off task behavior, the primary method of instruction was either large group or monitoring.

Exhibit 2.26 shows the distribution of the levels of engagement in core and non-core areas.

**Exhibit 2.26**

**Degree of Engagement in Core and Non-Core Areas  
Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Observations</b>	<b>Percentage with All/Most Students Engaged</b>	<b>Percentage with 3/4 students Engaged</b>	<b>Percentage with 50% or less Engaged OR Overt Off-Task Behavior</b>	<b>Engagement Not Noted</b>
Core	67%	35%	21%	23%	21%

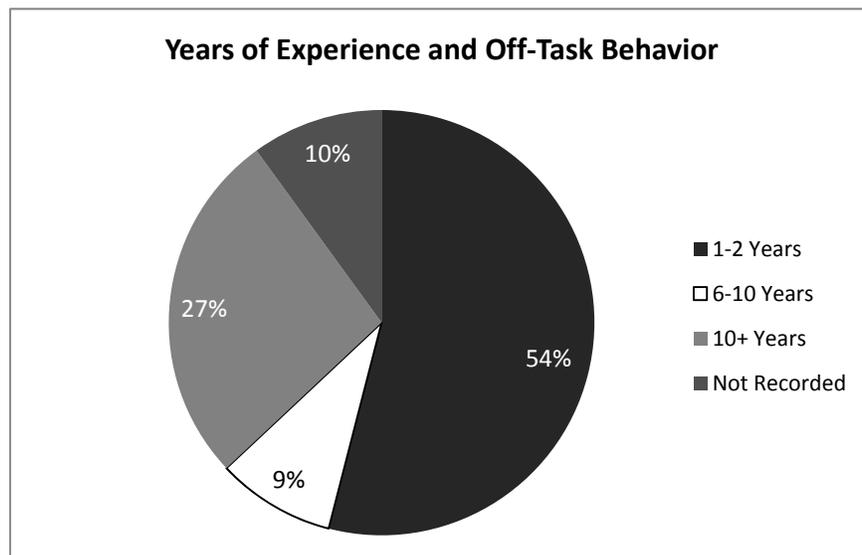
Non-Core	33%	41%	14%	36%	9%
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The following may be noted from Exhibit 2.26:

- Core content areas made up 67% of the total number of observed classrooms and non-core content areas made up 33% of observations.
- Of the core content classrooms observed, 56% had at least three-quarters of students engaged. Twenty three percent (23%) of core classrooms engaged had 50% or fewer students engaged or had one or more instances of overt off-task behavior, such as sleeping or texting.
- Of the non-core classrooms observed, 55% had at least three-quarters of students engaged. of the remaining classrooms, 36% had 50% or fewer students engaged or had one or more instances of overt off-task behavior.
- In 21% of core observations and 9% of non-core observations, the degree of engagement was not noted.

Auditors noted a correlation between the degree of off-task behavior and the number of years of experience the teacher has. These data are presented in Exhibit 2.27.

**Exhibit 2.27**  
**Years of Experience Correlated to Off-Task Behavior in Core Classes**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**



From Exhibit 2.27 the following may be noted:

- Of the classrooms that had either low engagement or flagrant off-task behavior, 54% of the teachers of those classrooms had 2 or fewer years experience.
- Nine percent (9%) had 6-10 years experience and 27% of teachers in classrooms with low engagement had 10 or more years experience.
- The high proportion of new teachers suggests that inexperience is playing a role in the lack of engagement. Newer teachers simply don't have the "bag of tricks" needed to keep students engaged and on task. This may be particularly true given the block schedule as 90 minutes of engagement would require skilled planning and careful management of transitions to effect.

Overall, auditors found that Student work artifacts mostly calibrated to their purported grade level but that the CMAPP was not well aligned to the Common Core in Language Arts. The CMAPP is inconsistently used, primarily because content and activities are inconsistently available. Additional problems with links, differentiation and navigation are hindering CMAPP's usage. Cognitive types of activities are generally low. Contexts of activities are overwhelmingly classroom activities and are not congruent with the contexts on the Smarter Balanced assessments. Classroom observations revealed a high proportion of direct, large group instruction and monitoring, coupled with a high proportion of large group work and individual work on the part of the students. A relatively high proportion of disengaged students may be correlated to the preponderance of large group instruction and teacher monitoring or to the high proportion of inexperienced teachers at the high school.

**Finding 3: Achievement is at or slightly below that of state means and generally trending toward improvement. Staff are using data to inform instructional decision making despite the lack of high quality aligned formative and diagnostic tools to evaluate student progress in mastering the curriculum.**

Assessment data are the most important tool in a teacher's tool belt. These data provide teachers with specific information regarding student learning, so teachers can plan their instruction to meet students' individual needs. Without targeted, diagnostic data, teachers' instruction can only be generic in nature and may overlook or misinterpret a student's gap in learning. The most important components to an effective feedback loop at the classroom level are high quality, aligned diagnostic and formative tools that a teacher can administer when a student needs it; immediate data from the assessments which a teacher can use to plan instruction; and tools and resources for use during instruction that match the students' diverse academic needs. These components are required for curricular differentiation, which is not to be confused with instructional differentiation. Instructional differentiation occurs when teachers modify strategies, approaches, and activities to match students' interests and learning styles, whereas curricular differentiation is when a teacher selects different objectives to teach to individual or small groups of students, in response to demonstrated gaps in their learning. This latter form of differentiation is the more critical in assuring all students are successfully mastering the curriculum.

To determine students' academic needs and to ascertain what tools teachers have at Knightdale High School to effectively differentiate the curriculum, the auditors interviewed and surveyed (via an online survey) a wide range of school personnel and stakeholders, visited every classroom in the building, and reviewed school and district documents, policies, assessment instruments, and data. Overall, the auditors found that Knightdale High School students performed at or slightly below the same levels of proficiency as the state in Language Arts and Math. The district also tests students in the core areas of Math and Language Arts every nine weeks with the Case 21 benchmark test. These formative assessments provided by the district are not adequately aligned to the Common Core curriculum nor to the Smarter Balanced assessments in all three dimensions, and data are not provided to teachers in a timely fashion for use in instructional decision-making. Teachers lack quality, targeted, diagnostic tools to differentiate their instruction, and they also lack the range of resources and materials necessary to meet the diverse academic needs in their classrooms. Despite the lack of timely data, teachers are working to make use of all data available to them in planning their instruction.

### **Student achievement**

Examining student assessment data allows districts to see how their program compares to other schools across the state and, if the tests are nationally administered, the nation. Assessment data can show districts and individual schools which areas need their focused attention and resources in order to effect improvement. Without assessment data, districts have no way to measure their progress toward stated improvement goals; in effect, they have no way to know if they're getting where they want to go. Additionally, they have no way to assess the effectiveness of their programs for individual subgroups

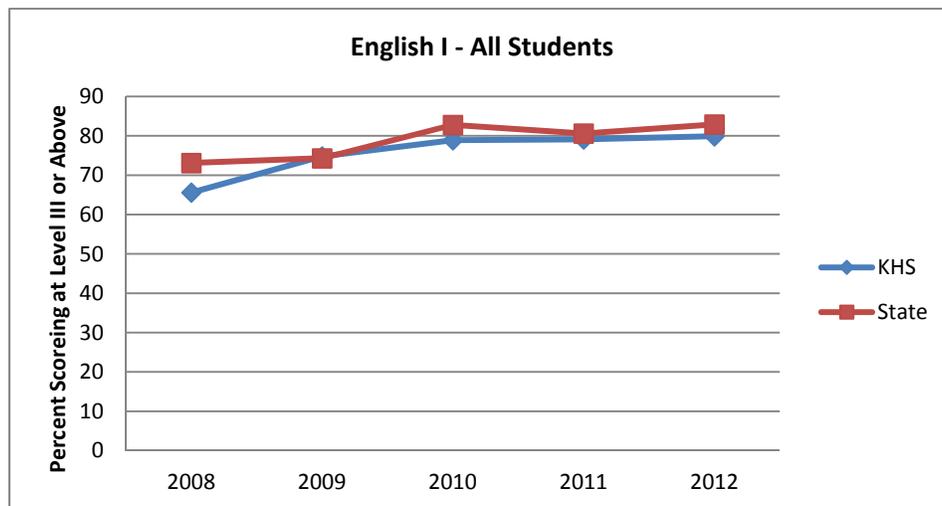
within the student body, which would allow them to focus resources toward improvement. Without assessment data to guide efforts, all schools can do is make changes and hope for the best.

To determine what achievement looks like at Knightdale High School, the auditors reviewed building-wide data compared to the state and also for a few selected subgroups. The subgroup analyses were performed to determine if there were any notable deviations from how the whole school performs against the state for the subgroups. The two subgroups, reportedly the lowest performing, are African American/Black students and LEP students.

Overall, auditors found that achievement levels at Knightdale High School were at the same or slightly lower levels than those of the state. These comparisons do not hold demographics constant, however, so caution should be used to interpret the data. Knightdale has a more economically and linguistically diverse population than the State of North Carolina, so the school would be expected to perform below state levels.

Exhibit 3.1 shows the achievement data from 2008-2012 for all students in English I compared to state results and trending upward.

**Exhibit 3.1**  
**Achievement Results for English I 2008-2012**  
**All Students**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**



From Exhibit 3.1 the following may be noted:

- Results show the percentage of students scoring at Level III or above, the level which is considered passing for End of Course (EOC) exams.
- Knightdale High School achievement for English I is below that of the state for all years except 2009, in which the differences were too slight to be significant.
- While state results have gone up and down, KHS results have gone up every year, from a low of 65.6% in 2008 to a high of 79.9% in 2012.

Exhibit 3.2 shows the results for English I EOC exams for selected subgroups compared to state results from 2008-2012.

**Exhibit 3.2**

**Achievement Results for English I 2008-2012**  
**Subgroup Analysis**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

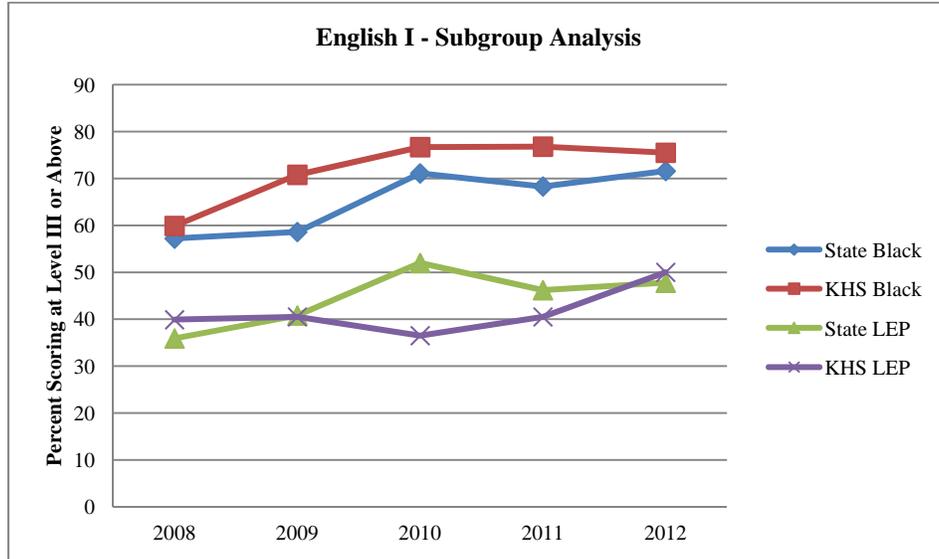


Exhibit 3.2 shows the following:

- Black students at Knightdale outperformed other black students in the state in each of the last five years.
- Black students at KHS show a general trend toward improvement, rising from a low of 59.9% proficient in 2008 to a high of 76.8% proficient in 2011. The percentage of black students passing was very slightly lower in 2012 -- 75.5% -- but still higher than the state.
- Limited English Proficient (LEP) students at KHS underperformed LEP students statewide in two of the five years. The other three years, KHS students were at or above the state in performance. Knightdale LEP performance is trending upward.

Exhibits 3.3 and 3.4 show the percentages of students passing EOC exams for Algebra 1 from 2008-2012.

**Exhibit 3.3**  
**Achievement Results for Algebra I 2008-2012**  
**All Students**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

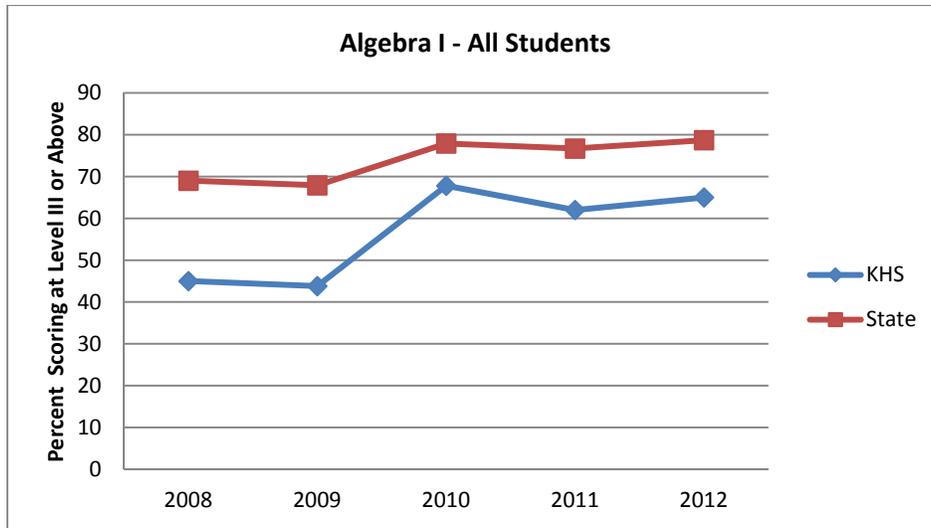
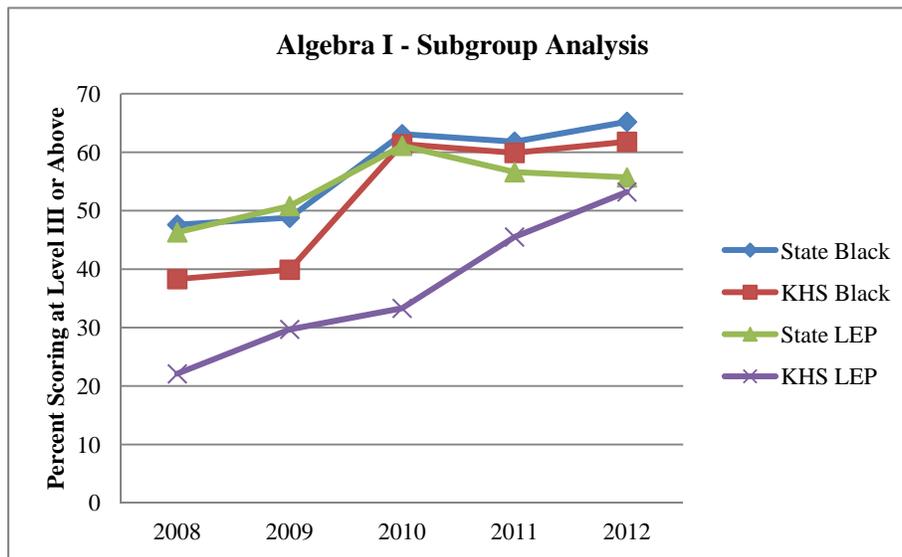


Exhibit 3.3 shows the following:

- The percentage of KHS students scoring at Level III or above rose from a low of 45% in 2008 to a high of 67.8% in 2010. The percentage fell to 62% in 2011 and rose again to 65% in 2012.
- Knightdale students underperformed the state in all five years examined, although the gap between the two has narrowed since 2008.

#### Exhibit 3.4

#### Achievement Results for Algebra I 2008-2012 Subgroup Analysis Knightdale High School April 2013



The following may be noted from Exhibit 3.4:

- The percentage of KHS black students scoring at Level III or above on EOC Algebra I exams was below that of the state for all five years examined.

- The general trend of KHS black student performance was toward improvement; the percentage rose from a low of 38.3% in 2008 to a high of 61.8% in 2012.
- The percentage of KHS Limited English Proficient students scoring at Level III or above was below that of the state for all five years examined.
- The trend for KHS LEP students is strongly toward improvement, rising from a low of 22.1% in 2008 to a high of 53.2% in 2012. LEP students showed improvement every year of the last five years.

Exhibits 3.5 and 3.6 show the results of EOC exams for Biology from 2008-2012.

**Exhibit 3.5**  
**Achievement Results for Biology 2008-2012**  
**All Students**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

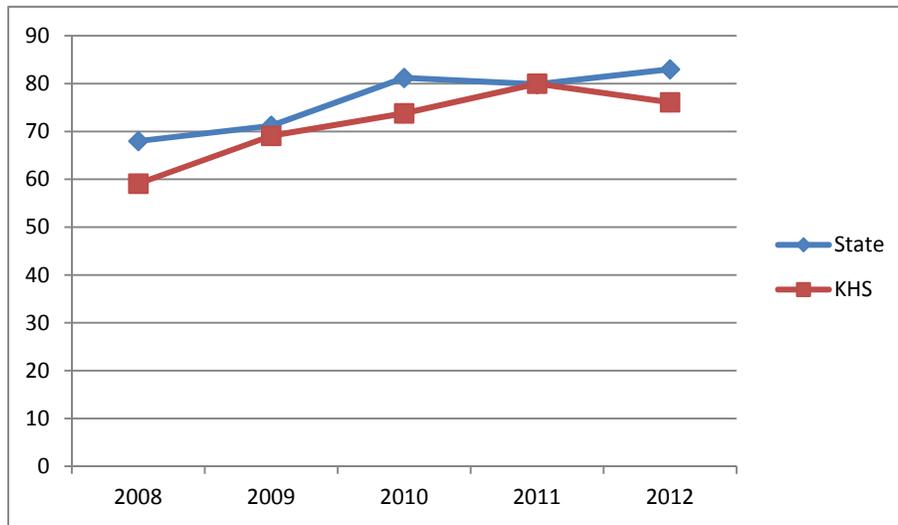


Exhibit 3.5 shows the following:

- KHS has been slightly below state achievement levels in biology all years except 2011 when achievement levels were the same.
- KHS achievement was trending upward until 2012, when performance declined.

**Exhibit 3.6**  
**Achievement Results for Biology 2008-2012**  
**Subgroups**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**April 2013**

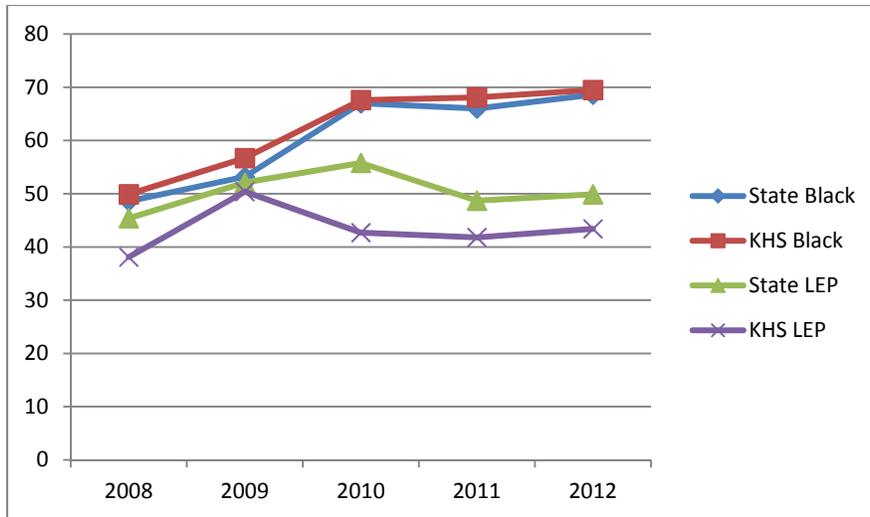


Exhibit 3.6 shows the following:

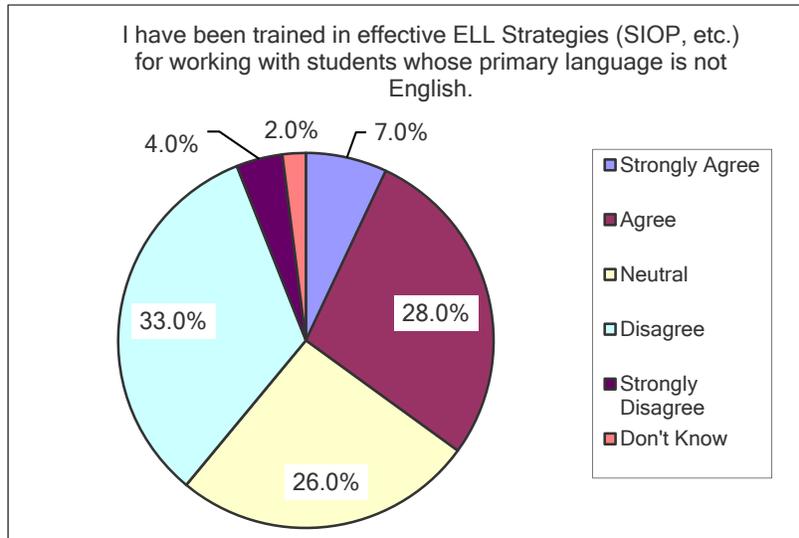
- KHS results for black students have been at or slightly above those of the state in biology for all five years examined.
- KHS black student pass rates have trended upward over the last five years.
- KHS LEP student results have been below those of the state for four of the five years examined. Only in 2009 were LEP pass rates commensurate with those of the state. The trend for KHS LEP students was upward from 2008 to 2009, but has declined in 2010 and has remained static for the last three years with little or no improvement.

The LEP students have historically performed below the mean, although the gap for Knightdale LEP students has narrowed in recent years. Effectiveness in working with LEPs was an issue several teachers mentioned during interviews, indicated a lack of background knowledge in how to meet their needs, insufficient training, or a need for more support. Sample comments included:

- “There are LEP kids that haven’t had an ESL class in 10 years and they are failing. They need support—they may need somebody to sit with them and care.” (Building staff member)
- “That’s one area I feel weak in, working with ESL students.” (Building staff member)
- “We have a lot of ELL students—I’m not sure that those resources are on there.” (Building staff member)
- “You should be able to take things, modify it for your students. Most of my issues are ELL problems.” (Building staff member)
- “We had [an ELL] workshop here, last semester about teaching students...but it wasn’t anything [definite]. Some helpful help—but nothing great.” (Building staff member)
- “Some of the kids are LEPs, they just don’t understand it. I can’t teach in one language and teach the same stuff in Spanish.” (Building staff member)

On the survey, many teachers mentioned serving LEP students as a frustration or weakness in the building. Exhibit 3.7 presents the survey data.

**Exhibit 3.7**  
**Training in SIOP Strategies**  
**Knightdale High School**  
**June 2013**



As can be seen in Exhibit 3.7, just over one-third (35%) of the 100 staff members who responded to the survey agree or strongly agree that they have been trained in effective ELL strategies, such as SIOP, for working with students whose primary language is not English. A surprising 26% were neutral, while 37% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This would indicate that only one-third of teachers feel equipped to teach ELL students effectively.

In summary, Knightdale High School's students perform, on average, at or just below state levels on the EOC exams. When analyzed by subgroups, Black students at Knightdale perform better than the state mean for Black students in English and biology, and just below the state mean in Algebra I. LEP students perform just at or below state levels, except in Algebra I, where they have been below state levels until the 2012 school year.

**Use of Data**

Board policies clearly require the use of data from formative and summative assessments to drive instructional decision-making in the district. Auditors were presented with documents that indicated data were being discussed during PLT time. Additionally, survey data indicate that staff members are using data to make instructional decisions. Exhibit 3.8 shows the survey results.

**Exhibit 3.8**  
**Survey Results -- Use of Data**

**Knightdale High School  
April 2013**

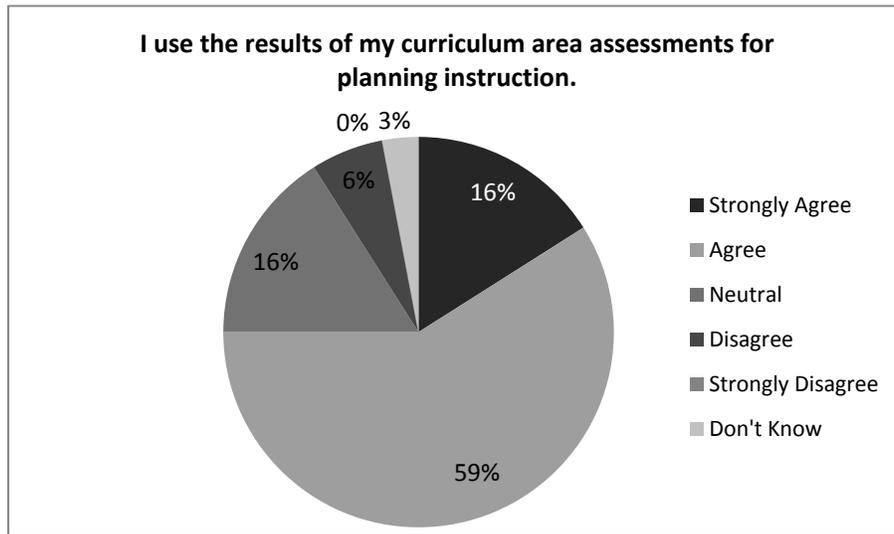


Exhibit 3.9 shows the following:

- Seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents indicated that they were using data for instructional planning.
- Of the remaining respondents, only 6% said they did not use data for instructional decision making and 16% were neutral. Not all areas have benchmark assessments, so auditors would expect some variation.

Interviews with building staff revealed that while data are being disseminated and their use is encouraged, there remains some confusion about what, exactly, the data mean and how they are to be used.

- "We use data. We try to make sure we're looking at scores for assessments – pre-assessment -- as a team. We used the data to try to help the kids understand the Case 21 prior to taking the next benchmark." (Building staff member)
- "Our principal is a math teacher. She is data-driven. Sometimes when it's given to the staff it's just a pile of data. I can't see what point is being made with it. I don't know what I'm supposed to think about it. Is it the wall of shame?" (Building staff member)
- "Last staff meeting they threw a bunch of data at us and wanted our thoughts. That's not useful. On a small scale I know what to do with data; on a school-wide scale, I'm not sure what it means. I don't know what we're looking for." (Building staff member)
- "As a school we absolutely look at data -- grades, gallery walkthroughs [of data]. We evaluated ourselves using data." (Building staff member)
- "We are data driven. Always look at the data for everything. We use test data by objective so we know what to re-teach. We are data people. That's strong." (Building staff member)
- "We don't always know what all the data means. There's so much. This is a weakness -- we're all over the place sometimes. We change instruments each year, trying to find a solution. Teachers get overwhelmed." (Building staff member)
- "Understand data? No." (Building staff member)
- "We are frequently asked to collect data and explain it." (Building staff member)

- "We use data to back up our teaching, our tests." (Building staff member)
- "Mrs. Jernigan is keen on using data. We analyze to see if there's things we can change." (Building staff member)
- "School-wide data that we have used I view as an intimidation factor. Grade data -- it's not really indicative of what's going on in the classroom. Interpretation is not there: it just creates pressure, fear. For young, inexperienced teachers...intimidating." (Building staff member)

Overall, auditors found that most building staff were attempting to use data to make instructional decisions, in spite of the fact that for many, Case 21 is not providing meaningful or timely information. In addition, the schedule for administering the CASE 21 Assessments is fixed; it serves as a benchmark, but not as a classroom-based, formative and/or diagnostic tool. Formative tools are administered at the teacher's discretion, based on student need, and results are used immediately for grouping and instructional decisions in the classroom. While data are being disaggregated and the use of data is encouraged, the interpretation and specific use of data to inform instruction are not well understood by all staff members, and the instruments available that are provided by the district are inadequate.

Teachers have worked in PLTs and by department to develop common assessments. These assessments were mentioned to the auditors, and many cite their usefulness in planning and delivering instruction. However, the auditors did not analyze the assessments for alignment with the Common Core along the three required dimensions (content, context, and cognitive type). The Curriculum Management Improvement Model, although never prohibiting teacher-made and implemented assessments, expects the district to develop and provide aligned, quality formative assessments.

In conclusion, teachers at Knightdale High School were using the assessments available to them or that they made themselves to make decisions. However, the assessment tools made available to them by district leaders were neither sufficiently aligned nor of adequate quality to provide the data needed to make instructional decisions. Teachers also do not get data back from the test quickly enough. Most testing focuses on language arts, math, and biology, and neglects other content areas.

## V. Recommendations of the CMSi Curriculum Audit™ Team for the Improvement of Knightdale High School

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

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

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

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

In this project, a separate set of recommendations, external to this report, has been developed for and provided to district leaders for their own planning purposes. It is hoped that these recommendations will both directly and indirectly serve to strengthen and facilitate the work needed to be done at Knightdale High School, and will minimize a duplication of effort across all four buildings.

Based on the three streams of data derived from interviews, documents, and site visits, the CMSi Curriculum Audit™ Team has developed a set of recommendations to address its findings shown under each of the standards of the audit. In the case of the findings, they have been triangulated, i.e., corroborated with one another. In the case of the recommendations, those put forth in this section are representative of the auditors' best professional judgments regarding how to address the problems that surfaced in the audit. The recommendations recognize and differentiate between the policy and monitoring responsibilities of the board of education, and the operational and administrative duties of the superintendent of schools.

**Recommendation 1: Strengthen the focus on the mission, vision, and values statements in a first step toward improving consistency and communication in the building. More clearly define the leadership structure of the building, defining the roles and responsibilities of leaders within the school in the efforts to increase student learning, and review for teachers all components of the culture of consistency in behavioral and academic expectations. Continue the use of PLTs to collaborate in improving the delivery of instruction. Increase monitoring to maintain consistency and increase curriculum alignment. Divert resources for additional staffing and increased STEM materials and technology; and to teacher training, coaching, and support.**

At Knightdale High School, the auditors found a staff and leadership team that is strongly focused on improvement and academic success. There have been many initiatives aimed at ensuring a culture of high expectations for all students, maximized educational opportunities, and improved engagements of students in the classroom, congruent with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills and approaches. The building has recently adopted a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) focus for its educational program. On a more specific level, two main priorities in recent years have been the decrease in behavior referrals and an increase in the graduation rate. Teachers are presented with data on a regular basis and spend common planning time interpreting data, in PLT groups (see Finding 3). They have also spent time

developing common assessments and integrating the ten habits into their daily instruction and instructional planning.

Behavior has improved and graduation rates have gone up, and despite a push for a culture of consistency in the building, teachers report a need for even greater consistency building-wide, in leadership, communication, academic expectations, and behavioral expectations and enforcement (see [Finding 1](#)). There are strong perceptions in the building that resources are not allocated fairly across county schools, and that resources available are insufficient to successfully deliver the curriculum. The facility itself is spacious, new, and attractive, but dirty and there were several complaints concerning bathrooms, insufficient breaks/opportunities to move, and food service. Busing was reported to be a problem, as a number of students arrive late every day, and the building is battling a history of negative perception in the community.

On top of those challenges, the clientele the building serves has all the characteristics of the most at-risk populations, and despite some growth in parental involvement, parent and community support and involvement needs improvement (see [Finding 1](#)). The teaching staff is competent and hard working, but it is also very inexperienced. One-fourth of all teachers have two or less years of experience, which contributes to inconsistencies and concerns over classroom management (see [Findings 1](#) and [2](#)).

Teachers have also been burdened with the recent shift to the Common Core Standards, and have worked hard to implement that change. They now face Common Core testing in a few short years, and they are working hard with the resources and curriculum resources the district provides for them. Teachers attested to trying to incorporate more student-centered, project-based approaches in the classroom, and the auditors did observe some cooperative approaches during classroom visits. However, the dominant teacher activity observed was direct instruction and the dominant student activity whole-group activity. This is not a judgment; merely a reflection and an opportunity for building leaders to determine what they want to see for dominant activities on a regular basis in classrooms (see [Finding 2](#)).

The following actions are recommended to district-level leaders to support increased student learning, improved student services and resources, aligned teaching, and academic success.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Board of Education of the Wake County Public School System:

### ***Resources***

**G.1.1:** Modify policy regarding resource allocation to be congruent with the Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan of the district. Resources must follow the areas of greatest need, which is characterized by demographic factors beyond any individual school's control. Weighted formulas should be used to allocate funds for non-salary items as well as for staffing buildings. This is of particular importance for schools that have extremely high percentages of free and reduced lunch populations but do not receive Title I funds, and for schools whose PTAs cannot stand in the gap for a school building because the community lacks commensurate resources.

**G.1.2:** Direct the superintendent (or designee) to conduct an inventory of technology resources in all high schools across the district. The inventory is to determine the equality of access to resources and tools necessary to support the curriculum with expectations for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, and the technology needs of the Common Core Standards.

### ***Monitoring***

**G.1.3:** Modify policy to more specifically describe the purposes and methods for monitoring curriculum in Wake County Public Schools. Direct the superintendent or superintendent's designee to ensure that policy reflects the comprehensive requirements and guidelines for monitoring outlined in **A.1.2**. Specify that monitoring is not intended for teacher evaluation; rather, it is intended to monitor the delivery of

curriculum in order to identify areas of weakness where teachers need additional support and then provide that support.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Wake County Public School System Superintendent of Schools:

### **Resource Allotment**

**A.1.1:** Revisit budgeting practices to align the budget with programmatic needs and to reflect the requirements for equity described in district policy (see [Finding 2](#)). Commit immediate resources to the following areas: Technology maintenance and upgrades, to support STEM focus; resources and materials required to deliver the curriculum; increased staffing to mentor new teachers, facilitate improved classroom management, and support effective instruction for all students. Classroom-based technology (hardware) and resources (goal: technology in students' hands)

Funds should be allocated specifically for the following:

- Software needed to support delivery of the curriculum (resources referenced in C-MAPP but not universally available) and STEM software needs
- Materials to support 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning, STEM projects, and literacy development (books and research materials)
- Professional development to assist teachers in integrating literacy and language objectives into everyday, content-based instruction and in delivering cognitively engaging (and personally relevant) instruction that is STEM focused.
- Staffing: ideally, two coaches to support teachers in delivering instruction. One coach should be primarily responsible for the implementation of effective, student-centered, culturally-responsive, language-integrative (SIOP), project-based strategies (i.e., constructivist approaches, discovery learning). This coach also assists teachers in classroom management strategies, both for behavior management as well as successful differentiation of content.

The second coach is to assist in integrating reading/language and STEM content across the curriculum. These coaches should work in conjunction with the Assistant Principals and the Principal, as members of the leadership team. Their main role is to support teachers' delivery of the curriculum, provide support and coaching, and spend the majority of their time in classrooms, modeling lessons, working with PLTs, and assisting teachers with becoming better teachers.

This financial commitment, beyond addressing the most urgent of all the students' and teachers' needs, demonstrates to the community that the needs of Knightdale High School's students are as important as those of any other school in the district.

### **Monitoring**

**A.1.2:** Work closely with East Wake Middle School building leaders to provide support, professional development, and coaching in curriculum monitoring. All training should focus on the effective delivery of curriculum, so intimate knowledge of the CCSS and the Smarter Balanced Assessments is critical. Revise the principals' and the building-level IRT's and Coaches' job descriptions and board policy to include more specific expectations for monitoring. These expectations must:

- Define all purposes of monitoring. Suggestions for purposes include: to determine which powerful strategies are used and with what kind of effect; to determine if the objectives being taught reflect on-level common-core strategies and if they align with the content and contexts of Smarter Balanced Assessments; to determine student engagement and the rigor of instruction and student activities; to monitor the types of reading students participate in in the classroom..

- Specify who is monitoring for what and how those responsibilities are interconnected. For example, if the IRT shares in monitoring responsibilities, how/when are their findings or observations shared with the principal? What kind of feedback should they share with district-level curriculum staff? How is this to occur and how frequently? Ensure that the building principal remains the key instructional leader in the building and require him/her to oversee all monitoring that occurs by other staff members.
- Specify what type of data are to be collected for each purpose, and with what methods;
- Indicate which data are intended to be collected district wide for district-level feedback (such as for determining the effectiveness of a staff development initiative), and which data are to be used for teacher evaluation, coaching, and instructional improvement within the building. Minimize the use of monitoring data for teacher evaluation; monitoring is most effective when it is done with a non-inspectional intent. Monitoring is about overseeing and collecting information about the effectiveness and alignment of the delivered curriculum, not evaluating teachers, so this should be seen primarily as a curriculum-related function.

Consider two other purposes and types of monitoring that supplement the non-supervisory classroom walk-throughs: SchoolView trend data collection and Examining Student Work data collection for calibrating student work. SchoolView is simply classroom observational data collected frequently over time to see if dominant teacher and student activities, the objectives taught, and the student work displayed all reflect the district's instructional model and expectations for rigor. The current walk-through approach used to collect data could be modified to include the other components of curriculum content and contexts that should be monitored that are included in the SchoolView tool. The SchoolView tool is included in Appendix F.

Examining Student work is a method for collecting student work to calibrate it against district and state standards and expectations to check alignment and determine whether the work is on, above, or below level. All three methods for collecting data are for different purposes and all three comprise one facet of monitoring that contributes to valuable district-level and campus-level feedback for decision making.

**A.1.3:** Require monitoring to be the primary responsibility of building administrators, including any building-based coaches, department chairs, mentors, or assistant principals/principal, in keeping with their role as instructional leaders. In monitoring, school leaders should not only keep the learner objectives and effective strategies in mind, but the instructional model, as well, focusing reflective questions on those aspects of the model the administrators deem appropriate or desirable. Classroom management practices are another area for observation.

It is not necessary for building leaders who share in monitoring responsibilities to look for everything possible every single time; rather, it is preferable that leaders look for one or two each time, but during brief (<3 minute) and frequent visits. The auditors suggest at least 2-3 times a week, by various people. Specific areas to monitor:

**A.1.4:** Use a classroom observation process (in addition to walk-throughs), as described above, to specifically calibrate and analyze the student artifacts and objectives being used in each classroom, in a collaborative, non-threatening context that can be performed by department chairs, mentors, instructional coaches (see **A.1.1**), and Assistant Principals. Consider something like the *Examining Student Work* program (CMSi) to equip teachers to be critical consumers, evaluating all available materials and resources to determine if it's appropriately on-level in content, reflects varied and 21<sup>st</sup> Century contexts, is congruent with SIOP, and is cognitively challenging. This process will also assist teachers in evaluating the work they assign in their classrooms, particularly those activities and resources that are pulled off C-MAPP and/or commercially-produced. This observation protocol is intended to augment the existing walk-through checklist approach already in use in the building (focused on effective strategies).

**Building-level Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to building-level leaders to support increased student learning, aligned teaching, and academic success:

**A.1.5:** Review the leadership structure of the building and redefine the roles and responsibilities for each position listed (include others, if necessary), specifying how each works to support the effective delivery of curriculum. Delivery is considered effective when it in fact increases student learning, and achievement, when that learning is measured. These positions and their possible roles and responsibilities should include:

- Principal: instructional leadership; maintaining building focus on the vision and mission; collaborating with and supervising other building leaders for consistency; monitoring instructional delivery; teacher appraisal.
- Assistant Principal: Assist in teacher appraisal; monitoring of common areas in the building for behavior management; classroom walk-throughs to support alignment of curriculum and implementation of effective strategies (see **A.1.7**); support teachers with classroom management practices.
- Instructional Coach (see **A.1.1** above): implementing effective classroom management practices and teaching strategies; differentiating instruction (content and strategies); support new teachers and coach them in managing differentiating content, small groups, and student activities (contexts).
- Stem/Literacy Coach (see also **A.1.1**): integrating STEM, language and literacy into every content area; assuring literacy development across all content areas and integration of Common Core language arts integration across all content areas, particularly STEM. Works also with new teachers to provide additional support.
- Department Chair
- Mentor
- Guidance Counselor
- BT director

The focus of this is to make very clear how each role in building leadership functions to more effectively support and coach teachers in their delivery of instruction, within the context of a culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse student population that has demonstrated weaknesses in reading comprehension and language arts, and is enrolled in a STEM school.

**A.1.6:** Define what aspects of building leadership will be kept tight (defined by the Principal/Assistant principals/leadership team) and those that will be kept loose (up to individual departments/teachers). For example, if departments are given control over scheduling (loosely held), are they allowed to schedule classes at maximum capacity to then increase teacher planning time? Do senior teachers have more power than less experienced teachers in making decisions about who will teach which sections? Departments should be informed how much latitude they have in making decisions concerning issues that are loosely-held. There needs to be clarity with regard to what boundaries or frameworks are in place.

### ***Monitoring***

**A.1.7:** Establish building-wide expectations and guidelines for monitoring that are congruent with the mission and vision of the building, and that also monitor for the integration and implementation of the following:

- The teaching of appropriate and challenging content, in contexts that are as real-life as possible and that align, contextually and cognitively, with Common Core, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, and Smarter Balanced contexts.
- High expectations for all students;
- Effective classroom management practices, particularly those that result from instruction that is cognitively engaging, intrinsically interesting, and personally relevant;
- Positive, respectful rapport between teachers and students (both ways);
- STEM content;
- SIOP approaches; these should minimally include an overt focus on vocabulary and language skill development;
- Literacy skills and practices across all content areas
- Effective, research-based strategies (constructivist, engaging, etc.; see also Appendices D and E for additional suggestions)

Again, monitoring should be focused on the delivery of curriculum (see **A.1.2** above) and on ensuring that all teacher-led initiatives and efforts in every classroom align with the building vision, mission, and requirement that all teachers hold students to the highest of expectations.

### ***STEM Programming and Building Image***

The auditors found that the community around Knightdale High School perceives the school negatively. Building personnel overwhelmingly attested to hearing stories about the school, believing it to be far worse than it is in reality. The building recently agreed to incorporate a STEM program. This has not yet been clearly defined by building leaders; however, STEM programming can play a vital part in the work to improve the school's image and reputation across the county. Consider the following suggestions in this endeavor.

**A.1.8:** Create a STEM committee, directed by the STEM coordinator (if one is identified) and the STEM/literacy coach (see **A.1.1**), that has the responsibility for developing a plan for the STEM program's long-range purpose with clear, measurable goals for its implementation. Include expectations for the technology and resources needed to adequately support the types of STEM activities that students are doing every day.

The STEM plan should highlight the following aspects of the program and define key elements:

- The purpose and intent of STEM programming (rationale, goals for students, philosophical basis for its adoption). Incorporate key elements from the school's vision and mission and values statements.
- Goals for the program should reflect what building leaders hope to gain from the STEM program—related to rationale and philosophy expressed in the values statements, vision, and mission. Emphasize the constructivist approaches and philosophy inherent to many STEM programs and the student-centered, project-based learning desired. Throughout, specify how the STEM content and approaches will be culturally responsive and incorporate personal relevance for the students.
- Expectations for how literacy and language arts skills will be integrated into the STEM focus and priorities. Include references to SIOP; ensure that SIOP integrates all classroom approaches.
- Expectations and descriptors of preferred teaching methods and approaches in the classroom—in other words, what does effective STEM teaching look like? How does it relate to students'?

experiences? How does it relate to the real world? Use the appropriate strategies and approaches from former trainings; build off what teachers are already familiar with, wherever possible.

- Suggestions for modifying curriculum and resources to enhance the STEM focus (if C-MAPP is inadequate).
- Assessment measures used to determine if the program is meeting its goals, beyond Case 21. Focus on assessment measures that reflect the priorities of STEM programming: student-centered, project-based learning; authentic assessment (relies on rubrics and performance-based measures).

Development of the STEM plan is a critical part of emphasizing the program in the building and treating it as a desired magnet program within the district. Approach the STEM program as an enrichment program that every child is eligible to participate in, in congruence with the building vision and values statements.

Use the new coaches to assist in the development and implementation of the STEM content and instructional strategies.

### **Building and Classroom Management**

Consistency across the building was a major concern expressed by teacher and students, alike, as well as the need to take more time with students in planning their academic goals. The auditors suggest the following steps, organized by building-based actions and classroom-based actions.

#### **A.1.9: Building-wide actions:**

- Across the building, continue to review the behavioral expectations and how to appropriately and positively enforce them in the classroom and common areas. Solicit student input on all reviews of behavioral expectations. The most important guidelines are fairness and being beneficial to students.
- Emphasize what every staff member's responsibility is in monitoring and being visible in common areas, including bathrooms. Routinely monitor bathrooms; when students know staff members will enter bathrooms at any time on a regular basis, they are less likely to misbehave or hang out in them. Also use time in the common area to meet and greet students, working on building positive relationships with them.
- Clearly define expectations regarding cell-phone use; make sure teachers and students alike are clear on when it's okay to have them out and when not. There are occasions (especially in a building with no clocks) when cell phone use is appropriate or necessary, or even supportive of instruction.
- Install clocks in all common areas; add some audio sign that lets students know when class starts in 60 seconds, then 30, or a similar combination. The intent is to give students fair warning when their passing time is almost up so those who really want to make it to class on time.
- Establish a system of rewards/incentives for students who make academic and behavioral improvement, such as fewer tardies, improved attendance, improved grades, etc. Make the rewards meaningful; solicit student input for ideas, but it should be tied to increased privileges rather than a material gain/reward.
- Review with teachers the conditions under which calling 1613 is necessary, to minimize its use. In every department, review alternatives as a team and make sure every alternative is considered or tried before 1613 is called.

- Ensure all APs consistently respond to 1613 when they are “on call.” Follow up with any teachers who use it unnecessarily or too frequently; provide those teachers with support in classroom management and engaging strategies (use the instructional coach).
- Revisit the daily schedule for ways to adjust it to add the following possibilities:
  - Additional lunch periods, staggered in smaller increments of time to minimize lunch crowding.
  - Flexibility in block scheduling, to allow any departments who want to try an alternative some autonomy, such as modified block, partial block, split block. Again, the criterion for considering any change that is ultimately better for students. For example, if a 20-minute advisory period every week is considered beneficial, work to ensure that can happen through inventive and innovative scheduling and working to modify the 4 x 4 block. This is especially important if there are certain courses that would be better if they were 9 month courses, such as freshman core courses.

In summary, continue to work within the building management structure already in place. Make revisions where and when necessary, while regularly seeking student input. Students are more likely to come to school when it’s a place they enjoy being. Clearly-defined, strict behavioral expectations can work simultaneously with a positive, pro-student environment.

**A.1.10:** Classroom-based actions:

The actions suggested here are intended to address managing time within the classroom, within the context of the behavioral expectations, effective strategies, SIOP approaches, and STEM emphases teachers have already been trained in (see also **A.1.11** on staff development).

- Managing the 90-minute block. To encourage student engagement and to minimize misbehavior, encourage teachers to manage the time in the classroom in smaller chunks. No chunk of time should exceed 20 minutes; vary student engagement in classroom activities every 20 minutes and deliberately encourage physical movement (perhaps to work cooperatively or to complete a project) at least twice every block period. No class should go more than 45 minutes without a quick break; ideally, students benefit most from short, intense bursts of learning/instruction (20 minutes) followed by a “rest” or mental stretch for a few minutes.
- Engage students from bell to bell; use sponge activities at the beginning and meta-cognitive processing at the end of a period to ensure students are engaged, not just compliant, the entire time. The amount of time teachers spend with students is not nearly as important as the intensity of activity/learning during that time. Another rule of thumb is that the more rigorous a course is and the busier students are, the less likely they are to skip class or misbehave.
- Employ different grouping strategies with students, for variety and also for curricular differentiation (see **A.1.12.1** and **A.1.14**).
- Work to incorporate more technology use into all lessons; consider BYOD approaches, where possible. A 2:1 ratio for devices is appropriate and fosters collaboration.

***Staff Development and Teacher Support***

**A.1.11:** Strengthen the BT program and decrease the number of new teachers a mentor may sponsor. Involve the coaches in the mentoring process; define how they work in collaboration with mentors and department chairs to support, guide, and correct new teachers.

**A.1.12:** Address teacher attrition; establish incentives for teachers that stay longer in the building (or even permanently!). If monetary resources from outside the building are not available, work to find

incentives within the building that are not attached to financial reward, such as privileges or special honors, or excused duties for a specified period of time.

**A.1.13:** Continue working with teachers on classroom management practices and effective strategies, in the context of implementing the Common Core. Differentiate all staff development for teachers; it is more beneficial to teachers to go deeper with previous content than to keep layering more on top.

The focus with new teachers, however, is on training them in those initiatives that other teachers in the building already know. There has been a great deal of training on Common Core and effective strategies; continue focusing on the effective strategies, but from the standpoint of ensuring that the strategies are focused on the correct content and contexts, while integrating STEM and language/literacy skills. Once teachers are demonstrating proficiency with the strategies in the classroom, consider training them in the following:

1. Curricular differentiation in the context of highly effective strategies;
2. SIOP strategies, and
3. Calibrating student work and commercially-produced resources.

**1) Curricular Differentiation:** emphasize the use of immediate, diagnostic and formative assessment. Make sure these are consistent building-wide, so data are reliable and comparable. Ensure that any diagnostic or formative tools align in all three dimensions with the Smarter Balanced assessments—particularly in context and cognitive type. The rule of thumb is that whatever is used in the building must meet and exceed expectations of the Common Core and Smarter Balanced assessments. When students are below grade level and learning content not on-grade-level, still ensure that their required performance on assessments aligns in context and cognition, if not content. Curricular differentiation means identifying with assessments where are a student's gaps in learning and then teaching to those gaps, specifically. See the following section on curricular differentiation for more information on this.

**2) SIOP:** Review the SIOP strategies; SIOP integrates perfectly with the need to focus on literacy and vocabulary development. Make planning SIOP strategies into lesson plans a part of PLT work and share out successes with students across the building. Direct the literacy coach, reading/language arts teacher, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade AP to assist teachers across all content areas, particularly in STEM content classes, to integrate reading/language arts objectives into content-based instruction. Even reading instruction can be integrated into content-area instruction; if not sure how, use literacy coach and reading teachers as trainers in how to do so, using pair and small group strategies within regular classrooms.

**3) Calibrating student work:** Train teachers in how to assess the actual content, contexts, and cognitive type of various activities and resources they use with students to ensure they are aligned with CCSS and Smarter Balanced assessments. Consider Deep Alignment Training or Examining Student Work for this; the intent of this training is to equip teachers to be critical consumers with whatever resource they select for use in the classroom and making sure that resource is high quality and aligned in all three dimensions. Much of the work collected by auditors was below grade-level; this is not surprising given students' reading levels when they come in at 6<sup>th</sup> grade. However, making sure that students still have access to resources, materials, and reading selections that are on grade-level is critical.

Monitor the implementation of these concepts; provide assistance to teachers when they require it. Monitor the work students are completing; assure its alignment with CCSS and Smarter Balanced. The goal is to have all teachers trained in the above approaches within five years.

## ***Curricular Differentiation***

The auditors include these suggestions last, since building personnel have already begun the journey toward being more data driven and individualized in planning and delivering instruction and this area of improvement is less urgent than previous suggestions.

This section addresses how to more effectively differentiate instruction in the classroom. This means *curricular* differentiation, not *instructional* differentiation. **Curricular** differentiation works to teach students the objective(s) they need, based on assessment data; this means selecting different content, or curriculum, to teach a small group of students. Instructional differentiation means using different strategies and approaches based on student needs and preferences—and allowing for different processes and products. For more information on curricular differentiation, see **A.1.14**.

**A.1.14:** Define the instructional model expected to be used in classrooms in the school. This is *not* intended to be a prescriptive, tightly-held requirement. Rather, the instructional model is intended to provide a clear picture of how teachers are to use *specific, diagnostic assessment data* to plan instruction and identify student needs, and then attend to those needs on an individual basis. Doing this effectively represents a departure from majority whole-group instructional approaches; this typically results in grouping students in pairs or small group, according to academic need, for a brief instructional intervention, or reteaching.

Any strategies or approaches can be used in conjunction with the model; it is, however, a visual depiction of true curricular differentiation (for a suggested model, see [Appendix C](#)). However, given the amount of focus and training in effective strategies in the building, it is better to stay with a short list the teachers are already familiar with and focus on implementing these few strategies very well. Then, additional approaches can be added as teachers master those on the list.

The model should do the following:

- **Strategies/Approaches:** Describe the ways in which district-adopted curriculum is expected to be delivered in conjunction with STEM expectations and the SIOP. In other words, the types of teaching practices building leadership expects to see and that are proven effective should be specifically described in writing and included in the handbook to ensure implementation. Drawing from previous staff development on effective teaching practices, these might include:
  - Implementing higher-order questioning that helps students see the “big picture” of the concepts, knowledge, and skills being taught, as well as facilitating a deeper understanding on the part of students;
- Differentiating instruction (curricular differentiation) to meet the individual needs of all students;
- Using small group activities, paired tasks, and cooperative learning strategies;
- Comparing/contrasting new concepts, knowledge, skills, with concepts, skills, and experiences already familiar to students;
- Engaging students in experimental inquiry, problem-solving, and investigation—all hands-on methods of applying or discovering new knowledge and concepts;
- Having students set their own learning goals, develop strategies for attaining them, and monitor their own progress toward meeting those goals;
- Engaging students in meta-cognitive activities, whereby they analyze their own thought processes in approaching test questions, assignments, new information, etc.; and

- Using non-linguistic ways to support comprehension of, identification with, and the retention of new concepts or knowledge, such as pictures, graphic organizers, outlines, etc.<sup>1</sup> (SIOP-type approaches)
- Tailoring instruction to the cultural, economic, and linguistic diversity present in every classroom, recognizing and valuing differences and similarities and emphasizing the benefits of cultural and linguistic pluralism (see Appendix D, Culturally Responsive Instruction).

See Appendices D and E for more suggestions on strategies and approaches for ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse populations.

**Instructional Planning and Monitoring of Learning:** Describe expectations for how teachers are to use student performance/achievement data to plan instruction based on their specific academic needs. Consider the Mastery Learning Model as a possible model for planning and executing instruction using a variety of strategies and approaches that the teacher is comfortable with. The Mastery learning model presents a model of close monitoring of student learning that is data based, and relies on flexible, small student grouping to deliver the exact teaching that those students need, rather than relying on whole group, one-size-fits all approaches. This model is presented in Appendix C.

1. Require the monitoring of curriculum delivery (see also **A.1.3**) to include monitoring for these teaching strategies and practices expected to be used in the classroom. The aim is to provide teachers with specific feedback regarding what type of strategies they were using, their effectiveness, and how that strategy could have been more effective or how perhaps another could have been used to improve student achievement.

**A.1.15:** As part of the instructional model, incorporate the expectation for **differentiating** instruction in the classroom to meet individual student needs. Differentiation occurs in two important ways: differentiating the content or objective an individual student needs to learn based on where they are at in the overall sequence of learning, and differentiating the type of activity or performance product the student is expected to accomplish or create. Both types of differentiation are important, but teachers must learn the difference and apply one or the other or both as needed with each individual child, based on the individual child's *need*. A critical part of differentiating effectively is by having a battery of skill-specific diagnostic assessments that give teachers key information on whether a student has mastered a targeted concept or skill. Teachers must also have high proficiency in managing small groups of students to allow for more individualized instruction.

**A.1.16:** Communicate the expectations for adherence to the instructional model widely. Integrate throughout all discussions and meetings concerning curriculum delivery the need to not only verbally espouse high expectations for all students and respect and appreciation for cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and economic diversity, but to model it faithfully in every classroom every day.

The definition and adoption of a research-based, student-centered, rigorous instructional model will assist the district in moving forward with improving instruction and student achievement.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see Downey, C., English, F., Steffy, B., Frase, L., & Poston, W. (2003). *Fifty Ways to Close the Achievement Gap*.

See also Marzano, R., Gaddy, B. & Dean, C. (2001). *What Works in Classroom Instruction*. May be downloaded from <http://www.mcrel.org/topics/products/110/>

## VI. SUMMARY

A CMSi Curriculum Audit™ is an “exception” report. The audit does not provide a normative view of the school compared to others like it. Comparisons with other schools are typically only used in issues of equity. Rather, the individual school audit holds the school up to scrutiny against the predetermined standards of quality as defined in the scope of work, notes relevant findings derived from that comparison, and develops recommendations in order to improve system and school performance over time. These recommendations establish the *starting point* for a discussion of how to deal with the documented findings and improve the school and its day to day operations so that student achievement will improve.

The auditors are confident that Knightdale High School has the leadership capacity and energy to make the needed changes within the building. Indeed, there are many initiatives underway that already serve to improve school efficacy; these include a strong collaborative culture, with functioning PLTs and departmental cohesion; a strong vision and mission that permeates the school environment; a Beginning Teacher program and mentoring program; robust staff development focused on improving curriculum delivery; and initiatives to establish a culture of consistency.

In schools with high percentages of students in poverty or from low-income backgrounds, establishing and maintaining the highest of expectations for their academic success is critical. This must serve as the foundational principle that guides all other initiatives and actions taken by every staff member. Philosophy and beliefs drive decisions more than anything else; if teachers and building leaders do not relentlessly, aggressively believe in Knightdale’s students’ abilities and potential, the students are less likely to believe it themselves. With such a population, inspiration and motivation typically come from without, initially, until students start to see that success is indeed possible and learning can be both relevant and rewarding.

The auditors found that the school continues to face many challenges, although there have been improvements in the culture and safety of the building in recent years. Consistency in behavioral expectations and enforcing those expectations is still inadequate, an issue that is exacerbated by the high percentage of inexperienced teachers in the building. The mentoring program for new teachers needs greater focus and an in-classroom coaching component, to assist teachers with engaging students, particularly the “non-learners.” Adding two coaches to the high school is strongly recommended, to alleviate the mentoring burden to an extent and to provide the focus and support new teachers need. These coaches can also help focus the STEM program and assist in maximizing the effectiveness of instructional delivery.

The high school has a high turnover rate among teachers, which corresponds to the high percentage of new teachers. The auditors recommend incentives for teachers who come and who stay, even if not monetarily based. Such an initiative is intended to recognize the efforts of the hard-working teachers in the building, improve morale, and recognize progress. Celebrating successes is an important factor of reform.

The auditors also found that continuity in the focus areas for teachers’ growth every year is inadequate. There are too many initiatives layered on top of prior ones, leaving teachers feeling somewhat overwhelmed. Better to stick to a few simple modifications and implement them over several years—a minimum of three. Time is needed to effect change and personalize the learning; otherwise, it is more likely to be abandoned in the tyranny of the urgent.

Therefore, the auditors recommend going deeper and more intentional with the STEM focus, defining it more explicitly and how it is expected to shape the overall design and delivery of the educational program at Knightdale. Develop a plan for it, involving multiple stakeholders, and then broadcast it widely. Given the needs of the population, such a focus is both beneficial and relevant, but continue to integrate language/literacy skills throughout to support students’ weaknesses. Identify key leaders for STEM and

literacy integration, as well as for the implementation of effective strategies with students, differentiation of curriculum, and classroom management skills. Increase the visibility of leaders in classrooms and common areas; monitoring is the most crucial component in increasing consistency, improving student behavior, and assuring the alignment of curriculum.

Most importantly, however, recognize students' progress and development whenever and wherever possible, assisting them in a personal awareness of the great gains they make over their four-year career. Student learning is the reason everyone is there; their learning is the product sought and as such should be acknowledged and celebrated when possible.

Given the suggestions in this report, the auditors are confident that Knightdale can become one of the highest-performing high schools in Wake County. The diversity in the building is a strength and a challenge, but the potential and the capacity among staff members to effect real reform and to bring out the best in all students is there. It is hoped this report offers real suggestions and guidelines to be truly innovative in planning for continuous improvement.



## **VII. APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

### Auditors' Biographical Information



#### **Holly J. Kaptain, Auditor**

Holly J. Kaptain is currently the Executive Director of Curriculum Management Systems, inc. She has worked in public education for over 20 years and most recently in higher education at Iowa State University, where she was a research assistant in bilingual and two-way immersion programming for culturally and linguistically diverse students. She is a CMSi (Curriculum Management Systems, Inc.) licensed trainer in deep curriculum alignment and has participated in over two dozen audits in 11 different states since 1996. Dr. Kaptain graduated with a B.A. from St. Olaf College in Minnesota and completed curriculum management audit training in St. Paul, Minnesota in July of 1996. She completed her M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction and her Ph.D. in Educational Administration at Iowa State University. She has presented at regional and national conferences on bilingual education research, instructional efficacy, and curriculum design. Dr. Kaptain is a member of Phi Delta Kappa, the National Association for Bilingual Education, the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages, as well as other honor and professional organizations.



#### **Heather Boeschen, BA**

Heather Boeschen has been an educator for 20 years. She received her BA in English, German, and Education from Macalester College in 1988. She completed her audit training in St. Paul, MN, in 1996. Heather has taught English language arts at the secondary level and German at the elementary level.

She currently consults with districts on Curriculum Alignment, focusing on Common Core assessment alignment. She has participated in several audits all over the country, most recently in Colorado and North Carolina.

## **Appendix B**

### **List of Documents Reviewed**

## Appendix C

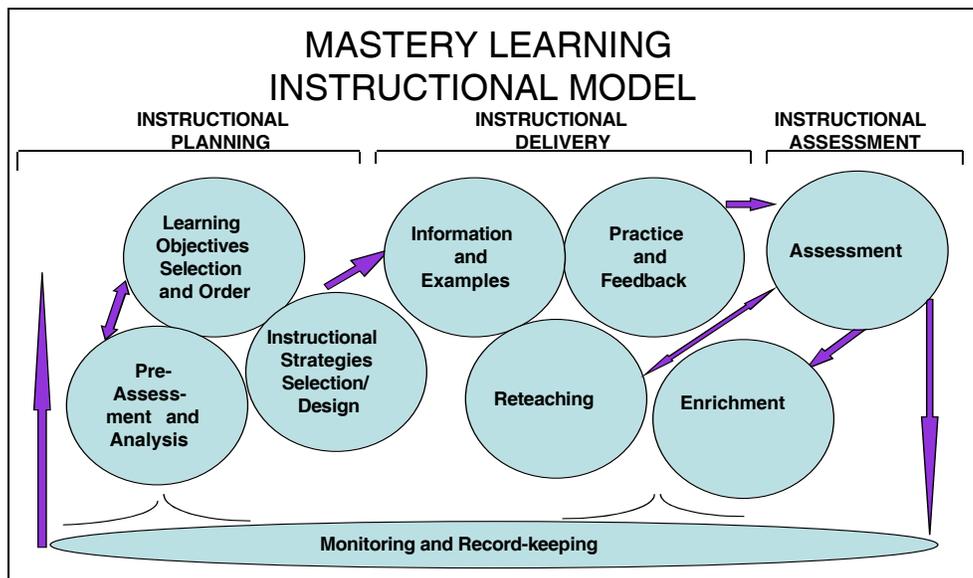
### CMSi Mastery Learning Approach and Lesson Planning Guidelines

This document briefly presents the approach teachers are to use as they are thinking about the delivery of curriculum. The approach is built around a PVA Mastery Learning approach as well as a set of researched instructional strategies. The learning of students and their continuous progress toward PVA curriculum standards and objectives are the central focus of the instructional model. This does not mean dictating the exact strategies or teaching techniques a teacher is to use to teach a specific objective. Rather, it is to direct the structure for the overall planning of instruction and its delivery. The approach is based in the concept of teaching to mastery and the need to differentiate instruction for each student based on data. **The guidelines are not about writing a lesson plan; rather, they are about the thought processes one goes through in planning lessons.**

The Mastery Learning approach calls for:

- Designing lessons/units of study around the district curriculum standards and objectives;
- Diagnosing students on these objectives prior to teaching the objectives to establish teaching at the right level of difficulty for students;
- Designing activities aligned to the objectives and anchored to appropriate student instructional level;
- Delivering aligned lessons using researched teaching practices;
- Using assessments along the way to determine if students have mastered the objective or need further reteaching; and
- Keeping track of where students are in their learning.

The following illustrates the basic components of the PVA Mastery Learning Instructional Delivery Model:



The following outline is a guide for the teacher's consideration in designing and delivering each lesson. It is built using the Mastery Learning model (Downey, 2001), Hunter Lesson Design, DataWorks Explicit Direct Instruction, Sweetwater Union High School (San Diego) Lesson Design, and Marzano's What Works in Classroom Instruction, as well as other well-researched effective teaching practices. Teachers are encouraged to use this outline in the design and delivery of their lessons.

## I. Design Planning

A. What do I want my students to know?	
Planning Area:	REMEMBER to...
1. <b>Content Objective(s)</b> * Estimated Class time: ___ periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build lessons around selected skills, knowledge, concepts and/or processes aligned to the District Curriculum.</li> <li>Gauge adequate time to teach the objective(s) (<i>i.e.</i> * <i>partial to multiple</i> class periods).</li> <li>Determine actual objectives to be taught to which students based on Initial Assessment (see B below)</li> </ul>
2. <b>Critical Attributes of the Objective(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide what the student needs <i>to know</i> and <i>be able to do</i>.</li> <li>Specify attributes in precise and measurable language.</li> <li>Sequence the critical attributes in the most effective teaching order.</li> </ul>
3. <b>Essential Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design at least one question to focus students for each critical attribute.</li> <li>Plan for a variety of question types (<i>e.g.</i> open-ended, higher levels of inquiry, <i>etc.</i>).</li> </ul>
4. <b>Essential Terms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and define essential terms included in the content objective using language students understand (consider second language acquisition expectations).</li> <li>Determine where in the lesson you will teach these terms most effectively.</li> </ul>
5. <b>Essential Prerequisites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select prerequisites required to learn the objective(s), noting that SOME learnings require NO prerequisites.</li> <li>Start by reviewing prerequisites in the district curriculum.</li> <li>Detail specific prerequisites for special student populations (<i>e.g.</i> Sp. Ed, LEP, G/T, <i>etc.</i>).</li> </ul>
B. How will I know if they have learned the content objective(s)?	
Planning Area:	REMEMBER to...
1. <b>Initial Assessment</b> ( <i>Diagnosis</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine if each student has the prerequisite skills and which of the new learnings he or she already knows.</li> <li>Plan both formal and informal strategies to identify student <i>readiness</i> to learn.</li> <li>Select strategies to teach <i>quickly</i> essential prerequisites to those needing them.</li> <li>Identify the performance target at the outset (<i>i.e.</i> what will provide evidence of adequate student performance).</li> </ul>
2. <b>Acquisition Assessments</b> ( <i>Short-Term Learning</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan to provide periodic acquisition assessments (<i>e.g.</i> quizzes, labs, worksheets, discussions, <i>etc.</i>) throughout the lesson(s), which may also serve, as practice activities.</li> <li>Plan for a variety of assessment contexts (<i>e.g.</i> test format, real-world, <i>etc.</i>) as illustrated in the District Curriculum.</li> <li>Revisit the learnings continuously through on-going assessments of the objective(s) for several weeks (<i>e.g.</i> in warm-up activities, homework, future test items, quizzes, <i>etc.</i>).</li> </ul>
3. <b>Mastery Assessments</b> ( <i>Long-Term Learning</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specify how you will return to this objective(s) in future lessons to review and reinforce mastery.</li> <li>Plan for a variety of question types including item-format of high-stakes tests.</li> <li>Allow multiple ways to demonstrate mastery (including end-of-course exams, portfolios, <i>etc.</i>).</li> <li>Plan to provide multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery.</li> </ul>
C. What resources and strategies will I use to teach the objective(s)?	
Planning Area:	REMEMBER to...
1. <b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select instructional resources critically, aligning to both <i>content</i> and <i>context</i> of the objective(s).</li> <li>Refer to the curriculum guides for resource ideas.</li> <li>Create or seek additional materials as needed to support attainment of learning objective(s).</li> </ul>
2. <b>Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider a variety of ways to present the learning (<i>e.g.</i> inductively, deductively, inquiry, direct instruction, concept formation, structured discovery, synectics, divergent, <i>etc.</i>)</li> <li>Select the most appropriate strategies based on what is being taught: Skills, Knowledge, Concepts and/or Processes.</li> <li>Select research-based instructional strategies, such as those in Marzano's <i>Classroom Instruction that Works</i>, as appropriate.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider strategies for differentiation and special student populations (Sp Ed., LEP, G/T).</li> <li>• Plan for teaching the objectives using multiple modalities (eg. visual, auditory, written, tactile, kinesthetic).</li> </ul>
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## II. Delivery Planning

How will I construct the learning experiences for each lesson?		
<p><b>Monitoring</b></p> <p><b>And</b></p> <p><b>Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Provide students with signals and reminders designed to sustain the learning activity and hold students accountable throughout the lesson(s).</li> <li>❑ Monitor the quality of student participation and products throughout the lesson(s).</li> <li>❑ Provide continuous targeted academic feedback that is specific to the content throughout the lesson(s).</li> </ul>	<b>Part of INSTRUCTION</b>	<b>REMEMBER to...</b>
	<b>Set/Advanced Organizer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Furnish students with a clear vision of the learnings to come with a meaningful reason for mastering the objective(s)—include how it fits into the <i>big-picture</i> of their education and the world around them. (e.g. a problem that needs solving, a current scenario, a recurring human theme, a unit of study, a link to something students want to know, etc.).</li> <li>❑ Reveal the specific content objective(s) and the type of learning (e.g. skill, knowledge, concept and/or process) to be mastered.</li> <li>❑ Activate what students have already learned in life and school that relates to the new learning (i.e. <i>scaffolds</i> prior knowledge).</li> </ul>
	<b>Relevant Input</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Teach the critical attributes and key terms of the objective(s) using a variety of research-based instructional strategies.</li> <li>❑ Use high-interest, real-world examples and non-examples.</li> <li>❑ Provide explicit samples of how students will demonstrate mastery—the format(s) and standards of performance.</li> <li>❑ Ensure universal engagement throughout the lesson (e.g. by writing the answers, pair-sharing, using whiteboards, cue checks, etc.).</li> <li>❑ Use the <i>essential questions</i> to focus on critical attributes of the objective(s).</li> <li>❑ Provide for language-development activities as appropriate to meet student needs.</li> <li>❑ Group students in a variety of ways (e.g. individuals, pairs, small and large groups; cooperative learning, reciprocal teaching, Socratic seminars, etc.).</li> <li>❑ Check students’ initial understanding of the learnings and determine which students are ready to move to <i>guided practice</i>.</li> </ul>
	<b>Guided and Independent Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Help students develop increased proficiency under close, <i>guided</i> supervision with corrective feedback.</li> <li>❑ Provide <i>independent</i> practice experience under continued teacher supervision (i.e. observe cues as students work alone, etc.).</li> <li>❑ Provide a variety of ways and multiple opportunities, linked to <i>District Curriculum and Instructional Guide</i> contexts, to move toward mastery.</li> <li>❑ Use homework carefully (i.e., to reinforce the learnings you are confident students can be successful in without support, to gather new information for readiness for next learnings, to complete extended readings, etc.).</li> </ul>
	<b>Closure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Provide final practice on the key concepts to clarify the objective(s) learned.</li> <li>❑ Use the information from the closure activities to diagnose next-teaching-steps (e.g. reteach, move on, individual review, etc.).</li> </ul>
<b>Mastery Acquisition and Follow-up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Allow multiple ways and opportunities to demonstrate acquisition of the learnings (e.g. end-of-unit exams, projects, presentations, etc.).</li> <li>❑ Return to this content objective(s) over time to review and reinforce mastery, either embedded in future lessons or as stand-alone activities.</li> </ul>	

7/22/13 This document was designed from Mastery Learning ideas from Downey (2001) “Are Your Expectations Clear Regarding an Instructional Model,” Thrust, ACSA, Burlingame, CA, Madeline Hunter’s *Lesson Design*, Explicit Direct Instruction from DataWorks Educational Research, and Sweetwater Union High School District (San Diego) *Lesson Planning* document.

## Appendix D

### Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teaching

- 1. The teacher consistently compares and contrasts different cultures, languages, experiences, and values with the dominant community cultures in the classroom, regardless of the content area.**

The teacher consistently allows students the opportunity to discuss their own and their families' experiences, values, and cultural experiences during the course of lessons and activities, within a context of acknowledging differences and similarities with the predominant community culture. The teacher displays an attitude of appreciating differences, presenting them in a positive light. This is a consistent approach every day, during various lessons or classroom scenarios.

- 2. Actively researches different cultural perspectives and examples connected to instructional content and incorporates these into classroom lessons and discussions.**

The teacher actively seeks examples, from his/her students' own representative cultures as well as from other cultures that tie into classroom lessons and discussions. For example, in a lesson on basic mathematical algorithms (division/multiplication), the teacher researches common global approaches to the same and introduce them in the classroom.

- 3. Involves students, parents, and the community in contributing to cultural awareness and appreciation.**

Whenever possible, the teacher invites contributions from students, parents, and the community at large in learning activities that focus on curriculum content being taught with diverse cultural perspectives.

- 4. Facilitates and encourages students to discuss concepts and new learnings in their native language in earlier stages of language development (not translating).**

When possible or desirable, the teacher allows small groups or pairs of students to discuss new learnings in their native language, to assure understanding of key curriculum concepts and vocabulary. For example, when reading a novel in class, students are occasionally grouped by native language to allow discussion of the plot and themes in the book, so students' comprehension is supported.

This approach is not to be confused with translating for students, although occasional translation (among students only) is acceptable. The teacher also allows students to contribute to classroom discussions in their native language if their English is not yet strong enough, with another student translating. This enables all students to contribute to discussions and activities.

- 5. Incorporates cross-language, as well as cross-cultural, comparison and development.**

The teacher facilitates comparing languages and cultures in a deliberate way. For example, word walls, graphic organizers, and concept maps may be used with bilingual terms and expressions.

- 6. Respects and values student input and frequently (daily) elicits student involvement and supports their personal connection to the learning.**

Students are always encouraged to contribute to classroom activities and discussions, sharing personal experiences that relate to new content. Such approaches also support scaffolding of curriculum content and makes learning more personally relevant.

- 7. Respects students' affective needs with regard to participation and involvement in classroom activities and discussions, particularly during the early stages of English development.**

The teacher allows students periods of silence or non-involvement, if a student feels uncomfortable participating or is struggling with communication issues. Such scenarios can be extremely stressful to

children and emotionally challenging, and the teacher responds accordingly with sensitivity and tolerance. Every student is unique and should be encouraged but never forced to participate in every activity. Consider alternative forms of involvement if the activity is a type of assessment.

## Appendix E

### CHARACTERISTICS OF COGNITIVELY ENGAGING INSTRUCTION

**Note:** The term, “Cognitively engaging instruction” is intended to describe classrooms where the emphasis is on meaningful, challenging student learning that makes kids think, involves them in their own academic progress, and creates a climate that encourages risk-taking, thinking outside the box, and real-life scenarios.

Cognitively engaging instruction is focused on the most important role schools play: promoting student learning. It is built on the foundation of rigor. Rigor is not determined by the quantity of work a student completes; rather, rigor refers to the *nature* of the work a student performs in completing an assignment or project; i.e., the amount of thinking that is involved, the nature of that thinking, and how it is manifested in their work.

The following characteristics are extrapolated from research and have been shown to be effective in improving achievement among all student groups: at-risk students, gifted students, learning disabled students, and ELL students. These characteristics, when coupled with challenging academic content, describe courses that would be considered “advanced” or “enrichment”-type courses.

**Teaching approaches and student learning activities reflect a constructivist philosophy regarding student learning. Such approaches are typified by the following characteristics:**

- The focus of all learning activities is to keep them meaningful for the student. The student understands why he/she is doing the activity, the goal or purpose behind it, and how he/she will ultimately benefit from completing it. Activities are student-centered, not teacher-centered.
- Learning focuses more on larger, connected or related concepts rather than on discrete, specific facts.
- The student can relate their learning to real-life scenarios; the learning is seen as relevant to themselves, personally, or to their social context.
- Every student is an active participant in his/her learning. Students are involved in setting learning goals and in monitoring their own progress in mastering objectives and meeting their goals.
- Learning activities are intrinsically interesting. They are modified to suit student preferences, learning styles, and academic needs. Students have a certain degree of autonomy, or choice, in their learning activities and the product they are responsible for.

**Students are divided into smaller groups (or pairs) for various instructional purposes. These groupings are accomplished in the following ways and for the various purposes:**

- Students are grouped or paired heterogeneously to foster collaboration with others and to encourage communication and positive, productive social interaction. Working in heterogeneous, collaborative groupings involves accountability and respects prevailing rules governing group members’ conduct (to ensure accountability for all group members).
- Students are grouped homogeneously, typically by need, to allow for instruction at the students’ level and in response to diagnosed gaps in learning. These groupings are never static; they change constantly—usually weekly or even daily—to reflect varying rates of student progress in mastering objectives.
- Groupings may be cooperative, where students work with each other to accomplish assigned tasks; pairs, where students review and learn from one another; or varied-size groups, pulled together to allow for small group, targeted instruction.

**Activities are personally relevant and culturally responsive. Such activities are characterized by the following characteristics:**

- Students are led to connect their learning to real-life scenarios or personal experiences, such as things they've seen or done themselves.
- Learning scenarios are culturally responsive—learning activities always take into account and build on students' linguistic, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity.
- Students are encouraged to view new learning through a lens of their personal cultural perspective: what about that learning has significance in their own ethnic/cultural context? What is similar? What is different? What learning is culturally neutral?

**Students are encouraged to think independently and critically:**

- The overall focus of learning activities is on thinking, not acquiring facts or knowledge. Knowledge acquisition is accomplished through projects and assignments.
- Students engage in learning scenarios and activities that require them to think independently—in contrast to mainstream thinking or against majority opinion or stance. In such scenarios, students are encouraged to adopt a specific position or formulate an argument, whether it reflects their personal opinion or not, and research and defend that position to those possessing opposing viewpoints.
- Students are involved in analytical thinking—breaking down concepts or processes into its various parts and demonstrating an understanding of how the parts relate to one another, or evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of all parts or perspectives.
- Students are given tasks that require reviewing large quantities of information and data and summarizing it into brief, meaningful synopses.
- Student activities reflect active cognitive processing, as first conceptualized by Bloom in his Taxonomy of Learning.

**The teacher engages students in metacognitive strategies. These strategies include the following characteristics.**

- Students are asked to think and reflect on their own thinking. They can explain how they arrived at an answer, describe their thought processes in completing a task or solving a problem, and describe their progress in mastering a specific concept or skill.
- Students are asked to think and reflect on their own learning. They can mark what they knew before and identify what concepts, knowledge, skills, and vocabulary they have acquired since that time.

**Language structures and vocabulary are deliberately, consciously taught and integrated into all learning activities across all content areas.**

- Classroom activities explicitly integrate and teach vocabulary using authentic text and context-embedded approaches.
- Learning activities across content areas simultaneously focus on content mastery as well as language skills: language structure, punctuation, vocabulary.
- Students are engaged in multiple modes of communication—speaking, reading, writing, listening:

**Instruction is differentiated to meet specific student academic needs and preferences:**

- Teachers utilize a variety of student groupings and multiple diagnostic tools and instructional resources to determine and teach required content (concepts, skills, knowledge, and vocabulary).

- Teachers plan instruction based on data from formative, diagnostic tools, which reveal gaps in student learning and specific weaknesses in student mastery of intended objectives.

## Appendix F

