

# Needs Analysis of Satanta School District, USD 507

Conducted by and for the Kansas State Department of  
Education's Learning Network

# I. Introduction

## Background

In September 2008, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) contracted with Cross & Joftus to implement a model for working with KSDE and five Kansas districts—Garden City, Kansas City, Topeka, Turner, and Wichita—struggling to demonstrate adequate yearly progress (AYP).

In 2009 and 2010, this model, the Kansas Learning Network (KLN), was expanded to reach 23 additional Kansas districts struggling to demonstrate AYP. In 2011, 12 more districts joined the Network, including Unified School District (USD) 507, Satanta. Since 2008, four districts have left the Network because they demonstrated AYP for two consecutive years.<sup>1</sup>

The rationale for the KLN is that districts struggling to demonstrate AYP need a combination of support and pressure to make difficult changes that will result in higher overall levels of student achievement and a narrowing of achievement gaps. Unfortunately, there is no “silver bullet” for making improvements, and the KSDE has finite capacity to help. Districts and the KSDE, however, can make significant progress if they think and act systemically, focus resources and energy on improving the teaching and learning process, and work collaboratively and with support from an external “critical friend.”

The goal, then, of the Kansas Learning Network is to improve school and district quality and increase student achievement through a collaborative, organization-development approach focused on applying systems theory and using data effectively.

One of the first activities in pursuit of this goal is to conduct a needs analysis of participating districts, focused on their ability to foster and sustain a school improvement process. The needs analysis encompasses an analysis of student achievement and other data; surveys of teachers, principals, and district administrators; and two-day site visits<sup>2</sup> that include interviews and focus groups with students, parents, civic leaders, teachers, instructional coaches, principals, district administrators, and board members as well as classroom observations using a process designed by Cross & Joftus called the Focused Classroom Walkthrough process (part of Kansas Process for Advancing Learning Strategies for Success, or K-PALSS).

All needs analysis activities are designed both to identify strengths and challenges leading to recommendations for improvement and technical assistance, and to train school and state officials to do their own needs analyses and classroom observations in the future.

---

<sup>1</sup> Under the No Child Left Behind Act, a district must demonstrate AYP two consecutive years in order to be removed from the “needs improvement” list.

<sup>2</sup> The site visit for USD 507 took place December 13-14, 2011.

The site visits conclude with a debriefing conducted by Cross & Joftus for the district’s leadership that includes a presentation of some preliminary results. This report represents the culmination of the needs analysis for Satanta, USD 507 (referred to throughout the report as USD 507 or Satanta).

## Satanta Student Demographics

In the 2010-11 school year, Satanta enrolled 365 students—a slight decline in enrollment from 2006-07, when the district served 380 students—and employed 45 certified and classified full- and part-time employees, approximately 35 of which were teachers. Students in Satanta attend two schools: Satanta Elementary School and Satanta Junior-Senior High School.

Like many districts in Southwestern Kansas, Satanta serves a significant percentage of students identified as Hispanic/Latino. In 2010-11, for example, more than 50% of students were identified as Hispanic/Latino. Most other students are White, with a small minority identified as Multiracial or American Indian.<sup>3</sup>

**Table I—Demographic Patterns in USD 507**

<b>Race-Ethnicity</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.0%	0.3%
African-American	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic/Latino	41.8%	52.3%
Asian/ Native Hawaiian/Pac. Islander	0.0%	0.0%
Multiracial	26.6%	1.4%
White	31.6%	46.0%

The most dramatic demographic shift in Satanta over the past five years—similar to most new KLN districts this year—lies in the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced priced meals. In 2006-07, 50% of students were eligible for free and reduced priced meals. By 2010-11, that percentage had increased by more than 15 percentage points, to 67.9%. This shift could reflect district efforts to ensure that all students eligible for free and reduced priced meals are identified; in any case, however, it means that the district is serving large numbers of economically disadvantaged students.

The percentage of English Language Learners has also risen over the past five years, from 42.9% in 2006-07, to 46.6% in 2010-11. At the same time, though, the percentage of students identified as students with disabilities has declined just slightly, from 10% in 2006-07 to 9.3% in 2010-11, slightly more than four percentage points below the Kansas average of 13.5%.

<sup>3</sup> KSDE data for Satanta Public Schools.

## Student Achievement

For the most part, Satanta students have performed relatively well on state assessment tests. The group “all students” has exceeded state assessment benchmarks for proficiency in math, for example, for the past three years (for additional detail, see Table II below). Additionally, in October 2011 Satanta Elementary received five Standards of Excellence awards from the Kansas State Department of Education—including a building-wide award in math.

**Table II—Satanta Summary Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Data**

**Reading** – Met AYP in 2009; did not meet in 2010 or 2011. On Improvement

Student Category	Year & State Target		
	2009 - 76.7%	2010 - 81.3%	2011 - 86%
All students	Met (84%)	Met (83.8%)	Met (81.3%) <sup>4</sup>
Free & Reduced Meals	Met (77.8%)	Met (79.3%) <sup>4</sup>	No (76.9%)
Students with Disabilities	N/A	N/A	N/A
ELL Students	Met (73.4%) <sup>4</sup>	No (68.1%)	Met (69.3%) <sup>5</sup>
African-American Students	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hispanic	Met (76.8%)	Met (72.8%) <sup>4</sup>	No (71.6%)
White	Met (91.2%)	Met (96.2%)	Met (91.4%)
Asian*	N/A	N/A	N/A
American Indian or Alaskan*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Multi-Racial*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Is.*	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Mathematics** – Met AYP in 2009, 2010, and 2011; not on Improvement.

Student Category	Year & State Target		
	2009 - 70.5%	2010 - 76.4%	2011 - 82.3%
All students	Met (86.3%)	Met (83.9%)	Met (86%)
Free & Reduced Meals	Met (82.4%)	Met (79.1%)	Met (83.3%)
Students with Disabilities	N/A	N/A	N/A
ELL Students	Met (82.3%)	Met (71.8%) <sup>4</sup>	Met (84.2%)
African-American Students	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hispanic	Met (80.5%)	Met (77.2%)	Met (86.6%)
White	Met (91.2%)	Met (91.3%)	Met (85.9%)
Asian*	N/A	N/A	N/A
American Indian or Alaskan*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Multi-Racial*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Is.*	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Overall Graduation Rate:** 2009—100%, 2010—96.6%, 2011—77.4%<sup>^</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The percent standard or above is below the target but above the criterion.

<sup>5</sup> The group made Safe Harbor through the hypothesis test

Notes:

\*These categories were reconfigured in 2010—Asian-Pacific Islander was split into two categories: Asian and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; Multi-Ethnic was changed to Multi-Racial; and Alaskan was added to American Indian.

^This percentage represents the four-year graduation rate for 2011. As of 2011, all states are now required by the US Department of Education to calculate schools' graduation rates based on a cohort model, in this case, the percentage of students who graduated in four years. The change is designed to ensure that all students are accounted for in the graduation rate calculation.

N/A indicates that data are not available.

Despite these accomplishments, however, there are some clear achievement challenges in USD 507. Students qualifying for free and reduced priced meals failed to meet proficiency benchmarks on state reading assessments in 2010 and 2011, as did Hispanic students in 2011, placing the district on improvement in reading. Additionally, the four-year graduation rate for all students was 77.4%, and for some groups of students—most notably English Language Learners and Hispanic students—the rate was below the 60% mark in 2011.<sup>6</sup>

## The Big Picture

Satanta is a rural farming community of approximately 1200 residents located in Southwest Kansas. Cattle and crop production are the main economic drivers. Major employers consist of feedlots, dairies, and agriculture, along with gas plants, the school district, a hospital, and a long-term care facility.

USD 507 is located primarily in Haskell County and serves three other rural counties. According to the latest US Census data, approximately 88% of Satanta residents are White and 28.5% are Hispanic/Latino (of any race). The median household income is just above \$52,000, slightly more than the Kansas median of approximately \$50,000.<sup>7</sup>

Like other KLN districts in western Kansas—Dodge City, Liberal, Garden City, Ulysses, and Stanton County—Satanta serves an increasingly large number of students and families whose first language is Spanish, not English.<sup>8</sup> The district also serves increasing numbers of students and families who are economically

---

<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the 2011 four-year graduation rate for students eligible for free and reduced priced meals was only 63.2%. It should be noted that since the new graduation rate measure attempts to account for the number of students who begin high school as freshmen and graduate as seniors, many districts' graduation rates are substantially lower than those of previous years. The data should be cause for concern, however.

<sup>7</sup> 2010 US Census data.

<sup>8</sup> For more in-depth information on demographic shifts in western Kansas, see the November 14, 2011 *New York Times* article, "Hispanics Reviving Faded Towns on the Plains," [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/14/us/as-small-towns-wither-on-plains-hispanics-come-to-the-rescue.html?\\_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha23](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/14/us/as-small-towns-wither-on-plains-hispanics-come-to-the-rescue.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha23).

disadvantaged. These challenges, combined with the small size of the district, have created added pressures for Satanta over the last few years.

Fortunately Satanta possesses a number of overall strengths that it can build upon to address these challenges and others.

- The superintendent and leadership team appear to be well liked and respected by stakeholders.
- The district has excellent relationships with community partners. Parents, board members, and students also expressed great pride in the district. Stakeholders are especially proud of the district's staff and learning facilities.
- Teachers at the K-2 level have begun transitioning to the Common Core standards. Lessons learned from this process can help Satanta as it begins to implement Common Core standards district-wide.
- Teachers and administrators have worked to implement vertically aligned mathematics and reading curricula, based directly on the Kansas state standards.
- The district has some important structural elements in place to support improvement: 1) a district-wide improvement plan; 2) well-articulated MTSS assessment and intervention processes in reading at the elementary level; and, 3) special education services focused on inclusion and collaboration between general and special education staff.

The district can draw on these strengths and others to address five key challenges as it works to improve.

- As the number of English language learners and students identified as economically challenged continues to increase, and state education funding continues to tighten, the district will be challenged to serve *all* students well and ensure that *all* students receive a high quality education.
- Currently, the district's four-year graduation rate is 77.4%, and graduation rates for some groups of students—especially Hispanic students and English language learners—are significantly lower. The district is challenged to improve graduation rates, prepare students for success in life after high school, and build a culture of high expectations for all students. The district is also challenged to build bridges and develop connections with the Latino community in Satanta.
- Though Satanta has an improvement plan, the district appears to lack a systemic approach to decision-making that would ensure that systems, resources, and policies are aligned to support improvement.
- Historically, the district's curriculum has essentially been the Kansas state standards. As the district transitions to the Common Core, it will be challenged to ensure that teachers have the support they need to implement an aligned curriculum, with necessary resources and supplemental materials.
- Currently, the district lacks a clearly-defined instructional model and data-based approach to improving instruction and learning. The district would

benefit from building on efforts—beginning at the early elementary level—to employ research-based, effective instructional practices, and implement data-based decision-making.

The report elaborates on these strengths and challenges in the Strengths and Challenges section below. Detailed recommendations about how to build on strengths and address challenges can be found in the section titled Recommendations.

## **II. Strengths and Challenges**

Strengths and challenges identified in the needs assessment of Satanta are summarized below in the areas of Leadership, Empowering Culture, and Human Capital; Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, and Professional Development.

### **Leadership, Empowering Culture, and Human Capital**

The superintendent, high school principal, and elementary principal present a strong leadership team. They appear to work with administrative directors and teachers in a close-knit environment that fosters a positive spirit and a “do-what-it-takes” attitude for success. Well-informed board members, who appear committed to improving the district’s performance, also support the district’s can-do approach. Focus groups participants expressed strong pride in the quality and accomplishments of the district.

Overall, the KLN Needs Assessment found substantial strengths in the areas of leadership, culture, and human capital.

- District leaders and administrative directors are held in high regard by staff, parents, and community members. The superintendent, a Satanta native, appears to have created a trusting, open work environment.
- District decision-making is guided by an improvement plan created by leadership teams from both the elementary and middle/secondary buildings.
- There is a well delineated, “results-based” plan for staff development.
- Compensation for Satanta educators ranks in the top one-third of Kansas Pre-K–12 public education systems, enabling the district to attract and retain quality staff.
- With a large population of Hispanic students, district leadership encourages teachers to earn ESL endorsement and most have already done so, or are in the process of doing so.
- Conversations the school board and district leaders indicate that the district is focused on improving student success and raising the high school graduation rate, especially for Hispanic students.

- District administrators and board members appear to have good working relations with business and civic leaders in Satanta. Political representatives in focus groups note that they are well informed when it comes to progress and challenges facing the district.
- The district appears to have good working relationships with community organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Lions’ Club as well. The Satanta Arts Council is also a close partner and uses the district auditorium for most of its shows and celebrations.
- Parents and civic leaders interviewed were exceedingly enthusiastic about the quality and progress of the district.
- The student focus group was very positive about the overall quality of their schools, teachers, principals, and programs. They praised the outstanding success of the FFA-Agriculture Education Program and their district team’s winning performances in the Scholars Bowl.
- Parents, board members, and civic leaders expressed pride in the appearance and upkeep of district buildings and sports fields.

“We admire how hard our teachers work; they do much more than expected to help kids succeed.”  
—*Parent*

“We are proud of our physical plant and the way we maintain its appearance.”  
—*Board Member*

USD 507 can draw on these strengths and others to address key leadership, culture, and human capital challenges as it works to improve.

- Though Satanta has developed an improvement plan, the district would benefit from ensuring that systems, resources, and policies are aligned to support the accomplishment of goals. There is need for a tighter organizational system that brings clear and consistent focus to specific areas of improvement.
- Though Satanta appears to be making strides in this direction, the district currently lacks a data-driven school improvement culture at all levels. Schools and teachers appear to use student data differently and lack coherent protocols and expectations for how to use data systematically to support student learning and school improvement.
- The district’s small population makes it routinely vulnerable to declining enrollment; board members, civic leaders and administrators noted that the

district's size was problematic. District consolidation, though not discussed specifically, was mentioned as a concern—especially in light of this year's enrollment decline.

- Latino students account for slightly more than half of the student population, and the district faces considerable challenges when it comes to helping students struggling to learn English. There is a need for expanded pre-school learning opportunities.
- While the district encourages students to concurrently take introductory college level courses at an area community college, Satanta does not offer Advanced Placement courses. Several of the high achieving students interviewed as part of the site visit expressed a desire for more challenging learning opportunities.
- Data on student progress and achievement do not appear to be key factors in evaluating teacher performance. The review team found only limited attention to strengthening teacher accountability for student success. As Kansas moves toward new teacher and principal evaluation principles (which include a focus on student data), Satanta can integrate those principles and improve its evaluation system.
- Civic organizations, businesses, and the school district face ongoing challenges attracting participation from the large Latino community. Several board members indicated strong interest in working to fill an open board seat from the Latino community. The district currently has five Latino staff members and no Hispanic/Latino teachers.
- With budget cutbacks early in the year, the district let go one of its two counselors. Several focus group participants noted that students seemed less aware of college application/admission requirements. Some students expressed frustration at their lack of knowledge about key aspects of career and college planning. This reduction in staff may also prove to be problematic given the district's graduation rate challenges.
- There appears to be need for more active engagement between the secondary principal and teachers who bring forward promising ideas for change and improvement.
- The board has a new set of goals for the district. While laudable, members would benefit from building on goals, to include expected results and timelines.

We have many teachers here willing and eager to think outside the box.

—*Teacher*

## Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, and Professional Development

Strengths and challenges identified within the areas of Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, and Professional Development are based upon a comparative analysis of information from the following three sources: (1) student achievement data; (2) perceptions identified by Satanta educators on surveys of educational practices, and by representatives from all constituent groups during focus groups and interviews; and (3) data collected during classroom visits, which document the extent to which effective teaching/learning practices are being implemented in the classroom.

More detail about the data collected during classroom visits using the Cross & Joftus Focused Classroom Walkthrough process can be found in the Appendix to this report.

## Curriculum and Assessment

Satanta has a number of curriculum and assessment strengths.

- Teachers have begun exploring implementation of the Common Core standards, and K-2 teachers have adopted and begun using the standards in math. This preparation will help the district as it begins to transition to the Common Core in grades K-12.
- While the Satanta curriculum has essentially been the Kansas state standards for the past few years, teachers in the focus group indicated that attention is also paid to the non-tested indicators to better prepare students for testing at all levels. Curricula appear to be vertically aligned, at least at the elementary level.
- Teacher collaboration in reading and math is evident in all grade levels. Though teachers completing the Cross & Joftus survey noted that they would like more time to meet and collaborate, it is clear that some communication and collaboration is occurring currently.
- There is a clearly defined assessment process in place K-6. The elementary appears to have a well defined approach to using data to guide instruction, with evidence of record keeping that enables teachers to track student achievement in both reading and math.
- The elementary MTSS (Multi-Tier System of Supports) approach for reading is well designed and includes charts for teachers that outline what focus, time, grouping, programs, and assessments are used for all, some, and few. The elementary also uses an assessment matrix for MTSS reading that targets grade level screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring resources for reading.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Teachers participated in structuring training in MTSS reading two years ago, with state approved MTSS facilitators Kevin Davis and Judy Rocklee. There have been no MTSS visits since 2010-11. While the elementary schedule tiers instruction according to MTSS guidelines, 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers report some frustration and need for additional training/support.

- The High Plains Education Cooperative encourages core curriculum opportunities for students with disabilities, and Cooperative staff members have worked collaboratively with Satanta general educators to ensure that students with disabilities are educated in regular classroom settings.

Satanta must address some important curriculum and assessment challenges as well.

- The district would benefit from actively pursuing implementation of Common Core standards as part of a well-rounded curriculum. While K-2 teachers have begun implementing the Common Core, the district as a whole has not yet begun the transition to the new standards. Additionally, curriculum staff and committees have been cut or become inactive over the last few years. As the district begins this transition process, it will be challenged to do so in a way that is planful and strategic. Teachers and principals report that supplemental materials are needed and the math textbook/curriculum needs to be reviewed as well.
- More strategic attention is also needed to increase achievement for all students in reading, including early intervention for English language learners (ELLs). Reading scores on state assessments have declined for the last several years, especially in the upper grades; this decline in scores, coupled with low graduation rates, is especially problematic for ELLs who need extra help and attention to succeed in school.
- MTSS reading strategies seem well defined, especially for students at the early elementary level. The district would benefit from participating in additional training and further defining tiered instruction that includes differentiation strategies in reading and math at all levels. MTSS was recommended by teachers for grades 7-8 but never addressed district-wide. The high school principal and building leadership team went to MTSS training but did not pursue implementation.
- The district is also challenged to use 6<sup>th</sup> grade data to guide curriculum decisions for transitioning 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. Currently, a comprehensive record of reading and math achievement is sent from 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade in a folder. Junior high teachers report having little structured time and support, however, for using data to guide curriculum and instruction decisions. Individual teachers work with students who are below grade level in both reading and math with no specific protocol. There is a jump-start approach for students in grades three-eight (students attend classes in August just before school starts). The teacher working the Jump Start program shares information with teachers about the needs of the at-risk students; if junior high teachers reviewed each 6<sup>th</sup> grader's data, however, the transition from elementary to secondary school would be greatly enhanced.

- The Junior-Senior High School appears to lack a defined and/or communicated assessment process. Secondary students take ACT assessments—the PLAN assessment in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the EXPLORE in tenth grade, and ACT assessment itself after that. The principal reports that about 50% of seniors take the ACT each year. Beyond these tests and the annual state tests, however, this is no clearly defined assessment process.

## Instruction and Professional Development

Table III presents the results from a survey of teachers (response rate 39%) administered online by Cross & Joftus.<sup>10</sup> Instructional strategies that respondents *believe* are most strongly evident and are least evident, are highlighted below. Additional instructional strengths and challenges are identified later in this section.

The strategies that *teachers* cited as most *strongly evident* include:

- creating safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments (cited as strongly evident by 53% of teachers and as not evident or minimally evident by 6%<sup>11</sup> of teachers)
- providing equitable opportunities to learn that are based on respect for high expectations, development levels, and adaptations for diverse learners (cited as strongly evident by 41% of teachers and as not evident or minimally evident by 6% of teachers)

Though a 39% response rate suggests that survey data should be read with caution, *more 50% of teachers completing the survey indicated that nine of the 19 sound instructional strategies covered in this survey were minimally evident or not evident.* This should raise a red flag for Satanta.

The sound instructional strategies that *teachers* believe to be *least evident* include:

- monitoring instructional practices and providing meaningful feedback to teachers (cited as strongly evident by 12% of teachers as not evident or minimally evident by 65% of teachers)
- meeting regularly on school-based learning teams to plan instruction and assessment (cited as strongly evident by 12% of teachers as not evident or minimally evident by 70% of teachers)
- meeting regularly on school-based learning teams to examine student work and identify effective teaching practices that address learning priorities (cited as strongly evident by 12% of teachers as not evident or minimally evident by 76% of teachers).

<sup>10</sup> Normally, this report would include survey data from principals as well. Since only one of two principals completed the survey, we have omitted principal data from this report. Both teachers and principals reported some difficulty submitting survey results, which may help to explain the relatively low response rate.

<sup>11</sup> Percentages are illustrative, but should be read with caution; 6% represents one teacher).

*Teachers* were *evenly divided* on the presence of the following strategy:

- fostering collegial relationships with families, school personnel, and the larger community to support students' learning and well-being (cited as strongly evident by 29% of teachers as not evident or minimally evident by 29% of teachers).

**Table III—Extent to Which Teachers Believe that Sound Instructional Strategies Are Present in Their Schools**

Please rate the extent to which you believe the following instructional practices are evident in your school.	Teachers	
	Strongly Evident*	Not Evident or Minimally Evident^
Educators create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments.	53%	6%
Educators provide equitable opportunities to learn that are based on respect for high expectations, development levels, and adaptations for diverse learners.	41%	6%
Students participate in research-based instructional practices that assist them in learning the curriculum, meeting rigorous academic standards, and preparing for assessments.	29%	6%
Students who are struggling to master content are identified by educators and provided with support individually or in small flexible groups using differentiated instruction.	29%	24%
Educators foster collegial relationships with families, school personnel, and the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.	29%	29%
Teachers and administrators use data from class, school, districts, and state assessments to determine results-based staff development.	29%	41%
Subject matter is delivered to students at an appropriately rigorous level.	24%	0%
Students are empowered to use data to monitor their own progress.	24%	36%
Educators use a variety of appropriate instructional strategies and resources, including technology, to actively engage students, encourage positive social interaction, and emphasize critical thinking, problem solving, and interdisciplinary connections.	18%	6%
Educators collaboratively function as a community of learners focused on improving student learning using appropriately allocated time and resources.	18%	42%
Educators participate in staff development designs that		

Please rate the extent to which you believe the following instructional practices are evident in your school.	Teachers	
	Strongly Evident*	Not Evident or Minimally Evident^
provide opportunities for practice, feedback, and support for implementation.	12%	53%
Adequate resources (human, fiscal, and physical), incentives, and interventions are provided to support student learning.	12%	53%
The effectiveness of staff development is measured by the level of classroom application and the impact of those practices on student learning.	12%	59%
Adequate resources (human, fiscal, and physical), incentives, and interventions are provided to support teacher and administrator learning.	12%	59%
Educators apply research to decision-making to develop instructional practices related to diverse learning needs of students.	12%	59%
School or district leaders facilitate, monitor, and guide the continuous improvement of instruction.	12%	59%
Administrators, academic coaches, or teacher leaders monitor instructional practices and provide meaningful feedback to teachers.	12%	65%
Educators meet regularly on school-based learning teams to plan instruction and assessment.	12%	70%
Educators meet regularly on school-based learning teams to examine student work and identify effective teaching practices that address learning priorities.	12%	76%

Teacher Response Rate = 17/44

Principal Response Rate = 1/2 (Data not included here)

Source: Cross & Jofus survey of Satanta principals and teachers December 2011

\*The response “Evident” was deleted from this presentation to highlight differences.

^The response “No Opinion” was deleted from this presentation. No teachers selected this option on any responses.

Survey responses only tell part of the story. Classroom observations, reviews of district and state assessment data, and conversations with focus group participants point toward some valuable instructional and professional development strengths in Satanta.

- One indicator of effective instructional practice is the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the Kansas State Assessment. The group “all students” has exceeded state benchmarks in math for the past three years, and students at the elementary level have met or exceeded state benchmarks in reading and math for the past five years.
- Teachers are providing instruction that is aligned to the state standards; tested indicators are taught first, but conversations with focus group participants indicate that the additional standards are also being taught.

- During observations of 36 classrooms using the Cross & Jofstus Focused Classroom Walkthrough observation protocol, the following effective *teaching* and *learning* practices were evident in classrooms visited.
    - Classrooms were orderly, well-managed, and adaptable to the learning task, with clear expectations for student behavior and participation in the learning process.
    - More than 80% of students were actively engaged 85%-100% of the time at all school levels.
    - Positive “student to teacher” and “teacher to student” interactions were consistently observed.
    - Teachers consistently used instructional planning strategies to communicate standards/skills-based lessons.
    - Teachers also employed the following strategy that research has shown to accelerate learning: reinforcing efforts and providing recognition (see Appendix for specific percentages related to these and other strategies).
  
  - The collaborative efforts of Satanta teaching staff and High Plains Educational Cooperative staff focus on an inclusive approach to instruction that appears to benefit students with disabilities.<sup>12</sup>
- “Inclusion is a way of life for our kids.”  
—Administrator
- Teachers at the elementary level use the Fountas and Pinnell universal screener to place students in tiers for instruction. Teachers give the screener three times per year and tiers are adjusted at that time. The teacher focus group indicated that teachers are having significant success with tiered instruction at the K-2 level and believe it is being implemented effectively. The elementary teaching staff and administration appear to be very focused on using student achievement data to drive instruction.
  - Although not implementing tiered instruction, secondary teachers we talked with seem very dedicated to helping students be successful and indicated a desire for additional learning that would improve and enhance their professional skills.
  - The district has a well-developed, results based, staff development plan. Teachers and administrators are encouraged to select and attend a professional learning activity each year that will enhance their individual professional practice; approved activities are funded by the district.

Despite these strengths, however, Satanta has some clear instructional and professional development challenges.

---

<sup>12</sup> Satanta currently educates 24 students with IEPs in grades 3-12.

- Currently, there is no clear instructional model for the district. A classroom walkthrough document is being used at the elementary level but not district-wide. Satanta would benefit from implementing a clearly defined instructional model and a systematic classroom walkthrough process at all grade levels.
- Satanta would also benefit from implementing data-driven instructional decisions for all students. The elementary teachers are using Fountas and Pinnell as a universal screener, yet, we found no evidence that teachers at the secondary level had access to formative assessment data, or that they were using data on a consistent basis to drive instruction. Seventh and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students would benefit, for example, from the guided reading program affiliated with Fountas and Pinnell’s work.
- Though students take various assessments at the secondary level, teachers in focus groups noted that they did not have access to or see the student scores from the PLAN, EXPLORE, or state KELPA (Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment) assessments.
- Focused Classroom Walkthrough data indicate that more than 80% of learning tasks observed were occurring at lower thinking levels: remembering, understanding, and applying—as opposed to analyzing, evaluating, and creating. This was especially true at the secondary level (see Appendix for more detailed information).
- Moreover, the following student learning activities that lead to higher levels of thinking were observed in less than 25% of the classrooms observed.
  - Asks/answers higher level questions.
  - Investigates and solves problems.
  - Participates in individual reflection (metacognition).
  - Uses technology in the learning process.
- Classroom walkthrough data also underscore the need for more supportive professional development and instructional coaching to ensure deep implementation of effective instructional strategies.
  - Strategies to meet diverse language and cultural needs were observed in only 11% of classrooms observed.
  - Differentiation to match student learning needs and strengths was observed in only 8% of classrooms visited.
  - Student demonstration of learning through differentiation in activities/materials and products/assignments was observed in only 14% of the classrooms visited, and other effective demonstrations of student learning were observed in very few classrooms as well.
  - Of Marzano’s nine research-based practices for engaging students in instructional activities that are predictably linked to gains in student

achievement,<sup>13</sup> the following were observed in 50% or less of classrooms visited: 1) identify similarities and differences; 2) summarize and take notes; 3) use homework and practice opportunities; 4) represent knowledge using linguistic/non-linguistic forms of information; 5) organize learning in groups; cooperative learning/pairs/small groups; 6) generate and test hypotheses.

- The current teacher evaluation system appears to be completely summative in nature. Satanta would benefit from developing and implementing an evaluation system that encourages discussion and collaboration around quality instruction.

### III. Recommendations

One of the primary goals of this needs assessment is to identify areas in which the district could most benefit from technical assistance. Building on the district's current capacities and strengths, technical support should help increase the quality of individual schools and the achievement of all their students.

At the outset of this report, five key systemic challenges were identified.

- As the number of English language learners and students identified as economically challenged continues to increase, and state education funding continues to tighten, the district will be challenged to serve *all* students well and ensure that *all* students receive a high quality education.
- Currently, the district's four-year graduation rate is 77.4%, and graduation rates for some groups of students—especially Hispanic students and English language learners—are significantly lower. The district is challenged to improve graduation rates, prepare students for success in life after high school, and build a culture of high expectations for all students. The district is also challenged to build bridges and develop connections with the Latino community in Satanta.
- Though Satanta has an improvement plan, the district appears to lack a systemic approach to decision-making that would ensure that systems, resources, and policies are aligned to support improvement.
- Historically, the district's curriculum has essentially been the Kansas state standards. As the district transitions to the Common Core, it will be challenged to ensure that teachers have the support they need to implement an aligned curriculum, with necessary resources and supplemental materials.
- Currently, the district lacks a clearly-defined instructional model and data-based approach to improving instruction and learning. The district would benefit from building on efforts—beginning at the early elementary level—to

---

<sup>13</sup> Marzano, R. (2001). *Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

employ research-based, effective instructional practices, and implement data-based decision-making.

To address these challenges and others identified in this report, technical assistance should address the following recommendations:

1. The superintendent should work with the board of education and the district leadership team—and parent/community stakeholders where possible—to align systems, processes, and policies to support the district’s improvement plan. This process should tie the district’s goals and priorities to measurable objectives, timelines, and accountability structures. A key focus of this planning should be how the district will meet the academic and social needs of *all* its students, including a large percentage of economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, and Latino students. This process should also address questions such as: Where can resources be leveraged? Can/should the district share staff with nearby districts? How can committee work be restructured to better meet the needs of students and staff members?
2. In collaboration with nearby districts, if possible, the district should also develop processes and systems to support implementation and integration of research-based effective curriculum, assessment, instruction, and professional development initiatives, with the goal of continually improving student learning and achievement to support high expectations for *all* students. This effort should include:
  - a. Creating a district process for transitioning to a curriculum guided by the Common Core standards, with resources and professional development to support teachers’ content knowledge and implementation in the classroom. A clear communication plan should be developed to inform all stakeholders of the timeline, process, and roll out for implementation.
  - b. Implementing a process to review and align curriculum and assessments, especially at the secondary level; if possible, develop a data warehouse that enables educators to use and manage assessment data effectively, and track individual student data over time.
  - c. Building PLCs (professional learning communities) at all levels that are equipped to use data systematically to support teacher-administrator decision-making and collaboration, to improve student learning and achievement. This process should include:
    - Ensuring that there is sufficient time for educators to collaborate and plan together; developing and implementing common PLC protocols; and monitoring the effectiveness of PLCs.

- Implementing classroom walkthroughs and using classroom observation data systematically to provide regular and helpful feedback to educators.
  - Identifying priority data and analyzing data to determine the extent of implementation of effective teaching/learning practices.
  - Determining future professional development practices using observation data.
- d. Adopting a common instructional framework, tied to rigorous standards, that helps teachers and administrators integrate research-based effective instructional practices. This framework should draw on an analysis of student achievement data and prioritize research-based instructional practices that will have the *greatest impact* on increasing achievement for *all* students, including economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, and other groups of students at risk of school failure. The district should also devote strategic attention to improving reading levels of all students by implementing enrichment activities for students who read above grade level.
- e. Examining the feasibility of implementing MTSS in reading and mathematics. In this review process, the district should work with a state approved MTSS facilitator to determine how the district might be able to participate in structuring, then implementation training, and look at the feasibility of establishing an MTSS Leadership Team.
- f. If feasible, adopting a monitoring system to measure the implementation and impact of professional development on changes in teacher behaviors.<sup>14</sup> In addition to classroom walkthroughs, the district may consider the use of tools such as the Innovation Configuration Matrix (ICM).<sup>15</sup> The ICM was designed to ensure that strategies are implemented correctly and with fidelity; it includes teacher self-assessment of the use of best-practice strategies.
4. As it works to improve graduation rates and ensure that students are college and career ready, the district should also review the rigor of the high school curriculum and look for ways to offer dual-credit and higher-level courses with nearby community colleges, and/or through virtual education opportunities. As part of this process, and working collaboratively with other districts if possible, Satanta should also look at counseling efforts and work to continue to strengthen relationships with parents, community-based social

---

<sup>14</sup> Reeves, D.B. *Transforming Professional Development Into Student Learning Results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Champion, Robby. "The Innovation Configuration can gauge progress of reform initiatives and take the guesswork out of professional development planning." National Staff Development Council, 2003.

service agencies, and other community groups to help ensure that all students have the supports they need to be successful.

## Next Steps

1. Based on the findings and the recommendations in this needs appraisal, Cross & Joftus recommends that the district participate in the following KLN Community of Practice (CoP):
  - o Instruction, Stage 1
2. If discussions have not already begun, your district facilitator will be in touch with the superintendent within the next couple weeks to discuss the CoP, answer questions, and help with the district's Integrated Improvement Plan.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Process for Analyzing Classroom Walkthrough Data

As recently proposed by City, Elmore, Fiarman, and Lee in *Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning*, “Since what goes on in the classroom is at the heart of instructional improvement, a key part of developing an improvement practice is observation.” Connecting classroom observations to the “larger context of the system’s improvement strategy” is how to support sustained improvement.<sup>16</sup>

In short, observation data need to be used regularly and systematically to improve teaching and learning. In order to do this effectively, districts must determine the skills educators need to develop, practice, implement, and refine during professional development.

The following process will assist district personnel in identifying what skills should take priority in future professional development:

1. Analyze classroom observation data summarized in the Appendix in the **“Teaching/Learning Practices Graphs.”** Based on work from the National Implementation Research Network at the University of South Florida, Cross & Joftus has developed an implementation matrix that quantifies the extent to which research-based practices are being implemented in classrooms observed (see percentages in the Appendix).

---

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth A. City, Richard F. Elmore, Sarah E. Fiarman, and Lee Teitel, *Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2009.

2. To prioritize professional development topics, consider using the following criteria provided by the Implementation Research Network:
  - Mark as a first priority those effective practices that are “*inconsistently evident*” in less than 29% of the classes visited.
  - Mark as a second priority those effective practices that are “*minimally evident*” in 30-49% of classrooms visited.
  - Mark as a third priority those effective practices that are “*partially evident*” in 50-69% of the classrooms visited.
  - Mark as a fourth priority those effective practices that are “*consistently evident*” in 70-100% of the classes visited.