Needs Analysis of Liberal School District – USD 480

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

I. Introduction

In September 2008, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) contracted with Cross & Joftus, LLC 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, this model, the Learning Network, was expanded to reach all 17 Kansas districts not making AYP, including Liberal School District, USD 480.

The rationale for the Learning Network 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 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 assessment of KSDE and all 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 three-day site visits[1] that include interviews and focus groups with students, parents, civic leaders, teachers, academic coaches, principals, district administrators, and board members as well as classroom observations using a process designed by Cross & Joftus called Kansas Process for Advancing Learning Strategies for Success (K-PALSS). All needs assessment activities are designed to both produce findings leading to recommendations for technical assistance and to train school and state officials to do their own needs assessments and classroom observations in the future.

The site visits conclude with a debriefing conducted by Cross & Joftus for the district's leadership that includes a presentation of some preliminary findings. This report presents all findings and represents the culmination of the needs assessment for Liberal School District, USD 480 (referred to throughout the report as the district or Liberal).

Situated on the southern border of Kansas, Liberal lies right next to the Oklahoma panhandle, just under an hour's drive from Texas. The largest employers in town include National Beef—a meat-packing plant that employs approximately 3,200 people, out of a

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[1] The site visit for Liberal occurred November 17-19, 2009.

total population of around 21,000—Seward County Community College, and Liberal School District.

Liberal enrolled just over 4,600 students in 2009. Approximately 68.5% of students are identified as Hispanic, 22% as White, 4% as African-American, and 5.5% as "other." More than 71% of students are classified as economically disadvantaged, and more than 46% have been designated as English Language Learners—both of these figures have increased by 10 percentage points in the last five years.

The district faces a number of challenges. Student achievement scores for most subgroups of students are far below state averages, and there are significant achievement gaps between White students and other groups of students. In 2009, the "all-student" category failed to demonstrate AYP in reading, and Hispanic students failed to demonstrate AYP in both reading and math, as did students eligible for free and reduced priced meals. Only 61.5% of Hispanic students demonstrated proficiency in reading, below the state benchmark of 76.7%, and 58.2% demonstrated proficiency in math, below the state benchmark of 70.5%. African-American students' scores and students with disabilities' scores are far below state benchmarks as well. The district's graduation rate—75.3% in 2008—is also well below the state average of 89.5%.

Beyond these challenges, the district has an aging building infrastructure, and many schools appear to be in need of substantial upgrades. Earlier in the year, Liberal failed to pass a bond issue, and more recently, a resolution to increase the district's capital outlay—so upgrades will have to wait. Partly as a result, it appears that community members and teachers, among others, have lost faith in the board's leadership.

In the face of these challenges, however, Liberal has a number of strengths. The district appears to have a strong administrative team, whose members work well together and appear committed to change. The team appears to have broad support at the principal level, an essential ingredient for success. Liberal recently implemented a new strategic plan, which provides guidance for the district's work and initial benchmarks to assess progress, and a comprehensive reform strategy, which shows promise despite some teacher concerns. And, despite bond and capital outlay failures, the district's budget appears to be well-managed.

To increase achievement and eliminate achievement gaps—and address the other challenges mentioned above—Liberal must continue to refine and fully implement the new strategic plan. The district must also build a new board culture and work diligently to regain the faith of the community. And Liberal must bridge substantial cultural gaps.

The report elaborates on these strengths and challenges in the Findings section below. Detailed recommendations about how to address them can be found in the section titled Recommendations for Technical Assistance.

II. Findings

Findings from the needs assessment of Liberal are summarized below in the areas of Leadership; Empowering Culture and Human Capital; and Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, and Professional Development.

Leadership

> "When we wanted to fix something, we would try a new program or a new technology. We were ignoring how teachers were doing in the classroom." –*Board member*

Over the last two years, Liberal has reoriented its approach to educational change. Driven by the recognition that students were substantially underperforming, the district has moved toward what appears to be a much more coherent approach to improvement.[2] Liberal has transitioned from a model built largely on school-based management—which encouraged the development of multiple approaches to curricula, instruction, and assessment—to an overarching district-wide reform strategy.

This new strategy is connected to several leadership strengths in Liberal:

- The new approach—tied primarily to Literacy First—grew in part out of Liberal's completion of a District Improvement Plan, and a Title III addendum,[3] which in turn led to the creation of a new strategic plan, Chalk Lines. All of these planning processes appear to have been decidedly positive factors in creating a unified improvement strategy for the district. By focusing on accountability and implementation, the district was able to narrow the focus of its efforts and begin to implement a more coherent approach to reform.

- The district appears to have a strong administrative team and strong leadership at the principal level. District leaders appear to work well together and to function as an effective team. This has helped the district create a unified improvement strategy.

- The district administrative team has participated in "intensive" leadership training with the intent of ensuring that leadership meetings are focused on instructional

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[2] For an excellent discussion of coherence, theory of change, and the need to focus on the instructional core, see Childress, S., Elmore, R., Grossman, A., and King, C. (2007). *Note on the PELP Coherence Framework*. Public Education Leadership Project at Harvard University. Also City, E., Elmore, R., Fiarman, S., and Teitel, L. (2009). *Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning*. Harvard Education Press.

[3] Title III provides funding to support services for English Language Learners and immigrant students. For more information about Kansas services, see: http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=350, accessed December 8, 2009.

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issues. In addition to reorienting the focus in meetings—from an administrative focus to an instructional focus, the training has also enabled district leaders to identify what's working and to reference "at least two positive encounters" they have had since the last meeting. These strategies appear to be enhancing leaders' abilities to work together effectively as a team.

- In developing and implementing the new and more systemic approach to change, district leaders appear to have done a very effective job of "protecting" principals and instructional coaches, allowing instructional coaches to coach staff, for example, as opposed to perform administrative duties. Principals in focus groups expressed support for the district's new approach and appreciation for leadership's willingness to "take the heat" for instituting the new approach. They noted that they are able to spend more time in classrooms and are beginning to see themselves as instructional leaders.

> "We spend more time in the classroom everyday." – *Principal*

- The district appears committed to "staying the course" as it implements the reform strategy over the long-term. Though Literacy First was introduced to teachers and building leaders in the spring of 2009, district leaders recognize that change is difficult, and that they must remain committed to the strategy for the foreseeable future.

Despite commitment to a more comprehensive approach to change, however, there are several leadership challenges that must be addressed as Liberal moves forward with implementation:

- One overriding finding of the needs assessment is that trust and faith in the Liberal Board of Education—and more generally, in the district's leadership—has been undermined as a result of recent activities related to bond and capital outlay votes (in the spring and fall of 2009, respectively):

  > "The school board is not trusted now at all." –*Community member*

  o With what appeared to be broad community input through a 43-member Blue Ribbon Committee, the district attempted to pass a bond issue last spring, part of which would have enabled Liberal to receive matching state funds to repair high school athletic facilities and add new improvements at a number of schools in the district. The bond failed—a community survey issued after the failure indicated that the economy and the focus on funding for athletic facilities in tight economic times drove no votes—and the district decided to go ahead with athletic improvements (which it had already largely budgeted for, but had hoped to supplement with matching funds). Though many people we spoke with acknowledged that the district planned to move forward with

athletic improvements anyway—and communicated this in community forums before the vote—there appears to be a perception in the larger community, and amongst many teachers and other stakeholders, that the district, and especially the board, did not listen to the community or act in good faith after the bond failed.

  o In the fall, the district attempted to pass a resolution that would have allowed it to increase the capital outlay. Voter turnout was low, and this resolution failed as well. As a result, the district is in a very tight budget situation and many facilities that need upgrades—larger classroom space, restrooms, new gyms, etc—may not receive those upgrades for some time.

- Moreover, the board of education does not appear to be operating at the policy level, and this is further undermining the leadership of the board and superintendent. In focus groups, both board members and district leaders pointed out that board meetings often focused on administrative details, as opposed to larger strategic and policy issues. Though board members were "aware of the strategic plan," for example, they do not appear to be using it to guide decision-making on a regular basis or to assess the district's progress toward improvement.

- Once the district began to identify an overarching reform strategy, district leaders made the decision to select the Literacy First approach and to implement it rapidly beginning in the fall of 2009-10. This decision and the way in which it was communicated appear to have created considerable resentment on the part of many Liberal teachers. Teachers in focus groups and in the Cross & Joftus survey reported feeling "taken by surprise," "overwhelmed," and "underappreciated." In part, these concerns typify reactions to large-scale change. This district must deal with them, however, as it moves forward.

- Additionally, many of the district's more seasoned educators expressed cynicism about the district's commitment to the Literacy First approach over the long-term. Principals, however, appear supportive. The district must build on that support—and the emerging support of teachers who see the benefits of the Literacy First approach—to address concerns and work with educators throughout the system to repair damage and gain buy-in and support.

> "We try everything that comes down the pike." – *Teacher*
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> "Literacy First is just another program. We will get rid of it in a few years." –*Teacher*

- Though Liberal has embarked on a comprehensive approach to change, the district does not appear to have an explicit, clearly articulated theory of action.[4] This will become especially problematic as the

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[4] See the Public Education Leadership Project's explanation of the importance of having an explicit theory of action: "In order to achieve their mission of increased performance of all students regardless of race, class, or prior academic performance, leaders in public school districts should develop theories of action about how to strengthen the instructional core. For example, a number of districts believe deeply that high

district moves beyond Literacy First and the reading curriculum, to ensure improvement in mathematics and other subjects.

- The development of principals as instructional leaders appears to be uneven. Though the district has worked hard to create time and space for principals to fill this role, principals in focus groups report that they still spend a great deal of time on administrative work. The district must continue to create a culture of professional learning throughout Liberal, and to ensure that principals have the support (administrative and otherwise) they need to focus more of their time and intellectual energy on becoming effective instructional leaders.

- The district does not yet appear to be using data consistently or systematically to guide decision-making. For example, though teachers in focus groups had heard of the DISK data system, only one teacher had actually used the system. By tracking individual student data over time, the system promises to be a very powerful tool for measuring progress and helping to define instructional and professional development needs. The district, however, must ensure that teachers and principals have the tools they need to use the system effectively.

Empowering Culture and Human Capital

Liberal appears to have done considerable work over the past few years to create an empowering culture and to strengthen human capital in the district:

- The district has supported Capturing Kids Hearts training for administrators, faculty, and staff to help them learn how to work with each other and with students to build "positive, productive, and trusting relationships." As part of this approach, teachers and students at the high school level sign short agreements (outlining, for example, how they want to be treated by the teacher, and how they will treat the teacher) at the beginning of the year, committing them to work together effectively. Several students mentioned that though they appreciated the agreements, many are identical from class to class. As a result, they may not be taken seriously by students—and perhaps some teachers. The district should look at how it can deepen the meaning of this process over students' school careers.

- As a part of the Capturing Kids Hearts program, Liberal offers and encourages all high school students to take a leadership course designed to help students "build personal responsibility and leadership skills through role plays, group activities, speeches, and projects." This program appears to be well liked by students and teachers alike.

quality professional development for teachers is the most highly-leveraged way to improve student performance. They articulate their theory of action as: *The most direct way to increase student learning is to improve teachers' instructional practice. Therefore, if we help all teachers improve their instructional practice, then we will accomplish high levels of achievement for all students* (italics in original)." Childress, S., Elmore, R., Grossman, A., and King, C. (2007). *Note on the PELP Coherence Framework*. Public Education Leadership Project at Harvard University.

- The district is working to create high expectations for every student, through programs such as AVID, as well as a substantial number of AP classes, which are open to all high school students. Liberal recently added a third AVID class at the high school to reach more students who might not otherwise attend college. In addition, and AP class enrollment and the number of students taking AP tests have increased. AP test scores remain low, however, suggesting that the district needs to review how courses are being taught and how students are being prepared.[5]

- A few years ago, the district created a dual-immersion school—McDermott Elementary—and did extend the dual immersion program to Sunflower Intermediary in 2009-10. McDermott has received state recognition for its work, and the dual-immersion approach holds promise for bridging cultural differences and improving language skills. Liberal also encourages teachers throughout the district to obtain ESL endorsement, though this policy may be endangered by the overall budget situation.

- The district has made a concerted effort to ensure that its teachers are well paid. According to administrators, Liberal teacher salaries are in the top 6% of teacher salaries in Kansas, and they are much higher than average incomes in some neighboring states, such as Oklahoma.

- There is also a focus on teacher recruiting and retention. Funds are set aside to support recruiting of highly qualified teachers, and administrators travel to recruiting fairs in several adjacent states. New teachers are also supported through a teacher mentoring program.

- Principals are empowered to select their own teachers and staff members. This is an important management tool, and one that helps to foster distributed leadership.

In addition to these strengths, however, Liberal faces several significant challenges in the areas of empowering culture and human capital.

- There is currently a cultural disconnect between the student population and the community, on the one hand, and the board, district leadership, building leaders, and the majority of teachers, on the other hand. Over the past several years, Liberal's student population has shifted from a majority White population to a majority Latino population. This population shift—and the emergence of racial, cultural, and generational differences—has created communications as well as cultural gaps in the district:

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[5] Though the total number of students taking AP exams increased from 32 in 2005 to 151 in 2009, only 12 exams out of a total of 151 given received scores of 4 or higher; 93 exams received a score of 1; 33 a score of 2; and 13 a score of 3.

- o Though the majority of students identify as Hispanic—including more than 40% who are English Language Learners—very few district administrators and teachers are Hispanic, and there are no Hispanic board members. Additionally, outside of the dual-immersion school, there appears to be only a handful of bilingual teachers.

- o There are also perceptions in the district that some community members— especially older members of the community—may not be willing to support bond issues because they don't see Liberal's students as "their students" or perhaps as the community's future.

- o Though Liberal has a family resource center, an intake center, and a parent coordinator, many families appear to remain largely disconnected from the district. Parents attend parent-teacher conferences and activities when their children are performing or participating in sports; otherwise, however, parent engagement appears to be low. Focus group participants noted, for example, that there was very low attendance at meetings sponsored by the district prior to the bond vote.

- The district does not have a coordinated approach to expanded learning opportunities, one of the most promising strategies for increasing student achievement and family involvement in high-poverty schools.[6] While there are a number of afterschool and out-of-school programs in the community, they don't appear to be coordinated or to work in partnership with the district. Additionally, when principals in focus groups were asked where their students went after school, many noted that even eight and nine year old children "went home alone, to supervise younger children." A few years ago, Liberal had a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant that funded several afterschool programs. When the grant period ended, the district determined that the program was not effective and decided to reallocate the resources to hire and train instructional coaches. There still appears to be a significant need for out-of-school time support, however.

- Transitions are challenging for students, families, teachers, and administrators. A number of years ago, to cope with overcrowding and ensure that the needs of all students were met at the appropriate developmental levels, the district divided the school system into four levels—elementary, intermediary, middle, and high school. As a result, students move between schools every few years, and there are "achievement dips" at each transition. Each school (and level) has its own culture, and cultural transitions are difficult. The district's integrated approach to improvement can help with transitions, but this will require a focused effort and considerable support.

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[6] For more information on this approach, see Little, P. (2009). *Supporting Student Outcomes Through Expanded Learning Opportunities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project. See also, Deich, S. (2009). *Using Expanded Learning to Support School Reforms: Funding Sources and Strategies*. Bethesda, MD: Cross & Joftus, LLC.

- Liberal does not have a dedicated HR director. Since no one is clearly charged with this task, it may be difficult to pay sufficient attention to recruiting and retention priorities.

- Many district facilities are in need of substantial improvement. The district appointed a task force to look at facilities issues in the wake of the failed bond and resolution votes. The work of this task force will be crucial over the next couple years.

- Heat and cooling in all buildings is centrally controlled by the district. Though teachers are able to have some control over the thermostat in their rooms, control is very limited. Some teachers and principals in focus groups noted that students had to keep coats on during classes. This lack of control appears frustrating for teachers and building administrators alike.

> "I have to have portable heaters in the room just to prevent the kids and me from losing feeling in our hands and feet." –*Teacher*

Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, and Professional Development

Findings related to 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 Liberal educators on surveys of educational practices, and by representatives from all constituent groups during focus groups and interviews; and (3) data collected during 65 classroom visits, which document to what extent effective teaching/learning practices are being implemented.

More detail about the data collected during classroom visits using the K-PALSS (Kansas Process for Advancing Learning Strategies for Success) process can be found in the Appendix of this report.

Curriculum

The Kansas curriculum standard requires the school/district to develop and implement a curriculum that is rigorous, intentional, and aligned with state standards. Liberal has successfully designed and is in the process of implementing a reading curriculum that is intentional and aligned with state standards. The selection of the Literacy First program[7]

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[7] In addition to Literacy First, the district is also implementing AVID, Thinking Maps, Four/Big Building Blocks, Study Island, Easiteach (on smart boards), Star Math, Math Facts in a Flash, Lexia, White from the

appears to be putting the district on the right track (if implemented with fidelity) and provides a common focus for the district that, among other things, can help with communication. Additionally, the AVID program provides a common focus on practices for increasing rigor at the senior high school level.

There are several other positive signs as well:

- At the high school, the AVID program is pushing students—who might not otherwise have access or encouragement—to take more high-level classes.[8]

- Sixty students are enrolled in the alternative high school program, which focuses on drop-out prevention and recovery. Last year, 24 students graduated from the program.

- There is also an after-school credit recovery program and coordination with the local community college that allows students to enroll concurrently. Students, however, can only take 24 concurrent hours in high school.

Liberal's primary challenge lies in implementing a rigorous curriculum with fidelity and consistency across the district. There are several issues embedded in this challenge:

- Successful implementation requires 1) monitoring and specific feedback to teachers by principals, instructional coaches, and consultants, and 2) successful development of learning communities and team teaching practices within schools. At present, though the district is working to develop a process to ensure accountability, consistency of implementation, and effectiveness of communication—especially in relation to implementation of the reading curriculum, Liberal has not yet fully or consistently implemented this process, and it does not appear to have been extended to the rest of curriculum or the high school. Additionally, teachers in focus groups expressed concern about the extent of change in the district over the last several years. There is some cynicism, especially among more seasoned teachers in the district, that the district's commitment to Literacy First will not last.

- Given the demographics of the district, special attention must be paid to meeting the needs of ELL students if achievement goals are to be met.

- The district appears to be assuming that successful changes brought about by Literacy First will also foster increases in math achievement. Although it is reasonable to assume that Literacy First will have a positive impact on those areas of math achievement that depend on reading skills, it cannot and was not designed

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Beginning/Future, Capturing Kids Hearts, and CKH Administrator training in building high-performance teams.

[8] Advanced placement courses currently given include Spanish, U.S. History, Human Geography, Biology, Calculus, and Statistics. In 2010-11, the district plans to add English, European History, and Environmental Science.

to ameliorate other problems related to math achievement. The district needs to monitor progress in math achievement carefully and will need to address math curriculum implementation needs directly.

- There is no writing component in Literacy First, and the Literacy First consultants differ in their beliefs as to whether it is allowable to teach writing during the reading block or not. Writing is tested beginning with the 5th grade state assessments. Teachers in many schools do not know how to fit writing into the schedule, and they get different advice from different Literacy First consultants. According to comments made during focus groups conducted with teachers, "Literacy First consultants are on different pages."

- According to the Director of Special Education, special education teachers use Lexia reading and manipulative sets for teaching and re-teaching necessary core instruction skills, supporting Literacy First and math. Administrators identify which interventions will be used. It is unclear what role the SIT teams play in determining necessary interventions.

- Communication systems regarding curriculum, especially as they relate to special education, appear to vary considerably by building. According to the Director of Special Education, in elementary schools, special education teachers are involved in PLCs; in high school, department heads foster curriculum-related communication. Teachers communicate with parents via emails, written notes, and visits; they also talk with parents at two parent/teacher conferences per year. The Special Education Director communicates with special education professionals via walk-throughs, emails, and visits. There does not appear to be an overarching communication system.

Assessment

According to state standards, schools should utilize multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.

Liberal exhibits a number of strengths in this area. The district has put multiple evaluation and assessment strategies[9] into place. It has also developed and is beginning to implement a new data information system (DISK) designed to track student data longitudinally. This system is available to teachers and administrators.

Despite the existence of multiple assessments and a longitudinal tracking system, however, the district is not yet using these tools systematically to inform instruction. The

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[9] Early Reading, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Benchmark Assessments, Explore, Kansas State Assessments in Math, Reading and Science, Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment (KELPA), and My Data First (tracks mastery through formative assessments in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency and comprehension).

district's data-based decision-making process appears to be functioning at the administrative level but has not yet been implemented at the school level.

This implementation challenge is evident on several levels:

- The district has successfully selected a research-based process (MTSS and special education comprehensive assessments[10]) to produce thoughtful assessment of students experiencing difficulties through the Student Intervention Teams (SIT) in each school. However, the functioning of these teams, particularly as they relate to timely special education evaluations, appears to be a source of frustration for many teachers and interventionists:

  o SIT teams function inconsistently across schools—from one school whose SIT team meets once a week, to another school that has no SIT team.

  o Students whose SIT teams have referred them for initial special education evaluation have had to wait six months to two years to get those evaluations, even though state policy says that "When teams conducting general education interventions **begin to question** whether the child might be a child with an exceptionality, or when the team begins to question whether the child might need special education and related services, then a referral for an initial evaluation needs to be considered," and that "Kansas has established a **60 school-day timeline** consistent with federal regulations (K.A.R. 91-40-8(f); 34 C.F.R.300.301(c)). The timeline for conducting the initial evaluation starts upon receipt of written parental consent to conduct the evaluation, and ends with the implementation of an IEP if the child is found eligible for special education (emphasis added)."[11]

  o The delays in getting students evaluated and placed for special education appear to have led to considerable frustration on the part of SIT team members and teachers. As a result, coordinators and teachers have quit their SIT teams and, at the high school, it has become difficult to recruit teachers for the SIT team.

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[10] Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children 4th Edition, Differential Abilities Scale, 2nd Edition, Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement and Key Math. Other cognitive measures include the Stanford-Binet, version5; Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test; Wechsler Nonverbal Scale of Ability; Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale 3rd edition; Test of Nonverbal Intelligence; Bracken Basic Concepts Scale Revised Edition; Young Children's Achievement Test; and Wechsler Individual Achievement Test. Behavior measures include Behavior Assessment System for Children, 2nd Edition; Conners 3; Brown ADD and Vineland-II. Developmental testing included use of Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment. Speech and language assessment tools include the Pre-School Language Scale; Hodson Transdisciplinary Play Based Assessment; Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test; Receptive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test; Test of Language Development; WORD; Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation; and, when needed, the Stuttering Severity Instrument; Clinical Evaluation of Language Functioning; and Arizona Articulation Proficiency Scale.
[11] KSDE. *Kansas Special Education Process Handbook*. http://www.ksde.org, accessed 11/21/09

o To determine the appropriate state assessment for students with disabilities, special education staff use the state form to assess the preponderance of evidence. It is unclear, however, to what extent special education staff work with SIT teams in various buildings to determine appropriate assessments.

o Some psychologists appear to function as gatekeepers rather than SIT team members, blocking evaluations and placement decisions so that as one teacher put it (and others concurred), "no amount of information is ever enough" and they exercise veto power over team decisions.

o Some key staff report being overloaded with responsibilities. For example, at the high school, one person we met with served as the testing, SIT, and 504 coordinator, as well as overseeing freshmen. She said she spends 80% of her time supervising testing, so she cannot adequately oversee the SIT process. Though this person has left the district since the needs assessment took place, Liberal must ensure that others don't become overloaded with responsibilities as well.

- Instructional coaches observed that it is hard for a classroom teacher to both teach and collect data on student behavior. They suggest that someone else observe students.

- New benchmark tests were created over the summer, using curriculum guides that were written five or six years ago. Teachers noted that they did not have input into the tests and that the tests did not match the curriculum as it is taught now. The Director of Assessment sees the mismatch as an opportunity to update the curriculum.

Instruction

Table 1 presents the results from a survey of teachers (response rate 44%) and principals (response rate 40%) administered online by Cross & Joftus.[12] Instructional strategies that principals and teachers *believe* are most strongly evident and are least evident, are highlighted below. Additional instructional strengths and challenges are identified later in this section. **Please note that since the estimated response rate was less than 50%, responses should be interpreted with caution.**

In general, principals participating in the survey identified a number of sound instructional strategies as strongly evident. The sound instructional strategies that *principals* believe are most *strongly evident* in their schools include:

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[12] Response rates are based on total estimated numbers of principals and teachers.

- administrators, academic coaches, or teacher leaders monitor instructional practices and provide meaningful feedback to teachers (cited as strongly evident by 88% principals and as minimally evident or not evident by 0%)
- creating safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments (cited by 75% of principals as strongly evident and 0% as not evident or minimally evident)
- meeting regularly on school-based learning teams to plan instruction and assessment (cited by 75% of principals as strongly evident and by 0% as minimally evident or not evident).
- using data from class, school, districts, and state assessments to determine results-based staff development (cited as strongly evident by 75% of principals and not evident or minimally evident by 0%)
- empowering students to participate in research-based instructional practices that assist them in learning the curriculum, meeting rigorous academic standards, and preparing for assessments (cited as strongly evident by 62% of principals and not evident or minimally evident by 0%).

The sound instructional strategy that *principals* indicated was *least evident* was:

- empowering students to use data to monitor their own progress (cited by 25% of principals as strongly evident and by 38% as minimally evident or not evident).

Principals were *evenly divided* on two strategies:

- providing adequate resources (human, fiscal, and physical), incentives, and interventions to support teacher and administrator learning (cited by 12% of principals as strongly evident and by 12% as minimally evident or not evident)
- fostering collegial relationships with families, school personnel, and the larger community to support students' learning and well being (cited by 12% of principals as strongly evident and by 12% as minimally evident or not evident).

In general, teachers are less optimistic about the use of sound instructional practices. The sound instructional strategies that *teachers* believe are most *strongly evident* in their schools include:

- creating safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments (cited as strongly evident by 60% of teachers and not evident or minimally evident by 6%)
- 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 54% of teachers and not evident or minimally evident by 13%)
- empowering students to participate in research-based instructional practices that assist them in learning the curriculum, meeting rigorous academic standards, and preparing for assessments (cited as strongly evident by 47% of teachers and not evident or minimally evident by 14%)

- meeting regularly on school-based learning teams to examine student work and identify effective teaching practices that address learning priorities (cited by 47% of teachers as strongly evident and by 18% as minimally evident or not evident).

Strategies that *teachers* participating in the survey believe to be *least* evident include:

- empowering students to use data to monitor their own progress (cited by 16% of teachers as strongly evident and by 43% as minimally evident or not evident)
- providing adequate resources (human, fiscal, and physical), incentives, and interventions to support teacher and administrator learning (cited by 17% of teachers as strongly evident and by 31% as minimally evident or not evident)
- providing adequate resources (human, fiscal, and physical), incentives, and interventions to support student learning (cited by 23% of teachers as strongly evident and by 31% as minimally evident or not evident).

Table 1. Extent to Which Principals and 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.	Principals		Teachers	
	Strongly Evident*	Not Evident or Minimally Evident^	Strongly Evident*	Not Evident or Minimally Evident^
Administrators, academic coaches, or teacher leaders monitor instructional practices and provide meaningful feedback to teachers.	88%	0%	44%	18%
Educators create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments.	75%	0%	60%	6%
Educators meet regularly on school-based learning teams to plan instruction and assessment.	75%	0%	47%	18%
Teachers and administrators use data from class, school, districts, and state assessments to determine results-based staff development.	75%	0%	41%	20%
Students participate in research-based instructional practices that assist them in learning the curriculum, meeting rigorous academic standards, and preparing for assessments.	62%	0%	47%	14%
Educators provide equitable opportunities to learn that are based on respect for high expectations, development levels, and adaptations for diverse learners.	50%	0%	54%	13%
Educators use a variety of appropriate instructional strategies and resources, including technology, to actively engage students, encourage positive social interaction, and emphasize critical	50%	0%	44%	12%

Please rate the extent to which you believe the following instructional practices are evident in your school.	Principals		Teachers	
	Strongly Evident*	Not Evident or Minimally Evident^	Strongly Evident*	Not Evident or Minimally Evident^
thinking, problem solving, and interdisciplinary connections.				
Students who are struggling to master content are identified by educators and provided with support individually or in small flexible groups using differentiated instruction.	50%	0%	45%	17%
Educators collaboratively function as a community of learners focused on improving student learning using appropriately allocated time and resources.	50%	0%	37%	23%
Subject matter is delivered to students at an appropriately rigorous level.	38%	0%	41%	18%
Educators participate in staff development designs that provide opportunities for practice, feedback, and support for implementation.	38%	12%	31%	22%
The effectiveness of staff development is measured by the level of classroom application and the impact of those practices on student learning.	38%	0%	22%	27%
School or district leaders facilitate, monitor, and guide the continuous improvement of instruction.	25%	0%	38%	24%
Educators meet regularly on school-based learning teams to examine student work and identify effective teaching practices that address learning priorities.	25%	0%	33%	30%
Educators apply research to decision-making to develop instructional practices related to diverse learning needs of students.	25%	0%	27%	21%
Adequate resources (human, fiscal, and physical), incentives, and interventions are provided to support student learning.	25%	12%	23%	31%
Students are empowered to use data to monitor their own progress.	25%	38%	16%	43%
Educators foster collegial relationships with families, school personnel, and the larger community to support students' learning and well being.	12%	12%	25%	28%
Adequate resources (human, fiscal, and physical), incentives, and interventions are provided to	12%	12%	17%	31%

Please rate the extent to which you believe the following instructional practices are evident in your school.	Principals		Teachers	
	Strongly Evident*	Not Evident or Minimally Evident^	Strongly Evident*	Not Evident or Minimally Evident^
support teacher and administrator learning.				

Teacher Response Rate = 153/350
Principal Response Rate = 8/20

Source: Cross & Joftus survey of Liberal principals and teachers November 2009.
*The response option "Evident" was deleted from this presentation to help highlight differences.
^The response option "No Opinion" was deleted from this presentation. Five percent or less of teachers and 0% of principals selected this option on any response.

Survey responses only tell part of the story. Classroom observations, reviews of assessment data, and conversations with focus group participants suggest two important instructional strengths in Liberal:

- One indicator of effective instructional practices is the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the *Kansas State Assessment*. Spring 2009 data indicated that the percentage of students scoring proficient or above district-wide was 67.5% in Reading and 64.6% in Mathematics. While these numbers are below state averages, they represent an increase:
    o in reading scores at seven out of 12 schools from the previous year, resulting in a 1.6% average gain—with three schools showing double-digit growth;
    o in mathematics scores at 10 out of 12 schools, resulting in a 3.1% average gain—with three schools showing double-digit growth.

- During observations of 65 classrooms in Liberal using Cross & Joftus' K-PALSS (Kansas Process for Advancing Learning Strategies for Success), 70% or more of classrooms at all levels of schooling demonstrated "orderly, well-managed environments which were conducive to learning." Additionally, at all levels, the majority of students were actively involved in learning groups, and teachers were regularly checking student understanding throughout the lesson. (See Appendix for specific percentages of these and other practices that contribute to accelerating student learning.)

Significant challenges remain, however:

- Data from focus group conversations and classroom observations indicated that Liberal would benefit from fully implementing Literacy First, through:
    o conducting classroom observations to collect data to determine the extent of implementation and the impact of effective research-based teaching practices
    o providing substantive feedback to teachers in a timely manner
    o and using observation data to inform a professional development program that is data-based and results-driven.

- K-PALSS observations identified the need to increase the following teaching practices, which were evident in 50% or less of the classrooms visited (see Appendix for specific percentages related to these and other strategies):
    - Explicitly communicating to students the standards that lessons are designed to address, so that students are aware of how their daily activities relate to the state's expectations of them.
    - Designing lessons based upon data from formal and informal assessments.
    - Adjusting presentations of information to accommodate kinesthetic learning styles and the language needs of English Language Learners.
    - Providing culturally responsive readings/perspectives.
    - Providing instruction and opportunities for learning at higher-levels of thinking—application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
    - Increasing the percent of classes using a variety of research-based instructional strategies, strategies (e.g., Marzano's, Bloom's, and Gardner's) that are predictably linked to increased student achievement.
    - Engaging students in self-evaluation, to strengthen their understanding of their current level of achievement and build shared responsibility for determining future learning priorities.

- Principals, teachers, and instructional coaches agree that more support is needed for those students who are under-performing and require Tier III approaches, but don't qualify as needing special education or ESL support services. Principals point out that students in this group are the ones who typically drop out.

The district has determined that ESL, Title I, and special education interventions will take place in an inclusion setting. Implementing the inclusion model has posed both new successes and challenges:

- The ESL interventionists were particularly pleased with the switch from a pull-out model, because they can witness directly how the students they are "consulting on" are actually doing (rather than taking the teacher's word for it) and they can work with more students, including those low-performing students who can benefit from the small group work but did not qualify for ESL instruction.

- Interventionists agree that regular education teachers need training in inclusion approaches, including team teaching and coaching.

- Paraprofessionals:
    - provide some of the one-to-one and small group interventions for special education and ESL students, yet apparently receive little to no professional development.
    - do not appear to be used as effectively or consistently as they might be.
    - do not appear to be assigned proportionally to schools based on the number of students who need support.

- Some pull-out programs are still needed for non-English speakers.

- Special education services in Liberal are provided by the district:
    - The building principals hire and evaluate special education staff with input from the Director of Special Education.
    - Services are delivered in an inclusion model. The responsibility of planning and making accommodations/modifications should be a collective responsibility by the IEP teams, but the special education teacher (IRC) has the biggest responsibility. Because inclusion is new this year, the district is still working out what happens both in the classroom and during additional support time.
    - The small group learning appears to be working well, but students with disabilities appear to be struggling in large group reading.
    - Some regular education teachers and special education teachers appear resistant to implementing the inclusion model.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Literacy First offers a coherent approach to professional development, an approach that the district can continue to build upon. In the Cross & Joftus survey, for example, many principals and teachers identified Literacy First as the most effective training they had participated in recently, because it included the following:

- initial training that was interactive/hands-on and provided time for teachers to practice with their colleagues

- implementation visits by administrators and "Instructional Coaches" to give feedback on practices and recommend next steps that target improved learning results

- on-going training and time for teachers to plan together

- continuous collegial exchanges on a weekly basis, as teachers examine student work and achievement data and collectively plan lessons.

> *"Support from Instructional Coaches is a big piece of accountability that Literacy First is bringing to our district— let's hope that there is follow-through with this."*
> *– District teacher*

Additionally, the district is planning on videotaping effective teaching practices to provide models for professional development sessions. This will enable teachers to see demonstrations of practices that result in increased gains in student achievement.

Many of the challenges related to professional development are also connected to the need for the district to fully implement a coherent approach to improvement.

- Professional development for staff is now being provided through the Literacy First program and/or SIOP, with the assistance of instructional coaches, and is focused on reading and math. Not all teachers have received the Literacy First training—including many ESL, special education teachers and para-educators—however, though all teachers will be expected to implement Literacy First. There also appears to be an added challenge for those teachers who have received training and are working with additional staff in their classrooms. It is unclear how they should teach students and manage/support other staff in the classroom.

- A majority of the 153 teacher respondents on the Cross & Joftus survey expressed concern that there is not sufficient time to meet regularly with colleagues in professional learning communities to identify effective teaching practices and modify instruction to systematically advance student skills. Research validates the link between the amount of time teachers spend on high-quality professional development and gains in student achievement.[13]

- Focus groups with principals and teachers noted that the district needs to develop and fully implement policies and procedures to help guide the effective use of time designated for PLCs. Currently, PLCs operate inconsistently throughout the district. Further, the district lacks consistent follow-up procedures for tracking collective work and measuring the achievement of benchmarks designed to continuously improve student achievement.

- The district does not have consistent criteria, such as the standards from National Staff Development Council, for evaluating the effectiveness of all professional development. Criteria such as these would provide a research-driven framework for assessing and informing future professional development sessions.

III. Recommendations for Technical Assistance

One of the primary goals of this needs assessment is to identify areas in which the district could most benefit from technical assistance and to design that technical assistance in a way that will have the greatest impact on the district's school quality and student achievement. Based on this needs assessment, Cross & Joftus, LLC recommends that the technical assistance provided to Liberal address one or more of the following general recommendations:

1) Undertake board and superintendent training, with the assistance of an external board facilitator. Minimally, the training should seek to address roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, board members, and the board chair; help the board to develop, implement, and evaluate annual board goals; and help to ensure that the board functions at the policy level. Within the larger strategic

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[13] Yoon, K.S, Duncan, T., Lee, S.W.Y, Scarloss, B., & Shapley, K. (2007). *Reviewing the Evidence on How Teacher Professional Development Affects Student Achievement*. Issues & Answers Report. REL 2007-No.033). http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/pdf/REL_2007033.pdf.

planning framework, articulate a clear theory of change. Communicate the theory of change and essential elements of the strategic plan widely, in a way that ensures staff and community engagement and buy-in from all stakeholders.

2) In line with the strategic plan, develop and fully implement a coherent framework to support and ensure alignment in curriculum, assessment, instruction, and professional development. This framework should:

- Fully implement Literacy First—ensure professional development for all staff—and build on Literacy First strengths (such as an aligned curriculum, instructional coaching, and ongoing professional development) to develop aligned curriculum, assessment, instruction and professional development for <u>all</u> subjects, including mathematics and science. Work with other districts in the Kansas Learning Network, such as Haysville and Coffeyville, that have implemented the Literacy First model.

- Systematize PLCs and classroom observations as catalysts for implementing research-based effective educational practices by:
  o conducting classroom visits using common criteria and providing feedback to educators
  o analyzing data using a consistent protocol to determine the extent of implementation of effective teaching/learning practices
  o determining future professional development practices using observation data
  o creating structured time and procedures for teachers and administrators at all schools to work together effectively.

- Enhance vertical communication between grade levels; develop and implement procedures to ease transitions between school buildings.

- Provide professional development to support usage of the DISK data system to track student performance over time, and develop procedures to ensure effective data-based decision making on all district initiatives.

- Continue to define the role of principal as instructional leader. Clarify the district's expectations of principals in that role and provide the necessary support to enable them to meet expectations.

- Implement an in-depth special education program review to determine how to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and to ensure that students have access to and make progress in the general curriculum. Once the review is complete, create and implement a special education action plan, including professional development.

3) Seek to rebuild the trust of the community—in the board, and more generally, in the district's leadership. Develop and implement a plan to communicate regularly

and widely with all stakeholders in the community. Build on effective and existing public-private partnerships—such as those with the Chamber of Commerce, the bank, and other local businesses—to strengthen relationships throughout the community.

4) Work to rebuild an atmosphere of collaboration, mutual trust, and respect among all staff members. Ensure that teachers, paraprofessionals, special education staff, and "interventionists"—including ESL staff, among others—play meaningful roles on various district committees. Communicate all district decisions widely and in a timely manner.

5) Using the classroom observation process outlined above, undertake a review of AP classes, to ensure that instructional strategies support rigor and higher-level learning. Provide professional development where needed.

6) Seek to intentionally diversify the Liberal teaching and administrative staff, as well as the board of education.

7) To increase parent engagement and to bridge cultural and racial differences, consider implementing a home visits program, like the program implemented in the Ulysses School District. Look at the possibility of developing family education and literacy programs.

8) Develop a coordinated approach to expanded learning opportunities. Consider pre-K and full-day kindergarten programs as part of an overall expanded learning approach.

Once district leadership has had an opportunity to review this report, a representative from Cross & Joftus will contact the Liberal superintendent to finalize a technical assistance plan that includes 24 days of external support for the time period January through September of 2010. This plan, developed in collaboration between the senior leadership of the district and Cross & Joftus will describe in detail the goals, objectives, activities, service provider, and timeline of the technical assistance.

APPENDIX
Findings from Classroom Observations
LIBERAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Using the K-PALSS (Kansas Process for Advancing Learning Strategies for Success) process, Cross & Joftus staff in collaboration with representatives from the Kansas State Department of Education and district staff visited classrooms and recorded observations of effective "teaching" demonstrated by the teacher and "learning" demonstrated by the students.

The entries under the "plus" column on the left side of the charts below show the percentage of classrooms visited in which research-based practices that consistently contribute to enhanced learning were observed. The entries under the "delta" column on the right side highlight areas that the district should address to improve the teaching and learning process.

Data were aggregated in school-level alike (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school) groupings to determine the percentage of classrooms in which evidence of the specified practices were observed. For reporting purposes in the narrative, we describe practices as having ***strong evidence*** if they were observed in 70% or more of the classrooms visited, *evidence* if they were observed in 50-69% of classrooms visited, and ***minimal evidence*** if they were observed in less than 50% of classrooms visited.

Elementary Schools (21 Classrooms)

OBSERVED PRACTICES +	PD RECOMMENDATIONS Δ
Learning Environment	
100% Orderly/Clean/Well-Managed 100% Safe/Conducive to Learning 19% Evidence of Learning/Displays student work	Students benefit from displays of student work with rubrics as models of expected performance.
Instructional Design	
76% Standards-based lesson 0% Data-based instruction is explicit 43% Modeling 86% Checking understanding 14% Guided Practice 14% Independent Practice 5% Teacher/Student Evaluation/Summary	Students benefit from communication of standards-based outcomes; this increases the relevance of learning. Need to communicate to students that learning experiences are based on data from assessments, demonstrations of expected performance, with feedback indicating understanding. Provide feedback prior to students being expected to perform independent practice successfully.
Strategies Used	
Adjust for multiple learning styles 76% visual 95% auditory 14% kinesthetic 0% Incorporate culturally responsive readings/perspectives 5% Address diverse language needs 10% Identify similarities & differences 5% Summarize & take notes 57% Reinforce efforts & provide recognition 57% Use homework & practice opportunities 0% Represent knowledge in multiple ways 57% Organize learning in groups 48% Set objectives & provide immediate/continuous feedback 0% Generate & test hypotheses 43% Use cues, questions & advance organizers	Students benefit from strategies that balance different learning styles of students. Students need to have differentiated instruction (DI) for all tiers of learning; strategies should address culturally responsive teaching and diverse learning needs. A larger repertoire of instructional strategies needs to be provided to expedite learning, especially if practices were evident in less than 50% of classes visited.

TEACHING

Elementary Schools (21 Classrooms)

OBSERVED PRACTICES +		PD RECOMMENDATIONS Δ
Cognitive Level		
10% Knowledge		Students need to be provided instructional opportunities that require them to demonstrate higher-level thinking skills.
29% Comprehension		
57% Application		
5% Analysis		
0% Synthesis		
0% Evaluation		
Environment/Resources		
29% Textbooks		Students use of textbooks, manipulatives, technology, and materials that reflect diversity should be increased.
62% Supplemental materials		
24% Manipulatives		
10% Technology		
0% Materials reflect diversity		
52% Worksheets: Open-ended/Fill-in/Multiple choice		
Interactive Behaviors		
95% Active involvement in classwork		Students benefit from opportunities for self-evaluation by sharing responsibility for their own future learning.
81% Asks/answers questions		
71% Receives feedback on performance		
5% Demonstrates reflection (meta-cognition)		
Strategies Demonstrated		
Demonstrates knowledge in multiple ways:		Students need to be provided opportunities to demonstrate their learning using a variety of multiple intelligences, especially by increasing those which were evident in 50% or less of the classes visited.
43% interpersonal		
5% intrapersonal		
86% verbal-linguistic		
38% logistical-mathematical		
33% visual-spatial		
24% bodily-kinesthetic		
5% musical-rhythmic		

LEARNING

Intermediate Schools (Nine Classrooms)

OBSERVED PRACTICES **+**		PD RECOMMENDATIONS **Δ**
Learning Environment		
100% Orderly/Clean/Well-Managed		Students benefit from displays of student work with rubrics as models of exemplary performance.
100% Safe/Conducive to Learning		
44% Evidence of Learning/Displays student work		
Instructional Design		
22% Standards-based lesson	**TEACHING**	Students benefit from purposeful communication of learning standards; this increases relevance of learning.
44% Data-based instruction is explicit		Systematic procedures for students to have guided practice and feedback prior to independent performance need to be implemented with greater consistency.
11% Modeling		
78% Checking understanding		
33% Guided Practice		
44% Independent Practice		
0% Teacher/Student Evaluation/Summary		
Strategies Used		
Adjust for multiple learning styles		Adjusting presentations of information should provide opportunities for all learning styles to be expressed; it should also address cultural diversity & language needs.
89% visual		
89% auditory		
33% kinesthetic		
0% Incorporate culturally responsive readings/perspectives		
0% Address diverse language needs		
11% Identify similarities & differences		
0% Summarize & take notes		A larger repertoire of instructional strategies is necessary to expedite learning especially if practices were evident in less than 50% of the classes visited.
67% Reinforce efforts & provide recognition		
22% Use homework & practice opportunities		
0% Represent knowledge in multiple ways		
56% Organize learning in groups		
33% Set objectives & provide immediate/continuous feedback		
0% Generate & test hypotheses		
11% Use cues, questions & advance organizers		

Intermediate Schools (Nine Classrooms)

OBSERVED PRACTICES +		PD RECOMMENDATIONS Δ
Cognitive Level		
0%	Knowledge	Students need to be able to demonstrate their learning using higher-level thinking skills.
33%	Comprehension	
56%	Application	
0%	Analysis	
0%	Synthesis	
11%	Evaluation	
Environment/Resources		
56%	Textbooks	Students benefit from being provided a variety of resources including the use of manipulatives and technology to increase to address diverse learning needs.
89%	Supplemental materials	
11%	Manipulatives	
11%	Technology	
0%	Materials reflect diversity	
67%	Worksheets: Open-ended/Fill-in/Multiple choice	
Interactive Behaviors		
89%	Active involvement in classwork	
78%	Asks/answers questions	
56%	Receives feedback on performance	
11%	Demonstrates reflection (meta-cognition)	Incorporate more time for reflective responses from students.
Strategies Demonstrated		
	Demonstrates knowledge in multiple ways:	Students need to be provided opportunities to demonstrate their learning using a variety of multiple intelligences by increasing practices evident in less than 50% of the classrooms visited.
56%	interpersonal	
11%	intrapersonal	
89%	verbal-linguistic	
56%	logistical-mathematical	
33%	visual-spatial	
11%	bodily-kinesthetic	
0%	musical-rhythmic	

LEARNING

Middle Schools (17 Classrooms)

OBSERVED PRACTICES **+**		PD RECOMMENDATIONS **Δ**
Learning Environment		
100% Orderly/Clean/Well-Managed		Displays of student work with rubrics reinforce expectations of performance to learners.
100% Safe/Conducive to Learning		
24% Evidence of Learning/Displays student work		
Instructional Design		
18% Standards-based lesson		Purposeful communication of learning standards increases the relevance of learning to students. Use of modeling and opportunities to check understanding and give feedback need to occur prior to students being expected to perform independent practice successfully.
0% Data-based instruction is explicit		
6% Modeling		
71% Checking understanding		
18% Guided Practice		
29% Independent Practice		
6% Teacher/Student Evaluation/Summary		
Strategies Used		
Adjust for multiple learning styles:		A larger repertoire of instructional strategies is necessary to scaffold instruction for all tiers of learning, and to address culturally responsive teaching and diverse language needs, especially if practices were evident in less than 50% of the classes visited.
76% visual		
59% auditory		
0% kinesthetic		
0% Incorporate culturally responsive readings/perspectives		
0% Address diverse language needs		
6% Identify similarities & differences		
6% Summarize & take notes		
35% Reinforce efforts & provide recognition		
29% Use homework & practice opportunities		
6% Represent knowledge in multiple ways		
35% Organize learning in groups		
6% Set objectives & provide immediate/continuous feedback		
12% Generate & test hypotheses		
0% Use cues, questions & advance organizers		

TEACHING (vertical center label)

Middle School (17 Classrooms)

OBSERVED PRACTICES +		PD RECOMMENDATIONS Δ
Cognitive Level		
18%	Knowledge	Students need to be provided instruction and opportunities to demonstrate higher-level thinking skills.
35%	Comprehension	
47%	Application	
0%	Analysis	
0%	Synthesis	
0%	Evaluation	
Environment/Resources		
41%	Textbooks	Students need increased opportunities for using a variety of resources and materials that reflect diversity and support individual learning styles.
41%	Supplemental materials	
0%	Manipulatives	
18%	Technology	
0%	Materials reflect diversity	
53%	Worksheets: Open-ended/Fill-in/Multiple choice	
Interactive Behaviors		
29%	Active involvement in classwork	Students need to be provided opportunities for self-evaluation in order to take responsibility for their future learning.
65%	Asks/answers questions	
29%	Receives feedback on performance	
0%	Demonstrates reflection (meta-cognition)	
Strategies Demonstrated		
	Demonstrates knowledge in multiple ways:	Students need to demonstrate their knowledge using a variety of multiple intelligences by increasing the strategies that were evident in 50% or less of the classes visited.
18%	interpersonal	
6%	intrapersonal	
47%	verbal-linguistic	
41%	logistical-mathematical	
41%	visual-spatial	
0%	bodily-kinesthetic	
0%	musical-rhythmic	

LEARNING

High Schools (18 Classrooms)

OBSERVED PRACTICES **+**		PD RECOMMENDATIONS **Δ**
Learning Environment		
94% Orderly/Clean/Well-Managed		
94% Safe/Conducive to Learning		Displays of student work with rubrics reinforce performance expectations to learners.
11% Evidence of Learning/Displays student work		
Instructional Design		
33% Standards-based lesson		Purposeful communication of learning standards increases the relevance of learning to students.
28% Data-based instruction is explicit	**TEACHING**	
28% Modeling		Use of modeling and opportunities to practice and obtain timely feedback on performance increases success at the independent performance level.
61% Checking understanding		
28% Guided Practice		
44% Independent Practice		
6% Teacher/Student Evaluation/Summary		
Strategies Used		
Adjust for multiple learning styles		A larger repertoire of instructional strategies is necessary to provide educators with skills to scaffold instruction for all tiers of learning, address culturally responsive teaching, and address diverse learning needs.
56% visual		
72% auditory		
0% kinesthetic		
0% Incorporate culturally responsive readings/perspectives		Need to especially target those strategies that were evident in 50% or less of the classes visited.
11% Address diverse language needs		
17% Identify similarities & differences		
28% Summarize & take notes		
44% Reinforce efforts & provide recognition		
33% Use homework & practice opportunities		
6% Represent knowledge in multiple ways		
22% Organize learning in groups		
22% Set objectives & provide immediate/continuous feedback		
0% Generate & test hypotheses		
33% Use cues, questions & advance organizers		

High Schools (18 Classrooms)
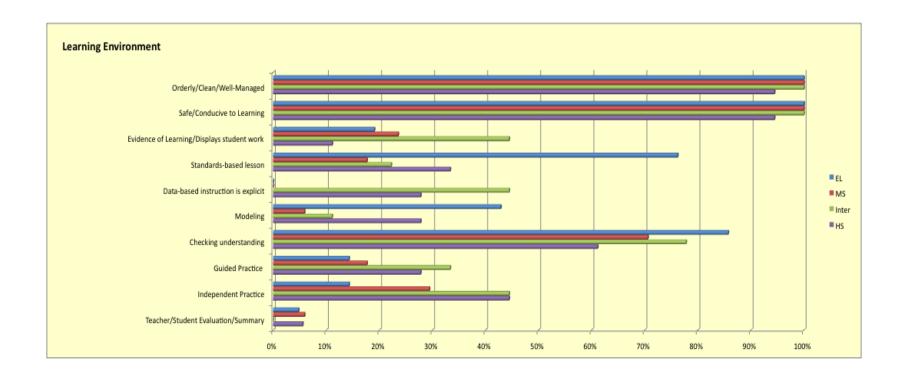
OBSERVED PRACTICES **+**		PD RECOMMENDATIONS **Δ**
Cognitive Level		
11% Knowledge		Students need to be provided opportunities for practicing higher-level thinking skills.
39% Comprehension		
39% Application		
11% Analysis		
0% Synthesis		
0% Evaluation		
Environment/Resources		
50% Textbooks		Manipulatives and use of technology should be increased to address diverse learning needs; the use of resources needs to be extended beyond supplemental materials and worksheets.
56% Supplemental materials		
11% Manipulatives		
39% Technology		
0% Materials reflect diversity		
61% Worksheets: Open-ended/Fill-in/Multiple choice		
Interactive Behaviors		
56% Active involvement in classwork		
56% Asks/answers questions		Students need to be provided opportunities for self evaluation and for taking responsibility for their learning.
39% Receives feedback on performance		
6% Demonstrates reflection (meta-cognition)		
Strategies Demonstrated		
Demonstrates knowledge in multiple ways:		
22% interpersonal		Students need opportunities to demonstrate their learning using a variety of multiple intelligences, by increasing those which were evident in less than 50% of the classes visited.
0% intrapersonal		
50% verbal-linguistic		
50% logistical-mathematical		
17% visual-spatial		
11% bodily-kinesthetic		
0% musical-rhythmic		
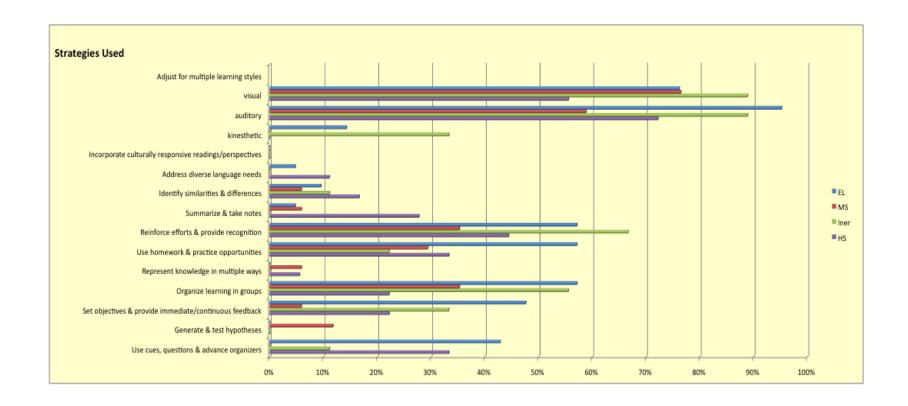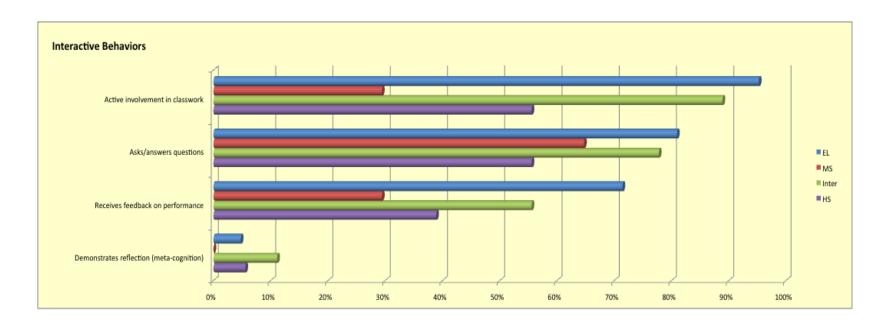
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TEACHING PRACTICES OBSERVED IN LIBERAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Learning Environment

Categories (top to bottom):
- Orderly/Clean/Well-Managed
- Safe/Conducive to Learning
- Evidence of Learning/Displays student work
- Standards-based lesson
- Data-based instruction is explicit
- Modeling
- Checking understanding
- Guided Practice
- Independent Practice
- Teacher/Student Evaluation/Summary

Legend:
- EL
- MS
- Inter
- HS

TEACHING PRACTICES OBSERVED IN LIBERAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (continued)

Strategies Used

Categories (top to bottom):
- Adjust for multiple learning styles
- visual
- auditory
- kinesthetic
- Incorporate culturally responsive readings/perspectives
- Address diverse language needs
- Identify similarities & differences
- Summarize & take notes
- Reinforce efforts & provide recognition
- Use homework & practice opportunities
- Represent knowledge in multiple ways
- Organize learning in groups
- Set objectives & provide immediate/continuous feedback
- Generate & test hypotheses
- Use cues, questions & advance organizers

Legend: EL, MS, Iner, HS

X-axis: 0% to 100%

LEARNING PRACTICES OBSERVED IN LIBERAL SCHOOL DISTRICT =

Interactive Behaviors

Categories (top to bottom): Active involvement in classwork, Asks/answers questions, Receives feedback on performance, Demonstrates reflection (meta-cognition)

Legend: EL, MS, Inter, HS

LEARNING PRACTICES OBSERVED IN LIBERAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (continued)