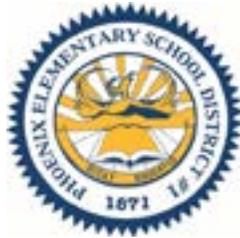


**A Curriculum Audit™**  
of the  
**Phoenix Elementary School District #1**  
Phoenix, Arizona



# Recommendations



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## **V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CMSI CURRICULUM AUDIT™ TEAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PHOENIX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT #1**

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

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

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

Where the CMSi audit team views a problem as wholly or partly a policy and monitoring matter, the recommendations are formulated for the board of education. Where the problem is distinctly an operational or administrative matter, the recommendations are directed to the superintendent of schools as the chief executive officer of the school system. In many cases, the CMSi audit team directs recommendations to both the board and the superintendent, because it is clear that policy and operations are related, and both entities are involved in a proposed change. In some cases, there are no recommendations to the superintendent when only policy is involved or none to the board when the recommendations deal only with administration.

Audit recommendations are presented as follows: The overarching goals for the board and/or the superintendent, followed by the specific objectives to carry out the overarching goals. The latter are designated "Governance Functions" and "Administrative Functions."

**Recommendation 1: Establish system-wide expectations, direction, and system guidance through updated and new board policies and administrative regulations to support systemic quality control of the educational program and system operations.**

A comprehensive set of board policies and administrative regulations is necessary to establish clear direction for the system, to guide the management of a system, and to express the expectations and intentions of the board legally charged with governance of the school system. Current policies provide updated frameworks for program operations and help create educational focus for ongoing decision making at district and school levels. Policies are relied upon to be a source of reference for campus management in the recurring issues and operational decisions to promote consistency of administrative practices and cohesion of organizational functions.

Auditors found that the current board policies and administrative regulations for the Phoenix Elementary School District #1 do not provide adequate direction or communicate clear expectations for either educational program management or related administrative and operational functions (see [All Report Findings](#)). Some policies represent generic educational expectations without giving clear direction. The policies require few elements of a data-driven planning function: an effective curriculum management system, a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation system, professional development planning, or data-based decision making (see [Findings 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4](#)).

The auditors' recommended actions address the primary needs in the area of policies as identified through audit analysis. Additional recommendations in this report identify specific areas of policy weaknesses as well. These actions need to be addressed during the next six to 12 months to establish clear parameters for operations and job performance, and to communicate expectations regarding the follow-up actions based on this report.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.1.1:** Prepare and present, for review and adoption by the board, drafts of new policies or updated and revised policies that will meet the criteria outlined in [Exhibits 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 1.2.5, 1.2.6](#) (see [Finding 1.2](#)) and address policy deficiencies pointed out in the findings and accompanying recommendations within this report. Address these revisions as a priority in order to establish clear direction and control for educational program management and sound operation of the campus and its schools.

**G.1.2:** Prepare, for adoption by the board, drafts of policy updates and revisions that clearly delineate the line of authority from the board through the superintendent that directs an aligned, rigorous, and system wide curriculum (PreK-8) be delivered to all students in the district. The policy will expect schools to adhere to the adopted curriculum and to determine and utilize the best instructional practices to ensure the learnings of each student in the district.

**G.1.3:** Establish an ongoing policy review and update schedule to avoid policies being outdated and ignored. Incorporate and include language needed to specify clearly the board's intent.

**G.1.4:** Establish a mechanism to ensure all administrators' understanding of policies and the expectation that policies be followed throughout the district.

**G.1.5:** Develop draft policy on the organizational chart and job descriptions that states clearly that only high-quality instruction is acceptable and that the primary role of professional employees is to facilitate and improve the instructional program to ensure student learnings.

**G.1.6:** Direct the superintendent to prepare administrative regulations and guidelines for consistent implementation of policies. Ensure administrative regulations are developed, maintained, current, and disseminated to all school sites with clear expectations for consistent adherence.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.1.1:** Assist in implementing **G.1.1** through **G.1.5** above. Provide draft policy language that offers specificity and clarity of expectations where needed to meet the audit criteria in Exhibits 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 1.2.5, 1.2.6, and other findings within the audit report. At a minimum, these revised, updated, or new policies should include:

- A philosophical statement of curriculum approach that the curriculum should be centrally designed and delivered.
- A policy requiring an aligned written, taught, and tested curriculum for all subjects at all grade levels and a multi-grade scope and sequence document covering all grade levels of the taught curriculum (see Recommendations 3 and 4).
- A policy on instructional expectations that includes the types of methods and strategies expected in classrooms and is based on teacher appraisals, and district and school priorities and goals (see Recommendation 5).
- An expanded policy on planning that outlines areas of expected planning across the system (e.g., curriculum management, professional development, student assessment and program evaluation, technology, and budget development) and incorporates the criteria from the respective findings in this report.
- A policy that requires planning, monitoring, and evaluation of all programs and intervention efforts on a systematic schedule/calendar and the use of resulting evaluation data in program and budget decisions (see Recommendations 6 and 10).
- A policy requiring the development, presence, and annual updating of job descriptions for all positions in campus employ (see Recommendation 9).
- A policy requiring annual updating of the organizational chart, with job descriptions for all positions represented on the chart (see Recommendation 9).
- A policy to differentiate clearly between decisions that are made at the school, those made at the central office, and those that are shared, thus centralizing decision making for better oversight of district functions.

**A.1.2:** Provide copies of updated policies and administrative regulations to all administrators, with additional copies available for staff at the work sites. Include updated policies and administrative regulations on the district website within six months to enable easy and ready internal and external access to the most current policies and regulations.

**A.1.3:** Include discussion of updated policies and regulations in administrative meetings as revisions are completed, highlighting particular areas of policy at the regular meetings; monitor for consistent implementation at all sites.

**A.1.4:** Cite references to policies and administrative regulations when making administrative reports and recommendations.

**A.1.5:** Monitor adherence and compliance with newly developed job descriptions to ensure consistent fulfillment of roles and responsibilities for all district employees.

**A.1.6:** Develop administrative regulations outlining the process and procedures to be followed in the development, revision, deployment, and use of board policies.

**Recommendation 2: Develop a comprehensive system to support the effective delivery of curriculum in Phoenix Elementary School District #1. Clearly define expectations for instructional planning, classroom-based approaches, monitoring, and professional development to provide a clear picture of engaging, challenging, and effective instruction.**

Supporting instructional delivery is a critical part of promoting high expectations for students, achieving deep alignment between the written and taught curriculum, and providing teachers, particularly inexperienced teachers, with support in selecting the best ways to teach the assigned objective(s). Flexibility should be allowed in how teachers approach a particular objective, but instruction should be adjusted for each child according to the data regarding that child's academic needs. A well-developed, district-adopted instructional model provides teachers with the steps and processes to follow in how to use data at the individual level to plan differentiated instruction. Differentiation includes strategies for re-teaching, sheltering content to ensure access for English Language Learners, and enrichment and acceleration for gifted students, in addition to adjusting the contexts of instruction to allow students variation in how they engage in learning activities. The instructional model represents the district's philosophy regarding how instruction should be adjusted to meet individual needs, as demonstrated by assessment data.

In addition to the instructional model, effective districts provide a framework for instructional strategies for teachers and campus leaders that outlines the type of approaches the district considers effective and most beneficial to its student population. These would typically include strategies that are effective with economically, linguistically, and ethnically diverse students. Such a framework, in conjunction with the instructional model, not only supports teachers in planning effective, student-centered instruction, but also supports principals in monitoring the delivery of curriculum and creates a focus for professional development. Professional development is the critical support piece in equipping teachers to deliver the curriculum effectively in accordance with district expectations.

The auditors found no direction in policy, job descriptions, or plans of the district's expectations for an instructional model although there was some direction in the teacher evaluation instrument regarding the types of strategies teachers should employ in delivering instruction (see [Finding 3.2](#)). There were no expectations for monitoring found in district documents and classroom visits, although frequent in some schools, were not consistent across all buildings and the purposes of monitoring were dependent on individual principals (see [Finding 3.2](#)). In visits to classrooms, the auditors found instructional practices were mostly whole-group in nature, differentiation of content was infrequently observed, and the cognitive challenge of student activities was low (see [Finding 3.2](#)).

Auditors found inadequate coordination and fragmented professional development at the district level. Most professional development offered is intended to support the implementation of a new program. The auditors found no evidence of long-range planning to direct professional development and connect it to curriculum delivery (see [Finding 3.3](#)).

In this recommendation, specific action steps related to instructional delivery, monitoring, and professional development are addressed in separate sections. These actions should be completed in one to three years.

**Instructional Delivery**

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.2.1:** Direct the superintendent to review research-supported instructional strategies that are effective with all student populations (such information is available from CMSi). Require this review of research to focus especially on those characteristics that have been shown to improve student achievement, such as vocabulary development and cognitively engaging instruction (see [Appendices D](#) and [E](#)).

**G.2.2:** Direct the superintendent to develop policy that requires an instructional model(s) to be adopted in classrooms throughout the district.

**G.2.3:** Direct the superintendent to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery of curriculum across the district and present a report to the board. Such an evaluation should use data from multiple sources: formative assessments, summative assessments, all monitoring data from the principals, and from samples of student work collected from classrooms on a regular basis.

**G.2.4:** Adopt the policies described above when drafted; direct the superintendent to ensure their implementation.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.2.1:** Direct the development of the policies described above.

**A.2.2:** Assure effectiveness in curriculum implementation. Although teachers must have discretion regarding specific strategies and approaches they use to delivery instruction, teacher discretion must be balanced within an established district expectation for both data-driven instructional planning and best practices for ethnically, economically, and linguistically diverse students. Train teachers in the new curriculum documents and support them in using those documents to plan and deliver their instruction. Assure that the curriculum is used in a context that prioritizes student needs above all else—the most effective instruction is responsive to the students at an individual level and is a crucial part of effective reading instruction at the elementary level.

**A.2.3:** Define the framework for strategies and the instructional model expected to be used in classrooms across the district. These are *not* intended to be a prescriptive, tightly-held requirement. Rather, the framework for strategies and the instructional model are intended to provide a clear picture of the steps district leaders expect teachers to take in planning their instruction in accordance to data. These steps should encompass the following:

- 1. Framework for Strategies/Approaches:** Describe the ways in which district-adopted curriculum is expected to be delivered. In other words, the types of teaching practices district leadership expects to see and that are proven effective with economically, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students should be specifically described in writing and adopted in policy to ensure implementation. Strategies are loosely held, but this is intended to outline those strategies and approaches the district considers congruent with the district-adopted philosophy of teaching and learning. Suggested practices should be research-based, developmentally appropriate as well as relevant, and might include:
  - Ensuring that the learning objective and language objective are evident to students and that the students understand what they should be able to know and do.
  - Implementing higher-order questioning that helps students see the “big picture” of the concepts, knowledge, and skills being taught, as well as facilitating a deeper understanding on the part of students.
  - Differentiating instruction to meet the individual needs of all students.
  - Using small group activities, paired tasks, and cooperative learning strategies.
  - Using sheltered strategies, such as SIOP<sup>1</sup>, to provide English language learners and students with low vocabulary ranges access to core curriculum and to support their academic English language development across all content areas.
  - Comparing/contrasting new concepts, knowledge, skills, with concepts, skills, and experiences already familiar to students.
  - Engaging students in experimental inquiry, problem-solving, and investigation—all hands-on methods of applying or discovering new knowledge and concepts.
  - Having students set their own learning goals, develop strategies for attaining them, and monitor their own progress toward meeting those goals.
  - Engaging students in meta-cognitive activities, whereby they analyze their own thought processes in approaching test questions, assignments, new information, etc..

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.CAL.org](http://www.CAL.org) for more information on the SIOP model.

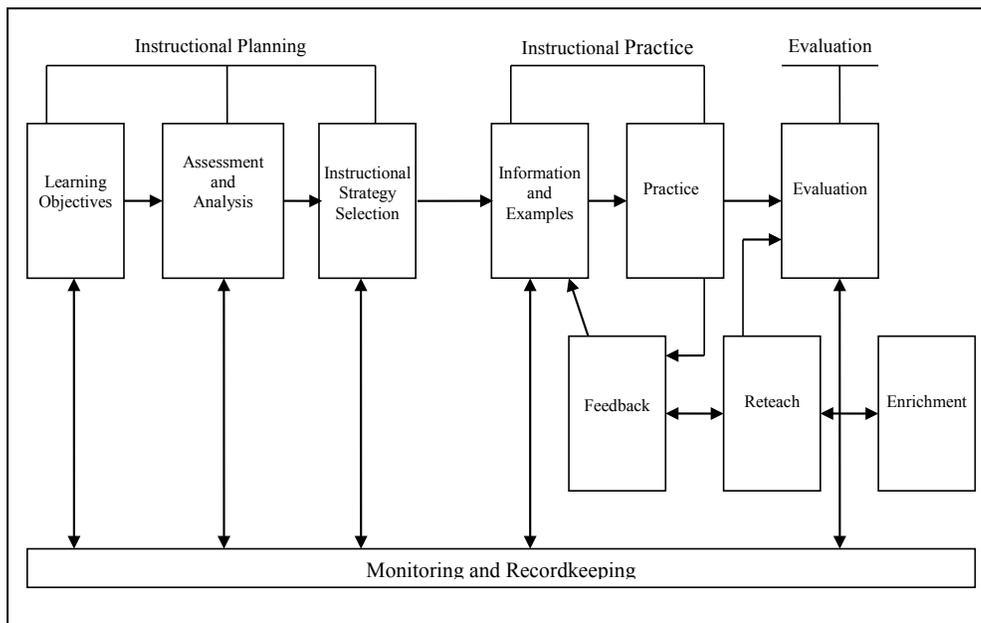
- Using non-linguistic ways to support comprehension of, identification with, and the retention of new concepts or knowledge, such as pictures, graphic organizers, outlines, etc.<sup>2</sup>
- Tailoring instruction to the cultural, economic, and linguistic diversity present in every classroom, recognizing and valuing differences and similarities, and emphasizing the benefits of cultural and linguistic pluralism.

(See also Appendices D and E for additional suggestions for effective instructional strategies.)

2. **Instructional Planning and Monitoring of Learning:** Clearly describe expectations for how teachers are to use student performance/achievement data to plan instruction based on their specific academic needs and delineate the steps in this process.
3. **Consider using the Mastery Learning Model:** as a possible model for planning and executing instruction using a variety of strategies and approaches with which the teacher is comfortable. The Mastery Learning Model presents a model of close monitoring of student learning that is data based and relies on flexible, small student grouping to deliver the exact teaching that those students need, rather than relying on whole group, one-size-fits all approaches. This model is presented in Exhibit R.2.1.

**Exhibit R.2.1**

**Mastery Learning Model**



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

**A.2.4:** As part of the instructional model, incorporate the expectation for **differentiating** instruction in the classroom to meet individual student needs. Differentiation occurs in two important ways: differentiating the content or objective an individual student needs to learn based on where they are in the overall sequence of learning, and differentiating the type of activity or performance product the student is expected to accomplish or create. Both types of differentiation are important, but teachers must learn the difference and apply one or the other or both as needed with each individual child, based on the individual child’s *need*. A critical part of

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see Downey, C., English, F., Steffy, B., Frase, L., & Poston, W. (2003). *Fifty Ways to Close the Achievement Gap*. See also Marzano, R., Gaddy, B. & Dean, C. (2001). *What Works in Classroom Instruction*. May be downloaded from <http://www.mcrel.org/topics/products/110/>

differentiating effectively is by having a battery of skill-specific diagnostic assessments that give teachers key information on whether a student has mastered a targeted concept or skill.

**A.2.5:** Communicate widely the expectations for adherence to the framework and instructional model. Integrate throughout all discussions and meetings concerning curriculum delivery the need to not only verbally espouse high expectations for all students and respect and appreciation for cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and economic diversity, but also to model it faithfully in every classroom every day.

The definition and adoption of a framework for research-based, student-centered strategies and approaches with an instructional model that assures differentiation to meet students' academic needs will not only assist the district in moving forward with improving instruction and student achievement, but also provide a consistent district-wide focus for instructional delivery.

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring is the primary means by which district leaders evaluate the degree to which the district curriculum is delivered with fidelity, and that the instructional model is likewise reflected in classroom activities and instruction. Monitoring is an absolutely critical facet of effective implementation. It is about supporting and facilitating quality and effective curriculum delivery, not just looking for it. No matter who is involved in monitoring (it can be carried out by multiple positions within a building and even by teachers amongst themselves); the principal should still remain the instructional leader on the campus.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.2.5:** Revise board policy to include specific expectations for monitoring instruction. These expectations must:

- Define all purposes of monitoring.
- Specify who is monitoring for what and how those responsibilities are interconnected. (For example, if site coaches share in monitoring responsibilities, how/when are their findings or observation data shared with the principal? What kind of feedback should they share with district-level curriculum staff? How is this to occur and how frequently? Ensure that the building principal remains the key instructional leader in the building and require him/her to oversee all monitoring that occurs by other staff members.)
- Specify what type of data are to be collected for each purpose and with what methods.
- Indicate which data are intended to be collected district-wide for district-level feedback (such as for determining the effectiveness of a professional development initiative), and which data are to be used for teacher evaluation, coaching, and instructional improvement within the building. All monitoring data may be reported to a single grade, rather than split across all grades. Instructional walk-through data is about collecting information regarding the effectiveness and alignment of the delivered curriculum, not an evaluation of teachers, so this should be seen primarily as a curriculum-related function.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.2.6:** Revise the principal and associate superintendent's job descriptions to include more specific expectations for monitoring, in accordance with the policy changes directed by **G.2.5**. Require monitoring to be the primary responsibility of the principal in keeping with his/her role as the instructional leader. In monitoring, district leaders should not only keep the learner objectives and effective strategies in mind, but the instructional model as well, focusing reflective questions on those aspects of the model the administrators deem appropriate or desirable.

**A.2.7:** Revise walk-through observation tools and evaluation procedures to be consistent with the newly adopted framework for strategies and the instructional model.

**A.2.8:** Once the new instructional model has been incorporated into regular classroom practice, consider two other purposes and types of monitoring that supplement the non-supervisory classroom walk-throughs: gathering trend data with a classroom observation tool to see if dominant teacher and student activities, the objectives taught, and the student work displayed all reflect the district's instructional model, differentiation, best practices, and expectations for rigor; and a protocol such as Examining Student work, which involves periodically collecting samples of student work and analyzing them for alignment and rigor. These methods for collecting data are for different purposes and all comprise one facet of monitoring that contributes to valuable feedback for decision making.

**A.2.9:** Revise the job description of principals to include a requirement for regular, informal classroom visits (walk-throughs). Revise job descriptions of central office supervisors to model and support site-level classroom monitoring. Ensure that the goal of monitoring is to mentor, nurture, support, and coach.

**A.2.10:** Provide training, coaching, and support for principals and central office supervisors in the district adopted instructional model, the alignment between instruction and the written curriculum, techniques for assessing the alignment between the taught and written curriculum, reflective monitoring of instruction, and effective methods for and coaching.

**A.2.11:** Conduct annual training in informal classroom visits (walk-throughs) for new and current administrators, supervisors, teacher leaders, department heads, coaches, and interested teachers.

**A.2.12:** Determine with the leadership team the district expectation for the amount of time in the instructional day that principals and co-administrators should be engaged in monitoring the delivery of the curriculum on a daily and weekly basis.

**A.2.13:** Designate expectations and procedures for central office administrators' engagement in monitoring classrooms with building administrators. Central office administrators should schedule their site visits and mentor principals and site co-administrators in the classroom monitoring process.

**A.2.14:** Establish curriculum monitoring as the primary responsibility of building administrators and supervisors in support of their roles as instructional leaders. Administrators should be trained to provide follow-up reflective conversations with teachers and site administrators.

**A.2.15:** Provide initial and periodic training for district administrators with current instructional best practices relative to various content areas and grade levels. Ensure training is aligned with the district professional development plan.

**A.2.16:** Develop and implement an evaluation strategy to determine the effectiveness and impact of administrator classroom visits on student learning and teacher effectiveness. Such an evaluation should use data from multiple sources: formative assessments, summative assessments, monitoring data from principals' and district supervisors' walk-throughs, and formal teacher appraisals.

**A.2.17:** Commit adequate resources to support professional development in curriculum development and monitoring to assist staff in designing and delivering a high quality curriculum for every student.

**A.2.18:** Annually evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum delivery in terms of achievement for every individual student and student subgroups. Clearly identify personnel responsible to implement this step.

### **Professional Development**

The purpose of a quality professional development program is to increase staff effectiveness and student achievement. This is accomplished by developing the skills of teachers, administrators, and support personnel in effective design and delivery of the curriculum. Professional development is a key factor in ensuring the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. A comprehensive professional development program is based on district goals prioritized and implemented over a stated period of time. Special emphasis must be placed on training teachers and principals to employ instructional strategies that meet the needs of every student and to implement the adopted instructional model to support differentiation and student-responsive teaching.

A comprehensive professional development program requires regular evaluation of the professional development approaches and content to determine if student achievement has improved based on the trainings provided to teachers. An effective professional development program is also linked to the teacher appraisal program designed to provide teachers with constructive feedback to improve classroom performance.

An effective professional development program is guided by a comprehensive plan that provides all staff with the knowledge and skills to be productive and move toward the long-range goals of the system. Professional development that is centrally coordinated with other district and school plans is powerful when it is data-driven and focuses on organizational change.

Effective professional development programs offer a variety of delivery models coupled with intensive follow-up and support and are inclusive of all staff. Follow-up activities include meaningful practice of what was presented. High quality programs are ongoing and utilize research-based strategies to guide improvement. Monitoring professional development strategies helps to effectively measure the success of the training in improving student achievement. Successful professional development is measured against student learning growth, not merely on the tallying of attendance or completion of training activities.

The auditors found that design and delivery of professional development is inconsistent, fragmented, and inadequately planned. Professional development lacks systemic monitoring, coordination, and evaluation to support campus and program achievement goals (see [Finding 3.3](#)). The recommendations of the auditors should be implemented within one to three years.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.2.6:** Direct the superintendent to develop policies that establish clear expectations for the purposes and goals of professional development in the district: to support the effective delivery of the district curriculum. In policy, direct the development of a long-range professional development plan that includes the components outlined in [A.2.10](#).

**G.2.7:** Adopt a policy that defines roles and responsibilities to centralize and coordinate professional development efforts in relation to:

- Selecting, planning, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating professional development activities in relation to student achievement.
- Requiring that professional development activities be directly linked to the teacher appraisal system. Require that training be evaluated in terms of student learning and growth of professional educators in the delivery of the curriculum.
- Assessing professional development needs based on data-driven analysis of student performance.

**G.2.8:** Direct the creation of a comprehensive long-range professional development plan. The plan must extend at least three years with annual updates and revisions to ensure connectivity to system priorities. Include the following in the plan:

- Policy that directs professional development activities that are aligned to the district's strategic plan.
- A process to provide for organizational, district, school, and individual professional development in a systematic and systemic manner.
- Inclusive of all employees.
- An expectation that each supervisor is a staff developer of personnel.
- An expectation that assessment of professional development activities is data-driven.
- A focus on research-based approaches and activities that are documented to show increases in productivity.

- A process to provide for the three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.
- A human learning, development, and adult learning approach.
- A variety of professional development approaches.
- A provision to require follow-up, coaching, and on-the-job application to ensure improvement.
- An evaluation process that is on-going, includes multiple sources of information, focuses on all levels of the organization, and is based on actual behavior.
- A process for campus-wide coordination and a process to perform clearinghouse functions.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.2.19:** Assist the board in the development of the recommended policy in **G.2.1** that establishes district professional development standards and expectations aligned to the identified training needs. Ensure that professional development is planned and mandatory for all professional staff, including all administrators.

**A.2.20:** Develop administrative regulations that describe the procedures and guidelines to implement all adopted professional development policies and activities district-wide.

**A.2.21:** Assign the responsibility to develop a comprehensive, long-range professional development plan for review and approval to the appropriate district administrator. A feasible number of priorities should be established within timelines.

**A.2.22:** Approve, monitor, and evaluate all district and school-level professional development activities.

**A.2.23:** Align all staff training with the district curriculum, district and campus improvement plans, student achievement results, as well as performance evaluation data of instructional staff members.

**A.2.24:** Incorporate goals for professional development that work in concert with the curriculum management plan and serve to support the strategic plan. Professional development goals should be updated (minimally) annually to ensure and maintain alignment with any changing priorities or conditions. This plan should include the following:

- A framework for integrating professional development activities with the mission and plans of the district.
- Expectations for professional growth for all employees.
- A process to provide for organizational, school, and individual professional development in a systematic and systemic manner.
- A process to provide for the three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.
- Incorporate in all professional development plans, whether campus-based or district-wide, sufficient provisions for in-depth training, follow-up or on-the-job assistance over time to ensure that professional development is being applied correctly and results in changes in practice.
- Define expectations for administrative monitoring and feedback to staff regarding implementation of new training in the classroom. Provide sufficient, targeted staff development for administrators to carry out this monitoring function, including training not only on the new skills teachers are learning, but also on how to observe classroom implementation of the new strategies and how to provide growth-producing feedback to improve performance.
- Hold teachers, building administrators, and support staff accountable for attending, utilizing, and monitoring the effective implementation of the training through their annual performance evaluations.

- Implement an evaluation process that is ongoing, focuses on all levels of the school district, includes multiple sources of information, and is based on actual behavior documented in the classroom.
- Overall, the focus of professional development should be on the improved delivery of curriculum and its monitoring to assure student learning is maximized.

**A.2.25:** Develop and present an annual report to the board on the status and outcomes of trainings based on student performance results including:

- An overview of the major learning activities offered at both the district and site levels.
- A review of the identified professional development needs, including what student learning needs were identified.
- A review of the major learning outcomes or specifically what the district and school sites were striving to accomplish from the training activities.
- A categorization showing the alignment of learning activities in relation to performance goals.
- A review of the evaluation procedures used to measure the effectiveness of professional development activities in relation to the planned teacher and student outcomes.

**A.2.26:** Identify the source(s) of funding for professional development activities and ensure that funding for professional development is incorporated in the annual performance-based budgeting process.

**A.2.27:** Include personal, individual professional development activities designed as part of employees' professional improvement plans in the professional development plan. Enhance personal improvement plans to include support and encouragement for teachers to pursue National Board Certification.

**A.2.28:** Align the professional development plan with the district strategic plan and campus improvement efforts.

**A.2.29:** Develop supervisory job descriptions to include responsibilities for the implementation and evaluation of the impact of professional development efforts on improving teacher instructional skills and behaviors as measured by improvement in student achievement.

**A.2.30:** Develop administrative regulations outlining the processes and procedures to follow to coordinate the training efforts of district and site coaches and mentors outlined in the district professional development plan to ensure alignment, consistency, and continuity. Ensure supervisory responsibilities are assigned in the job description of solely one district level administrator for planning, coordination, and evaluation.

**A.2.31:** Engage in training-of-trainers opportunities to advance school-wide sustainability and reinforcement of priority instructional strategies on a regular basis. Develop in-house mentors and coaches to support teacher implementation efforts.

**A.2.32:** Include in the professional development plan an induction program for teachers new to the district including:

- Orientation to the district's educational philosophy and the status of the district's strategic plan.
- Orientation to Phoenix Elementary School District #1 (including a tour of district facilities and campuses and the district's local communities).
- Detailed explanation and training on using the district's curriculum guides for each teacher's grade level and/or subject.
- Training on the district's assessment plan/program to include both local and state formative and summative assessments.
- Training on the use of district adopted textbooks and resource materials as tools in the instructional process.

- Presentation and training on specific instructional strategies recommended in district-adopted curriculum guides.
- Discussion regarding the district's instructional philosophy and planning.
- Presentation and discussion regarding the district's culture of student and parent services.
- Training of participation in the schools' Professional Learning Communities (PLC).
- Review of district operational processes and procedures, services provided for students and teachers, educational and intervention programs, and access to district and site coaches and mentors.
- Orientation and training on access to and use of the district's technology (instructional, operational, software, etc.).
- Assignment of a mentor/coach for support throughout the first year of employment.

Implementing the steps and expectations outlined in this recommendation will require several years to implement fully, in part due to the time involved in development a high-quality written curriculum for all content areas. However, work on instructional expectations should begin immediately and reflect a district philosophy based on respect for every child, appreciation for Phoenix families and their diversity, and a belief in student-centered approaches. These values and expectations should be congruent with the new strategic plan and should establish and reflect Phoenix Elementary School District #1's commitment to excellence in student learning.

**Recommendation 3: Develop and implement a comprehensive curriculum management system that coordinates and focuses all curriculum management functions and tasks across and within departments and schools. Deeply align current district curriculum to the new Arizona Standards; redesign and direct curriculum revision to ensure curriculum documents are of the highest quality and deeply aligned in content, context, and cognitive rigor with district and high stakes assessments.**

Sound curriculum management has many components, including:

- A board-adopted curriculum aligned with student needs and state performance requirements, covering all courses and subjects taught.
- A means for conveying the curriculum and performance requirements (usually curriculum and/or pacing guides) to teachers, along with performance expectations for teachers.
- Professional development that equips teachers to implement the curriculum in accordance with the board's performance expectations. This includes support in the classroom to ensure that training and curriculum materials are properly used.
- Monitoring of classroom activities by principals and other supervisors to identify and propagate productive practices that support learning, correct or eliminate practices that do not, and identify professional development needs.
- Appropriate and timely formative and summative assessments of students and evaluation of programs to identify the extent to which board goals are being achieved and areas where teaching and learning need to be modified to improve achievement and provide feedback for decision making and planning.

Every student deserves quality schooling. This is achieved through a teaching and learning process that is systematic and organized for systemic implementation. The curriculum is designed using a step-by-step process and the design is delivered throughout the district. A district with an effective curriculum management plan focuses its time, energy, and appropriate resources to guarantee equitable access for every student in the district. The goal is always increasing students' achievement and thereby their opportunities for success.

The systematic process includes quality curriculum documents based on a written, taught, and tested curriculum. The curriculum document is aligned in content, context, and cognitive type. A document that meets the audit standards of quality are aligned with the written, taught, and tested curriculum in a way that is consistent with external assessments. It informs teachers what skills and tasks to teach and how they should be delivered in the classroom so that students will master the objectives and can be successful on those assessments.

A quality curriculum ensures that learning is intentional, rigorous, focused, and that all students have access to the same learning. It has a format that is consistent across grade levels and includes the key components of objectives that have clarity and specificity, assessments that match district and state performance evaluations, prerequisite skills and knowledge needed for new learning, instructional resources and tests that match the objective, and specific classroom strategies for each objective taught. The process also includes an established curriculum review cycle and evaluation of the curriculum on a consistent basis.

The audit provides 15 components for an effective curriculum management plan (see [Exhibit 2.1.3](#)). The auditors used these components to assess the district's approach to curriculum management. There were no components rated as adequate during the auditors' review.

There is some evidence that curriculum planning has occurred in Phoenix Elementary School District #1; however, there is no comprehensive curriculum management plan currently in place. The associated documentation provided to the auditors included some scope and sequence materials for some courses. However, the scope and sequences offered were inadequate to serve as direction for teachers to follow in delivering rigorous and focused instruction.

The auditors found the scope of the curriculum inadequate (see [Finding 2.2](#)). Absent curriculum guides, teachers are left to develop curriculum individually, which results in inconsistent curriculum being delivered to students. Teacher survey responses, when asked "What do you use to guide instruction," showed that 86.5% design instruction from their own ideas and resources and 83.3% went online to develop their own curriculum.

Curriculum monitoring is inconsistent throughout the district. Teacher survey responses, when asked “How often do the following people visit your classroom to observe instruction,” the response category indicated that principals visited daily or weekly 36% of the time.

Phoenix Elementary School District #1 needs to design and implement a comprehensive system for curriculum management that coordinates curriculum management functions to include the design of curriculum, effective delivery of a rigorous curriculum, process for revision of the curriculum, and consistent evaluation of the curriculum. The focus must be to develop quality curriculum documents for core subject areas that ensure alignment and depth of content, have a format that is used throughout the district, and is consistent. Curriculum documents for all non-core subject areas that use the same format as the core areas will also need to be developed.

Auditors found no one comprehensive board policy requiring planning for curriculum management (see [Findings 1.3](#) and [2.1](#)). District administrators need to develop a comprehensive plan, directed by board policy, to guide the design and delivery of the curriculum, systematic assessment of student achievement, and timely data-driven program evaluation (see [Findings 2.1](#) and [4.1](#)).

The scope of the K-12 written curricula is inadequate in that not all subjects are supported by board-adopted curricula (see [Finding 2.2](#)).

Phoenix Elementary School District #1 curriculum guides do not give adequate information to teachers for effective delivery of the curriculum (see [Finding 2.3](#)). Internal consistency, which measures the congruence among design elements in a written curriculum and degree of cognitive complexity of the district objectives and assessments, was inadequate to direct teaching of the written curriculum and support attainment of district expectations expressed in the *Phoenix Elementary School District #1 Strategic Plan: Our Blueprint for Student Success*.

There are many opportunities for teachers to be involved in professional learning through a variety of different venues and in various content areas. However, there is no consistent district-wide focus or coordination.

Elements of professional development planning were found, but a district-wide professional development plan that includes the criteria for a comprehensive plan (as listed in [Exhibit 3.3.1](#)) does not exist in Phoenix Elementary School District #1 (see [Finding 3.3](#) and [Recommendation 2](#)).

Auditors’ observational data gathered while visiting classrooms and submitted student work examples indicate that instruction and student activities across schools do not meet district expectations expressed in the *Phoenix Elementary School District #1 Continuous Improvement Plan* or the district strategic plan (see [Finding 3.2](#) and [Recommendation 5](#)).

Auditors found that the Phoenix Elementary School District #1 lacks adequate planning for student assessment. In the context of the limited scope of assessment, Phoenix #1 lacks a consistent approach and focus on utilizing student achievement data at all levels of the organization. The district lacks adequate formative and summative assessment tools for teachers to use during instruction, and formal program evaluations that can identify the effectiveness of academic programs in the district (see [Findings 4.1](#), [4.2](#), [4.3](#), [4.4](#), [Recommendations 4](#) and [11](#)).

Based on their findings, the auditors recommend the development and implementation of a comprehensive curriculum management system that is focused on a planned approach to every aspect of curriculum design and delivery—its development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and revision—so that learning for all children is maximized. To put such a system in place and support these functions, the auditors recommend the following actions to the Phoenix #1 Governing Board and Superintendent of Schools. This implementation is best accomplished within a one to five years period and must be an essential focus for the district.

These steps will help district leaders prioritize the work that needs to be done and focus all involved personnel on common goals, thereby rendering the attainment of those goals more likely. The recommended steps are organized into the following sections:

- I. Curriculum Management Planning
- II. Curriculum Design and Development

## **I. Curriculum Management Planning**

The district needs a cohesive and comprehensive plan that directs the management of a quality, deeply aligned curriculum and its effective implementation in every classroom. Such management includes monitoring its delivery to maintain equity and the district's philosophical and instructional priorities, and evaluating its effectiveness, using the deeply aligned formative, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessment tools. This plan should be developed in congruence with the Strategic Plan and should assure that the complex interworking of departments within the district is both efficient and effective in achieving district goals.

This plan must integrate and coordinate professional development across the schools, specify and support identified methods (and purposes) for monitoring curriculum delivery, and reinforce the model for instructional delivery. These processes and procedures must be formalized and institutionalized in policy to ensure smooth transitions in the event of staff turnover and to facilitate orientation of new staff during future years of growth and expansion in the communities served.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.3.1:** Direct the superintendent to draft a curriculum management planning policy for board review, revision, and adoption that provides direction for the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of curriculum. Require regular reporting to the board on curriculum effectiveness, and include the following:

- A requirement for the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum;
- The expectation of PreK-12 articulation of learning goals and objectives;
- The expectation that all courses offered be supported by written curriculum guides;
- Formal board adoption of all curricula prior to implementation; and
- A requirement that planning, particularly timelines, within and among departments and schools be aligned to the curriculum management plan.

**G.3.2:** Direct that the superintendent enforce the requirement of a written, board-adopted curriculum for all subjects taught, starting with core subjects and expanding to non-core subjects.

**G.3.3:** Direct the superintendent to establish systematic procedures requiring central office staff members to monitor curriculum implementation in schools.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.3.1:** Assist the governing board in developing policies that define the roles of the board, district administrators, and teachers regarding curriculum. For example, the board is primarily responsible for adopting curriculum; administrators are responsible for attending to its development, evaluation, and revision, as well as for overseeing and supporting its implementation; teachers are responsible for delivering the adopted curriculum and sometimes assisting in the writing or reviewing of the curriculum, with support from school personnel, outside consultants, or district administrators.

**A.3.2:** Develop a curriculum management plan for directing the design, delivery, monitoring, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. The plan should address the following areas (see [Exhibit 2.1.2](#)):

### **1. A philosophical framework for the design of the curriculum:**

- a. Identify what the underlying beliefs of district leadership are regarding how children learn: What constitutes effective teaching, what is the teacher's role, what is the student's role, and what is a district's role in assuring a student's learning? Is education a process, a goal, or both?
- b. Use this process to specifically identify what the district's and schools' respective roles are in providing each child with an education, and establish a picture of what an effective, engaging classroom should look like.

- c. Use the philosophical framework as the guiding force behind making decisions regarding curriculum and assessment design and instructional delivery.
- 2. Timing, scope, and procedures for a periodic cycle of curriculum and resource review/development:**
- a. Ensure that every content area is addressed and has a written curriculum guide that facilitates effective, rigorous instruction; and that curriculum is kept up-to-date, particularly with changes in state standards or requirements, as well as testing modifications or changes.
  - b. Such a cycle should establish the timeline for reviewing the alignment, quality, and rigor of adopted resources and materials, and direct their revision or replacement where and when they are inadequate.
  - c. ALL resources that are referenced by the curriculum should be screened for rigor, availability to all schools, appropriateness, and alignment to district expectations for instruction and student engagement.
- 3. Stages of curriculum development:** Specify the different stages for developing and revising the curriculum. These might include:
- a. Backloading and released item analysis; review for alignment with external/target assessments in all three dimensions (content, context, cognition).
  - b. Assessing the complexity, rigor, and measurability of objectives.
  - c. Placing objectives in an articulated, PreK-8 sequence that expects mastery of content six to nine months before it is encountered on the state test or other high stakes tests.
  - d. Developing mastery-level projects and activities (such as any existing formative assessment tools) with accompanying rubrics, materials, and resources for rigor, cultural proficiency/inclusivity, technology integration, and student-centered, active learning.
  - e. Creating a bank of high quality assessment items and formative/progress monitoring assessment instruments to support differentiated, individualized instruction. See *50 Ways to Close the Achievement Gap*<sup>3</sup> for more specific suggestions and information.
  - f. The stages defined in the Phoenix #1 plan must particularly address the way student achievement data, teacher input, and monitoring data are used to evaluate the quality of the written curriculum. Revise the curriculum, accordingly.
- 4. Staff roles and responsibilities for curriculum management:** Who is responsible for what task? How do departments with overlapping responsibilities work in concert to effect improvements in the written curriculum and to better support classroom instruction?
- a. This aspect of the plan delineates which tasks are housed where and at what level: which are classroom-based, which are school-based, which are department-based, and which are board-based. (For example, it is the board's responsibility to determine the content of the educational program, in congruence with state law, and to approve and adopt the written curriculum. It is the teacher's role to deliver the curriculum, the principal's to monitor, instructional coach's and principal's roles to support teachers in delivering the curriculum, etc.)
  - b. Curriculum development and implementation should be the sole responsibility of the department of Curriculum and Instruction (staff) (see Recommendation 9).
  - c. Monitoring of classroom activities should be the primary responsibility of the principals, with support from other designated positions (such as instructional coaches and central office supervisors) to identify and promote productive practices that support learning, correct or eliminate practices

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<sup>3</sup> For more information, see Downey, C., English, F., Steffy, B., Frase, L., & Poston, W. (2003). *Fifty Ways to Close the Achievement Gap*.

- that do not, identify weaknesses or gaps in the written curriculum, and determine professional development needs.
- d. Clarify how monitoring and curriculum support responsibilities of any school-based personnel complement one another to prevent duplication of effort or possible conflicts in carrying out these supportive responsibilities.
5. **A format and included components for curriculum guides:** For consistency in every content area, specify the components to be included in the curriculum that are nonnegotiable and the other aspects that are “fluid.” The curriculum should include the criteria presented in [Exhibit 2.3.2](#) in addition to supporting assessments and tools to enable differentiation and implementation of the district’s instructional model in the classroom.
  6. **Direction for how state standards will be included in the curriculum:** Decide whether or not to use a backloaded approach in which the curriculum is derived from high-stakes tested learnings (topological and/or deep alignment) and/or a frontloaded approach, which derives the curriculum from the Arizona Standards (Blueprint), but in a refined, more specific format (but in a refined, more specific format). Of critical importance is the emphasis on condensing and streamlining the standards for feasibility and clarity of focus.
  7. **Require for every content area a focused set of precise student objectives/student expectations and standards:**
    - a. These should be derived from the new Arizona Standards, be reasonable in number so the student has adequate time to master the content and practice it in authentic, rigorous contexts, be very specific so teachers clearly understand what mastery of these objectives look like and what the standard of performance is, and should be measurable (written in measurable terms).
    - b. The curriculum should not only specify the content of the student expectations, but also include multiple contexts and suggestions for activities and approaches that engage students in critical thinking and analytical cognitive types.
  8. **Assessment beliefs and procedures to determine curriculum effectiveness and use of data:**
    - a. What are all the instruments that will be used to measure progress toward meeting goals, including the goal of students mastering curriculum objectives? How will the assessments be scheduled to avoid too much testing in a given testing window, and maximize use of the data that will be derived from administration?
    - b. How will the data be used, who will use it, how will it be collected, analyzed, and disseminated to teachers, administrators, and concerned stakeholders?
    - c. There must be an expectation for formative assessments included in the frameworks that teachers can use whenever needed to evaluate student progress in mastering learning targets (or to determine whether they already know content about to be taught).
  9. **Design of curriculum to support differentiation and other expectations for delivery:**
    - a. Directs the curriculum guides to be designed so that they support teachers’ differentiation of instructional approaches (to match student preferences and learning styles), and to support teachers’ selection of student objectives at the right level of difficulty. This ensures that those students who need prerequisite concepts, knowledge, and skills are moved.
    - b. Whole group, one-size-fits-all approaches, and reliance on test-like contexts cannot meet the majority of students’ academic needs. District curriculum leaders must define what true academic differentiation and rigor look like and how teachers can manage so many different skill levels and varying content knowledge in the classroom without holding certain students back or leaving other students behind. This is critical to meeting the needs of academically at-risk populations and must

be addressed by the design of the curriculum, in addition to all district documents that describe expectations for delivery.

**10. Approaches for using diagnostic, formative, and summative test results to plan instruction, evaluate programs, and design interventions at all levels** (see [Recommendation 11](#)).

**11. A staff development program linked to curriculum design and delivery:** Professional development that trains teachers in the curriculum, its design, and how to deliver the curriculum in accordance with the board's performance expectations is absolutely critical. (This includes support in the classroom to ensure that training and curriculum materials are properly used. See [Recommendation 2](#) for more detailed information.)

**12. Monitoring (and supporting) the delivery of curriculum:**

- a. This presents the procedures, philosophy, and intent for monitoring the delivery of curriculum. Multiple means of monitoring (as well as multiple purposes) are suggested, including the *Three-Minute Walk-through* (Downey, et al.).
- b. The key person to monitor curriculum content, context, and cognitive type; instructional strategies, student engagement and mastery, environments, and appropriate selection of learner objectives for teaching is the principal.
- c. Monitoring is a line officer responsibility that needs to be assigned, and with accountability for results, to principals.

**13. Communication plan:** Establish a plan for communicating among and across departments and levels of the district regarding the process, goals, and products/measurable associated with curriculum design and delivery (including professional development and assessment) to maintain constancy of effort, focus, and continuity.

**14. A process for integrating instructional technology into the curriculum:** Setting the expectation that technology will be incorporated into classroom settings to enhance student learning.

**A.3.3:** Make periodic reports to the governing board regarding the progress in managing curriculum district-wide, using data from formative and summative assessments, as well as data from monitoring practices. The importance of quality, deeply-aligned written curriculum that raises expectations for student performance and supports those expectations with critical resources for teachers cannot be overstated; curriculum is a key component in ensuring better teaching and higher achievement. Planning for its development, implementation, and revision is essential to impacting student learning in every classroom.

## **II. Curriculum Design and Development**

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.3.4:** Require that efforts to develop the written curriculum begin immediately; require that decisions regarding which content areas receive priority be data-based (for example, if math is an area of concern for so many individuals and there is little consistency in its delivery, focusing on that content area first might be prudent).

**G.3.5:** Review and adopt the written curriculum that is currently in use, and future curriculum prior to its implementation, based on a thorough consideration of documentation and staff advice.

**G.3.6:** Direct the superintendent (or designee) to review the concepts of deep curriculum alignment and require that those concepts form the basis for curriculum design efforts across the district.

**G.3.7:** Develop policies that define the roles and responsibilities of the governing board, district administrators, and teachers regarding curriculum. Incorporate into these policies the responsibilities outlined under the administrative functions section of this recommendation.

**G.3.8:** Direct the superintendent to assist the board in developing a clear, concise, comprehensive policy framework that stipulates that the written curriculum documents be revised to include at least the minimal basic components described in [Exhibit 2.3.1](#) and:

- A clear framework for the development of curriculum;
- A requirement for deep alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum from high-stakes tests;
- An expectation that all courses (including electives) offered within the district be supported by written curriculum documents;
- A process for the integration of technology with instructional strategies and resources. The goal is to enhance student learning; and
- A common format for all curriculum documents across subject areas and grade levels, core and non-core.

**G.3.9:** Adopt board policy that requires the following minimum components needed in every guide (see [Finding 2.3](#)):

- Aligned, specific learner objectives (based on the AZCCRS);
- A scope and sequence defining prerequisites (what specific knowledge and skills students must have prior to entering a particular course or level);
- Assessment instruments and sample test items;
- Instructional resources; and
- Suggested strategies and approaches for teaching the objectives.

These are only minimum components; internal alignment, evidence of rigor, clear descriptions of mastery, and clear connections to an aligned formative assessment system are all additional elements to be considered for quality guides.

**G.3.10:** Direct the superintendent to align professional development to support teachers' quality delivery of the curriculum.

**G.3.11:** Direct the superintendent to establish budget development procedures to ensure that district learning and planning priorities are reflected in budgeting and spending and are communicated to staff and the public-at-large.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.3.4:** Require that efforts to revise and refine the written curriculum begin immediately.

**A.3.5:** Assist the governing board in developing policy that requires the curriculum to reflect the principles and concepts of deep curriculum alignment (see [Finding 2.3](#)).

**A.3.6:** Define what the curriculum still needs to be considered a "model" curriculum. Examine the weaknesses in the format and components identified in [Finding 2.3](#). The following components are minimum requirements:

1. **Objectives:** The objectives used in the curriculum were from the Arizona College and Career Readiness Standards. They were insufficiently specific to give teachers adequate information regarding what mastery looks like. Objectives should be "refinements" of the state standards: a specific restatement of the intended skill or knowledge to be learned, the contexts in which it is to be learned and practiced, and the standard of performance by which a teacher knows mastery of that skill or knowledge has been achieved. These should all align closely with the state/national standards, but these specific learner objectives give the teacher more precise information of what mastery looks like and clearly define which objectives are assigned to which grade or instructional level (because the first grade objective is clearly different from the second, and so on).

The number of objectives included in the guide must also be manageable. It is better to focus on fewer objectives and address them more deeply than to include an entire battery of objectives that teachers “might” touch on. Review all objectives for evidence of rigor (see Hess’ Cognitive Rigor Matrix and Curriculum Example in [Appendix C](#)), and integrate into the objectives across all content areas expectations for culturally responsive content.

Giving teachers a clear continuum of student learning from preschool through eighth grade allows them to move students ahead at a more appropriate pace, if the students are ready, or to accelerate them if they are behind. This is easier when the teacher knows exactly where a student is on the continuum of learning, knows what content is next in the sequence, and can easily determine what students have mastered when they come into their classroom. This is particularly important in districts with high mobility.

2. **Assessment:** Specific examples of how each objective will be assessed, with what tools, and when must be included in the written curriculum documents. District formative assessments must be cross-referenced throughout, specifying when, how, and with which instrument each objective will be evaluated. Relying on released test items or commercially produced assessments or unit/chapter tests is insufficient; the sample items to be included should be items based on deconstructed, released test items that have been altered and “deepened” to provide students with a challenge level ensuring their success on a multitude of test items related to the same content (English and Steffy, 2001). Additional diagnostic assessments are needed to supplement the *ATI Galileo*<sup>®</sup> assessments, which serve as a minimal benchmark but lack cognitive rigor (see [Finding 2.3](#)). Teachers must have tools with which to continuously evaluate student progress and move them at the appropriate, individualized pace in all content areas. Consider more authentic approaches that integrate into daily instruction and are more project-based in nature, particularly those assessment tools that require writing.
3. **Prerequisites/Scope and Sequence:** Place the essential standards and learning targets (PreK-12) within a scope and sequence document to allow teachers to easily discern what content and skills students come in with and what content and skills they are responsible for seeing students leave with. Such a document helps distribute accountability and eliminates gaps and overlaps in student learning—an important factor in an educational environment that must make the most of the time allowed with students.

This will facilitate greater articulation of the curriculum from one level to the next and assure greater coordination across a single level or course, as the mapping out of objectives is already completed, and any “misinterpretation” of the nonspecific state standards/student expectations is avoided.

4. **Resources and Materials:** Every book, recommended professional resource, audiovisual aid, technological enhancement or program, and other resource should be listed (after ensuring teachers have all that are necessary) in the written curriculum and referenced by objective/strategy, after it has been screened for rigor, quality, developmental appropriateness, and alignment with the content, contexts, and cognitive types of the objectives. All suggested materials and resources should have been analyzed for deep alignment to the curriculum and the tests in use; modifications are also included in the guide to improve alignment.

Materials and resources are suggested—as with strategies and approaches, not required—to allow teachers and buildings flexibility in selecting those materials most effective and appropriate for their students. However, in cases with extremely high mobility, adherence to the sequence of units or objectives in the curriculum guide by teachers across schools becomes more important. This consistency in WHAT is taught is critical to ensure better transitions for students moving from school to school (while allowing for flexibility in how the content is taught).

5. **Suggested Strategies and Approaches:** This item is a critical part of ensuring high expectations for students and achieving deep alignment to provide teachers, particularly inexperienced teachers, with support in deciding ways to teach the assigned objectives.

Flexibility is always allowed in how teachers approach a given objective, but this component provides teachers with invaluable, research-proven suggestions if they want or need them. The suggested strategies should be developed to ensure they incorporate those contexts and cognitive types known to be part of the tests in use, and these strategies and suggested student activities and projects allow students to become familiar with the context and cognitive type before encountering them on the high stakes tests. This is the main tenet of the “doctrine of no surprises.”

However, such strategies should not ONLY align with test contexts. A wide variety of authentic, student-centered contexts is recommended to ensure a more broad-based, real-life application of the concepts, skills, and knowledge so that students can connect personally with the learning, be more actively and cognitively engaged, and see the overall value of their learning.

Currently, the strategies observed in classrooms are of varying quality and rigor, and the rigor of the sample student work was below that required on the state assessments. Classroom-based activities and strategies should always meet and exceed the rigor found on assessments—students should be challenged in the classroom, not by a high stakes assessment.

Beyond these components, the format for the guides should be determined. These do not necessarily need to be identical for all content areas, but within content areas it is recommended that a common format is selected and adhered to for consistency across the district. The degree of variation in curriculum guides is up to district leaders. Use the data from [Finding 2.3](#) in making decisions concerning curriculum design and development.

**A.3.7:** Direct the staff to revise/prepare written curricula in alignment with the new Arizona Standards in content, cognition, and context for all taught subjects and courses, starting with core subjects/courses and expanding to non-core subjects/courses. Phoenix Elementary School District #1 has evidenced the beginnings of an effective approach to designing a system-wide curriculum. Some of the existing district-developed curriculum documents have a common format across subjects and grade levels, and key structures have the potential for refinement to attain deeper alignment.

Content, Cognition, Context: *Content* is typically derived from state standards with local augmentation; *cognition* refers to the type of cognitive processes students engage in when learning content; and *context* refers to the way learning is experienced, e.g., write, model x based on y, represent, etc.

Example: Students will order and compare (*cognition*) whole numbers to 1,000 by using the symbols <, >, = (*content*) in written form given sets of numbers in mixed sequence from 1 to 1,000 (*context*).

**A.3.8:** Take steps to assure that all courses have a corresponding curriculum. Ascertain that every board-approved course in the district is included in the official course list. In the official course list, indicate which courses are offered at each building during the current school year (see [Finding 2.2](#)).

**A.3.9:** Engage in a deep alignment analysis (considering the dimensions of content, cognition, and context) to ensure the objectives, resources, and strategies included in curriculum guides are deeply aligned to the tests in use. Research the methods and ideas presented in the book *Deep Curriculum Alignment* by English and Steffy (2001), or consider contracting for a deep curriculum alignment training (contact CMSi for more information) to gain the skills necessary to analyze and deconstruct released test items, for information on how to successfully prepare for current and future tests in use, and to more successfully anticipate the direction in which the test is moving. This will assist the district in predicting where the state assessments and other external assessments are going and increase student success on current and future forms of the tests in use by ensuring that the content, context, and cognitive types encountered on any tests are an integral part of daily instruction without compromising rigor, active student engagement, and hands-on problem solving.

**A.3.10:** Develop or refine formative assessments to more deeply align with the *AzMERIT* and new Arizona Standards, and to more closely reflect the levels of cognition and type of student performance desired by district leaders. Link them to the written curriculum and identify those for which the data will be entered electronically and monitored at the system and building levels. Some formative assessments should be open for teacher selection, but ALL should be rigorous and incorporate a wide variety of contexts—not just multiple choice.

These assessments will provide teachers with diagnostic data on what skills, concepts, and knowledge students have mastered or are still lacking, so that instructional decisions may be made that target those deficiencies and that teaching is never redundant. Include diagnostic assessments that target specific skills to round out the battery of assessments teachers can use to constantly monitor student progress toward mastery of a discrete concept, skill, or objective. All assessments used in the district, whether classroom-based or district-level, should integrate a variety of student modes of response and performance-based items, as well as incorporate multiple types of cognition.

The assessments should be concise and yield the needed information in a very brief span of time—a few days, at the most. Ideally, the assessments could be quickly scored at each campus, so teachers receive the data immediately and can adjust instruction accordingly. In addition, continue to return benchmark assessment data to teachers in a timely manner. These formative assessments allow teachers to monitor every individual student’s progress toward mastering the intended curriculum, and each student’s performance on the state tests will no longer be a surprise or guessing game.

**A.3.11:** Reflect in the design of the curriculum the expectation that instruction will be differentiated to accommodate individual student needs (academic) and learning styles. This requires suggestions for remediation as well as enrichment within the guides themselves.

**A.3.12:** In written curriculum guides, also include the following:

- Integrate instructional technology.
- Include strategies for meeting the needs of English language learners, special education students, and gifted students.

During the curriculum development process:

- Obtain feedback from the curriculum review team.
- Use external consultants as “critical friends” to critique the process and products during the design stage.
- Direct personnel to date curriculum document and show the department/external agency and person responsible for the creation or modification of the document.

**A.3.13:** Establish a process to ensure that all texts, instructional materials, and ancillary resources for all courses that are suggested through the curriculum guides and provided to teachers by district personnel, including interventions and adopted programs, are screened for quality, rigor, and alignment (in all three dimensions) to the curriculum and with district expectations, prior to presenting to the board for adoption. Include the adoption and/or revision date as a recordkeeping measure to note the history of development.

**A.3.14:** Wherever possible, integrate strategies and approaches that are most effective with English language learners. When these are integrated within all core and non-core courses, it is more likely to become an institutionalized expectation and practice.

Require principals to monitor whether these approaches are implemented in the classroom. Continue to train teachers in these approaches and monitor for their impact on curriculum delivery.

**A.3.15:** Prepare for curriculum implementation. At least six months to one year prior to rolling out any new or comprehensively revised curriculum do the following:

- Field-test the curriculum. Pilot the resource materials, assessments, and any other supporting materials.
- Collect preliminary data concerning the pilot curriculum’s effectiveness in terms of student achievement.
- Revise field-tested curriculum guides based on feedback.
- Submit the revised curriculum guides for adoption by the board.

**A.3.16:** Prepare trainings for teachers in using and effectively implementing the curriculum. Issue a directive that planning within and across departments and schools will be in concert with the curriculum management

plan, especially in the area of providing timely professional development necessary for effective curriculum delivery (see [Recommendation 9](#)).

**A.3.17:** Develop and implement evaluation procedures for curriculum guides. Base guide evaluation on measurable and documented levels of student learning. Align the guide evaluation process with the district process for program evaluation (see [Recommendation 10](#)).

**A.3.18:** Develop administrative regulations to govern the development, deployment, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum planning process.

**A.3.19:** Develop processes for posting any newly adopted curriculum guide(s) on the district website for immediate access by instructional staff. Include functions that permit and encourage teaching staff to post their assessments and suggestions regarding lessons they have taught.

**A.3.20:** Make periodic reports to the board regarding the progress in managing curriculum district-wide, using data from formative and summative assessments, as well as from monitoring practices. The importance of quality, deeply-aligned written curriculum for the district cannot be overstated—curriculum is a key element in ensuring better teaching and higher achievement.

In summary, following the steps outlined above will move the district's written, taught, and tested curriculum in closer alignment and increase the overall expectations for student cognitive engagement, thereby reducing the likelihood that student performance on tests is predicted by demographic factors rather than by classroom instruction. A key element in curriculum quality is maintaining unwavering focus on how design supports and facilitates delivery; written curriculum must not only integrate content and contexts and rigor that are more challenging and deeper than the tests, it must provide teachers with tools they need to teach most effectively in a manageable format. The current Phoenix Elementary School District #1 curriculum requires refinement in deeply aligning to the taught and tested curriculum and to the new Arizona Standards.

**Recommendation 4: Develop and implement a comprehensive written formal student assessment plan to encompass proper scope and quality alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum to guide instructional planning across the district.**

Leaders of school systems plan for student assessments. The data generated by these activities help to determine the level of student achievement. Effective school systems utilize a comprehensive assessment plan that encompasses formative and summative assessment results to effectively plan for the design and delivery of the district's curriculum and to achieve desired outcomes of programs and interventions.

System-wide student assessment provides district and school staff information that will enable them to make instructional decisions that support improved student achievement. These instructional decisions include lesson planning and delivery in each classroom, the design and delivery of the curriculum, and how effective programs and interventions are implemented in the district. A comprehensive plan for student assessment builds capacity throughout the district for using assessment data.

The auditors found that several formative and summative assessments have been used to determine student progress and to measure other aspects of district performance (see [Finding 4.2](#) and [Finding 5.2](#)). Auditors did not find a comprehensive student assessment program to adequately provide data for curriculum and instructional changes to improve student achievement. Auditors found the scope of assessment to be inadequate for core and non-core courses and, furthermore, the designs of assessments were not aligned to support the delivery of the curriculum (see [Findings 2.3](#) and [4.2](#)).

The leadership of Phoenix Elementary School District #1 needs to make the design and implementation of a comprehensive student assessment plan a priority. An assessment plan is a means to guide instructional planning, ensure teachers are informed about student progress, determine staff and program effectiveness, and make vital decisions about district instructional practices and key educational programs.

In order to strengthen student assessment and program evaluation in Phoenix Elementary School District #1, the following steps are recommended to the governing board and superintendent. The superintendent should develop a timeline to ensure completion of these recommendations within one to three years.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.4.1:** Direct the superintendent to draft a policy that sets forth the expectation of formative and summative assessment of the curriculum by course and grade. The policy should provide specific direction to staff regarding the purpose, scope, and approaches for assessing curriculum at all grade levels and subject areas.

**G.4.2:** Direct the superintendent to ensure that routine benchmark tests and other formative assessment measures are aligned with the State Academic Standards, district curriculum, implemented across the system, and used to inform instructional decisions and monitor student progress at the student, class, grade, school, program, and district levels.

**G.4.3:** Expand board policy to direct the superintendent to develop an assessment plan to ensure that all components of an effective assessment plan are embedded and that the plan also includes program evaluation:

- Explicit procedures for carrying out formative and summative assessments;
- Frequent diagnostic (formative) instructional student assessments aligned to district curriculum;
- Student assessment and program evaluation disaggregated for effective use;
- Use diverse assessment strategies in all district programs, across all grade levels;
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of district and school-based staff;
- Specify the connection(s) among district, state, and national achievement;
- Specify the overall assessment and analysis procedures to determine curriculum effectiveness;
- Ensure student assessment examples and tools are included in curriculum guides;

- Specify how equity issues will be identified and addressed;
- Identify the components that are included in program evaluation;
- Ensure appropriate trainings for instructional use of assessment results;
- Establish procedures for monitoring formative and summative assessment and program evaluation from design to implementation to results;
- Establish process for communicating and training staff; and
- Specify the creation of an assessment data system that supports cost-benefit analysis of programs.

**G.4.4:** Direct the superintendent to draft a revision of board policy that requires qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of assessments and survey sources to be used in all levels of plan development and implementation.

**G.4.5:** Commit adequate resources to support the development and maintenance of a comprehensive, system-wide student assessment plan.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.4.1:** Assist the board in developing the policies described in recommended actions above.

**A.4.2:** Upon board approval of the above policies, prepare and implement a student assessment plan containing the following elements. Supporting administrative regulations should include the audit assessment plan characteristics.

- Include a formative and summative assessment system to carry out board policy.
- Specify explicit procedures to carry out regular formative and summative assessment at all levels of the system.
- Provide for frequent diagnostic instructional assessments aligned to the district curriculum, which teachers will use to make ongoing decisions including assigning student objectives at the appropriate level of difficulty.
- Disaggregate student assessment results for effective use.
- Provide a list of assessment tools, purpose, subjects, and type of students tested, timelines, and related information.
- Identify and provide direction on the use of diverse assessment strategies for multi-purposes at all levels of the system.
- Specify roles and responsibilities of district and campus level staff for assessing all functions and operations of the system.
- Specify overall assessment procedures and analysis procedures to determine curriculum effectiveness.
- Specifies how equity issues will be identified and addressed.
- Require aligned assessment examples and tools to be placed in curriculum, instruction, and assessment guides.
- Provide appropriate training for various audiences on assessment.
- Delineate the responsibilities and procedures for monitoring formative and summative assessment design, implementation, and results.
- Establish a process for communicating procedures, results, and trends of student achievement data.
- Specify the creation of an assessment data system that supports cost-benefit analysis of educational programs.

**A.4.3:** Directs the leadership team to examine benchmark tests and formative curriculum embedded assessments to verify their regular use and to ensure that they incorporate the district expectations for what students are to know and be able to do within the content area and grade level being assessed.

**A.4.4:** Direct instructional support staff to provide training and support to principals so that they can assist teachers in the use of assessment data to measure student progress and to make classroom instructional decisions that enable them to differentiate instruction while still moving forward in expected curriculum implementation.

**A.4.5:** Direct the collaboration of instructional support staff, administrators, and assessment and evaluation personnel to ensure that data from benchmark assessments, *AzMERIT*, and other measures are available to all teachers and building administrators to support instructional planning decisions and other efforts to improve student achievement.

**A.4.6:** Assign administrative staff, instructional support staff, and assessment departments to work cooperatively in determining the types and formats of data and data reports needed for decision making and planning and for professional development on accessing and interpreting data.

**A.4.7:** Develop a district master testing calendar to include all formal formative and summative assessments to be administered to students.

**A.4.8:** Direct the development or acquisition of testing software that will enable the district to provide local benchmark results to teachers and site principals within 24 hours of testing. Results should be disaggregated for easier use and provide item analysis for teacher use.

**A.4.9:** Provide training and support to principals so that they can in turn assist teachers and other staff in the use of assessment data to measure student progress and make instructional decisions to ensure the academic success of each student, including differentiating instruction when necessary and appropriate.

**A.4.10:** Direct the collaboration of central office administrators, instructional support staff, assessment and accountability, and instructional technology staff to ensure that assessment data from district, state, and national assessments is available to all teachers and administrators for instructional planning decisions in a format that aids their decision-making regarding improving student learning.

**A.4.11:** Develop a process for consistent monitoring of data used by administrators and teachers and attach to administrative evaluation criteria. Require the inclusion of test data analysis and data-based recommendations in all school department and district level reports and budget requests.

**A.4.12:** Perform ongoing analyses of written curriculum documents and district implemented assessments to control for bias (see [Recommendations 3](#) and [4](#)).

**A.4.13:** Revise existing job descriptions for administrators and instructional staff to include more specificity and clarity of responsibilities for assessment design, implementation, and evaluation, including data analysis and use in decision making at all levels.

**A.4.14:** Prepare and present reports to the board on progress toward completing the tasks on the timeline and annual reports on the overall status of the comprehensive student assessment plan.

**A.4.15:** Provide professional development training for all teachers on the process of deconstructing test items to better understand the content assessed in high stake tests. Teachers can use identified content (and context) in developing mini-assessments for use in their shared PLC collaboration that monitors weekly student growth.

**A.4.16:** Provide professional development training for all campus administrators in the design and use of assessment tools and data, the analysis of data, and the implementation of instructional change to impact student learning.

These recommendations provide the district with a means of generating the data necessary to assess student progress, analyze testing results, disseminate those results to the appropriate staff members, and ensure that the results are used to make sound decisions related to curriculum, instruction, and supporting programs.

**Recommendation 5: Establish a system for monitoring and supporting equity across the district. Ensure that areas of greatest need receive commensurate support with additional financial and human resources. Establish clear direction for ELL and Accelerated Learning Procedures and the MTSS that outlines program expectations and guidelines to ensure equity of access and effectiveness of services. Commit to effectively communicate with parents and proactively build relationships in the community.**

Realizing equity in effective schools districts and assuring equal access to programs and services requires a strong philosophical foundation rooted in the belief that schools exist to serve students, that all students are capable of academic success, that no child's potential can be measured, and expectations should be relentlessly high for all children, regardless of their ethnic, linguistic, cultural, or economic background. Such a philosophy must be expressed in belief statements, summarized in the district vision, and targeted by the district mission. For equity and equal access to prevail, the message from the top must be that the alternative to equity and equal access is not an option.

Equity is about ensuring that students have equal access to not only quality programs and services but also to academic success. Ensuring academic success means providing instruction and resources to students based on their individual needs not on what works for the majority of students or on a formula or standardized procedure. Equity in the world of public education shifts the district focus from what teachers and administrators want to do for students to what the students need the teachers and administrators to do. This student-centered approach requires involvement from parents and is proactive in seeking it: by venturing into the community, into students' homes, and building relationships with students and their parents and families. District personnel who attain this level of involvement see improved student attendance, improved school behaviors, and higher student achievement.

At the system level, areas of inequity must be monitored and addressed through system-wide efforts such as new policy directives, professional development initiatives, or even staffing changes. Identifying areas of inequity in a district is achieved through data analysis, as well as anecdotal evidence collected from district stakeholders. Areas of inequity must be identified, monitored, and addressed at individual schools through data analysis, classroom monitoring (walk-throughs), teacher evaluations, and building-level planning.

Programs that provide services to large subgroups of the student population must be clearly and specifically defined to assure their effective implementation and monitoring. These programs are essential at providing students with the supports they need for success. This system-level direction then translates into support for the teachers in delivering the services for the ultimate benefit of the child.

In the classroom, teachers monitor equity and assure equal access in similar ways but with a much smaller population. They look at test data by student subgroups, monitor their own instructional strategies and behaviors, ultimately evaluating whether students are making appropriate gains in achievement despite any demographic factors that might predict failure. The focus is ensuring that every child has the support and services he or she requires to be successful, in terms of resources, materials, instructional time, or targeted interventions.

Students from diverse backgrounds have varying needs and come to school with different background knowledge, experiences, and skills. These differences present challenges to educators who are inexperienced or unfamiliar with the differences, particularly differences in cultural understandings, priorities, and perspectives. Educators must learn to recognize and appreciate differences and teach students accordingly, in a student and culturally-responsive way, for students to be actively and personally engaged in instruction. The driving philosophy behind the concept of equity is that each student can attain academic success if provided with this support. There are no exceptions; expectations must remain high for every child and failure is never allowed to be an option. A child who fails to succeed academically is a failure on the part of the system.

The Phoenix Elementary School District #1 is a small, urban district with a diverse student population. Its students are culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse. Certain subgroups of students are not attaining academic success (see [Finding 4.1](#)). Some student subgroups are more likely to be suspended or retained (see [Finding 3.1](#)), while different subgroups are over- or under-represented in key district programs, such as the Accelerated Learner Program or in special education (see [Finding 3.1](#)).

Auditors examined Phoenix Elementary School District #1 documents that describe the programming for English Language Learners. The district's program is based on state requirements and includes some suggestions for instructional delivery, but goals and expectations for the program are unclear and training inadequate. Guidelines for implementation are not specified. Delivery and monitoring the program has been inconsistent. Auditors found district-wide disagreement over the clarity of the program and its effectiveness.

Direction for the ALPS is also inadequate. The program currently identifies students at a rate less than half the national average. Auditors found no consistent guidelines for its implementation, nor any direction for monitoring (see [Finding 3.1](#)).

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is the main process to provide interventions for students who are underperforming but the system is based on a flawed assessment instrument not aligned to the standards (see [Finding 4.2](#)) and relies heavily on computer-based interventions with limited scope for meeting student needs. Teachers and principals had low ratings for the quality of interventions (see [Finding 3.1](#)).

While parents expressed concerns over safety and food issues, they were most concerned about the lack of communication from teachers and schools. Many stakeholders expressed their concern over the district's lack of success in engaging parents and about the cultural disconnect they perceive across the system. Others commented on the inequitable distribution of resources that are not allocated according to need (see [Finding 3.1](#)).

To address the issues and concerns related to equity, improve parental involvement and increase access to programs and services and to increase the effectiveness of support programs in the system, the auditors recommend that the district take the following actions. These actions are grouped in two main categories: those actions that address general equity concerns; and those that address the ALPS and ELL programs, specifically, as well as the Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS). These recommendations should be implemented within one to three years.

### **District-level Equity**

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.5.1:** Direct the superintendent to revise board policy to address the issue of equity and prioritize equity district-wide. Policy needs to accomplish the following:

- Clearly establish the philosophy that serves as the foundation for assuring equity and equal access in all aspects of district decision making, processes, and communications.
- Define equity specifically in terms that clearly contrast it with equality. Specify when actions are to be equal (access to resources, materials, courses) and when they are to be equitable (fair, just, and different in order to level the playing field).
- Direct the methods to be used in collecting data on equity across the district; specify the instruments, measures, and procedures to be used to identify equity problems and to determine probable causes.
- Require the disaggregation of ALL centrally-collected assessment data by student subgroups and monitor their performance. Direct district leaders to pay close attention to achievement gaps that fail to narrow over a reasonable amount of time, such as two years.
- When problems with equity are evident, require multiple measures to evaluate reasons for achievement gaps; identify the key factors that contribute to maintaining the gap. Determine the suitability of current effort to ameliorate the gaps based on new data.
- When they are within the scope of the district's control, require that the factors contributing to inequities be targeted and eradicated using whatever means necessary to make changes that will result in ameliorating existing inequities (e.g., ALPS enrollment or special education identification rates.).

- Establish a district priority for high quality, student-centered instruction that is culturally responsive and supportive of English language development at all times, in every classroom. Refer to the framework for strategies that specifically describe such instruction in the classroom; require teachers to adhere to the model for instruction (see Recommendation 2).
- Institutionalize the importance of equity in all curriculum management functions throughout the district (all planning, monitoring, curricular revisions, curriculum delivery, etc).
- Direct professional development to be deployed on a regular basis to address equity and equal access issues. Evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development initiatives through ongoing data collection and analysis. Consider every subgroup of equal importance.
- Require application-only programs in schools to monitor the SES and ethnicity of their student population and new applicants to maintain proportionality in their enrollment.
- Establish high expectations for every student, regardless of race, income level, language proficiency, gender, etc. Specifically describe how those expectations are to be actualized in classrooms.

**G.5.2:** Request periodic updates from the superintendent regarding equity across the district using measures congruent with methods for equity data collection defined in policy (as directed in G.5.1). The data collected and reviewed for the reports are intended to evaluate the district’s success in maintaining an equitable educational program.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.5.1:** Assist the board in revising board policies to prioritize equity across the district and level the playing field for all students (i.e., giving every student the same advantages and opportunities in accordance with his/her needs).

**A.5.2:** Monitor achievement by student subgroup at all levels, using progress-monitoring tools that align to the standards and that provide meaningful data.

**A.5.3:** Work through the desegregation office and the curriculum department to ensure that students have equal access to all programs throughout the district. Implement intake procedures at schools with special programs that assure proportional representation of all district students in those programs. The students in any program in the district should look like all students in the district.

**A.5.4:** Require an instructional model and framework for strategies (both curricular and activities) that are centered on individual student needs. The model should reflect the latest research concerning effective approaches and activities for culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students. Such approaches are typically characterized by individualized instruction at the appropriate level for each child, in congruence with the teacher appraisal instrument and district belief statements.

**A.5.5:** Train teachers and administrators over a two-year period on the district model of effective instruction (see Recommendation 2).

**A.5.6:** Direct principals to monitor instruction for evidence of the instructional model and the framework for effective strategies, and require them to monitor test scores for student gains in achievement. Gains means monitoring a single cohort of students over time—from year to year—to ensure their performance is improving. Academic improvement should not be consistent for every child—students who are below grade level must have accelerated instruction and learning opportunities so they make faster gains than other students, to ensure that they do not fall farther behind. (See suggestions under MTSS for guidance in selecting and implementing interventions more effectively.)

**A.5.7:** Train principals aggressively in effectively monitoring the delivery of curriculum content as well as providing English language development support in every classroom. Mentor principals how to monitor and coach teachers more effectively to improve teachers’ instruction and their students’ achievement.

**A.5.8:** Supervise principals' monitoring of classrooms and implementation of the teacher appraisal process, particularly with teachers who are struggling with instructional differentiation and the use of diagnostic assessment data to drive their teaching and planning.

**A.5.9:** Coordinate all human resource, curriculum delivery, and building administrator functions to prioritize effective delivery of curriculum and instructional quality in PESD #1. Ensure that those buildings with the greatest needs (such as the highest percentage of at-risk students) have the most experienced and effective teachers and principals. Model and maintain an emphasis on meeting student needs and demonstrating high expectations.

**A.5.10:** Integrate principal supervisory functions with teacher evaluation and monitoring. In addition, teachers with unsatisfactory evaluations should remain in their current building (not be allowed to transfer) until documented problems are resolved. Provide principals with support in coaching and evaluating teachers and, when necessary, removing ineffective personnel.

**A.5.11:** Focus professional development on identified areas of individual teacher and principal needs. Require staff development for issues that are identified in teacher evaluations and that impede student success.

**A.5.12:** Beyond offering or requiring staff development for teachers and administrators, require the implementation and monitoring of teachers' new learnings in the classroom. Collect classroom observational trend data to determine whether professional development is having the desired impact on teaching and learning (see [Recommendation 2](#)). Observational data are collected and analyzed in the following areas:

- Dominant student activities observed;
- Dominant student learning arrangements;
- Dominant teacher activities observed;
- Evidence of student work that gives testimony to adherence to the adopted instructional model;
- Evidence of powerful instructional strategies (SIOP);
- Evidence of cultural and linguistic responsiveness; and
- Evidence of cognitive rigor, in both the materials/resources being used as well as in the students' activities.

### **Student Support: MTSS**

The current system for MTSS is functional in district schools across the system with existing committees and processes in place. The system has strengths and can be strengthened if observed weaknesses are addressed. Weaknesses in the system include:

- Insufficient direction concerning the implementation of MTSS, expectations concerning the nature/scope of assessments to be used to determine student weaknesses, and steps in the process of identifying deeper issues for those students whose learning challenges exceed the capabilities of regular interventions alone.
- Unknown quality/effectiveness of intervention personnel.
- Effectiveness of teachers in delivering differentiated, effective Tier I instruction.
- Relying on the *ATI Galileo* for identifying students' gaps/weaknesses.
- Relying on Imagine Learning as a broad-based intervention for the majority of Tier II students.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.5.3:** Develop board policies that require a plan directing the design and implementation of the PBIS and MTSS systems across all district schools.

**G.5.4:** Require annual reports concerning the effectiveness of PBIS; require the review of disciplinary data as well as survey data from students, teachers, and parents.

**G.5.5:** Require annual reports concerning the effectiveness of the MTSS program. Require results from at least three different assessment instruments to show growth, gains, or decline.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.5.13:** Develop a plan to direct the design and delivery of the PBIS/MTSS programs district-wide. In this plan, include the following components:

- Clear philosophy for student behavior management and for academic support aligned with the district's philosophy of education.
- Goals for both aspects of the program: clear, measurable, with assigned person(s) responsible for each, at every level of implementation.
- Direction concerning the tools used to measure effectiveness of both PBIS and MTSS.
  - With MTSS, use multiple measures to determine weaknesses in student learning. Do not rely solely on an electronic, unaligned assessment such as the *ATI Galileo*.
  - An assessment to determine reading levels and comprehension must be used at primary and reliance of fluency should be only a small percentage of the data used to determine students' weaknesses.
  - In primary, the use of a tool that requires miscue analyses and the use of teacher observation is a must. Consider Marie Clay's inventories for pre- and early-literacy skills, and the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System and Running Records. Consider the DRA II if it is available.
  - These tools can be used up through sixth grade with some students and they provide needed data on students' levels of comprehension, something fluency does not provide.
- For PBIS, set clear expectations and boundaries for behaviors required in schools.
  - Include in these expectations the proactive approach of soliciting parent involvement and engagement through home visits at the beginning of each year and with any students not experiencing success in managing behaviors.
  - The focus of home visits is to establish positive relationships with parents prior to any negative behaviors so families see the school as a resource and support for their child and their family.
  - Home visits after negative behavior are intended to involve parents in strategizing ways to minimize negative or destructive behaviors and partner with the school in assuring their child's academic and social success.
- For MTSS, develop a list of multiple, effective interventions for students in mathematics and reading that are focused on specific skills and provide those interventions for all schools.
  - Include tools already available at schools, such as the Leveled Literacy Interventions.
  - Ensure that at least two thirds of interventions are not computer-based to provide students with real-time feedback and teachers with targets of the exact skills, concepts, and knowledge these students need.
  - Interventions are more effective when selected based on the exact diagnosed need of the students and when they are delivered by teachers who can monitor their effectiveness immediately and adjust instruction accordingly.
- A schedule for collecting all data concerning program effectiveness and the data sources to be collected. The schedule should provide for the annual report to the board. Data sources should include disciplinary

actions, attendance records, parent volunteers and visits to schools, and additional student and parent surveys. Climate surveys to teachers and students are recommended as part of these evaluations.

Overall, in developing the plans for PBIS and MTSS, the focus is on student success—academic, emotional, and behavior. Additional factors should be considered in providing a comprehensive system of supports for students that include integrating social supports and services available outside the school district.

### **Support programs: ELL**

A well-designed program for English Language Learner (ELL) students advances English language acquisition in a timely manner, provides access to core curriculum content, allows for participation in courses of high level, and targets specific outcomes needed to enable students to graduate from high school and pursue goals to be college, work, and career ready. The success of such a program depends on the organizational capacity of the district in terms of a vision for the education of English language learners, the appropriate resources allocated to it, the professional preparation of staff, and the effective management of its design and delivery.

ELL programming in the district was almost solely reliant on state legislation. Greater specificity in program delivery is necessary to ensure that all teachers and building personnel understand what each component of the Structured English Immersion (SEI) model looks like, how to implement it, and that they have the resources and materials needed to present the program. Auditors found inadequate curriculum and resources to support teachers in delivering SEI and to meet the requirements of the Individualized Language Learning Plan (ILLP). Evidence of sheltered instruction to support access to content and of language objectives and instruction were inadequate (see [Findings 3.1](#) and [3.2](#)).

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.5.6:** Require the superintendent to present new or revised policies for board adoption to provide a framework for a comprehensive program for the education of ELL students. The framework should require specifications outlined below in [A.5.15](#).

**G.5.7:** Require the superintendent to submit an annual report to the governing board that includes progress of ELL students from one language proficiency level to another, the number of ELL students meeting and exceeding the state required proficiency level, progress towards meeting state academic standards, access to accelerated courses, disciplinary statistics, and graduation rates.

**G.5.8:** Commit adequate resources to support effective program implementation and required professional development to meet the needs of English language learners.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.5.14:** Prepare a board policy for board approval as recommended in [G.5.6](#).

**A.5.15:** Develop a plan for the design and delivery of ELL programming district-wide. The plan should include the following components, some of which may already exist in district documents:

- The district's philosophy for ELL programming. Review the statement in current documents that articulates the philosophical approach to English language acquisition. Revise, as needed, to reflect the district's philosophy of education and instructional approach and ensure the communication of the district's commitment to respecting and valuing the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity in the system.
- A statement of the district's commitment to language enrichment for ELL and non-ELL students in the form of developing students' proficiency in more than one language. Proficiency in multiple languages is seen as a foundational skill, globally, and is a preferred focus area for new and future parents. The linguistic diversity in the district is a decided strength in developing a culture of multilingualism and in fostering proficiency in Spanish, English, as well as any other languages.

- Specific goals for the program in terms of students' language progress, content mastery, as well as their sense of self-efficacy and positive self-image as a language learner. Keep the goals measurable, observable, and specific assigned to specific personnel for execution and monitoring with a timeline for completion. Establish a number of goals that are feasible and aligned to the district strategic plan.
- Provision for the integration of specific objectives related to English language development. These should address minimum vocabulary needs, language structures and syntax, and essential phrases and academic constructs. These ELD objectives should be integrated into EVERY content area to support the sheltered instruction model adopted by the district. ELL personnel should participate and be included in all curriculum development stages.
- Provision for the design of curriculum that explicitly embeds sheltered strategies in the core content areas in addition to language development strategies and approaches.
- Provision for the alignment of district and site programs with the specific objectives of the ELL/dual language enrichment programs, such as interventions used by MTSS or any other site-based adopted programs.
- Provisions that ensure access by ELL students to all core curriculum content, accelerated or Accelerated Learner courses, the Montessori program, and academic English language development.
- A schedule for the professional development of instructional, non-instructional, and administrative staff in terms of the effective delivery of services for ELL programming and dual language development. Connect this training to the focus on the framework for strategies and instructional model presented in Recommendation 2.
- Expectations that all instructional resources are available to all teachers in the district at the required proficiency levels, be research-based, and analyzed and evaluated for their appropriateness, rigor, quality, and alignment with the district-adopted sheltered instruction model and curriculum, such as SIOP.
- Provisions that delineate roles and responsibilities for all professionals who have a responsibility to administer the design/delivery of ELL services.

**A.5.16:** Define approaches to formal and informal assessment and provide guidance on the use of data for diagnostic purposes, to monitor progress, and to inform intervention for all ELL students. Establish transition plans for students moving from elementary grades to middle school grades who have not met expected proficiency levels in English.

### **Parent Outreach and Engagement**

The auditors heard multiple concerns from a variety of stakeholders about the lack of parental engagement and the district's need to establish firmer relationships with the community and parents in certain locations.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.5.9:** Direct that all job descriptions for office-based personnel, including school liaisons, be reviewed for accuracy and appropriate chain of command. Ensure that all job descriptions include the requirement that all parents and students are to be welcomed in full accordance with the district's philosophy and beliefs (good customer service). Require the appraisal process for these personnel to include performance evaluation on this criterion.

**G.5.10:** Include in board policy an expectation for a proactive approach to developing relationships with parents at every school.

**G.5.11:** Require an annual report from the superintendent regarding trends in parental engagement and involvement district-wide.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.5.17:** Establish expectations at the district level regarding how every student, parent, and community member is expected to be greeted and welcomed at every school site. Communicate the commitment to being a community institution of friendliness and respect in every neighborhood. Establish a high quality expectation of customer service.

**A.5.18:** Assign responsibility for the professional development of office personnel to the appropriate district level administrator. Train all office personnel (and supervisory administrative personnel) in appropriate interactions with parents and students. Direct principals to evaluate the effective implementation of these expectations and conduct a survey of parents and students regarding school climate. Those schools with extremely positive climate ratings should be highlighted and allowed to present to their colleagues the “secrets of their success.”

**A.5.19:** Define the role of the school liaisons. Include in their job descriptions the role of social service liaison, as well. Ensure that they are kept up-to-date regarding internal and external social services and supports that students and their families may request that exceed what the school itself can provide.

**A.5.20:** With the beginning of each school year, establish the requirement that all teachers, liaisons, principals, and other identified personnel (such as school resource officers) make visits to the families or homes of students in pairs or trios.

- If parents are uncomfortable having school personnel in their home, arrange to meet them at their place of employment or a neutral location.
- Use translators as needed, with appropriate translating protocols.
- As stated in **A.5.13**, the purpose of home visits is to pro-actively and positively engage parents in a discussion about their child and how the school can best support their child’s learning and development.
- Use this time to communicate to parents the district’s (and the school personnel’s) commitment to serving their child successfully in accordance with district philosophy and beliefs.

The time and effort needed to accomplish this daunting task is offset by the undoubted improvements in student attendance, academic success, and behaviors. Parents are more likely to come to school for subsequent conferences, presentations, and events when they already have had a positive interaction with their child’s school. Such approaches are already in use by charter schools; this is the district’s opportunity to communicate to the community its own programs and resources.

**A.5.21:** Establish a parent welcome and student intake center for students new to the district.

- A welcome center can provide not only information on registering for classes but also work with families to lower mobility within the district and connect them with needed social services at the first point of contact.
- A welcome center can identify any language issues with incoming students who do not speak English or Spanish.
- Alleviates the burden of processing registrations from school sites who can then focus effectively on their current students and families.

The steps outlined above will distinguish Phoenix Elementary School District #1 as the foremost provider of a positive, student-centered and family friendly education in the valley. Given the anticipated shifts in population and the competition always offered by charter schools, these actions promise to increase enrollment and improve students’ and parents’ satisfaction with their education while positively impacting student achievement.

**Recommendation 6: Develop and implement an expectation among all district staff that data are to be used to improve the district’s curriculum design, curriculum delivery measured by improvements in student achievement results, and to evaluate based on a quality designed formal assessment system.**

The quality of any educational organization is influenced by the presence of an assessment process that facilitates informed decision making about levels of productivity and the quality of the curriculum. As a critical element of sound curriculum management, assessment is comprehensive in nature and guides the district as it considers instructional needs. To establish a comprehensive picture of the progress of students, formal assessment should occur in all subjects (core and non-core) and at all grade levels. Effective districts use readily available formative and summative assessment data to diagnose problems in its curriculum design and delivery system. Assessment measures include formative and summative assessment, student performance data. Effective districts use assessment data on an ongoing basis to evaluate services, programs, and instructional strategies.

Auditors found district wide student assessment data results are below state average in English language arts and mathematics, and show significant gaps in various subgroups. The design of assessment to support effective delivery of the district curriculum is inadequate to support student learning and success on state tests (see [Finding 4.1](#) and [Finding 2.4](#)). Data analyzed by district personnel is based on summative state testing results even though other mechanisms and tools are available for assessing learning both formatively and summatively. Assessments found in the district such as the *Galileo* assessment are not aligned with the state standards and are prevalent in use for staff evaluation purposes rather than student achievement to measure the effectiveness of the district’s curriculum and instruction.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.6.1:** Direct the superintendent to include in a local policy that includes the development of formative, diagnostic assessment instruments are aligned to district curriculum and are administered to students regularly to provide teachers with information for instructional decision making.

**G.6.2:** Direct the superintendent to revise job descriptions to include the responsibility for developing the scope and monitoring of the development and implementation of formative district assessments (benchmark testing for all core subjects and grades).

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.6.1:** Assist the board in developing the policy described in action [G.6.1](#) and [G.6.2](#) above.

**A.6.2:** Revise existing job descriptions to include responsibility for development and monitoring of formal assessments for the district.

**A.6.3:** Design and implement a comprehensive, system-side formative assessment framework that includes:

- Formal formative assessments for all curriculum objectives that are available for teacher use in determining initial acquisition of learning;
- Informal formative assessments for all objectives that are in place for teachers to use prior to teaching an objective to determine prior student mastery;
- Informal formative assessments for all appropriate course/grade level objectives that are available for teachers to use prior to teaching an objective to determine pre-requisite knowledge; and
- Pools of informal assessment items for all objectives that are available for teachers to use during instruction to diagnose the current status of learning.

**A.6.4:** Provide for the monitoring of the formative assessment framework. Components to be included in the monitoring would include:

- Presenting teachers with formative student achievement data for incoming students at the beginning of the school year. Data from the prior year(s) assessment should be organized so that each teacher has historical achievement data by objective on each of his/her students.
- Identifying for the teacher individual formative student data on each objective for level of achievement and where each student is within those levels each time formative district assessments takes place. Data should include group and/or subgroup levels of achievement for a given objective.
- Presenting the individual formative student achievement level by objective connected to a district's schedule of objectives or pacing chart.
- Presenting longitudinal data for each student by class roster and specifies the required gain needed to close the achievement gap within three years.
- Identifying pre-teaching formative assessments to use for individual student diagnosis for one or more years. Subsequently, this allows teachers to determine when students are making desired progress over time.

**A.6.5:** Assess the extent to which the available formative assessments align with the *AzMERIT* assessments in the grade levels and content areas that are assessed by the state. If the available formative assessments provide a match to *AzMERIT* items in content, context, and cognitive type, require use of these formative assessments by teachers and hold principals accountable for monitoring student progress using these formative assessments.

**Recommendation 7: Design and implement a comprehensive, curriculum-driven budget development process that emphasizes cost-benefit analyses that links resources to instructional priorities. Update long-range facility planning, providing evidence of the tangible connections between the district's educational goals for students and the facility needs within the plan.**

Linkages between the budgets and programs that lead to predetermined priorities, goals, and strategies for improving student achievement are critical to the district's overall success. Intended results are lost or delayed when there is not a thorough, systemic process to ensure that the financial plan represents the district's learning priorities. To allocate resources without comprehensive evaluation of results ignores the annual opportunity to strategically re-establish priorities and aggressively pursue intended results with new direction. In the absence of such comprehensive budgeting practices, system-wide effectiveness is often a matter of chance and special political interests than of intentional design.

Auditors found the district's budget remains stable, however, decreasing enrollment expectations and the undertaking of facility renovations are two variables the district has identified as possibly negatively impacting district finances over the coming years. The auditors found that the system's budgeting process historically has been lacking in critical steps and elements that provide connections from data to decisions and from allocations to results (see [Finding 5.1](#)). The lack of effective cost-benefit processes has resulted in an inability of the district to determine the effectiveness of programming weighed against the program cost. In short, productivity of programs cannot be determined.

Essentially, the Phoenix Elementary School District #1 needs to refine and revise budgeting processes to ensure that the district accomplishes the district's mission to deliver quality learning experiences to its student clientele. The recommendations that follow are aimed to help the system cope with the phenomenon of decreasing enrollment, facility renovation, and rising academic expectations.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.7.1:** Direct the superintendent to prepare for board consideration a new policy and revised related job descriptions to provide overall direction for budgeting using criteria noted in [Exhibit 5.1.4](#) and [A.7.1](#).

**G.7.2:** Direct the superintendent to establish procedures and prepare and/or revise documents that communicate the budgeting process and goals throughout the system and requires budget and staffing proposals to reflect a direct connection to established data-driven priorities.

**G.7.3:** Direct the superintendent to set a budget development timeline to incorporate procedures identified in [A.7.3](#).

**G.7.4:** Require, as part of the budget development process, a presentation from the administration to communicate how the proposed budget addresses the goals and priorities and responds to student and program evaluation data. The presentation should include an evaluation based upon measurable criteria of the effectiveness of the previous year's budget in achieving district priorities and those programs and interventions that are being revised or terminated on the basis of lack of effectiveness or lack of specificity in their objectives or intentions. This presentation should specifically include student achievement results connected to the budget proposals.

**G.7.5:** Direct the superintendent to establish a three-year plan that, when implemented beginning with fiscal year 2018-19, will lead to successful implementation of actions [G.7.1](#) through [G.7.4](#).

**G.7.6:** Require that long-range facility planning include clear linkage of the facility needs and planned actions with the educational program priorities and student needs reflected in school and district improvement plans. Communicate expectations that the documents prepared for board, staff, and public information include narrative demonstrating these linkages and clear explanation of parameters for decisions on capital projects.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.7.1:** Draft and propose the policy identified in **G.7.1** and revise related job descriptions to include specific budget and related financial responsibilities in time for implementation with the 2018-19 fiscal year.

**A.7.2:** Establish procedures and prepare and/or revise budget documents that communicate the budgeting process and the goals the system is attempting to address, and require budget and staffing proposals to reflect a direct connection to the established data-driven priorities and assessment results (**G.7.2**).

**A.7.3:** Set the budget development process and timeline (**G.7.3**) to ensure that the budget planning processes are focused on specific, time-bound, and measurable goals. Clear connections must be established between the student performance information and the basic instructional and support areas of the budget. Undertake steps similar to the following to increase the connection of programs and priorities with budgeting decisions<sup>4</sup>:

1. Using the current construction of the budget, identify various educational activities or programs and group them into areas of need or purpose served. This would include a more expansive inclusion of sub-components found in the current budget.
2. Assign a budget/program manager to each component. Direct them to prepare a concise and meaningful budget proposal for their respective areas. Insure that campus level budgets are fully accountable to the policy identified in **G.7.1** and the requirements described in **A.7.3**. Otherwise, the district is further subject to fragmentation, which may contribute to unequal results in achievement.
3. Goal statements need to be attached to each program area or budget request to state the program's linkage to established goals and priorities, its purpose, the criteria for identifying success, and specifically how results will be evaluated and reported (the actual evaluation of the program's effectiveness should be physically attached to each budget package request).
4. Each request should be described so as to permit evaluation of the consequences of funding or non-funding in terms of performance results. It is essential that this element be added to the current budget planning process. Teachers and principals must participate in the actual budget decision-making process to assure that valid data are used, knowledge of actual practice is available, and instructional efficacy is served.
5. Compile the goal/linkage statements and budget packages and give them to appropriate staff to gather data that best describe needed service levels, program outcomes, and cost-benefits.
6. Define program performance expectations and accountability for each program area with the involvement of various stakeholder staff (including principals, teachers, and support staff). Current results should be compared to desired expectations and related service level requirements. For example, to be successful, a specific program may need to be established at 110% of previous spending levels or at 75% of previous spending levels. Changes in funding may necessitate a comparable reduction from some other program or allow an increased allocation for another program judged to be of greater consequence.
7. Each program manager must create three to five program alternatives that deliver an adequate and workable program at different levels of allocation.
8. Prepare guidelines and recommendations and give them to the Director of Budget and Finance, who will then combine all recommendations into a single budget proposal listing funding by program increments and corresponding line items for each incremental package.
9. Compile past cost information, especially expenditure percentages of budget, with performance data and recommendations to guide preliminary budget estimates. Assessment and documentation of previous program results are essential.
10. Appoint a budget planning team, representing the various stakeholders, that will eventually bring the draft budget documents to the superintendent to study the goals, priorities, and parameters inherent in the decisions being made for program funding. Discussions of cost-benefit information are critical at

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<sup>4</sup> For more information, see Poston, W. (2011). *School Budgeting for Hard Times—Confronting Cutbacks and Critics*.

this stage. Where needed, budget plans should be extended over multiple years to assure consistency of effort and focus (**G.7.5**).

11. The budget planning team evaluates and ranks the budget packages. Budget requests need to compete with each other for funding based upon data derived from evaluation of the priorities of need and level of program effectiveness. For example, specific academic curriculum standards should be set regarding students' optimum access to and mastery of technology. Present inventories should be evaluated to determine the gap between current availability and access and what is judged as being optimum. Once completed, a budget package would compete with all other expenditures. To ensure equity, an individual school's ability to generate its own grants or gifts should be considered in this equation. The result will be that budget decisions are made deliberately on the basis of highest priority rather than by default.
12. Compile results of the evaluation and ranking and publish them in a tentative budget with programs listed in priority order. Use this draft with administrators for input before a draft is prepared for use as the presentation document.
13. Finalize budget allocations based on available revenues, the appropriation levels to be authorized, and program funding priorities and rankings. Prepare the recommended budget to be taken to the governing board for final evaluation and ranking.
14. Use the public hearing process to communicate broadly the financial planning link with student needs, program priorities, and the results sought through the actions taken. Allow time for individual comment and questions. Prepare the final document after considering public information and board decisions.
15. Establish final program and services to be funded at the level approved by the governing board and set the budget in place.

**A.7.4:** Design the budget management process to allow for an acceptable variation (such as a plus or minus 3 to 5%), permitting program managers sufficient stability to achieve the desired results. Budget revisions should only occur when acceptable variations have been approved; failure to do so would violate board bylaws, sound accounting practices, and/or place the district financial jeopardy.

**A.7.5:** Provide training and consultation as needed to all affected staff members during the transition to a curriculum-driven budgeting process and format. In addition, all district and campus level personnel who have accounting or program evaluation responsibility should be required to demonstrate competency in their respective duties in order to avoid frustration and inefficiencies that occur when such competencies are not present.

**A.7.6:** Direct all leaders with responsibilities in the long-range facility planning process to respond to the direction in **G.7.6** above and prepare documents congruent with that expectation. Components of the plan should include the following:

- Philosophy statements that review the community aspirations and the educational mission of the district and their relationship to short- and long-range facilities goals.
- Enrollment projections that take into account any known circumstances that may cause significant change in pupil population.
- The current organizational patterns of schools and an identification of possible organizational changes necessary to support the educational program as the district grows and as aging facilities become too expensive to maintain.
- Identification of educational program needs (see **Findings 4.3, 5.2, and 5.4**) to be considered by designers of capital projects for renovation or addition of school facilities (e.g., space for specialty grouping of students, technological infrastructure, lab requirements, etc.).
- A detailed evaluation of each existing facility, including assessment of structural integrity, mechanical integrity and efficiency, technology capacity, energy efficiency, operations and maintenance, and health and safety requirements.

- Prioritization of needs for renovation of existing facilities and the provisions for additional facilities.
- Cost analysis of potential capital projects to meet the educational needs of the division, including identification of revenues associated with capital construction.
- Procedures for the involvement of all stakeholders of the county-wide community in the development and evaluation of the long-range facilities plan.

**A.7.7:** Assist the facility planners in preparing public information related to facility needs and their alignment with educational needs and priorities, as well as with the district goals.

**A.7.8:** Include the expanded facility planning information in all presentations to the governing board and the public related to plans for expansion, remodeling, or replacing current buildings.

**A.7.9:** Continue emphasis among all staff of quality maintenance and custodial care for all buildings.

With an approach to budgeting based on individual program costs, results, and performance, the governing board and superintendent will be better equipped to monitor both finances and program effectiveness simultaneously. It is important to note that such a system cannot be implemented hastily. Needed policies and related job descriptions should be completed in the next six months. Budget package descriptions, if prepared, can remain in place for the FY 2017-2018. Evaluation components are added to each package as the district collects and interprets meaningful student achievement data, which should improve each year and be fully implemented in three years. Given this approach to budgeting, changes in funding or allocation levels are truly based on, “How well are students doing?” instead of, “How much did we spend last year, or how much do we think we may need?”

The Phoenix Elementary School District #1 needs a credible rationale and an effective system for appropriating and/or reallocating finances, especially from unproductive programs and activities to new, emerging programs or activities of high priority based on organizational effectiveness, changing needs of clientele, or produced results. Moreover, valid linkages need to be identified among organizational objectives, results, and costs in the process of improving quality control and system prudence with its financial resources. Such linkages will provide evidence to support program increases and/or decreases each year.

**Recommendation 8: Develop, adopt, and implement policy to support the use of technology, both instructional and management, across the district that enhances student learning and staff productivity. Clearly identify expectations for technology usage in classrooms and provide adequate professional development and oversight to ensure its implementation and links to student learning.**

Technology planning in effective school districts leads to technology implementation that supports deeper and more meaningful learning in district. The systematic, efficient integration of technology into curriculum and instruction serves as a tool to increase student achievement. Technology also serves important roles in business and management functions. Appropriately funding and directing the use of technology throughout the school district is an essential part of effective management and control. A written plan that outlines expectation, goals, guidelines, and evaluation protocols for the use and integration of technology is an effective means of ensuring consistent implementation across the district.

Auditors found that the Phoenix Elementary School District #1 lacks a technology plan that meets audit criteria. Board policies and district job descriptions are limited in relation to guidance and responsibility related to technology for the improvement of student learning. Auditors also found that while technology is available in most classrooms, use of the technology is either limited or rudimentary.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.8.1:** Direct the superintendent to prepare for review and adoption a policy that outlines the criteria for use and implementation of technology at the district and campus levels.

**G.8.2:** Require through the policy described above in **G.10.1** that a schedule be established for reporting evidence of the effectiveness of technology use to the board and other decision makers. Require that effectiveness be calculated in terms of impact on student achievement.

**G.8.3:** Establish an annual reporting cycle for technology for administrators to present results that include student performance data linked to the goals and objectives of the technology as well as recommendations to continue, modify, or terminate the practices.

**G.8.4:** Approve funding for instructional technology based on completed needs assessment, information regarding alignment with the curriculum, student performance data, and the criteria in **G.8.1**.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.8.1:** Draft the policy recommended in **G.8.1** above and present to the board for adoption.

**A.8.2:** Establish criteria and create a plan for developing, adopting, implementing, and monitoring technology use that is aligned to district priorities and student learning goals and is responsive to student assessment data. The following components should be included:

- Insure board policy or administrative regulation for instructional technology exists which is congruent with **G.8.1**.
- Develop a clear statement of program philosophy/vision which aligns with other philosophy/vision expectations across the district, including the district improvement plan, campus improvement plans, professional development plan, and curriculum management plan.
- A comprehensive view of technology exists for both instructional technology and staff level management.
- A needs assessment has been completed and evaluated.
- Measurable student goals and objectives exist which align with student learning expectations.
- An ongoing student assessment component exists which identifies student technology usage and links to learning objectives.

- An ongoing program assessment component exists and is used make informed decisions about the effectiveness of the instructional technology program.
- There are comprehensive staff trainings with measurable standards for equipment, application, and technology.
- School site equipment standards exist.
- Internet access standards exist.
- The role of the school library is stated.
- An implementation budget has been identified.
- A maintenance budget has been identified.
- Technology site plans are aligned with district plans.

**A.8.3:** Require that district curriculum documents include recommendations for the use of instructional technology (see Recommendation 8).

**A.8.4:** Establish a plan which allows technology to be utilized for student assessment purposes, yet least interferes with technology availability for classroom instruction across the district/building.

**A.8.5:** Align technology use in classroom for instruction purposes with teacher instructional expectations. Consider incorporating classroom technology use as part of the teacher evaluation protocol.

**A.8.6:** Provide professional development for program administrators and principals on identifying effectiveness technology use in the classroom.

**A.8.7:** Require the teachers utilized management technologies (e.g., Synergy) and provide necessary professional development as needed to insure its completion.

The implementation of the above recommendations will advance the instruction and management technology program within the district. Such progress will increase productivity of district personnel, and also enhance instructional models to more closely align with the expectations expressed in district planning documents.

**Recommendation 9: Revise, adopt, and implement job descriptions and the organizational chart to meet audit criteria, establish clear lines of authority, and improve the clarity of functional relationships.**

A district's chain of command is reflected in its organizational chart. It defines the role relationships between supervisor and subordinates, outlining a scalar relationship between district officials. Adherence to the adopted chain of command ensures that the authority of the board is channeled through the superintendent to all employees in the district.

Job descriptions are clearly written explanations of duties and qualifications of persons employed by the school district. They provide employees with information regarding what background is necessary to successfully prepare for the job and how positions are to function within the organization, including assignment of supervisory relationships and the critical components of the job. A clear set of job descriptions supports the district's internal and external communications by explaining who performs what duties within the organization and how various positions interact to accomplish the board's expectations. The board must adopt all job descriptions to further ensure adherence to board policy and directions. To communicate graphically the responsibilities and functional relationships within a school system, a table of organization (organizational chart) and job descriptions must be present, aligned, current, and accurate.

In Phoenix Elementary School District #1, the organizational chart does not meet all audit criteria for sound organizational management (see [Finding 1.1](#)). Problems in meeting the characteristics outlined in [Exhibit 1.1.1](#) result in some confusion about responsibilities for the reader, and some vagueness occurs in indications of the curriculum design and delivery, assessment, program evaluation, and campus improvement functions. Scalar relationships are not accurately represented on the organizational chart, with positions at different levels of responsibility and compensation depicted on the same horizontal plane.

The district's job descriptions are numerous but do not adequately meet audit criteria. Job descriptions must meet audit criteria for accurate and clear specifications of responsibilities and relationships in the district (see [Finding 1.1](#)). All job descriptions must include appropriate accountability for the relationship of the position to the design and delivery of the district's aligned curriculum.

Auditors recommend that the district modify the position of Associate/Deputy Superintendent (the second highest administrative position in the district) and adopt a job description for a Chief Academic Officer (CAO) to bring curriculum development, revision, professional development, assessment, curriculum-based budgeting, and the sequencing and pacing of change under system macro-level control. Phoenix Elementary School District #1 is in need of bold, competent curriculum leadership so that classroom teachers and campus administrators are provided clarity regarding expected student learning.

It is important that the CAO maintain a balance between staff functions, such as curriculum development and professional development, and implementation, which is a line function. The CAO can only be held accountable if she can control the pace of learning as it impacts schools and classrooms. The CAO's office must also function as a clearinghouse for programmatic changes that involve textbook adoption, system program change, curriculum development and evaluation, instructional strategies, and the purpose of testing and assessment as it pertains to student achievement in the district.

Auditors recommend that the district establish a position of Coordinator of Professional Development that can consolidate the scattered training and staff development responsibilities. All job descriptions must be revised to reflect such consolidation, coordinated under the direction of the Director of Curriculum.

The auditors provide suggested steps to be taken in order to remedy the areas of deficiency noted in the audit analysis and recommend that these be accomplished within the next year, and sooner for any positions modified or added to the current administrative and staff team. These actions should be completed within two years to meet audit criteria.

**Governance Function:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.9.1:** Direct the superintendent to draft, for board review and adoption, a policy requiring annual review and adoption of the district's organizational chart and provide assurances to the board that all positions and job descriptions are aligned, current, accurate, and adopted by the board. Job descriptions must meet audit criteria for clear specifications of responsibilities and relationships in the district (see [Finding 1.1](#)).

**G.9.2:** Direct the superintendent to develop, for board review and annual adoption, an organizational chart that meets Curriculum Audit™ criteria for sound organizational management. The organizational chart must reflect the central design and delivery of curriculum and congruence among all district functions related to student learning.

**G.9.3:** Adopt a job description for a Chief Academic Officer as proposed by the superintendent (see [Exhibit R.9.2](#)). Revise appropriate board policies to reflect the scope and responsibilities of the CAO to plan, coordinate, implement, and evaluate the direction of the district-wide curriculum.

**G.9.4:** Adopt a job description for a Coordinator of Professional Development as proposed by the superintendent.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.9.1:** Assist the board in development of the policy described in **G.9.1** and present the draft policy to the board for adoption. Develop administrative regulations and procedures to keep the organizational chart and job descriptions current and consistent with board policy.

**A.9.2:** Disseminate new board policies and administrative regulations to all district employees.

- Include copies of newly adopted organizational chart for employee reference.
- Direct staff to review and revise all district job description to incorporate all essential job description components outlined in [Finding 1.1](#).

**A.9.3:** Revise current job descriptions for all district positions consistent with audit criteria for job descriptions outlined in [Finding 1.1](#).

- Develop or update job descriptions for all positions depicted on the organizational chart.
- Begin review process with all other employees to verify accuracy of the responsibilities and duties.
- Include the date of drafting and board approval for the most recent revision on all job description drafts and approved final documents.
- Ensure all job descriptions have been signed upon adoption by the board.

**A.9.4:** Develop a cycle of review of all district job descriptions to ensure they are current. Notations of any review and/or revisions should be posted on each job description as a record of the review process.

**A.9.5:** Finalize the job description for the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) (see [Exhibit R.9.2](#)), make recommended adjustments to the organizational chart (see [Exhibit R.9.1](#)), and submit to the board for adoption.

- Revise appropriate board policies to reflect the authority, scope, and responsibilities of the CAO.
- Present policies to the board for adoption.
- Create new administrative regulations outlining the duties of the revised CAO position.

**A.9.6:** Develop and finalize a job description for the Coordinator of Professional Development make adjustments to the organizational charts. Consolidate professional development responsibilities from other positions under one person to coordinate professional development planning, needs assessments, implementation, and evaluation.

**A.9.7:** Update the district's organizational chart to meet the audit design requirements included in [Exhibit 1.1.1](#) and address the deficiencies noted in [Finding 1.1](#), especially focusing on the logical grouping of functions and scalar relationships. Include the following characteristics in the design of organizational chart:

- The span of control that requires direct responsibility for no more than 12 employees.
- Not more than one supervisor to avoid being placed in a compromised decision-making situation.
- Logical grouping of functions to keep tasks of a similar nature grouped together.
- A separation of line and staff positions.
- A scalar relationship that shows positions at the same level with similar responsibilities, authority, and compensation.
- Full inclusions of all central functions that facilitate quality control are included in the organizational structure.

**A.9.8:** Ensure that all organizational chart drafts and adopted documents bear the date of drafting and/or adoption and that the most recent revision replaces earlier versions in document collections and any other communication media.

**A.9.9:** Annually provide the board with a review of the organizational chart for adoption and provide assurances that all job descriptions are available, listed, and current.

**A.9.10:** Disseminate and review the job descriptions and the organizational chart with all administrative staff to ensure consistent adherence to the chain of command.

**A.9.11:** Create a representative task force to study and consider the creation of a district middle school program (grades 6-8) including implementation of a middle school philosophy, curriculum, staffing, scheduling, funding, programs, etc. A middle school program would include redesignating identified schools buildings as middle school campuses and consolidating PreK-5 students within the remaining schools.

**A.9.12:** Direct the director of human resources to examine and forward recommendations to the superintendent regarding the titles of administrative position in order to create a common hierarchy of each designation (e.g., Principal, Administrator, Director, Coordinator, Supervisor, Manager, etc.). Consideration should be given to the different responsibilities, authority, and remuneration of certificated and classified positions to avoid confusion.

**A.9.13:** Clarify the role and responsibilities of the preschool “Administrator” position, whether it is a “Principal” position with commensurate authority, responsibilities, and remuneration for consistency within the district.

Exhibit R.9.1a

Recommended District Organizational Chart  
 Phoenix Elementary School District #1  
 May 2017

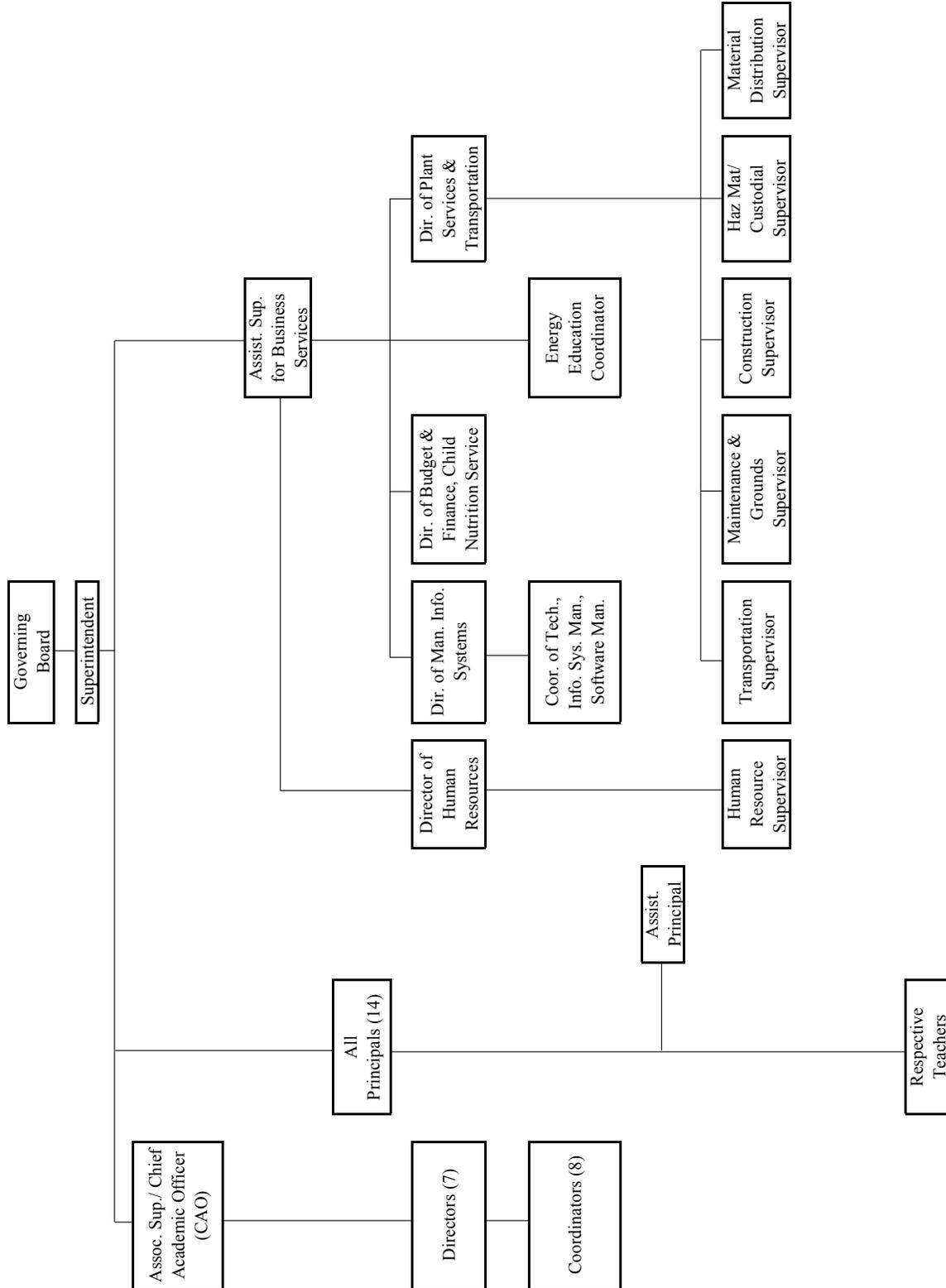
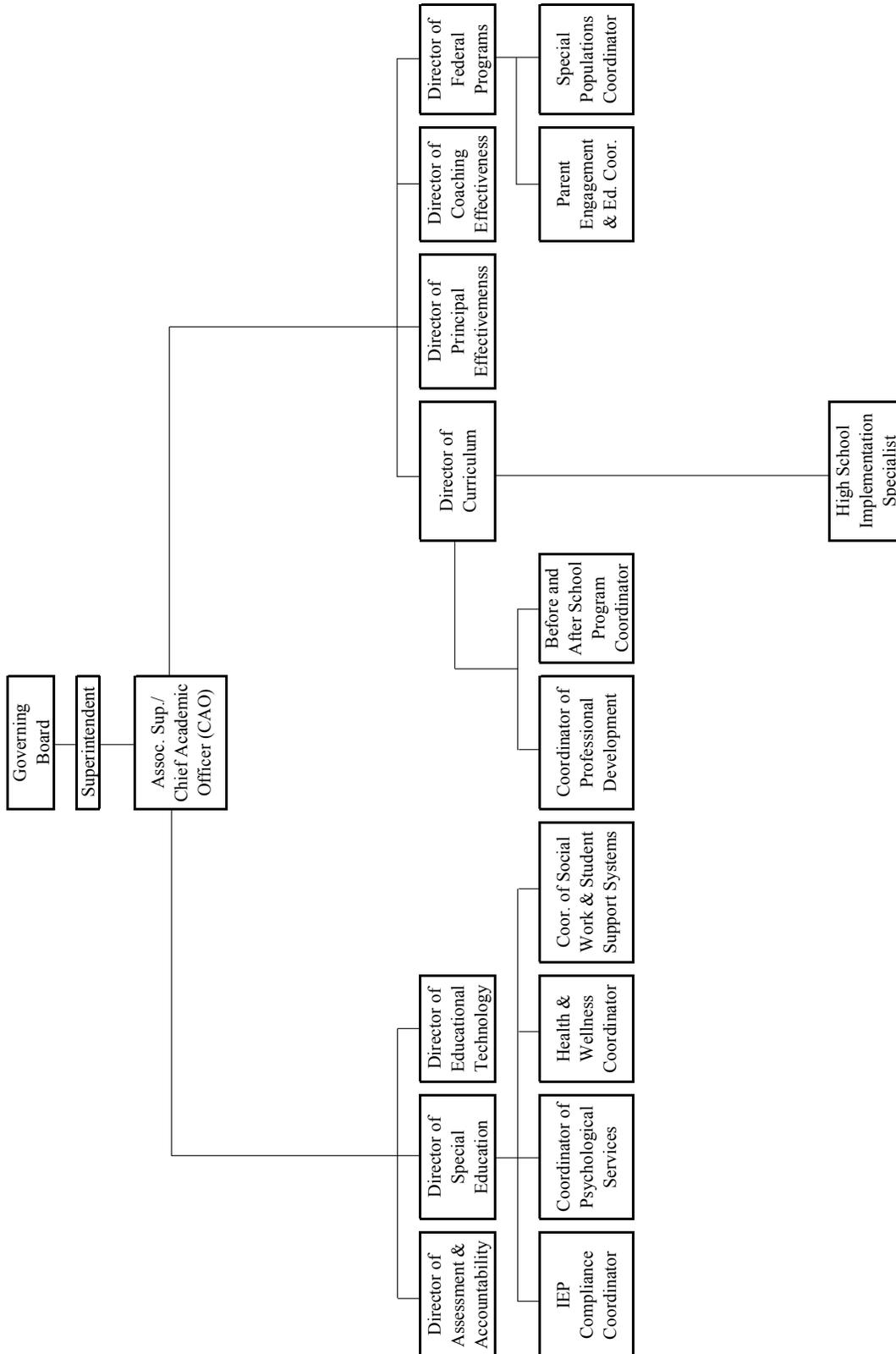


Exhibit R.9.1b

Curriculum and Instruction Organizational Chart  
Phoenix Elementary School District #1  
May 2017



## Exhibit R.9.2

### Job Description for Chief Academic Officer Phoenix Elementary School District #1 May 2017

JOB TITLE: Associate/Deputy Superintendent—Chief Academic Officer (CAO)

REPORTS TO: Superintendent

DEFINITION: The Chief Academic Officer (CAO) is responsible for the design and delivery of all curriculum, programs, and related educational program support functions for the school system, including the piloting, implementation, alignment, and timing and sequence of program innovation and change, K-12. The CAO is expected to integrate all curricular departments and functions so that there is a continuous and manageable upgrading and implementation of curriculum across the school system. The CAO is responsible for ensuring coherent, focused professional development, and improvement of curriculum utilizing internal and external student assessment results, student services, special education, gifted education, and instructional/information technology. The CAO is expected to develop, with input from professional staff (teachers, principals, and central office personnel), a district-wide curriculum management plan that is updated annually.

SUPERVISES: Directly supervises five elementary principals (including Preschool Principal), the Directors of Assessment and Accountability, Curriculum, Educational Technology, Special Education, Federal Programs, Principal Effectiveness, Coaching Effectiveness.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES:

1. Responsible for the design, delivery, and monitoring of all district curricula aligned to the appropriate state standards. Curriculum is predicated on the results of formative and summative student assessment results. Curriculum is prepared for every course (including electives) offered in the district.
2. Monitors and analyzes the results of student assessments to ensure individual student progress toward established district academic achievement goals and targets.
3. Develops annual curriculum management plan in which central curricular functions are integrated and focused with professional development and assessments.
4. Ensure equitable access and initiation of equity measures to address the needs of every district student.
5. Ensures that curriculum change follows a timetable of logical and timely development, sequenced so as not to overload teachers and principals with implementation responsibilities;
6. Coordinates all district-wide professional development, ensuring that it is congruent with district goals and priorities;
7. Coordinates curriculum and services for all students, including special education, ALPS, English language learners, economically disadvantaged students, historically underperforming students, at-risk students, and instructional technology;
8. Ensures alignment of technology services with needed instructional use, curricular support, and identified district curriculum needs;
9. Guide the implementation and enhancement of Professional Learning Community (PLC) principles and strategies;
10. Participates in the district performance-based budgeting process to ensure that the district budget is aligned with and driven by the desired and targeted results of student achievement (performance-based).
11. Develops related educational policies for board adoption and administrative regulations in all assigned areas (e.g., curriculum, assessment, professional development, monitoring instruction, instruction, students, etc.).

12. Ensures that curriculum documents are consistent in format to promote user friendliness for use by classroom teachers; and
13. Arranges pilot programs for all curricular, textbook/software, and instructional materials to be used in the district; arranges systematic evaluation of all curriculum, programs, instructional materials and textbook adoptions; and, identifies, researches, and implements any intervention programs deemed essential to increasing the level of student learning and success.

#### MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

The Chief Academic Officer must possess experience in successfully designing and implementing rigorous and aligned curriculum in an educational system that is functioning within and responsive to high-stakes testing and accountability systems. The CAO should possess working knowledge of testing and assessments, and experience in designing highly successful professional development programs, curriculum development, successful instructional and intervention strategies, and the management of change.

#### REQUIRED SKILL SETS:

1. Knows how to design and implement deep curriculum alignment based on test item deconstruction and other forms of feedback.
2. Knows how to direct successful curriculum design and delivery programs that have resulted in improved student learning gains on high-stakes accountability measures while maintaining challenging and rigorous standards for all students.
3. Knows the requirements, parameters, and successful strategies for all special programs offered in the district.
4. Knows how to analyze, interpret, disseminate, and utilize student assessment data for critical decision making for the district's instructional program.
5. Knows various instructional strategies and approaches to successfully implement differentiated instruction within a high-stakes accountability system for varied student groups, including the use of instructional technology.
6. Demonstrates the ability to work collaboratively.
7. Demonstrates the ability to perform effective professional development as a leader and model differentiated instruction.
8. Knows how to initiate, implement, and monitor Professional Learning Communities (PLC).
9. Knows one or more forms of classroom walk-through models.
10. Knows how to engage in internal curriculum consistency analysis.
11. Knows how to deconstruct test information and connect various forms of classroom instruction in order to improve teacher effectiveness.
12. Knows how to identify, research, analyze, and evaluate potential intervention programs.
13. Knows various types of curricular formats, the strengths and weaknesses of each, and what works best in different contexts.
14. Knows the major trends (local, state, and national) of curriculum in each of the core curriculum content areas: math, science, language arts, and social studies.
15. Understands approaches to curriculum design and delivery and instructional responsiveness to the diverse needs of students, particularly exceptional learners (special education, ALPS, English language learners, at-risk learners, and economically disadvantaged learners).

### **Exhibit R.9.3**

#### **Recommended Modifications to the Organizational Chart Phoenix Elementary School District #1 May 2017**

1. Change Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction to Associate Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer (CAO);
2. Change Director of Human Resources to report to Superintendent;
3. Superintendent to supervise nine elementary principals; remaining five principals, including Preschool Principal, to report to CAO;
4. Associate Superintendent/CAO to supervise five principals (TBD), including Preschool Principal;
5. Add new Coordinator of Professional Development (reporting to Director of Curriculum);
6. Eliminate Coordinator of Gifted Education—reassign responsibilities to Director of Curriculum;
7. Change Administrator of Preschool to Principal of Preschool;
8. Change High School Implementation Specialist to report to Director of Curriculum;
9. Director of Educational Technology to report to CAO;
10. High School Implementation Specialist to report to Director of Curriculum; and
11. Exclude any non-administrative positions from organizational chart(s) (e.g., IEIS, specialists, coaches, mentors, etc.).

**Recommendation 10: Develop and implement a policy and procedure that standardizes program and intervention selection based on diagnosed needs and design and implement evaluation of program objectives with feedback linked to student achievement. Develop and implement program decision-making in the initiation, modification, continuation, or termination of programs and interventions that are assessed on valid and impartial knowledge of potential value and measured results.**

Leaders of effective school systems intentionally plan to systematically evaluate the efficacy of their curriculum and instructional programs against pre-determined criteria which are based upon student achievement outcomes. These data are also used to determine selection, value, and funding priorities. Such a system creates and maintains a culture of accountability and related transparency that enables the district to direct its resources towards achieving its established goals and objectives.

As with all curriculum program development, program interventions should follow a rational selection and evaluation process to ensure that they meet desired outcomes, sustain district productivity, and lead to the improvement of student academic achievement performance with documented assurance. In designing procedures and processes for implementation, it is necessary to control the number of interventions implemented at any point in time to minimize fragmentation and loss of quality. When the system is overburdened with an excessive number of programs, principals and teachers are unable to distinguish which, if any, program actually helped to improve student achievement. Likewise, in absence of clearly written procedures, it is difficult to sustain the fidelity of effective programs through changes in leadership and staff.

PESD #1 does not have a process for the establishment, implementation or evaluation of program interventions. Many of the required components were missing from planning documents. Further, there was no documentation that any district-wide review process is being followed due to the heavy reliance on campus implementation of intervention programming. Job descriptions do not identify responsibility for oversight of the program. Imagine Learning, originally selected as an intervention pilot, is now a required program for all children and no longer fits the definition of an intervention. There is lack of processes to determine intervention effectiveness, consistency in the adoption of programs, implementation, and evaluation of program interventions in the district (see [Finding 5.2](#)).

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.10.1:** Direct the superintendent to prepare for review and adoption a policy that outlines the criteria for selection and evaluation of interventions at the district and campus levels. Include criteria for selecting, piloting, modifying, continuing, evaluating, and eliminating interventions.

**G.10.2:** Require through the policy described above in **G.10.1** that a schedule be established for reporting evidence of the effectiveness of interventions to the board and other decision makers. Require that effectiveness be calculated in terms of impact on student achievement.

**G.10.3:** Establish an annual reporting cycle for programs and interventions for administrators to present program/intervention results that include student performance data linked to the goals and objectives of the program/intervention as well as recommendations to continue, modify, or terminate the program/intervention.

**G.10.4:** Approve funding for programs/interventions based on completed needs assessment, information regarding alignment with the curriculum, student performance data, and the criteria in **G.10.1**.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.10.1:** Draft the policy recommended in **G.10.1** above and present to the board for adoption.

**A.10.2:** Establish administrative regulations for developing, adopting, implementing, and monitoring interventions that are aligned to district priorities and student learning goals and are responsive to student assessment data. The following components should be included:

- A description of the intervention that states the purpose, number of students to be served, and the cost per student;
- A description of the documented need supported by diagnostic and analysis data collected and considered in the selection;
- A statement ascertaining alignment with district goals and priorities and clear alignment with the district curriculum;
- The relationship to other programs operating in the district;
- A listing of required resources and funding sources that includes needs for space, staffing, material costs, and the potential for long-term sustainability;
- A budget for the proposed intervention that includes implementation costs as well as sustained costs over time;
- A plan for professional development for all staff responsible for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the program. This plan should include initial professional development costs as well as costs to maintain delivery effectiveness over time;
- A method of evaluation for both formative and summative purposes; and
- Evaluation results reported on a regular basis to staff and the board.

**A.10.3:** Design an evaluation and reporting format and schedule for programs/interventions that include student performance data sources, alignment to curricular goals, criteria used to measure effective implementation, and the statistical analysis used to measure program effectiveness.

**A.10.4:** Establish an annual schedule for the review of program evaluations.

**A.10.5:** Develop and implement procedures for eliminating programs that do not demonstrate effectiveness in improving student performance.

**A.10.6:** Provide professional development for program administrators on selecting or designing, monitoring, and evaluating program and intervention effectiveness.

**A.10.7:** Evaluate and confirm the current list of interventions to determine all programs/interventions that are currently available, currently being utilized, and which should be evaluated for need and effectiveness.

**A.10.8:** Allocate funding to effectively design, implement, and assess programmatic interventions using student performance data to evaluate effectiveness. Provide future funding in the budget for effective programs/interventions from existing internal funding sources or from long-term external funding sources.

**A.10.9:** Research, develop, and implement a district-wide model for Response to Intervention/MTSS. That model should include the following:

- A framework that includes a multi-level prevention system (high quality core instruction—Tier 1; evidence-based intervention—Tier 2; and individualized intervention—Tier 3) that provides increasingly more intense levels of support. The framework should also include appropriate screening measures and progress monitoring tools to make quality decisions based on data that support student learning and growth.
- Select appropriate interventions based on direction found in [A.10.2](#) and [A.10.3](#).
- A plan for professional development for all staff to define the multi-level prevention system and create a common understanding and vocabulary across all classrooms, campuses, and the district.
- Define expectations for implementation of the model district-wide and establish procedures for monitoring implementation of the RTI/MTSS Model and evaluating its impact on student achievement.

**A.10.10:** Designate personnel who will provide oversight for intervention selection and implementation within the district. Revise job descriptions as necessary to indicate levels of responsibility across the district.

These recommendations should give the district a means of developing and implementing policies and procedures that standardize program and intervention selection and Response to Intervention/MTSS based on diagnosed needs and design and implement the evaluation of program objectives with feedback linked to student achievement. Implementing these recommendations will improve decision making on the initiation, modifications, continuation, or termination of programs and interventions based on valid and impartial knowledge of potential value and measured results.

**Recommendation 11: Develop comprehensive assessment procedures to provide reliable data for decision making at all levels of the system. Establish a formalized process for selection, implementation, and evaluation of programs and interventions utilizing data that will be used as feedback for initiation, modification, continuation, or termination of programs and practices.**

Effective system wide student assessment and program evaluation processes provide district and school staff with quality feedback helping to make informed instructional decisions ranging from individual student lessons to overall design and delivery of curriculum and the effectiveness of programs and interventions. Evaluation strategies are determined in advance, and implementation of programs and interventions are monitored on a regular basis. Reports of progress or problems identified through student achievement provided on a periodic basis help to guide modification or elimination of programs and interventions.

Auditors found a lack of coordinated district wide procedures to provide direction for the proper selection, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs and interventions (see [Finding 4.4](#) and [5.2](#)). Auditors did not find a singular and focused comprehensive program and intervention evaluation plan that defines the critical characteristics essential for directing and providing direction for the design of a program evaluation system. Auditors found the district lacks a systemic process for the use of data for proper implementation, continuation, and termination of programs (see [Finding 4.4](#)). Auditors also did not find any job descriptions assigning roles and responsibilities for how data are to be used for the formal implementation, continuation, and termination of programs and interventions (see [Finding 4.3](#), [4.4](#), and [5.2](#)).

Recommendations should be implemented in six to 12 months to establish a process for the selection, adoption, implementation, and evaluation of programs and interventions.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.11.1:** Direct the superintendent to draft a policy outlining criteria for the selection, implementation, and evaluation of programs and interventions at the district and school levels. Include in the policy the requirement that all programs and interventions must be adopted by the board prior to implementation.

**G.11.2:** Adopt a policy requiring that all programs and interventions undergo a system review process linked to student achievement data at least every three years with linkages to district goals.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.11.1:** Draft a policy responding to [G.11.1](#) and [G.11.2](#) above, and develop administrative procedures to implement the policies.

**A.11.2:** Develop administrative procedures with detailed selection criteria for programs and interventions recommended to be adopted by the board. The criteria should address the following questions:

- Does the program or intervention align with the district's mission and goals?
- Does the program or intervention align with district curriculum?
- Is there an evaluation design that will produce objectives and reliable data on programmatic effectiveness?
- Do the program budgets include a cost of accounting for materials, staffing, equipment, and facilities requirements long term?
- Is the program likely to strengthen the overall programmatic efforts of the school system?
- What indicators suggest that the program or intervention will improve student achievement?
- How will improvement in student achievement be measured on a frequent and regular basis?

**A.11.3:** Develop a prioritized list of programs and interventions to be evaluated with timelines for review.

**A.11.4:** Design an evaluation and reporting format for programs/interventions that includes the following:

- The source of student performance data used for program evaluation.
- The alignment of curriculum goals to program assessments.
- The criteria used to measure effective implementation.
- Frequent formative evaluations and annual summative evaluations.
- Statistical analysis applied to measure program effectiveness based on student performance data.

**A.11.5:** Develop specific district criteria and procedures to determine whether to initiate, continue, or terminate programs/interventions.

**A.11.6:** Establish an annual schedule for the review of program/intervention evaluations with appropriate administrative staff.

**A.11.7:** Provide professional development for administrators and teachers assigned to lead the process of data analysis for program and intervention reviews.

**A.11.8:** Identify fiscal resources available to effectively support the design, implementation, and assessment of programs and interventions.

**Recommendation 12: Develop and implement coordinated planning processes that produce congruent district and campus plans and link the planning for curriculum management, professional development, student assessment, program evaluation, and budget development with those plans.**

Effective planning is essential for focusing and organizing district resources and priorities to meet changing student needs. Long-range planning provides a systemic means to sustain constancy of purpose as a district works towards achieving its goals. Comprehensive planning benefits students by increasing the probability that effective programs, practices, and facilities will be available to them regardless of district growth, economic changes, and other effects of community changes. School improvement planning that is aligned with district planning and considers all student data and unique school needs enhances the chance of increasing student achievement with improved focus and coordination of site and district efforts.

The auditors found a current district strategic plan and were informed of present efforts to create a new plan. There is little board direction for planning in areas of curriculum management (see [Finding 1.2](#)), professional development (see [Finding 3.12](#)), program interventions (see [Finding 5.2](#)), student assessment (see [Finding 4.1](#)), budget development, and technology planning (see [Findings 5.1](#) and [5.4](#)). Current documents do not fully meet audit criteria to provide quality direction for ongoing improvement efforts and to cohesively link those efforts across units and functions within the school district.

Common focus is emerging under the leadership of the superintendent in the area of student learning, curriculum and instruction, and technology. Board policies are inadequate to direct planning consistently across the district and among all stakeholders.

The following recommendations are designed to improve system planning for the effective integration of all planning functions and the successful accomplishment of district goals. Their implementation is best accomplished over a one- to two-year period. Some steps represent refinement rather than full-scale development and can be accomplished more quickly.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**G.12.1:** Direct the superintendent to assist the board in developing a clear, concise, comprehensive policy framework that stipulates the following:

- The requirement that all system sub-functions engage in planning and create plans that are connected to the overall system learning priorities, reviewed annually by the superintendent, interrelated to budget development, become part of the evaluation of the system administrators charged with these sub-functions, and reported publicly to the board at regular intervals.
- Requirement that all system initiatives be subjected to evaluation after a specified time period, ensuring that unsuccessful or even moderately successful initiatives may not be continued.

**G.12.2:** Adopt board policies to provide overall direction for a full scope of long- and short-range planning aligned with the current efforts in strategic planning. Policies should address development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of plans and their ongoing use in relation to the budget planning process. Policies should include expectations for public reporting to communicate plan implementation progress.

**G.12.3:** Direct the superintendent to design a planning process to comply with the policy described in **G.12.1**. Require that any district-wide strategic plan incorporate all components listed in [Exhibit 1.3.2](#), [1.3.3](#), and [1.3.4](#). Require linkage of campus improvement, curriculum management, student and program assessment, professional development, and budget planning to the district's long-range plan.

**G.12.4:** Direct the superintendent to establish budget development procedures to ensure that district learning and planning priorities are reflected in budgeting and spending and are communicated to staff and the public at-large.

**G.12.5:** Direct the superintendent, with the administrative team, to prepare regular reports to the governing board on all district plans and their results as they pertain to the attainment of district goals and objectives.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of Phoenix Elementary School District #1:

**A.12.1:** Assist the board in the development and/or revision of board policies as noted in **G.12.1** to meet Curriculum Audit™ criteria.

**A.12.2:** Implement a comprehensive planning process that:

- Provides a vision of the future in each of the functions and divisions in the district.
- Uses data information to frame district wide student performance measures over several years with increasing challenges.
- Requires campus improvement plans to set student performance measures aligned to the district measures and at a higher achieving pace.
- Develops SMART goals, objectives, and action steps, ensuring they are succinctly measurable, focus on student learning results, and are not merely tallies of completion or attendance.
- Require clear and explicit connections in campus improvement plans to the strategic directives of the school system.
- Ensures all professional development activities at each school site are clearly connected to the strategic directives.
- All school plans need to be indexed to relevant assessment data. Initiatives that are not so connected need to be eliminated. These actions will ensure system focus and accountability.

**A.12.3:** Direct that all initiatives previously implemented are to be systematically evaluated with measurable outcomes as to their effectiveness in reaching the goals for which they were adopted, and their anticipated effectiveness in supporting the strategic directives. Initiatives that have not been successful or are even only moderately successful may not be continued. Any program that is not evaluated will not be continued after a specific time period established by the superintendent.

**A.12.4:** Design a consistent format for district departmental and campus plans that includes the following components:

- Connectivity to the district mission, beliefs, and goals;
- Clearly established and measurable goals to meet student needs;
- Goals based on the analysis of student achievement data and other data;
- Strategies that address goals to be accomplished;
- Resources and funding required for each strategy/objectives;
- Methods of monitoring and evaluating plan progress included with plan design;
- Actions and intervention strategies that are built around effective change strategies;
- Evaluation based on measurable student results data;
- Deployment strategies to disseminate the steps and tasks to be accomplished in the plan;
- Identification of specific persons responsible for implementing strategies; and
- Professional development needed to reach the goals.

**A.12.5:** Provide training for all administrators and key instructional staff pertaining to the following:

- Understanding and adhering to the critical components of an effective planning process that is data driven;

- Building capacity to address components of the planning process as they assess campus and department needs; and
- Setting realistic goals and performance-based activities.

**A.12.6:** Monitor new or revised plans to ensure that these plans are aligned with the curricular priorities in the district and that implementation is resulting in progress toward those goals.

**A.12.7:** Direct administrative staff to directly utilize plan elements in their daily roles and responsibilities. References to specific plan goals and objectives are incorporated in all reports, presentations, and analyses to ensure routine usage of plans to focus on and improve student learning.

**A.12.8:** Develop administrative regulations to govern the development, deployment, implementation, and evaluation of the planning process.

**A.12.9:** Establish an ongoing communication plan to orient all staff and keep current the knowledge of the planning process and results.

**A.12.10:** Create a district task force to examine and analyze all existing plans in the district and to develop a process to consolidate the planning processes and eliminate duplication and contradictions between those plans. The charge of the task force is to:

- Assist campuses and district personnel to singularly focus on one concerted improvement effort.
- Reduce the amount of staff time devoted to writing and completing plans that simply meet compliance deadlines.
- Provide professional development for school and district staff in writing improvement plans and training staff on effective implementation of plans.

Attention, adherence, and fidelity to the twelve recommendations will provide Phoenix Elementary School District #1 with significant improvement in the management of its curriculum. Some recommendations can be implemented fairly quickly while others will require steady, continual efforts and attention. These recommendations are intended to guide the district in its effort to improve student achievement with a central focus on each student's learning.