

2012

# An Analysis of Governance Policies and Practices in one School District Regarding English Learners

Lynn V. Lysko

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Walden University

2012

Abstract

An Analysis of Governance Policies and Practices in one School District

Regarding English Learners

by

V. Lynn Lysko

M.A., University of Western Ontario, 1985

B.A., Wilfrid Laurier University, 1983

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Administrator Leadership for Teaching and Learning

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## Abstract

In a large, urban, high school district, secondary English-learning students are not achieving at the same rates as other identified subgroups on state and local standardized tests. This gap compounds economic and social inequities in the region. A solution to the problem is important to educators and policy makers in providing an equitable education for all students. Using the conceptual framework of organizational culture, this qualitative project study explored the district's policies and practices on the academic program for English learners and whether policies result in meeting academic needs of English-learning students at the secondary level. One-on-one interviews with district personnel, observations in classrooms, and documents were analyzed using interpretive policy analysis. Three goals drove the data collection: (a) identify inconsistent or conflicting district policies; (b) identify the impact of district policies on diverse groups; and (c) determine a foundation for district administration to write policy. While no inconsistent or conflicting policies were identified, the evidence suggested the need for clear, frequent communication between the different policy actors and professional development for administrators and teachers in schools to create successful academic systems for English learners. Implications for positive social change are that these students will achieve greater academic success and be less likely to drop out of school.



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## Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents, Bill and Shirley Lysko. They would have enjoyed watching me achieve this milestone. To Mike: you have some catching up to do.



## Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my husband, Dr. Richard Amstadter, for not giving up on me. I would also like to acknowledge my chairperson, Dr. Pamela Harrison; I thank her for her considerable patience and wisdom. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge my study buddy and fellow doctoral student for the last 5 years, Don Davis, who is also near the end of his journey. I could not have done this without any of you.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **Introduction**

Under the pressure of a formidable accountability system, American education leaders are confronted with issues of social inequity for their students (Marshall & Oliva, 2006). These issues have manifested through a perpetual student achievement gap that marginalizes and disenfranchises certain groups of students (National Assessment of Education Progress, 2009). Of particular note is the gap between students who are learning English (ELs) as a second or third language and those who are English only (EO, Ross, 2007). The federal legislation, No Child Left Behind (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002) holds American school districts accountable both for students learning English (NCLB, Title III, Strengthening Institutions) and grade-level course content in English (NCLB, Title I, Part A, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged). In the state under study, English language development (ELD), subject matter content, and state content standards are tested annually at the state level (California Department of Education [CDE], 2011)

NCLB is a reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The federal government designed the NCLB legislation to focus on specific subgroups of students such as English learners or students with disabilities instead of averaging achievement rates across all students as a single group. American districts and schools are now judged on meeting academic achievement goals, called annual measurable objectives (AMOs) (CDE, 2001). If any group of students—such as ELs or students with disabilities—does not meet the goals set by the state for 2 years in a row,

the school and the district face federal sanctions (CDE, 2010) and go into program improvement status. The NCLB mandates were designed to close the achievement gap and ensure higher teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 2008), thus resolving the inequity displayed by an achievement gap. One particular section of NCLB, Title I, has the following goal: “to eliminate poverty in the United States by providing compensatory education programs...designed to serve ‘culturally disadvantaged’ students ... and to achieve equality of educational opportunity for all students” (Spring, 2008, p. 487). Achieving the NCLB targets for every single subgroup has proven difficult for most CA schools (CDE, 2011).

Federal and state laws dictate how districts are to provide educational opportunities for English-learning students. This study examined district policies including philosophy, goals, objectives, and comprehensive plans (section 0000); administration (section 2000); students (section 5000); and instruction (section 6000). Inside each of these sections is guidance in the form of administrative regulations. For example, inside Article 0, Board Policy 04121 (District Board Policies, Regulations, and Bylaws Document) is the district’s philosophy of education regarding school site councils. Policy 2120, within the Administration section, outlines the superintendent’s cabinet. Article 6, in the section on Instruction, mentions one of two policies on ELs: services to Limited English Proficient Students (BP 6141.1). Examining district policy to determine the guidance given for ELs and examining the communication of policy to all policy actors formed the basis for this project study.

### **Federal and State Law**

The legal mandates related to language education in the state have a rich history. In 1855, the State Department of Education required all instruction to be in English (Spring, 2008). Over 100 years later, in 1970, a countering memorandum from the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) clarified Title VI (42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin. School districts were held responsible for ensuring that even students who did not speak English were able to learn the English language concurrently with content of other classes such as history or mathematics (HEW, 1970). Shortly after the HEW memorandum was released, approximately 1800 K-12 non-English-speaking Chinese students in San Francisco Unified School District in California who did not receive additional instruction brought an historic class action lawsuit against the city's school system (*Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 974). Ultimately, the United States Supreme Court held that the Education Code required that schools instruct students only in English and that the state policy ensured that all students master English in order to graduate. The Court held that the district's practices denied the Chinese-speaking minority benefits afforded the English-speaking majority. The lack of instruction caused a lack of opportunity for the Chinese students to participate in public education and violated Title VI, 42 USC § 2000d. The *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) decision required that schools be places where learning was possible even if the student did not understand English.



The Lau decision led to the Chacon-Moscone Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act of 1976 which required that schools offer instruction in the primary language of the non-English-speaking students, if necessary (California Education Code, Article 3, 1976; Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2008). The law was in effect for a decade until it expired in 1987, but during that decade it also required schools to provide professional development to staff so that they could be more successful teaching students with limited English proficiency (2005 Education Code 52160-52178).

Another legal case that argued the problem of access to curricula based on language ability was *Castañeda v. Pickard*, 648 F.2d 989 (5<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1981), filed against the Raymondville Independent School District (RISD) in Texas by Roy Castañeda. Mr. Castañeda claimed that the RISD was discriminating against his children because of their ethnicity. He argued that the classroom where his children were learning was segregated, using a grouping system based on criteria that were both ethnically and racially discriminating. The court ruled in favor of the district but Castañeda appealed. The Fifth Circuit ruled in favor of the Castañeda family and established a protocol for student assessments. The protocol determined how bilingual education programs would be held responsible for meeting the needs of English learning students. Both *Lau v. Nichols* and *Castañeda v. Pickard* considered issues of segregation, equity of instructional setting, and program access. An ongoing political debate at national and state levels about educational services to English language learners (ELLs) has ensued.

### **Definition of the Problem**

In a large urban high school district in a western state, secondary English-learning (EL) students were not achieving at the same rates as other significant subgroups on state and local standardized tests as reflected in the academic performance index (API) and adequate yearly progress (AYP) (California Department of Education, [CDE], 2009). This problem mirrored the larger national achievement gap. Despite the financial resources provided by the federal government through Title I (Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged) and Title III (also known as the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement Act) of NCLB, the district was in sanctions. One reason was the lack of academic achievement in the EL subgroup. For example, over 80% of the district's secondary ELs have been in U.S. schools for 7 or more years but have not attained enough English proficiency to be reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP) as measured by state tests (CDE, 2009). Part of the sanctioning phase requires the district to undertake a self-assessment of its policies and administrative regulations in order to verify compliance with all state and federal laws (CDE, 2009).

Recent research indicated that three factors possibly contribute to this problem, which affected the almost 2,000 English-learning students in the district's high school system: district policy development and implementation (Harris, 2007; Olsen, 2010), the organizational culture of the district (Caulkins, 2003; Denison, 1990; Schein, 1984), and instructional programming (Dailey, Fleishman, Gil, Holtaman, O'Day, & Vosmer, 2005;

Goldenberg, 2008; Marshall & Oliva, 2006). Embedded in the organizational culture of the district were concerns about district leadership and governance systems (Marzano & Waters, 2009; Reeves, 2009; Senge, 1990). Therefore, examining district policies and practices on compliance may lead to a better understanding of the discrepancy in achievement between ELs and other students.

### **Rationale**

#### **Evidence of the Problem at the National, State, and Local Level**

A report published by The Education Trust (2010) stated that, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2009), the achievement gap in five states continued to remain much larger than that of the United States on average (Rowan, Hall, & Haycock, 2010). The state under study is one of those five states and is “compiling the worst track record in closing the achievement gap” (Rowan et al., 2010, p. 6). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2006), this state also has one of the nation’s largest number of ELs, 1.6 million (26% of all students) who receive EL services.

On the regional level, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), and this district’s county specifically, the percent of adults who graduated from high school is 74%. The state average is 76.8% and the national average is 80.4%. The figures reflect the national averages quite closely. However, the percentage of those with a bachelor’s degree or higher is 15% in the county, lower than both the state average of 26.6% and the national average of 24.4% (U.S. Census, 2000). Further census data indicated that a

language other than English is spoken in an average of 39.5% of homes in the state, 17.9% of the homes on a national level, and 32.4% locally (U.S. Census, 2000). With lower parental educational levels and higher percentages of non-English-speaking adults in the community, there are implications for the economic prosperity of the region as well as the value placed on education.

**Title I accountability.** The region is a diverse territory of agricultural land; small, medium, and large cities, with urban, suburban and rural settings; and significant populations of students from low-income families (CDE, 2009). Many high schools in this region are identified as Title I (CDE, 2008) due to the high percentage of low-income students that receive free or reduced lunches in accordance with the national school lunch program. This socio-economic disadvantage suggests that the school may have a greater challenge meeting the student-achievement expectations (U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare, 1965). Moreover, these schools often have considerable numbers of minority students, and students that are not native speakers of English (CDE, 2011), adding to the challenge of sustaining academic growth.

The federal government's educational accountability under No Child Left Behind, AYP, is measured in part by the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in the core content areas of English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. At the local level, the EL subgroup of the district has not met the federal Title I academic achievement goals of AYP for the last 5 consecutive years (CDE, 2011). The high school district data was derived from administration of the CAHSEE for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade census. A certain

percent of the sophomore students must be proficient in both the ELA and the mathematics portions of the California HSEE. Each year, the percent of sophomores needed to achieve proficiency and meet AYP goals increases in the state. For example, in 2008-09, AYP required 46.0% of all subgroups of sophomores to be proficient in ELA and 47.5% to be proficient in mathematics. In 2009-10, AYP required 55.6% of sophomores to be proficient in ELA and 54.8% to be proficient in mathematics. In 2010-11, AYP goals for sophomore proficiency were 66.7% and 66.1% respectively. The state lagged behind the federal goals during the same period with 33.3% of ELs attaining proficiency in ELA and 42.8% proficiency in mathematics in 2009 (Department of Education, 2009); in 2010, 35.6% of ELs attained proficiency in ELA and 45.6% in mathematics (CDE, 2010); in 2011, 38.7% attained proficiency in ELA and 48.8% in mathematics (CDE, 2011). The district results for ELs for those same years lagged behind both federal goals and state results with 16.6% achieving proficiency for ELs in ELA and 31.8% in mathematics (CDE, 2009); 22.5% proficient in ELA and 29.4 % proficient in mathematics (CDE, 2010); and 26.4% proficient in ELA and 30.6 proficient in mathematics (CDE, 2011). Each successive year, with all AYP proficiency goals increasing approximately 11% until 2014 (CDE, 2012), additional targets are unlikely to be met in this district. As the goals rise, the number of students who do not achieve the goals is likely to increase. Something must change within the system to increase success in meeting AYP targets and eliminating the achievement gap.

**Title III accountability.** In addition to the AYP goals of Title I, the district is also accountable to the state and federal education systems for the goals of Title III under NCLB, two that are specifically related to ELLs and their acquisition of English and one related to the acquisition of other content knowledge. These three goals are called Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) and a variety of assessments contribute to the achieving the Title III targets. Using the state's English Language Development Test (ELDT), the state requires all ELs to take this assessment on an annual basis. An initial ELDT assessment, for students new to the state, determines whether students are classified as EL students or English-proficient students (CDE, 2004). The five levels of English proficiency measured by the CELDT include the following: *Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, Early Advanced, and Advanced*. Scaled scores are recorded in the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with a fifth score as an "Overall" average. Students are considered English proficient if their overall ELDT score is *early advanced* or *advanced* with a minimum score of *intermediate* in all the assessed domains.

The three AMAOs are quite different. AMAO 1 focuses on language acquisition; students are expected to gain one overall proficiency level annually until they reach the proficiency level (*Early Advanced* overall with no subskill area below *Intermediate*). In 2008-09, the federal target for AMAO 1 was 51.6%; the district under study exceeded that goal with 55.3% of ELs gaining one level that year. Data from 2009-10 for AMAO 1 show that only 51.4% of ELs gained one level and fell short of the federal target of

53.1%. However, the following year showed greater success. In 2010-11, 58.3% of ELs achieved one level of proficiency, surpassing the federal target of 54.8%.

AMAO 2 deals with the percentage of ELs who could reasonably be expected to reach proficiency. The term “reasonably expected” takes into account the age, grade level, number of years a student has been in a state school, and other factors. Thus, a 6th grade newcomer to a district would not be included in the “reasonably expected proficient” cohort on AMAO 2, yet a 6th grader who had been in a state school for several years would be “reasonably expected” to be proficient. Three types of students have been reflected in AMAO 2: those with slow, steady progress; those who have been in U. S. schools for 4 or more years, regardless of their CELDT level; and beginners who score *Proficient* within 1 year. The AMAO 2 cohort, then, is a subset of, and smaller than, the AMAO 1 cohort. In 2009-10, the AMAO 2 targets changed to reflect two distinct groups: ELs with less than 5 years in the United States and ELs with more than 5 years in the United States; goals were created for each group. In 2009-10, the goals for reclassification were 17.4% and 41.3% respectively. The district under study did not meet the first goal for students with fewer than 5 years in the U.S., with only 14.4% of ELs in the cohort meeting the ELDT criteria for proficiency. The EL subgroup did meet its goal for students who have been in U.S. schools more than 5 years, with 44.7% of them meeting ELDT criteria for English proficiency. This district pattern continued into 2010-11. Students with fewer than 5 years in the country gained ELDT criteria for English proficiency at a rate of 15.9% while the target was 18.7%. Students with more

than 5 years in the United States met CELDT criteria for English proficiency at a rate of 49%, surpassing the federal target of 43.2%.

AMAO 3 data are compiled from the performance of the EL subpopulation on AYP in ELA and mathematics. The tests that contributed to AMAO 3 at the high school level included the (a) California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) and the California Modified Assessment (CMA) for kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade special education students, and (b) the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) for the sophomores. In 2008-09, the federal target for AMAO 3 was 44.5% for ELA and 43.5% for mathematics. The district under study did not meet that goal: only 16.6% of its ELs achieved proficiency on the ELA portion of the CAHSEE and 31.8% on the math portion. In 2009-10, the goals increased to 55.6% in ELA and 54.8% in mathematics. Again, the district did not meet the AMAO 3 targets: only 22.5% of ELs achieved proficiency in ELA and 29.4% achieved proficiency in mathematics. The most recent data, 2010-11, continued this pattern. The 2010-11 targets were 66.7% for ELA and 66.1% for mathematics. But only 26.4% of ELs achieved proficiency in ELA and 30.6 of ELs achieved proficiency in mathematics. As a result of the continued pattern of not meeting all three AMAOs, the California Department of Education sanctioned the district (CDE, 2008) and required an investigation to discover what was causing the lack of achievement among ELLs.



### **Evidence of the Problem in the Literature**

The NCLB legislation has exposed discrepancies in the achievement levels of the different subgroups of students (CDE, 2009). Data reports from the Department of Education (2009) explained earlier in this study mirror this national context, showing a wide disparity between the success of ELs and all students in the district under study. While achievement gaps are not new (Harris & Herrington, 2006) their elimination remains elusive. Districts throughout the United States have remedied only pieces of the puzzle (Reeves, 2009). Examples include creating a system of pressure and support and using equity audits, tools to examine compliance with federal statutes for civil rights in educational settings to prevent discrimination (Burch, 2005; Rorrer, Skrla, & Scheurich, 2008; Snipes, Doolittle, & Herlihy, 2002). Rowan, Hall, and Haycock (2010) warned that more than a simple measurement of the achievement gap is needed. They cautioned that research should examine not only the size of the gap but also the narrowing of the gap, progress for all students, and comparisons of groups with other jurisdictions. Only a few districts have successfully addressed the issue of poor academic achievement among EL students (Cloud, Genesse, & Hamayan, 2009; Goldenberg, 2008; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004).

Research reports from Burch (2005) and the Center for Applied Linguistics (2006), as well as educational policy articles from Darling-Hammond (2008), Darling-Hammond and Friedlander (2007), Garcia and Guerra (2004), and Rorrer (2006), suggested investigation of Local Educational Agency (LEA) policies and practices.

Understanding the relationship of policy to practice with respect to the federal and state mandates for equity may reveal whether existing district policies set a clear course for improvement. An understanding of the policies and practices of the district's governance system could help educators address the gap at the local level. With the forces of federal laws, such as *Lau v. Nichols*, and civil rights amendments such as Title VI, could be used in conjunction with NCLB accountability, could be used to close the achievement gap and reduce inequity at the local level. Determining alignment of policy to practice and monitoring the implementation of policies is worthy of study.

### **Definitions**

The following terms associated with the problem were used in this study:

*Academic Performance Index (API):* API is the state's measure to which all students are held accountable for learning the content standards in ELA, mathematics, science and social science. They are tested by the state's Content Standards Tests (CSTs). There are five proficiency levels for this growth model of achievement – far below basic, below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced. The goal for all schools is to achieve a school score of 800 points on the API. API is also measured specifically for each significant sub-group of students (CDE, 2007).

*Achievement Gap:* The achievement gap is defined as the difference between academic results for student population groups as measured over time. For the purpose of this study, the group was selected from the list of those identified for accountability

ratings by the State: English learning status (Department of Education, Testing and Accountability, 2002).

*Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP):* AYP is the federal measure to which all students are held accountable for learning the content standards of ELA and mathematics. The federal goal is for every student to be proficient by the year 2014 (NCLB, 2001). In the state, the test used to measure high school students' knowledge is the state's High School Exit Exam (HSEE) and is given to the students for the first time in their sophomore year. Each subgroup of students, including ELs, has annual targets for AYP in order for 100% of all students to be proficient by 2014.

*Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs):* AMAOs are the Title III goals for each English-learning student to achieve. There are three goals: AMAO 1 focuses on making annual progress in learning English; AMAO 2 focuses on attaining English proficiency and is divided into two subgroups (those students with less than five years in the U.S. and those students with more than five years in the U.S.); AMAO 3 focuses on the AYP goals identical to those of Title I.

*Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs):* AMOs are the Title I goals for each content area for the percent of students who must be proficient. For example, in the year 2009, 44% of all high school students must be proficient in ELA. There are goals for both ELA and mathematics. These goals are also used to calculate AYP (NCLB, 2001).

*District Intervention and Assistance Team (DAIT):* The DAIT is a combination of district office leadership people and an outside team of experts who provide guidance to

the district to guide reform efforts. The providers are expected to have formal training through the Department of Education which guides their reform solutions and supports the district in Program Improvement to write and enact a new Local Educational Agency (LEA) plan (CDE, 2009).

*District Assistance Survey (DAS):* The DAS is a tool used by the Department of Education to assist districts to self-assess and reflect on existing policies and practices in the state's districts that could prevent all students from achieving equally (Department of Education, School and District Improvement Division, 2006). This tool is shown in Appendix A.

*No Child Left Behind (NCLB):* NCLB is a federal law enacted in 2001 focused on the education of all students, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, disability, or language (U.S. Department of Education, Public Law 107-110, 2001). Both Title I and Title III regulations are contained within NCLB.

## **Significance**

### **Significance of the Problem in California**

Knowing the condition of its state school system, in March 2008, California took a bold leadership step in response to districts not achieving Title I AMOs. Holding school districts to the highest level of accountability for student achievement, the State Board of Education (SBE) decided to assign corrective actions to 97 districts in Year 3 of Program Improvement (PI) under NCLB. These districts had reached PI Year 3 status largely for two reasons: the subgroups of ELs and Students with Disabilities are not making AYP

targets (California Department of Education, 2008). The range of districts stretches geographically from the Mexico/U.S. border to the border of Oregon and from the western coast to the Sierras. The CDE had divided the districts into four categories ranging from toughest to lightest sanctions: intensive, moderate, light, and other.

The SBE assigned a District Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT) to districts in the intensive and moderate categories. The DAIT helped analyze data and led a district capacity study. The DAIT and a district team of people analyzed these data, based on a needs survey known as the District Assistance Survey (DAS, Appendix B), to prioritize the implementation of an action plan. The DAS tool is research-based and has seven sections: (a) standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment, (b) professional development, (c) human resources, (d) data systems/analysis and monitoring, 5) parent and community involvement, 6) fiscal operations, and 7) governance and leadership (Shannon & Bylsma, 2004). The 97 districts in Year 3 PI were scored on a Priority Assistance Index based on four components. The four components were: (a) percentage of AYP targets met, (b) percentage of Title I schools in the LEA that are not in PI, (c) relative growth in the Academic Performance Index (API) over time, and (d) relative API performance (CDE, 2008). This project study concentrated on the DAS section of governance and leadership policies especially focused on equity issues for English-learning students within the district. It examined the district's 2008 self-assessment of compliance with the nine elements of the governance section as a benchmark of the district's policy. Then, any changes in policy since the 2008 self-assessment were

explored. The study was significant because it gave attention to the first cohort of PI districts to undergo the sanctions of the CDE. Also, it offered suggestions for policy revision for districts entering PI in subsequent years and generated a deeper knowledge and understanding of the challenges for the districts under sanctions. Identifying the challenges by examining achievement data led to action plans for each district. Each action plan had a focus on governance as one of the factors contributing to the challenges. Designing and implementing new governance policies was an important first step in the improvement process. A focus on the particular subgroups who were not meeting AYP was part of the improvement process design. This study focused on the efforts of a particular district to examine the improvement efforts that were successful.

### **Significance of the Problem at the Local Level**

The district under study is comprised of two separate districts operating under a single board of education. The elementary district (K-8) was number 56 on the Department of Education's priority assistance list for Program Improvement, and the high school district (9-12) was number 18 (Department of Education, 2009). Therefore, the elementary district fell into the light category and the high school fell into the moderate category, so only the high school district required the support services provided by a District Intervention and Assistance Team (DAIT). These districts were 2 of the 97 (33 elementary, 2 high school, and 33 unified districts) which were Program Improvement Year 3 for Title I and also Year 5 for Title III. These factors indicate that the districts are under sanctions from both Title I and Title III mandates and were not meeting the federal

goals on two fronts. While the subgroups of students not meeting the goals were the same (ELs and students with disabilities), the districts were held doubly accountable and faced dual corrective actions (CDE, 2009). As stated previously, few districts have all the answers to the problems of closing the achievement gap between English learning and English proficient students (Cloud, Genesse, & Hamayan, 2009; Goldenberg, 2008; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004).

The process of completing the District Assistance Survey guided the district leadership and the DAIT to prioritize the seven elements, to hone district thinking, and to focus on some of the biggest challenges. In the case of this research, several questions arose from the use of the tool that merit further study to address the existing achievement gap, especially within the governance section.

### **Significance of the Problem for Other Educators**

With students not measuring up to AYP goals and accountability rising each year, more districts are unable to meet the targets. Successful districts could serve as exemplars for study, but the research on education policy development and implementation in successful districts is scarce. In the literature, the information about policy writing or analysis in successful districts is insufficient. This project study could offer guidance and use this district as an example to follow. Given that the state's Department of Education required the use of the District Assistance Survey only at the beginning of the data analysis phase and never required the district to use it again, a district under sanctions that chose to self-study the governance and leadership aspects of

the tool could lead the way for other educators to avoid the same mistakes that can contribute to an achievement gap. If the LEA under study were to provide additional exemplars of success in reducing the achievement gap, there would be a benefit to other district educators in the state, providing a road map to avoid sanctions.

### **Significance of the Problem for Promoting Social Justice**

Positive social change requires a change that improves conditions for people. Walden defines positive social change as a “deliberate process of creating and applying ideas, strategies, and actions to promote the worth, dignity, and development of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, and societies” (Walden University, para. 2, 2010). With similar philosophy, in March, 2010, at a speech in Selma, Alabama, United States’ Education Secretary Arne Duncan vowed to reinvigorate civil rights enforcement in the American education system stating,

The educational inequities of today are going to translate into the economic obsolescence of tomorrow.... The achievement gap is still a cancer that imperils our nation's progress. America's school children cannot wait six years, or eight years, or 10 years, for pervasive educational inequities to disappear. Your children, my children, our children, the students gathered here today, have only one chance—one chance--for an education. (Duncan, 2010, p. 5)

Providing equitable learning conditions for children contributes to Walden University’s commitment to positive social change and its mission of social justice. A leader for



social justice and positive social change in the world of education would be an advocate for marginalized subgroups of students such as ELs even in the face of adversity.

Marshall and Oliva (2006) described the current social reality of the education world, stating that educators have attempted to improve education equitably for students but “success is uneven” (p. 2). Scholarship from the last two decades focused on understanding why there are inequitable outcomes for marginalized students and placed the blame clearly on systemic organizational practices and policies (McNeil, 2000; Poland & Carlson, 1993; Sewell, DuCette, & Shapiro, 1998). The original purpose of NCLB greatly supported social change, as its primary objectives were to equalize both educational opportunity and outcomes (NCLB 2001). Yet, federal policy at the local level sanctioned under-performing schools and districts that were predominantly poor with minority populations (Loveless, 2006).

In addition to the economic imperative mentioned by Secretary Duncan, research needs to focus on issues of social justice that includes district leadership development (Cambron-McCabe, 1997). Policy development research is also needed. Leaders who are developing policies with social change implications directly support the vision and mission of Walden University. These leaders “expose and alter the institutions which perpetuate systemic oppression” (Heybach, 2009, p. 239). Creating scholar-practitioners who transform society and advance the universal good will transform pedagogic practice. The implications of the proposed study for the state and the country include application or replication in other program improvement situations at sites and districts. A deeper

investigation into a district-level context may be replicable at a county, state, or federal level and provide guidance for many districts to follow.

### **Guiding/Research Question**

This project study analyzed a school district's policies and practices that influence the academic experience of ELs educated within that district. It attempted to determine whether district policy and practice reflected the legal mandates essential to meeting the academic needs of English-learning students at the secondary level. The research sought to answer the following question: How does district board policy meet the academic needs of English-learning students at the secondary level?

### **Review of the Literature**

The purpose of the study was to determine how district board policy meets the academic needs of English-learning students. To analyze scholarly thinking about the topic requires deep comprehension of the moral and ethical viewpoints of a particular author (Hart, 2008). A comprehensive literature review shows where the researcher's study fits what is known about the topic and what requires further attention, in this case, what is known about policy and practice, and its influence on student achievement. A review of the recent professional literature on the achievement gap looked at organizational culture, the cultural health of the educational system, leadership, and governance for equity. After the conceptual framework is developed and discussed, the review delves into the literature on the achievement gap of ELs. While much scholarly attention has focused on instruction for elementary ELs (Hill & Flynn Hill, 2006),

secondary ELs merit further study, specifically related to district support systems for academic achievement.

The review is divided into three main sections. In the first section, organizational culture—the conceptual framework for the study—is described, along with an approach for measuring organizational culture, and the elements of subculture. The second section is comprised of a description of the philosophy of educational organizational health, professional learning, home-school relationships, and expectations of students. The final section of the literature review sought to understand equity in educational leadership and governance. Topics include district office leadership, equity in economics, equity in achievement, and equity in instructional programming.

The review was based on peer-reviewed sources from the EBSCO, ProQuest Central, and Sage databases. The following key words were used: *organizational culture*, *achievement gap*, *district office leadership*, *instruction*, *secondary English learners*, *second language acquisition*, and *relationships*.

### **Organizational Culture as a Conceptual Framework**

This study is situated within a conceptual framework of organizational culture. The framework includes an understanding of the concept and definition of organizational culture. Inclusive concepts concern organizational culture, elements involving subcultures, and the role of dialogue across cultures to promote shared understandings (Schein, 1984).

**Definition of organizational culture.** Management theorist Edgar H. Schein (1985) developed a definition of culture in order to examine methods of measuring culture and identify ways that a culture could deal with difficult issues, such as change, and do it in a healthy manner. Based on management theories of Deal and Kennedy (1982), Schein (1990, 2004) evolved the concept of organizational culture to understand that culture is the result of a group's accumulated learning and is defined as a set of values, beliefs, norms, and assumptions held by this group. He posited that the evolution of a culture includes the construction of shared meanings through a social learning process where members of the organization "recreate and ratify prior meanings but also construct new meanings as new situations arise" (Schein, 2004, p. 2). Denison (1990) declared that a culture is functional or healthy depending on the consistency between its practice and beliefs. To understand and change an organization, its values and structures must be examined alongside individuals' understanding of the context (culture, climate, and practices) of the organization (Denison & Spreitzer, 1991).

**Measuring organizational culture.** Schein (2004) also warned that transformational change of the organization will fail if the psychological safety of the individuals involved in the change were deemed to be at risk and that the building of trust was a complicated communication process driven by the individual's desire to trust. Supporting Schein's belief in the importance of communication, Cataldo, Raelin, & Lambertin (2009) developed the Integrated Schein Model, and revealed additional need to focus on context for a successful change event. For organizational cultural change to

be successful, Cataldo et al. (2009) stated that critical factors within the culture of the organization (communication from the top, collaboration across departments and professional development of the individuals) affected the opportunity for success.

Schein (1984) stipulated that organizational culture should be examined and measured at multiple levels. By 2009, he had evolved three distinct levels of organizational culture: artifacts and behaviors, espoused values, and assumptions. At the most simplistic level, an organization will have artifacts that demonstrate how the corporation has been constructed and what behaviors it exhibits. What cannot be determined at this level is why people behave as they do within the working environment. At a deeper level, behavior may be analyzed by examining the values that each member possesses. This analysis occurs through interviewing the members within the organization to ascertain individual understanding of their own and others' behaviors. Further insight into why people behave as they do then merits analysis of the unconscious behaviors of the members of the organization which is the deepest level of examination (Schein, 2004). Schein (2004) also argued that the ultimate level of organizational culture analysis included anthropological, focused inquiry as the only way to expose these assumptions that are the "taken-for-granted processes of 'how we do things around here' that become embedded in rituals and traditions" (Schein, 2004, p. 3). He suggested that an outsider conduct the focused inquiry to help the subcultures of the organization clarify what it may take for granted. Analysis of a district's policies and practices

(beliefs and behaviors) can be qualitative in nature and forms the basis for the choice of policy analysis methodology in the next section of this study.

**Elements of subculture and the role of dialogue.** Caulkins (2003) suggested that organizations consist of different subcultures, as opposed to one culture. For example, a school district would likely have many different subcultures from different departments at the district office to each school site. Hypothetically, in the subculture of the Human Resources department, there may not be an understanding of the importance of hiring teachers who believe in building strong relationships with families and students or who have the instructional pedagogy in their training to be effective with ELs. At the same time, the Educational Services department may have developed values around the importance of all students graduating high school and, in order to do that, teachers must build strong relationships with students and families and be highly effective with their pedagogical knowledge. Therefore, to have a highly effective district as a whole would require all the subcultures to dialogue and share beliefs and practices in order to find common ground (Schein, 2004).

Caulkins (2003) stated that there may not be only one view of culture but that each viewpoint contributes to the reality of life within the organization. Both Schein and Senge (1990) agreed that shared meanings about the realities within an organization were constructed through a social learning process. Senge (1990) defined the need of a culture to become a learning organization with exclusive focus on shared learning through communities of practice (Hord & Sommers, 2008; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002).

## **Cultural Health of Education Organizations**

**Philosophy.** Consistency between practice and beliefs defines an organization's cultural health (Denison, 1990). Caulkins (2003) further declared that viewpoints within the organization each offer a slightly different version of the same reality. Without an understanding of subcultures embedded within an organization, education leaders are challenged to reform the culture of their own system. Understanding the gap between policy and practice is a necessary element of the description of the culture of an organization. Effective public education stems from a culture that seeks to include all stakeholders, including students. Elmore (2000) warned that little research exists on organizational design and practice in exceptionally high-performing school districts. The available research reflects certain commonalities between exemplary school districts but offers no advice on sustaining the efforts or the processes (Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2008).

**Professional learning.** Senge (1990) described five disciplines as the means of building learning organizations: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning. Considering the different systems that encompass a school district, from human resources to business services to educational services, the management and understanding of the interrelation of each to the other can have a positive or negative impact on schools and student achievement. Senge suggested that redesigning a school system to exemplify a learning organization would enhance opportunities for people to expand their capacity to create the desired results, to nurture new patterns of thinking, to set free a collective aspiration, and to learn how to learn

together. Evolving from Schein's 1984 definition of organizational culture, change theorists and school improvement theorists have devised methodology to guide practitioners (Denison, 1990; Denison & Spreitzer, 1991). Understanding how to measure culture, managing the change to become a learning organization, and collectively sharing values and goals may lead to success.

Scholarship has shown that the focus of improvement work is the collegial learning of professionals in the community (Hord & Sommers, 2008; Matsumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Reeves, 2008). This professional learning culture should generate new knowledge to problem-solve while understanding the change process in order to be more functional (Dufour, Dufour, & Eaker, 1998, 2005; Fullan, 2000; Fullan et al., 2005; Hord & Sommers, 2008; Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Wagner, 2003). The collegial learning of the professionals occurs when strong relationships are in place (Levine & Marcus, 2007; Matsumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). Levine and Marcus (2007) further argued that collaborative inquiry communities, which assist professionals in having a shared vision and taking ownership of their learning and the learning of their students, should be organic. In contrast to collaborative inquiry, federal sanctions for NCLB (CDE, 2009) force teachers to implement a given curriculum faithfully, never wavering from the pacing guide. Levine and Marcus (2007) asserted that organic collaboration may yield higher student achievement results. Similarly, a collaborative teaching culture is critical to improving student learning conditions (Barth, 2006; Little,



2007; Matsumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). District leadership should have a system in place for collaboration to occur.

**Home-school relationships.** Strong relationships should also extend beyond faculty to the students and their families (Borba, 2009; Daniel, 2008). Family involvement in school, home-school communication, and support systems for families are a few ways in which relationships may be forged, but Borba (2009) maintained that educators need professional development for these relationships to be built appropriately. Daniels (2008) promoted gaining trust with families and providing translators to increase communication. One way in which the relationships for students who are ELs might grow is for educators to understand the language acquisition patterns and connect to the culture of their students by taking initiative and reaching out to families (Guo, 2006). Guo (2006) suggested that barriers to teacher-parent communication can be categorized as: “language differences, parents’ unfamiliarity with the school system, teacher attitudes and institutional racism, different views of education, and cultural differences regarding home-school communication” (Guo, 2006, p. 83). This district’s culture and practices surrounding outreach efforts to parents through District English Learner Advisory Committees (DELACs) are worthy of investigation. Examination of the policies surrounding these outreach efforts is also critical.

As relationships are built with families, teachers should learn to accept and promote first language ability as value-added in their students. In addition, if teachers are able, they should use primary language to assist students in understanding the content of

the class is documented in order to improve student learning (Bleakley & Chin, 2008). Empowering students to communicate in multiple languages and have a strong command of academic English will improve achievement measures. Teenagers from non-English-speaking parents who attain higher levels of English proficiency are less likely to be high school dropouts and more likely to contribute to the economy (Bleakley & Chin, 2008; Demie & Strand, 2006). Language acquisition is easier at a certain age (Bleakley & Chin, 2008), and acquisition of first language literacy skills supports the acquisition of subsequent languages (August & Shanahan, 2006; Hyekyung, Padilla, & Silva, 2006; Mays, 2008).

**High expectations for students.** Title III regulates a compulsory requirement to learn the English language. Research supports correlations between second language learning and student success (Christian, Pufahl, & Rhodes, 2005; August & Shanahan, 2006). Research examining NCLB has shown positive effects on students' academic achievement because of a new culture of high expectations for ELs (Cohen & Clewell, 2007; Griego Jones, 2003; Ramirez, 2003) yet a concern with the reliability of standardized tests (Shirvani, 2009) exists. Maintaining an understanding of the aforementioned factors, the next focus will be on social justice and closing the achievement gap.

### **Educational Leadership and Governance for Equity**

Organizational culture makes a difference to the success of the organization, and the leaders within are important to that success. Dickson and Mitchelson (2006) postured

that the relationship between leadership and culture is symbiotic. The literature on governance and leadership builds on this framework of organizational culture through the work of Elmore (2000), Waters and Marzano (2009) and other scholarly literature surrounding leadership activities like policy development and implementation. To improve the conditions of the learners within the organization, leadership at the district level must increasingly focus on special sub-populations of learners (Elmore, 2000; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Waters & Marzano, 2009). In a meta-analysis, Waters and Marzano (2009) discussed the following four major results from research.

**District leadership.** The first finding of the meta-analysis showed that leadership of the district impacts students' academic achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2009). In addition, Rorrer, Skrla, and Scheurich (2008) affirmed that one of the district's most essential tasks is providing instructional leadership. Without a confirmed agreement in the literature about the definition of district instructional leadership, Rorrer et al. cited two elements of instructional leadership that were consistently apparent during their review of the literature between 1986 and 2004: (a) generating will, and (b) building capacity. Often the missing element, capacity at site, district, and state level is critical to effect change in policy, strategies, resources, and actions (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005) that make a difference to student achievement. A difficult challenge, building group capacity involves working together in different ways.

Second, Waters and Marzano (2009) found that district leadership must focus on setting board-supported goals for instruction that are fiscally supported in policy and

consistently monitored. Rorrer et al. (2008) also reported that changing the culture of the district to focus on teaching and learning can impact student achievement in a positive way. One avenue to do this is by refining structures and processes to align with beliefs and expectations. District work should revolve around policy coherence and assurance that district spending is aligned with goals and students' needs. By examining district belief systems and goal setting, in essence, the culture and climate, social change implications can be revealed (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher., 2005; Skerritt & Hargreaves, 2008; Rorrer et al., 2008) and the issue of the achievement gap may be solved. To sum, goals that are supported and funded will make a difference in what happens to teaching and learning and result in improved student achievement.

Third, establishing policy coherence and ensuring equity for all students is important professional literature (Waters & Marzano, 2009). For example, Rorrer et al., (2008) purported that the policy enactment role of the district was directly related to the federal and state accountability systems, but the concept of equity as a value to district efficacy is relatively new in research. To maintain a focus on equity, a district should investigate past inequities, confront them directly, and insist that "equity be at the forefront of instructional and policy discussions and of decision making" (Rorrer et al, 2008, p. 330). Olsen and Romero (2006) suggested that, within the policy making of the district, focusing specifically on sub-groups of students such as ELs is critical. A deeper analysis of the equity literature is helpful for understanding the affiliation that leadership has to provide a socially just educational system. The literature reveals that the ideal of

NCLB to create a more equitable education system has not necessarily played out in student achievement results (Sherman, 2008; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004).

Fourth, Waters and Marzano (2009) found that the tenure of the superintendent was important to the success of the district. Rorrer et al., (2008) noted that research has “overlooked, ignored, and even dismissed” (Rorrer et al., 2008, p. 307) the district office personnel as having any influence in improvement factors, citing research (Smith & O’Day, 1991) that has the focus of reform efforts at the site level instead. While the limited research supports the aforementioned precepts, few documented districts have been able to establish all these practices successfully.

**Economics.** Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008) described a strong relationship between educational opportunity and social injustice that may lead to inequities local leadership needs to address. Scholarship on economics reveals that, as a culture, we need an educated society to thrive, survive, and remain global leaders (Elmore 2000, 2005; Heckman, 2006; Heifitz & Linksy, 2002a, 2002b; Milliken, 2007; O’Connell, 2007; Wise, 2008). Therefore, improved academic achievement for all students is not only a moral and social imperative, an economic imperative (O’Connell, 2009) benefits the greater society. A lack of investment in secondary schools has contributed to the “social, political, and economic breakdown of generations of young Americans” (Wise, 2008, p. 5) and economic factors are substantially affecting the drive to guide students to be globally competitive.

High school dropouts are an economic drag on the states. Princiotta and Reyna (2009) reported the effects of high school dropout rates on the national economy citing research from Alliance for Excellent Education and Levin, Belfield, Meunnig, and Rouse (2007). Dropouts are less likely to be employed, more likely to receive welfare, and much more likely to be imprisoned. Each high school dropout costs the public sector \$209,100 over a lifetime (Wise, 2008). In the aggregate, dropouts cost the United States more than \$300 billion per year (Wise, 2008).

**Achievement.** Historically, equity has increased student academic achievement in different ways. Teacher quality, students' instructional program, and state accountability are purposeful means of increasing student achievement (Skrla, McKenzie, & Scheiruick, 2009). The current focus on standards, time, and course access has allowed for an increase in rigor of program. In turn, the increased rigor has enabled minority students to reach closer to parity with nonminority students (Harris & Herrington, 2006). While some argue that NCLB has not achieved its purpose (Shirvani, 2009), Harris and Herrington argued that the focus of NCLB on specific subgroups has at least raised awareness of their existence. They stated that reporting the assessment data of the subgroups induces increased achievement. In contrast, Rorrer (2006) argued that focus at the local district level on these same factors would create equitable outcomes for students. Even closer to the classroom, McKenzie et al. (2007) contended that equity must be managed at the site level by preparing school leaders not district office leaders.

They argued that examining links between school practices and student outcomes should be the responsibility of the people closest to the student: teachers and site administration.

**Instructional programming.** Tsang, Katz, & Stack's (2008) study of San Francisco Unified School District suggested the district create policies that embed assessment of ELs in their instructional program. They discovered that length of time since the students' arrival in the United States makes a difference to achievement, and their study indicated a need to monitor the services provided to ELs as well as include growth measures for progress. They called for accountability of schools and districts to create flexible approaches for the academic learning of ELs. Policies should be adapted to permit accountability systems using multiple indicators to assess proficiency with English and academic content (Tsang, Katz, & Stack, 2008). One example of a policy shift suggested by the researchers included teachers using common writing prompts and collecting language samples. Tsang et al. also criticized policies with high-stakes consequences as unfair to ELs and suggested investigating more appropriate measures.

This literature review has focused on factors concerning organizational culture and the poor achievement of students within a district, including factors of governance, leadership, culture, and educational equity that sustain the existence of an achievement gap. A study of the academic experience of ELs through policy guidance and implementation may offer the local education system ideas to improve its learning and support structures for students.

The next section considers the implications of the policy study.

## **Implications**

The analysis of the existing district policies related to ELs' academic experience could indicate certain discrepancies between district policy, instructional practice, and legal mandates regarding English-learning students at the secondary level. Program evaluation and policy analysis are integral to the decision-making process that guides the elimination or addition of programs (Yanow, 2000). This local analysis, an understanding of organizational culture health, and a strong review of the literature may lead to recommendations for policy and practice change or alignment

Inspired by an “intellectual ideal [and] moral outrage at the unmet needs of students [as well as] a desire for a caring community where relationships matter” (Marshall & Oliva, 2006, p. 7), a new organizational culture with LEA policies that support ELs could become a model for social justice. Effecting change in the local setting based on information extracted from the research of the larger context could influence other districts' policy-making. The venues of governance and leadership affect a large population of English-learning students throughout the state. Fullan (2006) and Senge (1990) urged thinking on a systemic level to affect the broader community and to influence more students academically.

The evidence from literature suggests that a focus on educational leadership and organizational culture for social and economic impact could result in social change. In turn, the focus would influence a positive, systemic shift for student achievement. This examination assisted in exposing a dearth of internal policies. The capstone product of



the project study was a series of recommendations for amendments and/or updates to existing policies to promote more equitable academic achievement, particularly for ELs.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this project study was to analyze one school district's policies and practices that influence the academic experience of an English learner, and make recommendations for based on federal and state legal mandates, student achievement and enrollment data, interview responses, observations, and the current literature. In Section 1, a definition of the problem rationalized the need for the study. A complete discussion of the academic achievement gap for ELs at national, state, and local levels followed. A literature review, set within a conceptual framework of organizational culture, exposed what was known about the need for district leadership and governance to tackle the problem of the achievement gap. The significance of finding a solution for the problem clarified that it would be an important study on state and local levels and would assist educators to promote positive social change. Implications about potential findings of the study guided the next section on methodology.

Section 2 describes the qualitative methodology that was used to examine the academic experience of ELs and the school district's organizational culture. The methodology used interpretive policy analysis when examining LEA documents and artifacts; the effects of the policy and practices are described through interviews with teachers, counselors, and administrators and through observations of students in

classrooms. The data from the artifacts, interviews, and observations were collected and analyzed in order to help answer the research question.

In Section 3, the project is described as a response to the research question. A scholarly review of how the problem was addressed guided this section and supported the proposal's ideas. The literature was analyzed to ensure that validated research and theory support the content of this project study. A description of the content of the project focused on needed resources, existing supports and potential barriers to the implementation of the project. Implementation plans included a timetable and roles and responsibilities of participants. The project's overall evaluation plan included a justification, outcomes and goals, and a discussion of its social change implications.

In Section 4, reflections about the study and conclusions are offered. The section includes (a) a discussion of the project's strengths and weaknesses and makes recommendations to address them, and (b) an analysis of what I learned about scholarship, project development and evaluation, and leadership and change. The section closes with (a) a reflection on the importance of the work, (b) the major learning from the work, (c) a discussion of its implications and applications, and (d) directions for future research.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Introduction**

This project study attempted to determine whether district policy and practice reflected the legal mandates essential to meeting the academic needs of English-learning students at the secondary level. The research sought to answer the following question: How does district board policy meet the academic needs of English-learning students at the secondary level? This section includes an overview of the federal and state policies guiding English learner policies at the district level, a synopsis of policy from No Child Left Behind (2001), and an examination of California's Proposition 227 (Proposition 227, English Language in Public Schools, Educ. §§ 300 et seq. 1998). The state's District Assistance Survey (DAS) guides a deeper discussion of district policy.

In a large, urban high school district in a western state, there is an academic achievement gap between secondary EL students and other significant subgroups of students (CDE, 2009). Despite federal resources, such as Title I and Title III categorical budgetary support, the district is in sanctions under both Title I and Title III. Over 80% of its ELs have been in U.S. schools for 7 or more years and have not yet attained English proficiency as measured by progress on the state's English Language Development Test (CELDT), achievement on the state's Content Standards Tests (CSTs), and course grades as per district and state policies (CDE, 2009). Embedded within the organizational culture of the district are also concerns about district leadership and governance systems, as evidenced by the District Assistance Survey (DAS). The DAS is a state tool the district

used to self-analyze when it first studied its issues in 2008 for program improvement sanctions. Research indicated that several factors contribute to the achievement gap: district policy development and implementation, (Harris, 2007; Olsen, 2010), the organizational culture of the district (Caulkins, 2003; Denison, 1990; Schein, 1984), and instructional programming for students (Dailey, Fleishman, Gil, Holtaman, O'Day, & Vosmer, 2005; Goldenberg, 2008; Marshall & Oliva, 2006). In this qualitative project study, interpretative policy analysis was limited to policies and practices of the school district that influence the academic experience of ELs. Recommendations to update policy guidance were made.

District policies under examination in this study include philosophy, goals, objectives, and comprehensive plans (section 0000); administration (section 2000 ); students (section 5000 ); and instruction (section 6000 ). Each of these policy sections contains administrative regulations that provide guidance to district personnel who implement the policies. Article 0, Board Policy 04121 (District Board Policies, Regulations, and Bylaws Document) contains the district's philosophy of education on school site councils, last approved in 1997, prior to the enactment of NCLB in 2001. In the Administration section, Board Policy 2120 on the superintendent dates back to 1983. A final example is Article 6, Instruction, which makes a single mention of services to Limited English Proficient Students (Appendix Q) and which also dates back to 1983.

The following sections include (a) an explanation of the policy framework as a justification for an interpretive policy analysis as well as (b) a detailed description of the

setting and sample, participants, instrumentation, data collection and analysis, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and the measures taken to protect the participants' rights.

### **Federal Legislation: No Child Left Behind**

No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) was a 2001 reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The federal government designed the newer NCLB legislation to focus on specific subgroups of students instead of aggregating all students. Districts and schools are now judged on academic achievement goals called AMOs which measure achievement of all students. If any given group of students such as African American, English learner, or Students with Disabilities, does not meet the achievement targets set by the state for two years in a row, the school and the district face federal sanctions (CDE, 2010). The state institutes differing levels of sanctions for each successive year that the school or district does not meet goals. Penalties include offering the parents the opportunity to send their children to a different school, contracting with an outside entity to analyze the district and school site issues, and closing down underperforming schools. A school or district can exit program improvement status only if it meets all goals for two consecutive years (CDE, 2010).

The implementation of NCLB led to an intensive investigation into academic achievement for all students, including English-learning students. While some argue that requiring the same high standards from students who do not fluently speak the language of the standardized test (Menken, 2008; Shirvani, 2009) is unfair and inequitable, others

argue that NCLB has led to a more focused instructional program for students and holds districts and sites more accountable than ever before (Rowan, Hall, & Haycock, 2010).

### **State Legislation: Proposition 227**

Established in 1998 and passed by a 61% majority of state's voters, Proposition 227, the English Language in Public Schools initiative, requires that all public school children in the state be instructed in the English language (Proposition 227, English Language in Public Schools, Educ. §§ 300 et seq. 1998). This education code section allows parents or guardians to relinquish the right to have their child instructed in English through a waiver process. The parents must demonstrate that the child already knows English, or needs Special Education, or would learn English more quickly from an alternative instructional methodology. The proposition is part of the State's Education Code, Sections 300-340. The primary objective of the statute is for students to receive English language instruction to attain English proficiency and is focused on all students whose native language is not English. Before Proposition 227, districts offered programs for students taught in their home language or a bilingual program, in which they were taught in both their home language and English.

Students stayed in home language or bilingual programs until they could read, write, and understand English as well as an average English speaker in their grade. In an analysis of bilingual education leading up to the change in law through Proposition 227, Callaghan, Unz, and Vega (1997) claimed that although bilingual education had started with the best of intentions, it was an unmitigated disaster that politicians refused to

acknowledge. Proposition 227 eliminated virtually all bilingual education (Proposition 227, 1998), and students were required only to have a working knowledge of English instead of mastery.

### **District Assistance Survey**

The quantitative instrument first used to diagnose district issues in the state was the DAS described in detail in Section 1 of this study and set out in Appendix B. Each section of the survey asked leaders in the district to rate the district on a Likert scale of three: 1 = *minimal*, 2 = *partial or in progress*, and 3 = *full implementation* of the descriptors in each category. For example, if the teachers selected *full implementation* of the curriculum, then 75-100% of them must be using this adopted English curriculum on any given day (CDE, 2007). If only 25% of the teachers were using the curriculum on any given day, then respondents would select *minimal*.

The focus of this study, the governance section, has nine elements to rate. While each self-rating requires documentation, district leaders who completed the rating subjectively may not have garnered all the information needed to make recommendations for improvement. The district under review in my study completed the District Assistance Survey at the beginning of the sanctioning phase in 2008. Appendix B also explains the indicators and ratings for the DAS instrument, as well as the district's completed self-assessment that constitutes the benchmark policy to be examined in this study. The focus of my study is not the entire DAS but the sub-section of the DAS on governance, cited in Table 1 below.

Table 1

*District Assistance Survey: Section 1*


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A.1	The local governing board works within the scope of its role and responsibilities as a member of the district governing team, setting policies and aligning the budget to support the successful implementation of the Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan.
A.2	The LEA's vision, mission, policies and priorities are focused on the academic achievement of all students, especially English learners, (Els), students with disabilities (SWDs), and other high priority students, and reflect a commitment to equitably serving the educational needs and interests of all students.
A.3	The LEA leadership fosters an organizational culture that supports educational reform based on a coherent research-based instructional program. This culture of shared core values and norms can be observed at all levels of leadership and across all schools.
A.4	The LEA has policies to fully implement the State Board of Education (SBE)-approved EPCs for Instructional Success in all schools in the LEA. These include evidence of implementation regarding instructional materials, intervention programs, aligned assessments, appropriate use of pacing and instructional time, and alignment of categorical programs and instructional support.
A.5	The LEA Plan is developed in alignment with the accountability requirements at both the state and federal levels and with input from all stakeholders. It is grounded in sound, research-based instructional practices and is the guiding document for the development of the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) in each of the LEA's schools.
A.6	The LEA's fiscal policies and adopted budget are aligned with the LEA Plan and reflect a coherent instructional program based on state standards, frameworks, SBE-adopted standards-aligned materials, sound instructional practices, and the EPCs.
A.7	The LEA uses an effective two-way communication system and provides timely and accurate information to all stakeholders, especially students, parents/families, teachers and site administrators, about student achievement, academic expectations, and accountability requirements.
A.8	The LEA holds teachers, site administrators, and district personnel accountable for student achievement and meeting federal, state, and local accountability requirements.
A.9	The LEA provides all schools with the infrastructure to collect and interpret student achievement data in order to establish and communicate instructional priorities and strategies for improved student achievement.

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*Note.* The table is one part of seven of the District Assistance Survey (Appendix B) from the California Department of Education and is used for all districts that enter program improvement status as defined by No Child Left Behind (2001). (CDE, 2006)



### **Research Approach and Design**

As described in the problem statement of Section 1, the situation in the district called for an investigation into specific district policies related to governance and ELs, along with how the schools enacted these policies. In addition, the guiding question under consideration in Section 1 informed the selection and design of an interpretive policy analysis as the research methodology (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2002; Yanow, 2000) which was an interpretive policy analysis. Interpretive policy analysis utilizes qualitative methodology and “explores the contrasts between meanings as intended by policymakers...and the possibly variant and even incommensurable meanings...made of them by others” (Yanow, 2000, p. 9). A focus on the communications and interactions between the district and school leadership was necessary to understand the intentions of the people enacting the policies. Policies were created by the leadership of the district and its governing board. Further, understanding intentions of policy actors was critical to identifying barriers to policy enactment and necessary to guiding district leaders to serve the needs of the school better in supporting ELs. Weimer and Vining (2005) offered a simple definition of policy analysis as “client-oriented advice relevant to public decisions and informed by social values” (p. 24). Thus, the study also identified the need for policies that may not currently exist. The resulting project is a written guide on all aspects of the EL academic support system, including equity, for consideration by the district and its governing board (Weimer & Vining, 2005).

### **Justification of the Design**

Traditionally, quantitative methods have ruled the field of policy studies (Wright, 2004). However, Yanow (2000) argued that these traditional approaches using quantitative tools from microeconomics and strategic analysis neglect the importance of the concept of local knowledge. She further described the need for local knowledge to interpret data while attempting to comprehend the policy. She also maintained an analyst cannot be objective because the local knowledge acquired reflects the education, experience, and training of the analyst and contributes to making sense of the policy under investigation. Further, Weimer and Vining (2005) contended that if a variety and substantive quantity of data are collected about the policy problem, then the analysis generated will be better.

The choice of qualitative methodology over mixed method or quantitative methodology was also related to the DAS. The DAS was the original quantitative instrument used in this district when it entered program improvement year 3. Required only at the beginning of the sanctioning phase, the quantitative tool did not afford the opportunity for a longer discussion of a qualitative nature, nor was this district ever required to revisit it to determine growth. A qualitative study burrowed further into the issues of why the district is in program improvement, what growth has occurred during the period of sanctions, and which changes may be made to create a more successful educational system. I attempted to uncover the participants' understanding of their world. Key factors in qualitative research include the researcher as the primary resource

of data collection, and a descriptive product (Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2002) which follows.

### **Description of the Evaluation**

Policy analyses occur in many forms. Traditionally, they evaluate the need for, or potential outcomes of, proposed legislation but frequently are also used after laws have been passed to monitor or evaluate the effect of the law (Yanow, 2000). Trochim (2009) argued that policies need to be evaluated for development and implementation success. The fields of economics, politics, education, and business all use policy analyses.

The traditional methods of policy analysis have many limitations (Yanow, 2000). An example of such a limitation is the tool used to assess and shape the policy under investigation. Yanow (2000) asserted that while the analysis is usually for internal purposes, it also may become widely known through published or presented formats. Various state and federal entities conduct policy analyses that serve to advise, advocate, or support the interest group (Yanow, 2000). Types of traditional policy analysis include cost-benefit analysis and decision-making analysis, but Yanow (2000) contended that other factors of human beliefs and feelings also need investigation to understand the full impact of a given policy. Hence Yanow added a qualitative aspect to the traditional quantitative format resulting in an interpretive policy analysis. She argued that surveys alone miss potential and meaningful information critical to the analysis. Weimer and Vining (2005) also proposed that a combination of field research and document research is necessary for policy analysis.

Yanow (2000) described the following steps to conducting an interpretive policy analysis. First, she proposed to determine the policy artifacts and identify those who interpret the artifacts. Understanding that different people may interpret artifacts in different ways, sweeping the community seeking common traits is important. Once the artifacts and the interpreters of the artifacts are identified, Step 2 is to pinpoint the meaning the interpreters place on the artifacts. After Steps 3 and 4 of data collection and analysis, the fifth and final step that a policy analyst takes is to mediate discussion between the policy actors or interpreters for conflicting understandings of the policy under investigation.

Guided by Yanow's (2000) five-step process, qualitative elements of the evaluation design for this project study included identifying and gathering policy artifacts such as official district policy documents, especially those artifacts related to the elements contained in the governance section of the DAS. The communities of meaning described by Yanow (2000) in Step 2 that were relevant to the policy issue derived from a multilevel investigation of board and district-level policy actors and site-level policy actors. Data were collected through interviews as well as through observations of EL students in classrooms to complete Steps 3 and 4. These data uncovered specific meanings of the artifacts and provided information on policy knowledge and implementation. Finally, points of conflict that reflected different interpretations developed from both the school perspective and the district perspective to guide the analysis and understand the policies under investigation. After analysis of the points of

conflict and description of the areas of agreement or discrepancy as experienced by stakeholders, the final section of the project study focused on the implications of policy formation.

### **Overall Evaluation Goals**

The policy analysis identified the following specific goals for the evaluation:

Goal 1: Identify inconsistent or conflicting policies

Goal 2: Identify the impact of the policies on diverse groups

Goal 3: Determine a foundation for district leadership to write policy

The in-depth data analysis was designed to discover district governance policy implications for EL students and identify gaps or barriers that need to be addressed within the culture of the organization. Negotiating new meaning in policy or reframing outdated policies may lead to a successful academic experience for ELs.

### **Participants**

#### **Criteria for Selection**

A stratified, purposeful sampling of the natural setting of the district selected the participants involved in the study. The sample was purposeful in order to understand the problem surrounding the research question (Creswell, 2003, 2007). The district was a high school district in California, in sanctions under both Title I and Title III, as described in Section 1. Participants included both men and women of varying ages and years in the education field. I sought out specific individuals who belonged only to the high school district under study. The sample was stratified to include a vertical slice of

the district from the board-level personnel down through district and site leadership and faculty. Purposeful, stratified sampling best matched this study because it focused on subcultures and made possible comparisons between groups that verified the data collected (Creswell, 2007). The sampling led to a clear view of participants' perceptions of their reality and how they enact policy guidelines (Hatch 2002).

### **Justification of Sample Size**

In the search for participants who have experienced the phenomenon of the culture existing within the policies of the district (Creswell, 2007), and for the study to have authenticity and depth, I included 44 participants. They were purposefully selected from a variety of departments and sites within the district. The sample included five of the seven elected members of the school board. As there are seven high schools in the district, the sample also included all seven of the high school principals, five of the associate principals of curriculum and instruction, and three guidance counselors. Additionally, the study's sample included eleven teachers in schools of high populations of ELs. The district office participants totaled 11 and represented the following departments: Educational Services (including Special Education), Business Services, Assessment, State and Federal Programs, Superintendent's Cabinet and the current Superintendent.

### **Procedures for Gaining Access to the Participants**

A formal approval from the superintendent (Appendix C) allowed access to people in the district office, at the board level, and at each of the seven high schools. I

contacted the participants through an email request for volunteers (Appendix D). Creswell (2007) suggested obtaining an adequate sample. I had to seek participant representation from certain groups in order to have an appropriate sample. The form of the sampling was maximum variation where variations and patterns were sought (Creswell, 2007). Identities of teachers, administrators and district office personnel remained completely confidential. The use of pseudonyms such as Administrator 1, 2, 3, or Faculty Member 1, 2, 3, guaranteed confidentiality of each participant for the final report.

### **Methods for Establishing Researcher-Participant Relationships**

Establishing a relationship with the participants invited open and honest responses. Gaining the support of the superintendent facilitated access to the participants and data and made a stronger welcome for the researcher (Hatch, 2002). Additionally, as a current district employee, I had an existing professional relationship with the governing board, leadership, and many of the teaching faculty that facilitated entry into these arenas for interviews. I have worked in the district for over seven years beginning as the director of curriculum and staff development. In this role, I forged strong relationships with board and cabinet members as well as those in other offices such as the Assessment Office. I was responsible for connecting with and supporting all site administrators and teachers with staff development and compliance issues. From this district perspective, I gained a strong understanding of the culture of the organization.

Hatch (2002) disagreed with educators completing research in their particular setting. He asserted that, while access to the participants and establishing rapport may be easier, it was not worth the risk of extensive bias or conflict of being a researcher and an educator in the same setting. Since the research was dependent on a district with certain characteristics (many ELs, sanctioned under Title I and Title III and limited to a focus on high school), I was restricted by the number of qualifying districts. Distance limited the access and time for research as other similar districts were quite far away geographically. The subsection on data collection discusses the role of researcher bias and methods taken to prevent researcher bias. Academic data about ELs was easily obtainable from the state and district websites, thus eliminating that possible conflict. As I was not involved with any policy creation, little conflict with researcher bias that may invalidate the data (Creswell, 2003, 2007) existed.

### **Measures for the Ethical Protection of the Participants**

This qualitative research required much from the participants, including their time, their trust in the researcher, and their active engagement in the interviews (Hatch, 2002). I began each interview with a clear, nondeceptive explanation of the study and clarified that any revelations during the interview or focus group be omitted from the analysis if they were deemed harmful to the participant (Creswell, 2003, 2007; Merriam, 2002). Each participant was able to read the transcript of their interview for final approval and inclusion in the study. Finally, ensuring that participants could opt out at



any point if they no longer wished to participate was critical to the protection of their rights.

Negotiated research agreements between the researcher and the participants (Hatch, 2002) included collecting informed consent, guaranteeing confidentiality, providing opportunity for opting out, and sharing the results of the study with proposed solutions resulting from the policy analysis (Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002). Withdrawal from the setting post or during data collection was another consideration for the ethical treatment of participants (Hatch, 2002). I described the withdrawal process in the negotiated research bargain but no participants withdrew.

## **Data Sources and Collection**

### **Description of Data Sources**

Merriam (2002), Creswell (2007), and Hatch (2002) all asserted that a qualitative study is an attempt to understand the phenomenon as experienced and understood by the participants. These writers discussed a variety of data collection methodologies to achieve this purpose. As an example, Creswell (2007) described qualitative data that could be “grouped into four basic types of information: observations..., interviews..., documents..., and audio-visual materials” (p. 129). Consistently the aforementioned researchers agreed that qualitative interviews consist of structured, open-ended questions, but the interviewer may need to generate questions depending on the participants’ responses, the context of the interview, and the relationship between the interviewer and the participants. Therefore, the interviews in this study became semi-structured

(Merriam, 2002). Observations of students provided another opportunity for data collection as the researcher sought to understand the phenomenon from the participants' point of view (Hatch, 2002) while being respectful and sensitive to the student perspective (Janesick, 2004). Yanow (2000) also maintained observations as a significant data source that provide opportunity for sense-making and yield data through interactions and non-verbal language.

### **Justification for the Choice and Appropriateness of Data Collected**

Yanow (2000) suggested that the first step to the policy analysis process was to identify artifacts that carry the meaning of the policy. In this study, sources of local knowledge offered data through personal interviews as well as through unobtrusive measures and documents (Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2002; Weimer & Vining, 2005). Unobtrusive measures were publicly available data such as student achievement data, course outlines, and policy documents that demonstrated district philosophy about English learning students, instructional program, and support system design (Hatch, 2002; Weimer & Vining, 2005). These data sources were attainable on the district and schools' intranet and external websites. I created binders to contain the hard copies of these documents organized by data type – interview, observation, or unobtrusive. Within those categories, I organized and indexed the data by type such as board policy or administrative regulation, EL student achievement data, and LEA Plan. I used a log of the data collection (Appendix H) to help with the organization of the binders along with separate binders for each participant subgroup.

### **Number and Duration of Interviews**

Personal interviews included governing board members, district office and school site leadership, the current superintendent, and faculty (teachers and counselors). Each interview ranged from 10–45 minutes in length; Appendix E contains the questions used to focus the interview. Questions to guide the interviews (Appendix E) provided the data to answer the guiding research question of the study: How do district governance policies and practices meet the academic needs of English-learning students at the secondary level?

At times, the participants' answers required probing with additional questions. Interviews with district office cabinet and the participants from site leadership occurred on campuses, at the district office, or at a convenient location for the participants. Faculty interviews were conducted at their home school sites or at a site convenient for the participant. These interviews occurred before and after the school day or in the evenings at the preference of the participant.

### **Number and Duration of Observations**

Observations of students occurred during instructional class time, using the district approved Teaching and Learning Protocol for gathering observational data (Appendix F). Categories on the Protocol included evidence on teachers' context for the learning, student engagement, and checking for understanding. One of the criteria for English learner reclassification for the district is achieving a 2.0 grade point average (GPA) in the four core classes: ELA, mathematics, science, and social science.

Therefore, observations were only from those particular classes. Observations included freshmen and sophomore classes at each of the four Title I high schools, for a total of 32 observations. The number of observations was substantial enough for an in-depth, qualitative look at student engagement, curricula, and progress monitoring (checking for understanding) of student learning. (See Appendix G for the email request to gain access to the classrooms in each of the four high schools in the participant pool.)

### **How and When Data Were Collected**

I collected the data over 6 months, May through November, of 2011. For the interview, I gave the participants the questions prior to the interviews if they wanted. I used a small electronic Olympus digital voice recorder to record their responses for transcription and saved the responses under a locked password on my computer in order to have a permanent record of the interviews for review after they occurred. Hatch (2002) purported that the intent of writing up findings is to comprehend the phenomena not simply in a quantitative, statistical manner but using the senses to reveal the issues to the readers.

I conducted the observations in the same period in concert with a district team or the principal of the school. I did not observe alone in the classroom as I did not want the observation to be seen as evaluative on any level by the teacher, yet I collected the data independently of others in the room. Neither did the observation team intrude in my personal observations. Appendix F is the district-created protocol used for walk-through observations to collect data about the implementation of the curricula and instructional

strategies in use in classrooms. The tool was created to respond to the program improvement sanctions and the action plan requirements. To maintain confidentiality of the data collected, I used no teacher or school names for identification purposes on the tool and the data I collected were for research purposes only and not shared with others.

To collect all the student achievement data, I required Internet access. The achievement data are public information on the California Department of Education website. Directors in the district Assessment Office helped me get internal, specific data about the length of time students had been in the United States and the progress that they had made on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Additionally, the Assessment Office provided access to the district's AMAO goal attainment and progress with Title III sanctions.

District policy information was available on the Internet and hard copies of all district policies and administrative regulations were stored at the district office and available publicly. I obtained access to course outlines specific to courses for long-term ELs through the district's intranet. Two course outlines collected were Academic Language Development 9 and Academic Language Development 10, both courses designed for long-term ELs as a support class to their core ELA class. Class placement guidelines are embedded into these course outlines. Student classification as a long-term EL was not evident from the course outline, but informational charts obtained from the Office of Assessment and Evaluation, as well as specific school lists, provided this information. The director of assessment and evaluation provides complete lists of ELs

and their achievement data to all teachers in the district on a semi-annual basis, and the student information system has reports that garner a portion of the same information, obtainable upon request.

### **Process and Systems for Data Generation, Collection, and Recording**

The process of gathering data is generalized into document research and field research (Weimer & Vining, 2005). For this project study, document research included the collection and examination of all unobtrusive measures, such as course outlines, policy and administrative regulation statements, and student achievement data. Scouring the relevant research literature on ELs included investigation of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, dissertations, and policy analysis reports from research labs or governmental sources (Weimer & Vining, 2005).

The generation of original data required field research through interviews and observations. The interviews occurred in person, and I recorded the interviewee's responses electronically. Collecting and storing all these data electronically and in categories prepared me for the encoding process. The observations occurred during school hours using the district-approved teaching and learning protocol (Appendix F). I created a binder to store the collection of completed protocols with no schools, teachers, or students identified.

### **Systems for Keeping Track of the Data and Emerging Understandings**

A separate binder stored the hard copies of the recordings of the interviews and the observation protocols, and a computer held all the electronic data under a locked

system password. To ensure complete confidentiality, pseudonyms masked the names of all participants. Examples of pseudonyms include District Administrator 1, 2, 3, Faculty Member 1, 2, 3, and so on. I collected unobtrusive data, such as the student achievement data and selected policies to analyze, electronically and with hard copies as back up. Public and district websites contained most of the required data electronically. Appendix H is a log of the data collected and what is contained in each of the binders.

### **Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants**

As all of the participants were employees of the district, the first contact was an internal email with a scanned copy in PDF of the superintendent's letter of cooperation (Appendix C). A sample of the contact email is included as Appendix D. A second email sometimes followed one month later if I had not yet reached the anticipated number of participants in each category. The second email is also contained in Appendix D.

### **The Role of the Researcher**

The role of the researcher must be to answer the research question and highlight ambiguities (Weimer & Vining, 2005) in order for the report to be as complete as possible and to make a more informed analysis when presented with all the evidence. Yanow (2000) purported that data collection and analysis are somewhat intertwined but once all the possible data were collected, there were many ways to analyze them.

To achieve the maximum benefit from an interview and have an in-depth, responsive conversation, the interviewer must be perceived as a non-threatening entity (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). As a current employee of the district, I had to validate the

findings first by checking researcher bias (Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2005). Knowing the board members, the cabinet leadership, and the site administrators on a personal level, had both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage included being able to obtain access to their time while a disadvantage included a familiarity with me that could have made their objectivity difficult. This validation process is described in further detail later in Section 2.

## **Data Analysis**

### **How and When Data Were Analyzed**

Data analysis is possible by creating links to common ideas and themes for subsequent purposes of synthesis and coding, as suggested by certain experts on qualitative research (Creswell, 2007, 2003; Hatch, 2002). Rubin and Rubin (2005) stipulated that, “Coding involves systematically labeling concepts, themes, events, and topical markers so that you can retrieve and examine all of the data units that refer to the same subject across all your interviews” (p. 207). To create the codes, I scrutinized the literature review for concepts that supported the problem. I was careful to establish codes reflected in the literature, but I also studied the codes for their purpose in the context of the proposed study, not simply the context of the current available scholarship. The coding structure was divided into three main categories: policy development (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005), perceptions (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005; Skerrit & Hargreaves, 2008), and practices (Rorrer, Skrla, & Scheurich, 2008). Due to their importance for the success of English-learning students, sub-categories emerged inside



the coding structure. The sub-categories focused on instructional program (Goldenburg, 2008) and equity (Sherman, 2008; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004). After a personal review of the analysis, a fellow Walden doctoral student peer debriefed the findings to ensure that the analysis was accurate. My colleague signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix P).

### **Evidence of Quality and Procedures for Accuracy and Credibility**

Leading methodology experts have agreed that establishing the validity for quantitative research is not the same as that for qualitative research (Creswell, 2007, 2003; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2002). Qualitative research has no hypothesis, is inductive, and requires the researcher to become directly involved with the process. Quantitative research requires a more deductive methodology and a hypothesis. Validation processes are also different for each. Validation processes for this qualitative study included peer debriefing, triangulation, member checks, and clarifying the researcher bias (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2002). Triangulation involved comparing the unobtrusive measures with interviews and observations in order to verify findings or to discover discrepancies. I also compared a variety of unobtrusive measures to each other. Member checking consisted of allowing the participants to read the transcript of their interviews to establish verification or discrepancy of the findings (Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2002).

A final method to establish the quality of findings was the use of thick, rich description. Detailed descriptions of each policy, and the dates of adoption and subsequent periodic reviews, provided a greater depth of understanding (Creswell, 2007).

Observational notes and electronic recordings of the participants' interviews also provided thick, rich description required for establishing the quality of the findings. The use of quotes and descriptions of the contexts added to the richness of the description (Merriam, 2002).

### **Procedures for Dealing with Discrepant Cases**

While the process of gaining the trust of the participants and detailed description of the interviews led to validation of the participants' responses (Creswell, 2007), some discrepancy existed regarding differing responses from group to group, i.e., administrators versus teachers and district participants versus site participants. Creswell (2007) suggested using a negative case analysis and refining questions to identify negative or disconfirming data. He based his suggestion upon examination of strategies frequently used by other, noted, qualitative researchers, such as Miles and Huberman (1994). As I embarked on the process of analyzing data, I did not find that the discrepancies between participants were related to misconceptions but rather were related to different experiences and job types. Among job-alike groups, no discrepant cases existed. The discrepancies occurred between groups. For example, a teacher had a different concept of monitoring the LEA Plan than the superintendent. Therefore, I did not need to re-interview the discrepant interviewee to gain further understanding.

### **Limitations of the Evaluation**

As I finalized the evaluation of the analysis, I adhered to the advice of Polkinghorne (1989). He suggested that the researcher ask certain questions of herself.

The questions required self-reflection on certain topics: interference of the researcher affecting the participants' responses, the accuracy of the transcription, possible alternate conclusions, the relationship between the transcriptions and specificity of the responses, and transference of the conclusions to other districts in program improvement. In Section 4, reflections clarify answers to these questions and will reflect personal growth as a scholar and a researcher.

### **Findings**

In a large, urban, high school district in a western state, the problem of an achievement gap between long-term ELs and other students exists. Students who have been in U.S. schools for seven or more years have not yet attained enough English proficiency to be reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP). The district is in sanctions under both Title I and Title III and has undertaken a self-assessment of various departments to better understand its problems. One of the sections of the self-assessment tool, the DAS, focused on district governance. Examining this district's board policies has led to a better understanding of the discrepancy in achievement between ELs and other students. The board policies examined were the following: Philosophy, Goals, Objectives, and Comprehensive Plan (Section 0000), Administration (Section 2000), Students (Section 5000), and Instruction (Section 6000). Through the framework of the DAS and the lens of each of the goals of the study, board policies were related to the Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan Addendum, formal interviews, and observational data. Goal 1 of this study required identification of inconsistent or conflicting policies.

Goal 2 required identifying the impact of the policies on diverse groups. Goal 3 required determining a foundation for District administration to write policy. Each goal will be examined thoroughly and separately guided by the contextual framework of organizational culture.

Recalling the earlier definition of organizational culture, Schein's (1985) posited that the evolution of a culture includes the construction of shared meanings and that the health of the functionality of the culture depends on the consistency between practice and beliefs. He further offered that, to understand and change an organization, an examination of values and structures paired with individuals' understanding of culture, climate, and practice must ensue. As the district under study was in sanctions and dealing with difficult issues, scrutinizing the organizational culture of this district through its board policies could lead to important change and improvement of practices, thus creating a healthier educational system. This healthy system, with practice, beliefs, and policies aligned and consistent, would ideally function with greater effectiveness, evolving to meet the needs of its students.

### **Goal 1**

Goal 1 of this project study required identification of inconsistent or conflicting policies surrounding ELs. To summarize all the policies examined, Philosophy, Goals, and District Plan (Section 0000 ) contained four board policies regarding philosophy, goals, and the district's plan, Administration (Section 2000 ) contained a single board policy, and Students (Section 5000 ) and Instruction (6000) contained 49 and 46 board

policies respectively. Only two of the 102 policies examined governed action for working with ELs. An examination of each of the 102 board policies revealed no significant inconsistencies or conflicting direction. Each policy was an entity unto itself and defined procedures relating to a single issue. For example, the first board policy, BP 0100 (Appendix Q), defined the district's philosophy of education as providing educational opportunity for all students. No conflicting direction about philosophy of education was defined by any other policy under examination. The district's mission statement located on the website, supported graduation as a goal for all students. Further, throughout each and every interview, not one person at any level indicated a different belief system. All board members, district office administrators, site administrators, and faculty members communicated the belief that all students should graduate high school and pursue post-secondary options.

While inconsistency in the policy wording itself did not exist, BP 0100 defined that policy be reviewed on a regular basis. Perhaps due to the lack of a definition of regular, inconsistency was evident in the implementation of BP 0100. The chart in Appendix I outlines all the board policies under examination and the dates of adoption and revision. Appendix I clearly shows inconsistent implementation of the district's philosophy about policies being adopted and reviewed. One particular policy on Outdoor Education has not been reviewed in 38 years (BP 6142.3, Appendix Q). In fact, there were 56 out of the 100 board policies (56%) that had no revision date.

When specifically examined with ELs as the guiding factor, the policy analysis resulted in a finding of two board policies. Using a search for the term “Limited English Proficient students” (LEPs) instead of the term “ELs”, a thorough electronic and hard-copy review of the board policies and administrative regulations revealed two additional board policies within Section 6000. The term Limited English Proficient is still used at the federal level in Title III documentation (No Child Left Behind: Title III Part A English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act, 2001). Beginning with the 1998-99 data collection, state law required the use of the term ELs to refer to those students who had previously been labeled Limited English Proficient (LEP) (Department of Education, 2011). The following discussion will use the term LEP interchangeably with EL within the district’s board policy. The two board policies identified in the second search were BP 6141.1 and BP 6141.2. An examination of these two board policies demonstrated guidance to acknowledge the existence of ELs but no specific direction on curriculum, instruction, or assessment.

**Board policy 6141.1.** The first of the board policies referencing ELs was Board Policy 6141.1. The board adopted policy in 1983 but it had no associated administrative regulations. The policy decreed that the board recognize that Limited English Proficient (LEP) students existed and were entitled to “equal access to educational opportunity” (BP 6141.1, Appendix Q). The board recognized that providing students with textbooks, facilities, teachers, and curriculum did not represent equality of treatment, citing *Lau vs. Nichols* (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974). Further, the policy stated that an understanding of both

the original culture of the student and the new culture of the state and the United States should be nurtured. Proficiency in English was a major objective and, in schools with ten or more LEPs, the State requirement of a program option would be available.

**Board policy 6141.2.** The second board policy in Section 6000 referencing ELs was BP 6141.2 (Appendix Q). The board policy governed assessments for ELs in second through eleventh grades. Initially adopted in 2001, revisions occurred in 2004 and 2005. No explanatory administrative regulations guided this policy either. The policy stated that test variations were allowable on the state standardized tests as well as the state's High School Exit Exam (HSEE). Variations listed included breaks during testing, testing in a separate room, translation of test directions into primary language, and access to glossaries or vocabulary lists.

In summary, I achieved Goal 1 of this study. The goal targeted identification of inconsistent or conflicting board policies directing the academic experience of ELs. Two board policies were identified within the policy section governing instruction for students and neither of them conflicted with the other, nor were they thought to be inconsistent. Additionally, nothing was revealed in the District Assistance Survey (DAS), the Local Educational Agency Plan (LEAP), the interviews, or the observations to contradict the understanding of the board policies as written. The next step is to examine the policies with a lens on Goal 2 – identifying the impact of the policies on diverse groups. During the following discussion, data gathered from the interviews and other publicly-available documentation will guide the analysis.

**Goal 2**

Goal 2 required identifying the impact of the policies on diverse groups. Through interviews and document analysis, different participants clearly had different levels of knowledge of policies, depending on their role within the educational system of the district. District and site administrators directly leading and managing the daily educational services to students had the clearest and deepest knowledge of the governance structure. Board members and teachers not dealing with governance issues on a daily basis were either unaware or knew little about specific policy existence or its impact on diverse groups. Board members and teachers believed policy guided action, however, no evidence was discovered regarding policy specifically guiding certain actions. A thorough discussion follows about each group's understanding of the impact of policies on the diverse groups. The data examined were a combination of the two board policies specific to ELs, the 2008 quantitative DAS tool, the 2011 interview responses divided by like group, and the LEA Plan.

BP 6141.1 decreed that the board recognize that Limited English Proficient (LEP) students existed and that LEPs were entitled to "equal access to educational opportunity" (BP 6141.1, Appendix Q). The board recognized that providing students with textbooks, facilities, teachers, and curriculum did not represent equality and that an understanding of both the original culture of the student and the new culture of state and the entire United States should be nurtured. BP 6141.2 stipulated that ELs could have test variations for assessments such as the CAHSEE As curricula, teachers, instructional materials,



assessments, and facilities formed the basis of these board policies, an examination of other critical data seemed necessary to answer Goal 2. A scrutiny of the 2008 District Assistance Survey quantitative tool follows next.

**District Assistance Survey (DAS) section A.4.** Section A.4 of the DAS (Appendix B) surveyed respondents about district policies in place to monitor the Essential Program Components (EPCs). The EPCs were offered as guidance for instructional time, materials, assessments, and teacher and administrator training. This guidance would align with Board Policy 6141.1. The DAS described full implementation of Section A.4 as the board having policies for the following: (a) a selection and implementation process of instructional materials, including intensive intervention programs; (b) expectations for the appropriate allocation of instructional time; (c) expectations for the administration and analysis of common district benchmark assessments, formative/curriculum-embedded assessments, and the use of placement/exit criteria; 4) training and in-class support opportunities for teachers and administrators; 5) alignment of fiscal and human resources to support the EPCs (See Appendix B). In 2008, the survey administration required district and site administrators to respond to four of the six questions. Their responses concerning Section A.4 noted that implementation was in progress (Appendix B). For the remaining two questions, district and site administrators responded that implementation was substantial.

Goal 2 required identifying the impact of the policy on diverse groups. The results of the 2008 DAS tool assert that the respondents believed policies to exist when none did.

Since no specific policies regarding curriculum adoption or quantity of instructional time could be found within the existing board policies, a distinct policy/practice knowledge gap for the respondents of the 2008 survey became clear. The next data under study were the interview responses from the current policy analysis. The examination of the impact of the policies on each group again took place through the lens of BP 6141.1 and BP6141.2, namely curricula, equal access, teachers, facilities, and assessments.

**Board member interviews.** In the 2011 qualitative study, the fourth interview question asked, “What is the process for monitoring the LEAP Addendum re: monitoring implementation of curriculum, intensive interventions, benchmark assessments, allocation of instructional time, and professional development for teachers?” (Appendix E). The LEAP Addendum was a product of the district improvement work required as a result of the 2008 DAS tool responses. Therefore, a deeper probe into its contents and what people knew about it seemed appropriate for this study. Board members’ responses were split with three of the five not knowing how the LEAP was monitored (BM 1, 4, 5) and the remaining two stating that the board received reports (BM 2, 3). They did not elaborate on the contents of the reports, but two board members did express a desire to know that their fiscal decisions matched the goals of the district (BM 2, 4).

**District administrator interviews.** District administrators’ responses to the same question were consistent. One of the 11 District Administrators mentioned that they knew of district protocols for classroom walk-through visits to monitor the implementation of the LEAP (DA 9). Another district administrator knew that “we were

having regular meetings and [they] were bringing data in to us (DA 3). A third district administrator knew of an “improvement stakeholders group which really is a constant review of the LEA Plan” (DA 10). Two of the three aforementioned district administrators worked in the Educational Services division, and each of them had a different piece of knowledge of the full Local Educational Agency Plan (LEAP) monitoring process. Comparing different divisions of district office responsibilities, even administrators within the Educational Services division knew little about the monitoring of the LEAP. The remaining nine district administrators knew of no monitoring of the LEAP, reporting, “I am not involved or included in those types of decisions, discussions, monitoring” (DA 1), “I am out of the loop on that aspect” (DA 6) and “In my capacity, I haven’t monitored it” (DA 11). One Educational Services administrator declared, “I have never seen our LEAP, so I don’t know” (DA 7).

**Site administrator interviews.** Although no single site administrator discussed the complete LEAP monitoring process, the site administrators collectively enumerated a number of contexts for LEAP monitoring. A variety of interviewees in this group mentioned the District Intervention and Assistance Team (DAIT), district informational reports on intensive intervention achievement, walk-through data, benchmark assessment data, and collaborative discussions with teachers (SA 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12). In particular, the advent of walk-through visits in the classroom to monitor the implementation of the curricula and the benchmark assessment data were discussion topics at the collaboration meetings and highly regarded by site administrators. Two site

administrators expressed concern that the results of a single, quarterly walkthrough visit did not represent reality. For example, Site Administrator 2 stated, “We put some things on paper when asked; we can generate some reports. But I would speculate that it is not an accurate reflection of what is happening on a day to day basis” (SA 2). Three site administrators expressed a lack of knowledge of monitoring the LEAP implementation (SA 5, 9, 13). SA 9 stated that, “I am not sure I know the process for monitoring the LEAP” and SA 13 explained, “This is one question I am not fully aware of or would be able to speak completely about.” Site Administrator 5 remarked on the elimination of district office personnel due to budget cuts and declared,

We used to do a much better job at this...But they've changed so much, by eliminating district people that really monitored benchmarks and writing of benchmarks and staying current...we were so good between district-level curriculum coordinators, directors, down to principals...now I think we are so weak...It doesn't happen anymore. (SA 5)

**Faculty member interviews.** Ten of the 13 faculty members responded that they didn't know how or if monitoring of the LEAP occurred. Of the three who responded in the affirmative, one stated that, “They ask for a lot of data and ask for benchmark assessments” (FM 3), another affirmed that a parent sub-committee for Special Education (FM 7) existed, and a third responded that walk-through visits to the classrooms (FM 11) were one method of monitoring the LEAP.

Goal 2 required identifying the impact of the policy on diverse groups. The results of the interviews emphasized that the respondents each understood a portion of the current district practice to monitor the LEAP which correlates in many aspects to BP 6141.1 and BP 6141.2. The LEAP required that policies be written to guide the district's decision-making processes and actions in certain areas already mentioned. Since none of the interviewees understood the whole picture of the LEAP and the two aforementioned policies did not offer specific guidance regarding curriculum adoption, quantity of instructional time, specific types of assessments or facilities, I argue that the LEAP was not being implemented in this regard. A distinct policy/practice knowledge gap, this time for the 2011 interviewees, existed. Since questions arose from the examination of this interview data, further inspection of the LEAP related to ELs seemed appropriate and necessary.

**LEAP addendum goal 9.** The district team and the DAIT wrote a Local Educational Agency Plan (LEAP) Addendum in 2008, subsequent to the district going into Program Improvement, and in answer to the results of the 2008 quantitative District Assistance Survey (DAS). The LEAP Question 6 (Appendix K) related specifically to ELs. Goal 9 of the Addendum responded to Question 6, describing the district's efforts to uncover issues related to the non-achievement of ELs. The LEAP cited that the district had convened a committee of administrators and teachers to research and to craft an improved EL system of support in English language development (ELD) as well as achievement of academic standards. The new system had four fundamental action steps:

learning academic standards, English language development, effective instructional practices, district leadership and support. Each of these action steps described a plan that included professional development. An examination of each of the four action steps followed.

***Learning academic standards.*** Goal 9.1 was Learning Academic Standards. The action steps for implementation of a new instructional system included: 1) ELs to have access to high school level ELA and Algebra curriculum and instruction (9.1.1.a); 2) ELs to have access to language development classes or intensive interventions (9.1.1b); 3) diagnostic, placement, progress monitoring, and exit criteria assessments (9.1.1.c); 4) specific protocols for collaboration between teachers (9.1.1.d); 5) a process for assisting all teachers to know and understand their own English learning students (9.1.1.e); 6) the adoption and purchase of new curricula for the secondary language acquisition classes (9.1.1.f).

The timeline for the action steps to be in full implementation was summer of 2009 through spring of 2010. Although the plan was written in 2008, by 2011 only three of the seven persons involved in the plan's implementation remained at the district office. Whether all the action steps were implemented was unclear from any posted documentation, but Section A.4 of the DAS directly related to policy addressing the Essential Program Components (EPCs) of the Academic Program Survey (APS) and addressed the same concepts of curriculum, assessment, and instruction.

Examination of 2011-12 master schedules of each of the four Title I high schools in the district answered numbers one and two above: access to high school level English and Algebra as well as language development classes and intensive interventions. The support system for each high school is summarized in Appendix L. The master schedules showed a system of support for all students, including ELs, to achieve in rigorous, college preparatory course work. The system included Academic Language Development classes, English support classes, and Algebra support classes in each master schedule. Multiple sections of reading intervention (Scholastic Read 180) and mathematics intervention (Algebra Readiness) classes existed at each of the four sites. Although no evidence of Goal 9.1.1.c above could be found, evidence of action for Goals 9.1.1.d-f was clear. The district created and used protocols for teacher collaboration (9.1.1.d) since the 2009-10 school year. Appendix M shows a completed sample of the protocols. The Class List by English Proficiency (Appendix N) was evidence of a process for teachers to know and understand their ELs (9.1.1.e). Guidance for usage of the Class List by English Proficiency was neither on the document nor available on the intranet. The list showed trend state assessment, district assessment, and language acquisition progress (Appendix N). Finally, for Goal 9.1.1f, observations in the Academic Language Development (ALD) classrooms indicated the use of a new curriculum, adopted in the spring of 2009.

Progress benchmarks for the action steps of Academic Learning Standards described a comprehensive Title III plan, site master schedules, class lists of ELs,

implementation of new courses and increased re-designation of EL students. Finally, classroom visits were to show higher engagement of students and benchmark exams would indicate greater achievement of ELs. While the final Title III plan or Master Plan for ELs had not yet been updated or posted to the district's website at the time of data collection for this study, several district and site administrators were reviewing a draft copy from December 2011. . Master schedules, class lists of ELs, and new curriculum all showed evidence of implementation of the action steps of Goal 9.1. The single area of inaction or lack of information available was the availability of data comparing year to year re-designation numbers. The final column of the plan in Appendix K defined expenditures and funding sources, citing federal Title III funding sources, and state Economic Impact Aid (EIA) Bilingual sources.

*English language development.* Goal 9.2 was English language development (ELD). The action steps consisted of developing and funding a system to provide ELD to ELs until they were re-designated Fluent English Proficient (Goal 9.2.1a). The system needed to include placement and exit criteria as well as assessments to be identified, implemented, and monitored for progress. Finally, Goal 9.2.1b required the system to differentiate instruction for ELs of varying levels of English proficiency as determined by state's English Language Development Test (CELDT) levels. For example, instruction for long-term ELs should differ from that of newcomers to the country.

The timeline for the implementation of Goal 9.2 was the fall of 2009. Progress benchmarks included a comprehensive Title III plan (or English Learner Master Plan)



and the implementation of the Language Institute and the Academic Learning Development classes. The EL Master Plan was in draft form in April 2012 but master schedules (Appendix K) showed evidence of both the Language Institute and Academic Language Development classes with funding sources described as both general fund and Title III (Goal 9.2.1b). Systemic administrator professional development had not yet been provided by spring, 2012.

*Effective instructional practices.* Goal 9.3 was Effective Instructional Practices. The action steps consisted of identifying, implementing, supporting, and monitoring effective strategies in the instruction of ELs, namely high engagement practices, building academic language, differentiation, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) and checking for understanding. Professional development specifically targeted for teachers and administrators to be able to accomplish the goal's intent was specified, required action.

Timeline for implementation of the third section was fall, 2009 through fall, 2010 but progress benchmarks were not identified. Single Plans for Student Achievement from 2009-2011 for each of the Title I high schools indicated targeted professional development for effective instructional practices. Appendix N summarizes the evidence from the plans of each of the high schools. Professional development on effective instructional practices was not evidence at the two non-Title I, 9-12 high schools in the district. The primary evidence showed that the sites were responsible for their own professional development and used predominantly categorical funding to pay for it.

*District leadership and support.* Goal 9.4.1 of the LEAP (Appendix K) required that the Superintendent's Cabinet formulate policies and administrative regulations to clarify the K-12 program for ELs (Appendix K). Goal 9.4.2 in this section required clear definition and support of district leadership and responsibility for ELs.

The timeline for implementation of Goal 9.4 was spring, 2010. Board-adopted policies and guidelines, as well as a clear organizational chart were to be progress benchmark indicators and no additional funding was required. Of note, in 2011, the members of the superintendent's cabinet had changed by 80% from the time of the writing of the 2008 LEAP Addendum. Only one cabinet member remained from the writing team of 2008. The changes in Superintendent's Cabinet are documented in a series of organizational charts found in Appendix J showing composition and reorganization changes multiple times between 2008 and 2011. In addition, turnover in board members of almost 60% showed only four of the seven from the 2008 board remained. Finally, the site leadership had changed considerably, with three new high school Principals, and three new Associate Principals of Curriculum and Instruction. After identifying only two board policies that focused on ELs, BP 6141.1 and BP 6141.2, the data stipulated that codification for expectations, assessment criteria, and base program guaranteed to ELs within 2011 board policy was not evident. Predominantly, the action plan for Goal 9.4 – district leadership and support – had not been implemented on any level.

Goal 2 of this study required identifying the impact of the policy on diverse groups. The results of the examination of the LEAP Addendum asserted that, although very specific guidance existed in the LEAP Addendum in Goal 9, the actions were only partially implemented by the diverse groups. Specifically, Goals 9.1 through 9.3 were essentially implemented, except for certain professional development for administrators and teachers. The fourth action step, Goal 9.4 (policy writing), had not been implemented to any degree. The policy actors (people in each group) had drastically changed to the point that many of the people who wrote the plan no longer continued in their role and that knowledge of the plan in general was vague. The district office leaders had changed and nearly half of the site administrators were new in their positions. No evidence of annual review of the LEAP by policy actors was found, and a review of the names of the people responsible for the action indicated by the LEAP Addendum indicated that they either no longer served in those roles or they no longer worked for the district. Timelines set within the LEAP Addendum had passed due to the policy actors having changed or the timelines being too ambitious.

In summary, Goal 2 of this study has been achieved. The goal was to study the impact of the policies guiding action for ELs on diverse groups. A thorough examination of BP 6141.1 and BP 6141.2 through the lenses of the 2008 DAS quantitative survey, the 2011 interviews, and the 2008 LEAP Addendum revealed a variety of factors and policy actors in the diverse groups had changed considerably. Current district office leadership had completely changed within the last two years, the site leadership had changed by

almost 50%, and school board membership had changed drastically since the writing of the LEAP Addendum. This reality of personnel turnover within the district led to sporadic knowledge of policy on every level and incomplete action in the 2008 LEAP Addendum. The next step is to examine the policies with a lens on Goal 3 – understanding a foundation for district administration to update policy. During the following discussion, data gathered from the interviews, the LEAP Addendum, and research guides the analysis.

### **Goal 3**

The third goal of this study was to determine a foundation for the district administration to write policy. Careful examination of Goals 1 and 2 revealed no inconsistent policies and that, while a Local Educational Agency Plan (LEAP) Addendum clearly offered guidance and action, no official board policies codified the plan. The examination of the two goals, in context of the literature on organizational culture, clearly makes the case for writing policy for those within the district to implement and monitor. Remembering the caution of Cataldo et al. (2009), critical factors within the culture of the organization affected the opportunity for successful organizational cultural change and these factors were important to the creation of a foundation for policy writing. The critical factors included communication, collaboration, and professional development. Schein (2009) also stipulated that there were three distinct levels of organizational culture: espoused values, artifacts and behaviors, and assumptions. The qualitative data collection of the interviews in this

study led to a deep understanding of the espoused values of the participants. The resulting data analysis created a concrete grasp of the critical factors and commanded the foundation for policy writing. The interviews, the LEAP, and the policy analyses guide the next portion of this study.

As previously mentioned, only two of the 102 policies examined, governed action for ELs. Board policies 6141.1 and 6141.2 have already been thoroughly discussed. The governance section of the District Assistance Survey (Appendix B) and the nine categories within determined the choice of policies upon which this next section is focused. What follows is a more complete analysis of certain overarching board policies, and a case for why they should be written in a collaborative manner, communicated throughout the system, and then professionally developed with the policy actors.

The governance section of the DAS focused on the nine categories described thoroughly in Table 1. The categories included: (a) the implementation of the Local Educational Agency Plan (LEAP); (b) the vision, mission, policies, and priorities of the district; (c) the organizational culture of the leadership; (d) the implementation of the Essential Program Components (EPCs); (e) the alignment of sites' Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) with the LEAP; (f) the alignment of fiscal policies with the LEAP; (g) the communication system of the district; 8) the accountability of all district personnel for student achievement; and (h) a data collection infrastructure. Goal 2 analyzed the implementations of the LEAP and the EPCs in. I did not examine, in depth, the organizational culture of the leadership, the alignment of the district's fiscal

policies, or the accountability of personnel for student achievement for use with this goal. A deeper look at the vision, mission, policies, and priorities of the district, the communication system, and the alignment of the SPSA and the LEAP drove the achievement of Goal 3 of this study. The following is an examination of the policies specific to those three subsections of the District Assistance Survey.

**Vision, mission, policies, and priorities of the district.** Section 0000 of the district's policy document contained 4 board policies and 2 administrative regulations regarding philosophy, goals, and the district's plan. Section A.2 of the DAS required that the LEA's vision, mission, policies, and priorities be focused on the academic achievement of all students, especially ELs (ELs), students with disabilities (SWDs), and other high priority students (Appendix B, p.1). Analysis of DAS data collected in 2008 when the District Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT) first began to work with the district indicated that the district office and site administrators who responded to the quantitative tool believed the LEAP was only partially implemented. A complete search of the current board policies yielded no evidence of even partial implementation of mission, vision, or prioritization of a particular subgroup of students. Digging further into each specific board policy determined that no policy guidance existed in written form, thus nullifying the 2008 responses that implementation was in progress.

While no policies currently existed, the district did write a strategic plan in 2008 that addressed the vision of all students meeting graduation requirements (District Website Homepage, 2012). Within the content of the three year plan existed guidance for

working with ELs and Students with Disabilities, to name a few high priority students. Further, the action steps of the LEAP Addendum Goal 9 were the responses to the difficult issues the district was facing, specifically the non-achievement of ELs. A specific set of policies written based on Goal 9 of the LEAP Addendum to respond to A.2 of the DAS could guide successful implementation of the LEAP Addendum. As discussed in Goal 2 of this study, the action steps of the LEAP Addendum indicated partial completion. Completing the remaining action steps would need to include professional development for administrators and teachers.

**Alignment of the LEAP with the SPSA.** BP 0420 described the District Master Plan for School Improvement, now known as the LEAP. Board Policy 0420 was adopted in 1978 and has had no subsequent reviews. Direction in the policy to the Superintendent was annual development and update of a District Master Plan for submission and approval to the State Board of Education. Direction to the Superintendent included involving representatives from principals, teachers, district office administrators, classified staff, students, parents, representatives from business and industry, and bargaining units in the process. No indication from the district's LEAP or the Addendum is found that the process is completed annually or that the process involves membership from the groups mentioned in the policy. Specifically not found was evidence of student representatives.

Full implementation of section A.5 of the DAS required that the LEAP be the guiding document for school sites' SPSA. Writing a policy to respond to section A.5

would guide district personnel's work surrounding accountability requirements and the site personnel's work developing their SPSA. BP 0421 addressed the role of School Site Councils, a topic on which interview question number five of this study also focused. The concept of board approval being required for the School Site Council activities, especially in the realm of school improvement, was clear in the wording of this policy yet none of the board members interviewed realized that they were responsible for the approval of sites' Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), a document created by the School Site Council. Section A.5 of the DAS required that the LEAP be developed with all stakeholders and in alignment with accountability requirements. The staff who answered the 2008 quantitative survey question about this alignment believed implementation of the SPSA and the LEAP was in progress (Appendix B). The sporadic knowledge regarding the LEAP and the SPSA alignment, required examination of the policy guiding the governance of the district. One board policy exists in Section 2000, the administration section of the board policy guidelines. Board Policy 2231 offered a picture of the district-level governance structure, an executive committee. No date of adoption on BP 2231 was evident.

BP 2231 described the Executive Committee of the Superintendent. This policy directed that the Executive Committee shall be "the Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction; Assistant Superintendent, Business Services; Director, Education Services; Director, Personnel; and others upon special invitation" (BP 2231, Appendix Q). Neither the previous nor the current superintendent's cabinet



reflected this exact membership. Upon review of internal documents (Appendix J) but not reflected in board policy, a complete re-organization took place in the spring of 2008, a year after a new superintendent took over the helm of the district from a superintendent who had presided over the district for 23 years. Following the 2008 reorganization, downsizing and subsequent re-organization occurred in the spring of 2010 (Appendix J). In July 2011, when a third superintendent began to lead the district, there were minor revisions to the reporting structures and composition of the Superintendent's Cabinet. The 2011 organizational flowchart reflected budget streamlining and a new attention to special education with the addition of an assistant superintendent of special education. The three organizational flowcharts of 2008, 2010, and 2011, summarized in Appendix J, were not reflected in BP 2331.

*Board member interviews.* In 2011, when asked about the LEAP, Board Member 2 (BM2) stated that "I've not seen these. These are things that the school principals would sit down with the superintendent." Another board member stated, "That's more of a staff responsibility" (BM3). A third stated, "It's embarrassing to tell you I have no idea. You've given me things to look into." (BM5) These assertions contradict the intent of BP 0421 adopted in 1978 and revised in 1997 as board members did not know how the SPSA was monitored or their role in the process. Neither did they express certainty about how the sites' SPSA was aligned to the district's Local Educational Plan (LEAP). BM2 stated, "I think we just rely on staff to make sure they're doing it."

*District administrator interviews.* The depth of knowledge of the interviewed board members regarding BP 0421 did not reflect the depth of knowledge of other district office and site administrators, but was somewhat reflective of the faculty group. Of the district office administrators, primarily the education services administrators knew what was in the SPSA for each site, how it was monitored, and that it was board approved. Administrators in the Business Services division did not indicate depth of knowledge about the SPSA or the existence of the school site council. DA6 stated that she had no role in monitoring the SPSA whatsoever yet, contradictorily, DA10 stated that “we’re currently working on a model...so it’s a little more standardized...and so it matches the LEAP better.”

*Site administrator interviews.* One hundred percent of the associate principals and 100% of the site administrators knew that the school site council created and monitored the school improvement plan and knew what was in their school’s plan. SA6 stated that the SPSA took a “backseat to the things you put in your Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) document” and that it was impossible to blend two different documents created by two different groups of people. SA7 stated that the WASC recommendations were clearly in their school’s SPSA.

*Faculty member interviews.* Only 25% of faculty knew anything about the school site council or the SPSA as derived from the answers to interview question number five. The knowledge of the faculty described who created the SPSA, and that administration’s role was to monitor it. But no one mentioned the faculty’s role in

monitoring the SPSA. The majority of the faculty interviewed believed that the SPSA should be aligned with the District's plan but either had no direct knowledge if it did or had no knowledge at all of the district-level Plan and its contents.

**Effective two-way communication system.** Section A.7 of the DAS (Appendix B) ascribed to a communication system for student achievement. Full implementation of the system required timely, two-way communication with all stakeholders regarding achievement, expectations, and accountability (Appendix B, p. 2). In 2008, district and site administrators answered only one DAS question related to communication. The question asked if there were "clear and frequent communication with the local governing board regarding the implementation of the Essential Program Components (EPCs)". The respondents indicated that the implementation of this communication system was in progress (Appendix B). Nothing in the quantitative questionnaire of 2008 indicated a communication system that was two-way.

**Board member interviews.** In 2011, interviewed board members' responses varied from, "We're very dysfunctional" (BM1) to "It's always been top down" (BM 3). Board Member 4 described past practice as having been complex and confusing. This board member specified that written guidelines and protocols had been created and shared in a workshop to indicate their communication system being funneled from the board members through the superintendent to the employees and the public. All board members indicated that improved communication with the board, the public, the administrators, the certificated, and the classified employees (BM 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) was

evident due to the most recent change in superintendent because of her vision to communicate, collaborate, and celebrate. In the first six months of the current superintendent's tenure, increased and two-way communication was noted publicly via Twitter and Facebook postings, weekly E-News blasts to the entire district via the internal email system, and highlights of board meetings sent to everyone in the district prior to their occurrence. A distinct shift toward a more frequent and open communication system as suggested by the DAS A.7 was definitely evident on the district's website and through internal email. The two-way system had been opened by employees being able to respond to the superintendent's blog postings, nominate fellow employees for "Hero of the Month", or even join to follow the superintendent on Twitter and Facebook where the two way communication was desired, possible, and extremely transparent.

*District administrator interviews.* The district office and site administrators substantiated the finding that communication had improved with the change in superintendent. Attributed to a desire to reach a younger, more digitally competent group of employees, DA9 stated, "The response has been fabulous; they feel included and in the know". During previous superintendents' tenures, "reactive rather than front loaded or proactive communication" (DA9) was the norm. Other district office administrators stated that, aside from the new superintendent's electronic communications, no other communication system existed (DA8) and that communication under previous superintendents had not been strong but confusing and disjointed (DA 1, 2, 3, 7). DA2

stated that, at one point, one knew exactly where to turn to get questions answered but with recent and numerous reorganizations and employee turnover, it was not always clear whose responsibility was a certain department. DA6 spoke of one-on-one communications with the board and a process called “meet and consult” where different employee groups meet with the superintendent to deal with a variety of issues. The same district administrator spoke of school site presentations on student achievement to the board. DA5 stated that, due to a distinct lack of communication in the past, a culture of strained relationships, lack of collaboration, and isolation existed in the district. She continued, “It was difficult to know where decisions were being made and who we were following.” DA4 indicated agreement with DA5 in that reports were presented to the board but “I have never had to break out anything specific to ELs or any other significant sub-group.”

*Site administrator interviews.* Again, as with district office personnel, site administrators clearly indicated that the beginning of the tenure of the new superintendent showed transparency of communication and a “congenial, non-threatening atmosphere” (SA 3, 6). Site administrators were clear that, while decisions and information were communicated well, how decisions took place was not always clear (SA 1, 2, 6). For example, SA1 asserted that “I don’t know how they go about actually formulating that [decision].” SA6 stated, “regardless of what they’re going to tell you is supposed to be, how much collaboration they’re going to do, they’ll end up making the decisions they want to make.” Agreeing with certain district office administrators, SA1, and SA8, SA2

believed that communication was directly appropriated to relationships. He stated, “You don’t go to a position, you go to a person” when you wanted answers or help and that “there really isn’t a structure of communication.” SA5, SA9, and SA10 agreed that the communication between board members and the site administrators was minimal with little formal no structure especially as related to vision of academic achievement and the instructional program. In fact, SA5 stated that during the tenure of the first superintendent, it was a structure of “don’t talk to any of them [board members] about anything negative or not quite right.”

One anomaly across site administrators was the effect of the change of organizational structure on the communication system. SA11 commented that the idea was good but “it caused a lot of communication problems” and “didn’t function well.” SA12 enjoyed the 2008 organizational re-structuring into K-12 Academic Learning Communities (ALCs) because attending more meetings directly meant that information was not second-hand. I sent a follow-up question to probe this discrepancy with all site administrator participants. The question asked if communications were perceived as clearer, more effective, and more frequent under the vertical ALC organization or under the grades K-6 and 7-12 organization. The results of the follow up email supported SA 11’s assertion by 80 percent that the ALC structure inhibited strong communication although at least three administrators said that the infrastructure may have worked better given more time than the two years it existed.

*Faculty member interviews.* Faculty Members agreed that the communication from the current superintendent had increased dramatically in frequency and clarity over the previous superintendents (FM 3, 7, 10, 12, 14). FM4 stated, “It’s something totally new in the seven years that I have been here.” FM7 agreed, stipulating that “in the past, that office has not necessarily been an open door.” FM10 asserted that “just having any conversation regarding ELs to me is a breath of fresh air.” Other Faculty Members either said nothing about the communication system or stated that they had no knowledge of how communication occurred between the board and the district, except for monthly board meetings (FM 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, & 13). FM14 declared, “I think the board has very little knowledge of what we do in our classrooms...on a daily basis” but placed the blame on the lack of information flowing through site administrators and the turnover of district office administrators. FM2 concurred that the board “did not get enough input from teachers who are on the front line of teaching these kids every day.”

The previous deep analysis of the three sub-sections of the governance section of the DAS created the foundation for the district to write policy to include all action steps being implemented within the LEAP Addendum. Further, a need for the district to collaboratively write the policy to guarantee all stakeholders were represented existed. Following the creation of policy, it would be necessary to teach the policies through professional development to the policy actors. Goal 3 of this study was achieved.

### **Evidence of Quality**

It should be noted that member checking was the primary context in which the participants validated the accuracy of the transcriptions of the interviews. I also used a peer debriefer to consult on objectivity and triangulation between interviewees and the unobtrusive measures (achievement data, policy documents, and the DAS data) to verify discrepant data and consistency of information. All other data were downloaded from the district's website or gathered from internal sources responsible for those data sets. For example, the Class List by English proficiency (Appendix N) data were compiled and verified by the Supervisor of Assessment and Evaluation. The observational data were collected, compiled, and verified by the DAIT providers and the Educational Services division of the district office in cooperation with site administrators. The district policies and the LEAP Addendum were posted on the district's website as public documents.

### **Outcomes**

The guiding question for this policy analysis was whether or not district board policy met the academic needs of English-learning students at the secondary level. Because there was no evidence of policy guiding action for ELs and this sub-group of students was not achieving on state and local assessments, the answer to the guiding question is that the district's policies do not meet these students' needs. Policy analysis revealed a need for updating and revising policy to include specificity regarding governance issues of significant sub-groups of students. Still not evident in the policies of this district were guidelines for equity of programming, instruction, and assessment for



ELsELs (Klenowski, 2009; Rorrer, 2006; Tsang, Katz, & Stack, 2008), nor was there evidence of a specific professional development focus based on student achievement goals. While there has been a significant amount of progress in the action plan of the LEAP Addendum, the actions have stalled on the DAS recommendations, codifying the actions into policy. The executive summary of recommendations in Appendix A provides guidance for a district with the same issues to move forward with action and reduce the inequity of an achievement gap, thus meeting the needs of the ELs in a more significant manner.

### **Summary**

Throughout Section 2, the choice of methodology as a policy analysis derived logically from the problem discussed in Section 1. The policy analysis at the school district level within a framework of the larger state and national contexts accomplished the goal of gaining a better understanding of the achievement rates of English-learning students and the guidance offered by the governance policies to all the stakeholders who implement the policies on a daily basis. The policy analysis was designed as interpretive and qualitative and selected over either mixed method or quantitative for the depth it could offer. A focus on the governance of the district and school leadership guided the choice of methodology. Doing so led to an understanding of the intentions of the people implementing the policies dictated by the leadership of the district and its governing board. Understanding intentions of policy actors was critical to identifying barriers to policy implementation and guiding district leaders to better serve the needs of the sites in

supporting ELs. The research justified a sample size of 44 participants, 32 observations and a thorough investigation of board policies and administrative regulations. Methods of establishing a researcher-participant relationship were established along with measures for the ethical protection of the participants. Collecting and analyzing data led to findings that guided the interpretation of district policy implementation. The findings from the data resulted in a clear understanding of potential issues for EL academic achievement.

Section 3 describes the policy analysis project study which led to relevant recommendations arising from the data analysis and supported by the scholarly literature.

## Section 3: The Project

### **Introduction**

Section 1 presented the problem and the purpose of the project study. The purpose of the study was to analyze the district's governance policies regarding English learners, one of the district's under-achieving, significant subgroups, contributing to an achievement gap reflective of that of the state. English-learning students are not attaining proficiency in a timely manner, as defined by state standards. Further, Section 1 set the problem of the achievement gap within a state and local context in order to rationalize the need for the study. Accountability measures, federal laws, scholarly literature, and student achievement data also supported the need for the study.

In Section 2, a proposed tradition of qualitative research and an interpretive policy analysis methodology guided the data collection. Data included interviews, observations, student achievement data, and board policies. Three goals guided the analysis of the data: identifying inconsistent or conflicting policies, identifying the impact of policies on diverse groups, and determining guidance for the senior administration to write policy for board approval and system implementation. The findings resulted in recommendations for policies to be created and professionally developed in a collaborative fashion throughout all levels of personnel within the district.

In Section 3, the project, goals, and rationale are described. A review of the literature, on academic success in educational systems offers support for the project and covers topics such as vision and mission, policy creation and implementation, and

instructional program components. Following the literature review, necessary resources, barriers, timeline, and personnel responsibilities of the project study are detailed. A statement of the study's implications for social change in the local community and the more far-reaching, academic community completes the section.

### **Description and Goals of the Project**

District policies on governance and academic supports for ELs were investigated with three goals as the focus. The goals included (a) identifying current district policy; (b) examining the impact of policies on diverse groups; and (c) determining a need for any new policies. The intent was to discover how policies and administrative regulations were promulgated at different levels in the district. A triangulation of quantitative survey instruments, board policies, observations, and individual interviews created a thick, rich description of the perceptions of each group of policy actors. Faculty, site principals, and school board members described their perceptions of district practices. Understanding the differences in depth of knowledge about policy between different policy actors was important to the process of identifying any barriers to policy implementation.

Identification of the differences was necessary to be able to guide district leaders in developing and communicating information to the site leaders and classroom teachers about how to support ELs academically. Interviewees represented a purposeful, stratified sampling of the district – a vertical slice of the leadership from board members to teachers in the classroom – and led to greater understanding of who knew what.

Because the interview questions used in this 2012 study were nearly the same as those used in the 2008 DAS, I compared the answers from this study to those of the original DAS and the actions suggested in the 2008the LEAP Addendum. The goals of this study guided the project by revealing policies that needed review, policies that needed to be communicated, and policies that needed professional development for teachers and administrators to understand how to implement them for the benefit of ELs. The resulting project is a suggestion guide for writing policy on all aspects of the EL academic support system; it is offered for consideration by the district and its governing board.

### **Rationale**

An interpretive policy analysis guided the study in order to compare and contrast not only the interview data but also the survey data and the data from the district's LEAP Addendum (Yanow, 2000). The collection of a variety of substantive data is supported by Weimer and Vining (2005) and allowed for a thorough and quality data analysis. Over a period of six months, 44 participants were interviewed with questions from Appendix E, 32 classroom observations occurred (Appendix F), and the 2008 DAS (Appendix B) and the LEAP Addendum (Appendix K) were examined and triangulated in detail. A total of 102 board policies and 75 administrative regulations (ARs) were examined from four different sections of LEA policy guidance, and data were collected about the quantity of support classes at each Title I high school. The magnitude of the

data collected justified the size of the sampling and the choice of methodology as qualitative.

Once collected, the data were reviewed through the lens of the three goals of the study. Each goal was identified individually and all the policies were examined in the context of each goal. A coding structure divided the policies examined into policy development, policy perceptions, and policy implementation (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). With regard to Goal 1, no conflicting direction or inconsistencies were revealed in the examination of the policies. It must be noted, however, that 56% of the board policies had never been updated or reviewed since adoption and only two of the policies examined mentioned ELs specifically. Even the term EL was not in board policy; the term Limited English Proficient (LEP) was used to reference ELs.

Goal 2 analysis revealed that a distinct policy/practice knowledge gap existed among the policy actors. While some commonalities were revealed within job-alike groups, the knowledge level of policy actors differentiated greatly between groups (Coburn & Talbert, 2006). For example, faculty members revealed similar knowledge, but their knowledge differed from that of district-level administrators or board members. Further discussion of the recent literature on this topic occurs in the review of the literature found later in this section

Goal 3 created the foundation for the executive summary and the recommendations found in Appendix A. The need for the district to collaboratively write policy that represented and included all stakeholders was clearly established. In addition,

it would be necessary to teach the new policies to the actors through professional development to ensure the practice/policy knowledge gap identified in Goal 2 was diminished.

The DAS (Shannon & Bylsma, 2004) recommended codifying specific governance concepts for implementation through clear recommendations. The recommendations included:

1. The board sets policies and aligns the budget to support the development and successful implementation of the LEAP.
2. The mission, vision, policies, and priorities are focused on the academic achievement of all students, especially ELs, students with disabilities (SWDs), and other high priority student groups to reflect a commitment to equity.  
(California Department of Education, DAS, 2008, p. 1)
3. The LEA fosters an organizational culture of shared core values and norms observable at all levels of leadership and across all schools.
4. The LEA has policies to fully implement the State Board of Education's guidelines (Essential Program Components or EPCs) for intervention programs, instructional materials, assessments, instructional time, and alignment of categorical programs for instructional support.
5. The LEA Plan is aligned with accountability requirements and is the guiding document for the Single Plan for Student Achievement at each school.

6. The LEA's fiscal policies and adopted budget are aligned with the LEA Plan and reflect a coherent instructional program. (California Department of Education, DAS, 2008, p. 4)
7. The LEA uses effective two-way communication and provides timely and accurate information about achievement, accountability, and expectations. (Department of Education, DAS, 2008, p. 5)
8. The LEA holds teachers, administrators, and district personnel accountable for student achievement. (Department of Education, DAS, 2008, p. 5)
9. The LEA provides all schools with the infrastructure to collect and interpret student achievement data to establish and communicate instructional priorities. (Department of Education, DAS, 2008, p.6)

While not all the recommendations above required policy to support implementation, at least three did. To summarize, the findings of this study determined that no current LEA plan and no policy guidance regarding mission, vision, or prioritization of a particular subgroup of students existed for this particular district (Callahan, 2005). While an LEAP Addendum from 2008 guided implementation of evidence-based practices, no policy documentation or support guided the actions required in the LEAP Addendum, especially in Goal 9, the goal focused on ELs. Through the interviews and the examination of the Single School Plans for each school, clear similarities were discovered between the schools. Absent a LEAP, consistency between schools indicated district guidance of some sort. The study did not necessarily focus on



the organizational culture of the district except for what could be examined through board policy, so no finding regarded the third recommendation in the DAS. The district's fiscal policy alignment was not under examination during this study but the communication system had been deemed ineffective. The findings of the study reflected that a new communication system being implemented by the current superintendent was improving the two-way flow of information. Finally, the accountability requirements of the district's personnel and the data collection system were not examined in depth as no policy guided those recommendations. The next discussion will focus on the literature around the aforementioned concepts that the DAS indicates are needed in policy, namely, the LEAP with vision and mission, and the policies regarding the EPCs.

### **Review of the Literature**

The first literature review in Section 2 derived from a conceptual framework of organizational culture and provided the foundation for the study of literature related to the *problem*. A thorough review of recent scholarship included the fields of organizational culture, cultural health of the educational system, leadership, and governance for equity. Searches for syntheses of data on academic success in educational systems were conducted through What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), the Best Evidence Encyclopedia (BEE), the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Coordinating Center (EPPI-Center), and the Promising Practices Network (Slavin, 2008). The search revealed that a great deal of scholarly attention has been focused on ELs in the elementary grades but not much on districts having success with secondary ELs. There

is a dearth of research in other key issues facing districts (Corcoran, Fuhrman, & Belcher, 2001). The following key words were used to seek scholarly articles about the *solution*. *They include: policy, analysis, implementation, school district, central office, district office and decision-making*. A review of each item's reference list also yielded articles worthy of inclusion. The following discussion of the literature sets the course for the rest of the study.

### **The LEAP: Mission, Vision, and Priorities**

The importance of having a vision, mission, policies, and priorities outlined in a specific LEA plan in order to increase student achievement in school districts is clear in the literature (Bryk, Bender-Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Fullan, 2010; Levin, 2008; Wade, 2004; Waters & Marzano, 2009). However, there are often impediments (Burch & Spillane, 2005; Corcoran, Fuhrman, & Belcher, 2001; Spillane, 1998) such as changes in leadership, policies, and funding as well as policy interpretations by those charged with implementation. Waters and Marzano (2009) clearly stated that district leadership matters. In their meta-analysis of 1,210 districts, they discovered a correlation between district office leadership and student achievement with an effect size of .24 (statistically significant at .05). While not specific to English learner achievement, their findings are able to be generalized for district efficacy. Waters and Marzano (2009) also concluded that effective district leaders should engage in particular leadership actions. Included as priorities in these leadership actions were (a) ensuring collaborative goal setting; (b) establishing non-negotiable goals for achievement

and instruction; and (c) creating board alignment with and support of district goals. Bryk, Bender-Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton (2010) concluded that schools were ten times more likely to be successful with instructional focus and guidance. Levin (2008) summarized collective capacity building for improving student achievement, through seven practicalities of leadership development, two of which focus on establishing a vision and goals, and maintaining a focus on teaching and learning. He espoused a knowledge/practice gap on how exactly research became practice (Levin, 2011). Research has posited that the role and responsibility of the school board was developing collective capacity of the district's personnel as related to raising the bar, closing the achievement gap, and creating high expectations of students (Callahan, 2005; Fullan, 2010). Wade (2004) analyzed a school district's culture and found that a high degree of alignment and connection between and among the different layers of an organization was brought on by the clear mission and vision of the board of education and the superintendent and resulted in improved student achievement. In every way, the research base indicated that it was not possible to improve student achievement without a clear mission and vision, codified in policy with specific student subgroups as priorities.

Difficult decisions face any district: what to do, how to do it, how to ensure equity for all students, and how to spread the effectiveness across schools (Burch, 2005; Corcoran, Fuhrman & Belcher, 2001; Rorrer, Skrla, & Scheurich, 2008; Wade, 2004). Careful attention must be paid to make decisions and plans based on evidence, not on philosophical leanings or ideologies of the policy makers and a systemic planning process

could create a culture of inter-dependence, in essence, a professional learning community. Without discussion and decisions on the purpose for the existence of the district (mission), what its goals are for students, and how this mission will be carried out (vision), there are only individuals working alone, side by side (Dufour, Dufour, & Eaker, 2008). Policy guiding the strategic enactment of a clear mission and vision must focus on developing effective instruction to ensure that all students perform well (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Cloud, Genesse, & Hamayan, 2009). In the case study of three districts, Burch (2005) found in each case that problems in achieving instructional improvements resulted from “non-specific policies and signals for intended effects on classroom teaching and learning” (p. 65). Burch concluded that conversations about teaching must infiltrate the entire system if student achievement were to improve. The scholarship is clear that board philosophy and policy goals should drive teaching and learning goals.

**Policy creation and implementation.** Coburn and Talbert (2006) stated that district policy interpretations varied with respect to local knowledge. The policy actor’s place within the system and relationships with colleagues (local knowledge) contributed to a variety of implementations of a given policy (Burch & Spillane, 2005; Spillane, 1998). Policy interpretations varied between specific groups of people working within the system but interpretation was similar amongst people within the same group of the system (Spillane, 1998). Honig and Coburn (2007) espoused the use of local knowledge and suggested funding district administrators to monitor policy implementation and provide professional development opportunities for people within the system to

understand and research educational improvements. Especially important in their regard was how policy actors used evidence for daily decision-making and goal setting; still, they suggested that more study was necessary in this arena and encouraged partnerships with policy researchers. Wade (2004) suggested a strong alignment between the different layers of the district for policy to be effective and that policies be created to guide curriculum choices, professional development, use of formative and summative data, and monitoring school improvement action plans. The foundation to write policy in these areas is supported in the state's use of the Academic Program Survey (APS) and its seven (EPCs). A review of the scholarship on such a foundation for policy writing follows.

### **Essential Program Components**

The State Board of Education (SBE) approved the APS as a tool for use in schools primarily to identify why the school entered Program Improvement (PI) status (California Department of Education, 2011). The APS contains nine EPCs and descriptive criteria by which school personnel are supposed to judge themselves. The nine EPCs are instructional program, instructional time, lesson pacing guides, professional development for administrators, teacher professional development, instructional coaching, student achievement monitoring system, monthly collaboration for teachers, and fiscal support. On the rubric describing the criteria for each EPC, a section within seven of the nine EPCs does guide action for specific subgroups of students, including ELs. The next section of the literature review will focus on the

research for suggested policy guidelines for each of these factors except for lesson pacing guides and fiscal support which have no specific guidance for ELs.

**Instructional program.** Historically, ELs have been tracked into low-level, sheltered programs that contribute to high drop-out rates and low college-going rates (Callahan, 2005; Olsen, 2010). Callahan further stated that “Systemic tracking of ELs results in a lack of access to high quality content-area instruction, which in turn has linguistic, academic, and programmatic consequences” (p. 306-7). In fact, ELs benefit from rigorous college preparatory course work and have achieved English proficiency at higher rates in such programs (Gold, 2006; Linqanti, 2001; Maxwell-Jolly, Gandara, & Mendez Benavidez, 2007). Christensen and Stanat (2007) recommended policy to choose an efficient, systematic, and effective model of language support. As well, reclassification from EL to Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) is hampered (Callahan, 2005) by instructional environments and ineffective instructional methodology (August & Hakuta, 1997) as students are unable to learn academic content in lower-level classes. Policies for instructional programming to support a rigorous college preparatory course of study are crucial for learning both academic content and acquiring English and should consider that content acquisition and English acquisition are both sequential and simultaneous (Linqanti, 2001). Further, English Language Development standards have considerable gaps and districts need to define high quality literacy development for ELs (Maxwell-Jolly, Gandara, & Mendez Benavidez, 2007).

**Instructional time.** Policies regarding extended instructional time (during the school day, summer school, and after school) provide more opportunities for students to be academically successful (Hakuta, 2000). Organizing the school day to add teachers and paraprofessional assistants to provide increased one-on-one teaching and learning, and adding extra years to finish high school were offered as policy modifications (Gold, 2006; University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute, 2008) that would increase the academic opportunities for English learner success. In addition, policies guiding acquisition of English or English Language Development (ELD) should focus on the specific academic needs of different types of English learning students. Although the state's English Language Development Test (CELDT) has five proficiency levels and the requirement for students is to obtain one proficiency level each year, Hakuta (2000) argued that acquisition was more likely to require at least four to seven years or encompass the spectrum of Kindergarten through eighth grade. Policies guiding district goals and benchmarks for progress in language acquisition and content acquisition are essential (Christensen & Stanat, 2007) and should be simultaneous (Linguanti, 2001).

**Instructional coaching and teacher collaboration.** The requirements of the education profession necessitate collective peer sharing and seeking of knowledge (Lambert, 2002; Schön, 1983). Hord & Sommers (2008) purported that the creation and implementation of professional learning communities created ongoing conversations, encouraged participation, and sharing of educator's learning. The work of Schmoker (2006) and Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour, (2004) placed the role of leadership squarely in

the arena of developing professional learning communities. These communities first must create a shared vision, a collective moral purpose that transcends their individual pursuits to improve instruction (Elmore, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2005). Richardson (2008) wrote that high quality professional learning where adults were learning together created successful reforms and cited several examples (e.g., Alabama Reading Initiative, Boston Public Schools, Norfolk Public Schools, and Adlai Stevenson High School). These school systems all enjoyed improved student learning, yet the investment they each made was focused on improving the adult learning. Her argument centered on the premise that when educational organizations shifted the professional development model from a cafeteria of choices appealing to a vast array of interest, to targeted training on professionals students benefitted. She stressed that instructional coaching and the associated observation of instruction was a premier component of many of the reforms. Policies for development of formal and informal collaboration, as well as coaching, could positively impact that educational system.

**Student achievement monitoring system.** Particular for monitoring English learner academic success are a variety of assessments including state and local assessments. Each assessment serves different purposes such as diagnostic, formative, summative, placement, and longitudinal study. Clear policy guidelines for multiple measures of assessment are necessary due to the difficulty of language acquisition at later ages (Bleakley & Chin, 2008; Gold, 2006) and especially to guide teachers' decision-making around instructional methodology. Linqunti (2001) suggested that teachers and



administrators needed to monitor the academic success of ELs both before and after reclassification. Portes and MacLeod (1999) offered that assessments be disaggregated by ethnicity, by parent education level, and by socio-economic status for deeper study as different acquisition success resulted. One key factor in the literature was the finding that parents of ELs who learned English decreased EL drop-out rates (Bleakley & Chin, 2008). This decreased dropout rate resulted in policy implications for providing services such as English language classes for parents in evening, after-school, or adult education programs. In addition to language acquisition for parents, districts needed effective strategies for EL parent outreach to encourage and teach families how to support and participate in their students' schooling (Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007; Gold 2006).

**Professional development for administrators and teachers.** The University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute (2008) advocated for state policy to create and run centers for professional learning primarily focused on ELs where teachers and administrators could attend to deepen their skills. While professional development focused on ELs was not readily available and generally of poor quality, it was deemed a district responsibility to include both teachers and administrators to create greater advocacy for ELs (Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007; Maxwell Jolly, Gandara, & Mendez Benavidez, 2007; UCLMRI, 2008). Professional development should focus on laws governing instruction of ELs as well as strategies to overcome language barriers, acquire second language, understand EL achievement data, maximize instructional time,

enhance content-area literacy, and understand English learner typology (Christensen & Stanat, 2007; Maxwell Jolly et al., 2007; Olsen, 2010). Guiding principles for professional development suggested by Maxwell Jolly et al. (2007) and Callahan (2005) included making connections to students' lives, creating safe and responsive classrooms where high trust existed in the teacher-student relationship, and having multiple opportunities for students to interact with text and with each other by reading and writing to deepen academic understandings. Without appropriate professional development, teachers reported a lesser sense of self-efficacy thus affecting instructional success with ELs (Callahan, 2005). Policy decisions regarding focus of professional development and who should receive the professional development are critically important.

### **The Project**

This qualitative study was an interpretive policy analysis. The policy analysis derived from a series of interviews and observations as well as a large collection of documents and data, including the policies themselves. Subsequent analysis and validation of the data collection revealed important findings and answered the question: How does district board policy meet the academic needs of ELs at the secondary level?

The policy analysis identified three goals to be achieved. The three goals were:

Goal 1: Identify inconsistent or conflicting policies.

Goal 2: Identify the impact of the policies on diverse groups.

Goal 3: Determine a foundation for District Office leadership to write policy.

Goals 1 and 2 were achieved in the analysis found in Section 2. For Goal 3, the analysis showed a need for board policies more specific to the English learner subgroup to be written as informed guidance for all the policy actors in the system (Klenowski, 2009). As a direct result of the policy analysis, an executive summary and written guide for next steps to write policy on all aspects of EL academic support (Appendix A) is offered for consideration to the local governing board and the Superintendent's Cabinet.

### **Needed Resources**

In order to be able to complete the policy analysis through qualitative measures that involved interviewing people and observing in classrooms, many steps were involved. First, approval from the superintendent of the district was required. The Superintendent immediately supported the study. Once permission was officially acquired, finding a participant pool was critical to proceed to the interview process. Support from the superintendent was very valuable and each email request for an interview included a letter from the Superintendent approving the study. The participant pool needed to be purposeful and stratified to achieve a deep understanding of the knowledge levels of people in different areas of the entire system (Creswell, 2007). Over the course of six months, with interview requests via email, 44 people within the district agreed to become participants. Interviews were arranged at a place and time convenient to the participants (Hatch, 2002) and ranged in length from 9–45 minutes. The semistructured interviews (Merriam, 2002) were recorded electronically to facilitate accurate transcriptions. Once the interviews were transcribed, they were sent via email to

each participant for member checking and validation purposes. Accurate transcription of the interviews was necessary to process the data for analysis and code for the trends generated by the interview questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The participant pool was a major support to completing this study.

Concurrently with the interviews, classroom observational data were collected through a visitation process already in place within the district. Over the course of 3 months, these data were collected from the four Title I high schools in the district under study, and resulted in 32 classroom observations ranging in length from 10–15 minutes each. The observations were collected and stored in binders for examination during the data analysis process. The built-in district process of walk-through observations and the existence of an observation protocol highly supported the project implementation processes and made it quite easy for the researcher to successfully collect the observational data.

The most important data collected were the district's board policy documents (Bardach, 2009; Weimer & Vining, 2005). Available publicly via the Internet on the district's website, searching and analyzing the policies for content about ELs was not only possible but unproblematic. The findings revealed a definite need for specific board policies to be written to govern action and support for EL academic success. The executive summary of recommended action in Appendix A addresses the findings from the policy analysis in more detail and would require funding expenditures as well as personnel time.

### **Potential Barriers**

Barriers to the implementation of the policy analysis could have derived from a number of sources at all levels of the system. The Superintendent who approved the study originally left the district yet, the new Superintendent continued to support this research. Considering that the findings could have resulted in a negative outcome, the support of the new Superintendent was very positive in allowing the study to proceed. The promise of confidentiality went a long way towards convincing participation in the study; trust in the researcher could have been a potential barrier, but it was not.

A large turnover in district office and site personnel in recent years, with administrators moving out of the system or changing positions within the system, was a definite barrier. Two participants stepped down from their site administrative positions but continued the interviews as if they were still site administrators and answered from that perspective. The administrators who replaced them continued to answer from the perspective of their previous position as well. No brand-new administrators were introduced into the system.

An election during the data gathering process brought three new board members to the table. The board member interviews had been completed before the newly-elected members took office so they were not included. While none of the new board members were included in the interview process, they will still be presented with the findings through the written guide of Appendix A. Observational data might have been difficult had there not already been a process in place applicable to this data collection.

Acceptance and action with the findings from the analysis could still be a barrier as the board members or the Superintendent's cabinet may or may not choose to proceed with the recommendations.

Further barriers to the implementation of the actions recommended in the executive summary could be funding expenditures and district personnel's time. The complete review and update of all board policies to align with new federal requirements for student achievement and acknowledgement of underachieving subgroups of students would require multiple months of meetings, passage through school board member review and adoption, and potentially funding to pay for the service of a professional organization or a district person. Ultimately, the desire of the board to have policy that reflects current reality and mandates could also be a barrier to the implementation of the recommendations in Appendix A.

### **Implementation and Timelines**

The policy analysis took place over the course of nine months from start to finish. The interviews took much longer than originally anticipated, not in length of individual interviews but in scheduling the quantity of interviews, especially over the summer months when many people in the district were not working. Working around vacation and work schedules of 44 people proved to be more time-consuming than expected. Also not anticipated was the length of time the interview transcriptions took. Transcriptions were extremely time-consuming even with the use of the electronic recording device, often taking triple the actual length of the interview itself. Once the transcription was

complete, member checking was expeditious, with most participants returning their approval of the transcription by e-mail within 24 hours. On the other hand, collection and analysis of the board policies also went much quicker than anticipated because the policies had recently been uploaded to the internet and electronic searching for terms such as equity or English learner was possible.

Analysis of the data collected also took an unanticipated amount of time. Once collected, triangulating between 44 interviews, 32 observations, 3 large binders of documents, 102 policies, and 75 administrative regulations was a tremendous task and added at least two months to the overall process. Over the course of the full 9 months, reading and rereading the recent literature to ensure the focus and appropriateness of the project was time-consuming. Over 25 more peer-reviewed articles were added to the reference list to justify and lend credibility to the project recommendations. The executive summary of recommendations in Appendix A could occur over the course of the next 1–2 years and is more fully described in the appendix.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Doing research in one's own district is not encouraged by some experts (Hatch, 2002). Yet Creswell (2007) claimed that member checking, triangulation, and identifying researcher bias could combat familiarity with the participants and the knowledge of the system.

As I interviewed a vertical slice of the district, my role was multifold: that of subordinate and manager. I needed to avoid asking leading questions and involving

myself in discussions about the questions. As an employee of the district, a preexisting rapport with many other employees and board members made it quite easy to gain access to the participant pool. Many participants were eager to support me throughout the research process even to the point of meeting me at my own school for their interview. As well, I found that recording the interview allowed me to focus completely on the questions, probing, if necessary, to get as much information from the participant as possible. Ensuring confidentiality with each interview and again with the request to check the transcription was crucial to many participants' involvement. They were willing to discuss many issues but wanted their confidentiality ensured. A final responsibility was critical to the project's success: collection of the most recent versions of board policies and ensuring the accuracy and research base of the recommendations was important to establish researcher credibility.

Due to the fact that the study was a policy analysis, the project evaluation plan was presented in Section 2 in the form of the three goals mentioned again at the beginning of this project discussion. Achieving the three goals led to negotiating new meaning in the policies and identifying policies that needed reframing (Yanow, 2000) in order to support the English learner subgroup to greater academic achievement. The result of goal achievement is the written guide of recommended actions for the board of education and the Superintendent's cabinet found in Appendix A. The recommended actions would potentially require the services of a professional organization, a district leader, or a group of concerned individuals to complete the work. It could require one to



two years for completion given that policies need to be revisited and read by the board during multiple meetings and receiving the benefits of public input.

## **Implications**

### **Local Community**

This project study was significant for the school district because it directly addressed needs identified by the DAS and needs deriving from federal NCLB (Title I and Title III) sanctions. The district was being held doubly accountable and facing dual corrective actions. This high school district was not meeting the academic needs of its Title I students, and particularly the English learner sub-group of students. As a result of the sanctions and while an external entity supported the reforms, certain actions in the LEAP Addendum (Appendix K) were implemented as described earlier in this study. An action plan was created with timelines and goals, but after 2010, when the external entity was no longer directly supporting the district's efforts, the action plan was partially abandoned. Principals changed jobs or left the district; even the top leadership at the district office changed tremendously. This study has the potential to urge the district back into action to revise the timelines, assign the actions to leaders currently within the district, and complete the plan. As policies are clarified and prioritized by the school board, communication throughout the system about changes in governance will be especially critical if common practices are to be adopted and practiced. A vertical information flow will increase knowledge of all policy actors. Guidance to understand existing inequalities caused by institutional practices, and professional development to

face it (Klenowski, 2009), will help to achieve the true intent of No Child Left Behind, namely to serve all students' needs, especially significant subgroups of students such as ELs or students with disabilities. The policy actors will have a major focus on the EL subgroup of students that is currently not achieving at high levels; the recommendations in the Executive Summary of Appendix A should assist the district to hone its thinking, prioritize the significant subgroups such as ELs, and focus on its biggest academic challenge –closing the achievement gap (Rowan, Hall, & Haycock, 2010). Achievement of these goals would begin to transform the district and have a potential effect on other districts in the larger community, reducing the inequities at all levels – social, economic, and academic. The district's teachers and administrators, who have voiced confusion or frustration in the interviews, or declared a lack of knowledge about guidance, may see the recommendations as providing clarity of action and seek to implement the policies at all levels, from the classroom to the boardroom.

### **Social Change**

Walden defines positive social change as creating and using ideas and actions to “promote the worth, dignity, and development of individuals, institutions, and the larger society” (Walden University, 2010). As this study revealed, as long as policy fails to address the embedded deficiencies of program, curriculum, and instruction, a whole generation of language learners are relegated to a diminished societal position. They do not achieve at the same rates as students whose primary language is English, often dropping out of school, becoming disenfranchised, and without hope of equitable

learning conditions. However, when educational leaders address the obstacles ELs face, by producing and administering sound policies, our system of public education can provide the pathway to an equitable future for all students. Being born in the United States does not guarantee equity, remember, the EL group of students was found to be performing less well academically than other groups of students, even though many ELs had been born in the United States and had gone to American schools for their K-12 academic experience. As the fastest-growing group of students in the K-12 educational system, a focus on reforms for ELs; reforms such as rigorous curricula, appropriate assessment, and parent involvement increase the chances of greater academic success (Abedi & Linqanti, 2012; Pompa & Hakuta, 2012). Students who matriculate through such systems perform well, and after reclassification, often out-perform their English-only peers (Department of Education, 2011). Promoting the best practices in policy will serve to realize the Walden mission of social justice as students receive the program, curriculum, and instruction they need to be equally successful as their English-only peers. Currently disenfranchised, unsuccessful students will be better prepared to finish high school and pursue post-secondary learning options, either in a career or in an educational institution. As mentioned in Section 1, the systemic, organizational practices and policies may be to blame for the inequitable outcomes of marginalized students. Resolving the issues locally could create an exemplar or role model for other districts in the state facing the same difficulties. The components in the guide of Appendix A and the guidance in the LEA plan focus on policy action to govern what happens on a daily basis with

curriculum, assessment, instruction, professional development. Increasing student success and providing a more equitable academic environment could change opportunities for ELs, allowing more access to college, higher paying jobs, and greater personal wealth. The new prospects of a more learned culture could deeply affect the greater population and may lead toward a reverse of the current, negative, economic situation in the United States.

### **Far-Reaching**

The knowledge garnered from this study will be a guide to other districts in states facing similar state and federal sanctions. While legislative influence at the state-level might be difficult, other districts in the first cohort could be working together to support and guide each other with local governance issues. San Francisco Unified School District, Stockton Unified School District, and Napa Valley Unified School District were three districts in the first cohort of districts to face the federal sanctions for similar reasons. If other districts could benefit from the recommendations found in this study, the achievement gap would begin to close at a faster rate causing inequity between subgroups to be reduced. Marginalized students, such as ELs, would be more successful academically. Engaging in collective capacity building (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005) would assist not only the district system, but the larger K-12 system within the state.

## Summary

With almost 2,000 ELs in the high school district under study, it would seem impossible to ignore a group of students of this magnitude. The district has focused the majority of the reforms at the General Education population with reforms being implemented haphazardly and incompletely. No practices suggested in the Local Educational Agency Plan Addendum (LEAP) have yet been codified in policy. As one administrator stated, “if we put things into board policy, then we would *have* to do it!” (DA7). The culture is shifting slowly, yet positively, towards a more open, trustworthy, and communicative system with the advent of the recent Superintendent. As the tides shift and more new people enter the system, it will be critical to remember the issues. A real danger exists that the issues will be forgotten and good work that has occurred already would be lost. By codifying the policies and ensuring that everyone in the system knows what the expectations are, the likelihood is greater that success will occur, no matter who helms the system or the schools. Policy outlasts people and will benefit the future employees of the district.

Section 3 presented the project description and goals, the rationale, a second review of the relevant literature, the project implementation describing potential resources, barriers, timeline, and responsibilities, as well as the board policy analyses. A summary of the study’s implications for social change within the local community and the more far-reaching, academic community was also presented. In Section 4, I have had the opportunity for deep reflection on a number of levels, including my growth as a

scholar, practitioner, and project developer. I have pondered what I learned on a systemic basis and what future directions this research could take.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the study was to analyze the district's governance policies regarding English learners, one of the district's under-achieving, significant subgroups, contributing to an achievement gap reflective of that of the state. In Section 4, I reflect on my growth as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer; I ponder what I learned on a systemic basis; and I recommend future directions for this research.

This project study was designed in response to district-level EL achievement data. The rationale for conducting a qualitative, policy analysis derived from literature (Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2002; Weimer & Vining, 2005; Yanow, 2000) and the fact that the district was facing federal sanctions under NCLB Title I and Title III mandates (CDE, 2007). The research question that guided the data collection and analysis was: How does district board policy meet the academic needs of EL students at the secondary level? The depth and breadth of the sample of 44 participants across different levels and groups within the system increased the knowledge of the culture reflected in the district's policies through interviews, 32 classroom observations, and a multitude of data measures. At the time of the study, the district was in Program Improvement as defined by NCLB. Based on the research question, an interpretive policy analysis was used. Data were collected through interviews, observations, unobtrusive measures, and the board policies themselves.

This qualitative study had three goals: (a) identify conflicting board policies (of which there were none); (b) identify the impact of the policies on diverse groups; practice greatly differed from the policies and policy actors' knowledge of board policy varied according to their position in the district; and (c) determine a foundation for the district administration to write policy. The study revealed a need for a clear LEA plan. Its mission, vision, and prioritized goals would include subgroups and the EPCs that improved student achievement. The final policy recommendations will be offered to the superintendent and her board of education for consideration after the study has been approved.

The achievement of the three goals of the study has greatly impacted me on several levels. On an academic level, I have developed a deeper understanding of policy analysis as an effective research methodology. On a social justice level, I have gained a greater empathy for the plight of students who are at-risk simply due to language barriers. Career-wise, I have developed research skills to guide the next level of scholarship and leadership skills to guide the next level of job attainment.

### **Project Strengths**

A number of project strengths existed including the cooperative participant sample, the interesting data from the interviews, and the opportunity for reflection and examination of board policies that revealed much about the governance of the district. Forty-four interviews took place over the course of 6 months. The participant sample for the interviews included people from all areas of the system (Creswell, 2007). With the



exceptions of a few teachers and two administrators, almost all participants who were invited participated in the study. Each participant was very eager and trusting to share their thoughts and answered the questions to the best of their ability and knowledge (Creswell, 2007), allowing that the interviews be completed in a matter of months.

As the participant sample was so diverse and cooperative, the data garnered from the interviews provided great depth of knowledge of the many layers of culture within the organization. Each participant was a policy actor at some level from the school board to the teacher in the classroom and thus was able to provide insights into the practices of the district from their particular perspective or position within the system. The thick, rich description offered established the quality of the findings (Merriam, 2002). While the interviews ranged in length from 9–45 minutes and some participants did not have much to offer, the lack of information in and of itself was revealing. Overall, the large quantity of data generated and analyzed were extremely useful in determining the response to the question.

A thorough examination of the board policies had not been completed in many years as indicated by the review dates (or lack thereof) found in Appendix I. It was both revealing and interesting to discover what was contained in the policy documents i.e., which areas of governance had received numerous revisions (technology and discipline) and which areas had not received much attention at all (philosophy and instruction). It was also important to notice that there were few policies that governed action on ELs

either specifically or generally. To know that this project study had information to offer the district about its policy governance is gratifying (Yanow, 2000).

### **Project Limitations**

Project limitations included the observations, the recent changes in both site and district leadership, and a concern for researcher bias. The observations revealed little about ELs specifically because it was not known how many ELs or which students they were in each class. Neither did they reveal data on policy implementation as because I had no direct contact with the teacher or class being observed. Therefore, these data were not useful for determining board policy implementation or the effect of certain instructional strategies on the EL subgroup of students. One way to resolve this discrepancy might be observation over time of a smaller participant sample (Janesick, 2004) and their specific English or mathematics class. Prolonged observations over time could reveal information about instructional strategy effectiveness with particular subgroups of students. The same observation might reveal a correlation between particular instructional strategies and professional development.

Changes in leadership at the site and the district level were also limitations of the project (Waters & Marzano, 2009). From the quantitative survey distributed in 2008 to the interviews completed in 2011, there were many changes at all levels of leadership from site (50%) up through district and superintendent (almost 100%) and even to the board of education make-up (57%). These changes in leadership seemed to raise questions from the participants resulting from the loss of historical knowledge within the

district about how things were done a certain way or why policies were written in a certain way. Had the policies been on paper only or active in implementation? Had there been a reason not to revise policy to include information about NCLB, program improvement support services, and particular subgroups of students, including ELs? Had there been policy professional development for any leader in the district? Why had predominantly only discipline and technology policies been revised in recent years? Questions such as these merit further study.

As an employee of the district for the last 7 years, there were strengths and limitations to being the researcher. Participants' cooperation, trustworthiness, and voluntary assistance in the study supported the decision to undertake the study in my own district. Participants' eagerness to provide the "right" answer, not the answer that was the truth, and getting off track during the questioning were limitations to being the researcher. Sometimes they revealed names that had to be removed from the transcript. It was also slightly awkward to interview supervisors. Past relationships with participants could have tarnished the interview data collection but with the consistent member checking, I do not believe it did.

### **Recommendations for Remediation of the Limitations**

Although the project study was successful in responding to the research question, there are elements that could have been modified to reduce the limitations. To reduce the limitations and increase validity of the current study, I used member checking, triangulation, and a doctoral peer to debrief the findings (Creswell, 2007). Further study

into a different district facing the same sanctions would make for an excellent case study analysis and further reduce researcher bias. As well, a focus on only participants who had held their position within the district for a certain amount of time would reduce the concern over the loss of knowledge due to the changes in leadership. Finally, eliminating the observations completely from the data collection or creating a more useful protocol for gathering specific information by subgroup of students would create more validity for the study. Another option for observations might be fewer classrooms over an extended period of time, including focus groups of EL students to assist in understanding the phenomenon in more depth.

### **Recommendations to Address the Problem Differently**

There are potentially alternative ways to address the problem other than the policy analysis. For example, a quantitative study could have involved more survey questions with a hypothesis. A sample hypothesis could have been that districts in NCLB Program Improvement status have common variables affecting achievement outcomes of ELs. A survey to discover the impact of any number of variables as perceived by superintendents or directors of curriculum would have served to garner information from a quantitative perspective. Questions could focus on questioning variables such as policy, curricula, professional development, communication, and other system factors. Alternately, the new survey could have been a repeat of the 2008 DAS discussed in Appendix B, a quantitative survey with a Likert-type scale undertaken by the district's personnel. A mitigating factor for not choosing this particular route might be the turnover of personnel

at the site and district levels. With few repeat participants, the results would definitely have been suspect.

A mixed methods study could have used the aforementioned survey analysis as well as interviews and document analysis to uncover policy needs of the district. Using this type of methodology, both research aspects could be incorporated to include surveys, observations, and focus groups with parents or students. A mixed methods study would have a more historical approach to it but a visual model needed for the study might be difficult to design given a focus on only one particular sub-group of students. Also, the difficulty of becoming an expert at both qualitative and quantitative methodology might impact the decision of the researcher.

One final suggestion, a qualitative case study, could have compared multiple districts in the same situation or 2 districts – one high-performing and one under-performing with comparable demographics. For example, in the first group of districts to become labeled Program Improvement in the state under study, there were 54 districts whose achievement data for ELs was a factor. Were a researcher to compare four or five of these districts to attempt to discover commonalities and differences, the data could be very interesting. Data from the selected districts could take on a more longitudinal focus perhaps with multiple observations over time investigating the instructional delivery angle. Instead of comparing a few districts in Program Improvement to each other, another possible angle could be to compare a district that was not in Program Improvement to one that was to discover what the participants considered the major

factors to the creation of a high-performing system and a low-performing system. A key factor would have been to compare districts in the same state since accountability is measured differently in different states.

### **Analysis of Learning**

#### **Scholarship**

Reflecting on Senge's (1990) work on learning organizations, I am reminded of the five disciplines he described: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning. He suggested that redesigning school systems to exemplify a learning organization would expand the capacity of the system to create desired results, nurture new patterns of thinking, set free a collective aspiration, and to learn how to learn together. Beginning with Senge's work, I feel the scholarship of the last three decades has culminated in very specific guidance for districts to become learning organizations or professional learning communities. The goal of a professional learning community is for educators to work together with a shared vision, beliefs, and values and to become interdependent (Dufour, Dufour, & Eaker, 2005). As the district moves toward a model of shared vision, mission, and sets priorities for all students, I realized that the possibilities for this collaboration to lead to improved student achievement were endless. Stronger and more trustful relationships have begun to lead to collective inquiry and educators within the system are developing as reflective practitioners and working together. Professional development within groups of focused teachers and administrators from different sites is strengthening our collective capacity

(Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005) and giving us a sense of hope and opportunity and nurturing new patterns of thinking. Considering the evidence base while problem-solving as a professional was not something I undertook on a regular basis; reading appropriate peer-reviewed research studies was new to me. Using the studies as part of everyday work has become a habit and maintaining access after graduation to an online library like Walden's has become a very high priority.

### **Project Development and Evaluation**

Project development and evaluation must be examined through the lens of the strengths and limitations. Although doing the project in my own district garnered goodwill and a willing participant pool, it was also a bit awkward and sometimes uncomfortable because of the vertical nature of the sample. Completing the same project in a different district going through similar circumstances, the participant sample might not be as willing and it might not be as uncomfortable since previous relationships would not interfere. The interviews would likely take longer to schedule and complete, given no assumption of the researcher's knowledge on the part of the participant; trust would not be automatic. In a different district, it would be easy to underestimate the length of time for the entire study to occur.

Private interviews were an excellent method for gathering data but would focus groups have facilitated or detracted from gathering the same data or would they have gathered different data completely? The document collection was facilitated by the internet as most internal documents were posted on the district's website. Were that not

the case, the timeline would have changed again and the project length would again be extended. On the other hand, data gathered from observations were not as useful in this project; if the observations had been less formalized and used a different protocol developed for the purpose of the study, the data gathered may have told a different story about ELs' academic success. A different study might observe or interview or have focus groups with 3 groups of ELs: one that is achieving well, one that is not achieving well, and a group of dropouts.

Interviewing took place during the time of year that crossed school years thus creating a problem with personnel change. As previously mentioned, site leadership, district leadership, and board leadership changed greatly over the course of the project. This issue may have been mitigated had the interviews taken place during a single school year. In future projects of this sort, that should be a major consideration. All in all, while the project could have successfully gone in different ways, the model that was used did achieve the goals.

### **Leadership and Change**

In Section 1 of this study, the evidence from the literature suggested that a focus on educational leadership and organizational culture for social and economic impact could result in social change. In turn, the focus would influence a positive, systemic shift for student achievement. The project study revealed much about the leadership of the district as seen through the lens of its board policies. Not developing a specific mission and vision for student achievement goals, highlighting specific subgroups of learners for



support, or providing clear direction for action caused the many layers of the organization to have different interpretations of how to implement the policies. Where there were no policies or clear written directions, people were working to the best of their knowledge. Diverse philosophies, various professional development and knowledge base, and misunderstood mandates were not leading to a successful academic experience for students, especially ELs. The direction in the DAS and the LEAP Addendum clearly needs continued action and personnel for implementation and completion. It will require skilled leadership within the learning organization to achieve this goal. Once the focus has been regained, the academic experience of all students will change.

### **Analysis of Self**

#### **Scholar**

Over the course of the last 2 years and indeed the last 5 years of doctoral study, I have deepened my appreciation and knowledge of peer-reviewed research and scholarly writing. I have always believed in writing to learn, but the past few years have taught me so much more. Writing to reflect, writing to teach, writing to persuade, and writing to learn have become so much a part of me that rarely do I present, facilitate, or process without pre-writing to understand a concept. To be able to write to and with other classmates and colleagues has enhanced my thinking and caused my communication skills to become more effective. I now write newsletters to parents, create professional development for staff, video-blog, and tweet to students. I have at a deeper respect for the varied ways of communication and how my communication skills define me to the

public. I constantly question the effectiveness of my messages and strive to improve both the quality and quantity. I am also lucky enough to be able to communicate in multiple languages; now my goal is to use each of the methods mentioned in a bilingual fashion so I may reach more of the wider school community. I have realized through the interviews the importance of communicating my mission, collaborating to create a vision for our students, and ensuring monitoring of the vision with a specific eye on my significant sub-groups of students. Whether or not the larger system proceeds with the recommendations, using my new knowledge to lead my professional learning community and do right by the students under my care is critical. I now see myself as a change agent, ready to facilitate new thinking and challenge deeply held belief systems so that students may have an improved academic experience.

### **Practitioner**

Most importantly, I have truly become a reflective practitioner. Honestly, I thought that I was a reflective practitioner before I began the doctoral program but I believe now that I was only scratching the surface. Did I read books? Yes. Did I read journals? Yes. Did I read evidence-based, peer-reviewed books and journals? Absolutely not! I didn't even know there was a difference existed because I believed validity was automatic in the writing of the book or article and its subsequent publication. Now, I have embedded my new knowledge into the accreditation report for my high school and my Single Plan for Student Achievement. I pay greater attention to the district's 2008, outdated LEA plan so that my school is aligned with the district goals. I

have plans to lead a vision and mission process resulting in data-driven goal setting at my site. I have goals to delve deeper into the areas that my study revealed as meriting further research. I have begun a journey into the research world that I enjoy and will not forfeit with graduation. I have committed to myself to continue to learn and grow and use my knowledge in my everyday practice.

### **Project Developer**

I learned a great deal about myself as a project developer. I realized I have a passion for qualitative research, I especially enjoyed face-to-face interviews that get to the heart of the phenomenon, and I deepened my knowledge about the academic experience of ELs as governed by board policy. The qualitative angle of research allowed me to have personal interactions with people in my district. Through this method, I developed a deeper understanding of philosophies, contexts, and organizational culture which would not have been possible through quantitative instrumentation. The process of the study, from deciding on a question to analyzing data and deciphering findings, engaged my inner sleuth, like a good mystery. I delighted in selecting data collection methods that interested me, and I greatly honed my analytic skills scouring data to decipher their meaning. The document examination led me to a more profound comprehension of the organizational culture of the district. Being relatively new to the district, examining the board policies, I was able to see trends and patterns as well as the effects of the leadership of three different superintendents. Through the project

development and implementation, I set an enormous task for myself and achieved a life-long goal.

Developing the executive summary of the recommendations was a task that was both challenging and gratifying. Discovering the solid background and research involved in the DAS and relying on that tool to guide the executive summary of recommendations grounded my thinking about what works systemically to support students, especially focusing on English-learning students and focused my work at the site level to become more powerful. Clearly-communicated information with specific, measurable goals is now a higher priority in my daily work. Consequently, I feel much better prepared to serve students in my school and district.

### **Overall Reflection**

The study, resulting from what seemed like a simple question, almost grew almost out of control. From the beginning, the advice from professors and colleagues alike was to simplify and focus my research project. As I attempted to continue working on that which interested me and studying what would ultimately benefit the bigger system, my research question became increasingly clear. I wanted to focus on closing the achievement gap for ELs, think systemically to help get my district out of sanctions, and ask pertinent questions that were legitimized by research and literature. Reflecting on the past year, I think I have achieved this goal. Confronting and controlling my researcher bias, I now question everything and triangulate my thinking with others by staying current with the literature. If not for the kind and gentle guidance of my chair, my

methodologist, and my doctoral peers, I would not have been able to complete this study. That revelation leads me to believe that, by working with a team of colleagues and building collective capacity, together we achieve more. As I offer the executive summary of recommendations to the board of education and the superintendent's cabinet, I believe the focus on ELs will deepen throughout the system and their academic success will be enhanced. Teachers, principals, district leadership, and board members will understand at a much deeper level, the needs of ELs. Professional development may occur to support the deepening of this knowledge. Instructional practice in the classroom may reflect a focus on ELs and more ELs will begin to re-classify to Fluent English Proficient. Sharrat and Fullan (2009) asserted that capacity building throughout a system required a moral imperative, a commitment to shared vision and staying the course. A focus on teaching must infiltrate the entire system – every school, every classroom - and strategic leadership at all levels must support this culture shift. I plan to lead as a role model at my own site and support the district as it moves down this path towards social justice.

### **Implications for Future Research**

As stated earlier in the strengths and limitations sections, future research on this topic could take many paths. One of the most interesting to me would be to return to the same district in 5 years to ask the same questions, examine board policies, and analyze student achievement data. I would like to verify if there had been any changes that could be directly related to the policy recommendations or if the achievement gap for ELs had

decreased by a significant amount. Another path would be to undertake the same project in one or two different districts to compare and contrast through a multiple case study methodology.

If I were to modify the current methodology, I would add focus groups to engage the English-learning students and their families directly. It would be incredibly revealing to investigate the phenomenon from an individual student's perspective. Examining the academic experience of the English learner by interviewing academically successful ELs, ELs who are not achieving well, even a group of drop-outs could generate very significant data and lead to a much deeper understanding of how to enhance the school experience for students.

As Section 4 concludes, reflection on my growth as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer was detailed. I have also contemplated what I learned on a systemic basis and offered future directions for this research to take. The undertaking of a doctoral study was tremendous and interesting and I intend to continue the research path.

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## Appendix A: Executive Summary

### **Background**

This executive summary has been prepared for the superintendent, her cabinet, district principals, and the school board. It is offered with recommendations for continued action on behalf of the district's English learners and summarizes the findings and recommendations from the *Analysis of a School District's Governance Policies and Practices Relating to English Learners* – a project study undertaken by Lynn Lysko in pursuit of her doctoral degree from Walden University between August 2007 and October 2012.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the district's governance policies regarding ELs, one of the district's under-achieving, significant subgroups, contributing to an achievement gap reflective of that of the state. Secondary English-learning (EL) students were not achieving on state and local standardized tests for the Academic Performance Index (API) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) at the same rates as other significant sub-groups (California Department of Education, 2009). A report published by The Education Trust (2010) stated that, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2009), the achievement gap in five states continued to remain much larger than that of the U.S. on average (Rowan, Hall, and Haycock, 2010). This state is one of the five states and is “compiling the worst track record in closing the achievement gap” (Rowan et al., 2010, p. 6). According to the National Center for

Education Statistics (NCES), this state also has one of the nation's largest reported numbers of ELs, totaling 1.6 million students (26% of all students) who receive ELL services (NCES, 2011).

At the regional level, data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2000) indicated that in the California, specifically this district's county, a language other than English was spoken in an average of 39.5% of homes in the state and 17.9% of the homes on a national level. The local data for the county indicated that 32.4% of families reported a language other than English was spoken at home (U.S. Census, 2000).

A qualitative approach to the project study involved interpretive policy analysis through a combination of document research and field research. The goals of this qualitative study were 1) to identify inconsistent or conflicting policies; 2) to identify the impact of policies on diverse groups; and 3) to determine a foundation for a district to write policy in support of work with ELs. Over a seven month period from May 2011 through November 2011, I examined 102 board policies, conducted 44 interviews of a variety of district personnel, and collected data from 32 classroom visitations. In addition, I examined the district's responses to the 2008 DAS (DAS) and the 2009 Local Educational Agency Plan (LEAP) Addendum that contained the action plan for the district's program improvement work.

### **Summary of the Analysis and Findings**

Yanow (2000) described the following steps to conducting an interpretive policy analysis. First, she proposed to determine the policy artifacts and identify those who

interpret the artifacts. Understanding that different people may interpret artifacts in different ways, sweeping the system seeking common traits is important. Once the artifacts and the interpreters of the artifacts are identified, the second step is to pinpoint the meaning the interpreters place on the artifacts. After steps three and four of data collection and analysis, the fifth and final step that a policy analyst takes is to mediate discussion between the policy actors or interpreters for conflicting understandings of the policy under investigation.

Guided by Yanow's (2000) five-step process, qualitative elements of the evaluation design for the project study included identifying and gathering policy artifacts such as official district policy documents, especially those artifacts related to the elements contained in the governance section of the DAS. The communities of meaning described by Yanow (2000) in step two that were relevant to the policy issue derived from a multilevel investigation of board and district-level policy actors and site-level policy actors. Data were collected through interviews as well as through observations of EL students in classrooms to complete steps three and four. I analyzed the data to determine the knowledge base of policy of various policy actors, as well as any policy-practice gaps that existed regarding supporting the academic experience for ELs in the high schools. These data uncovered specific meanings of the artifacts and provided information on policy knowledge and implementation. Finally, points of conflict that reflected different interpretations developed from both the school perspective and the district perspective to guide the analysis and understand the policies under investigation.

After completing all the interviews, I submitted the transcripts to each interviewee to verify transcription accuracy. The participants indicated that the information was accurate and offered little or no suggestions for clarity. After analysis of the points of conflict and description of the areas of agreement or discrepancy as experienced by stakeholders, the final section of the project study focused on the implications of policy writing.

Through the framework of the 2008 DAS and the lens of each of the three goals of the study, board policies were related to the 2009 Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan Addendum, formal interviews, and observational data. Each goal was examined thoroughly and separately guided by the contextual framework of organizational culture. Schein (1985) posited that the evolution of a culture included the construction of shared meanings and that the health of the functionality of the culture depended on the consistency between practice and beliefs. He further offered that, to understand and change an organization, an examination of values and structures paired with individuals' understanding of culture, climate, and practice must ensue. In effect, the examination of culture occurred through this study. Each goal is presented individually for the findings.

### **Goal 1**

Goal 1 of this study required identification of inconsistent or conflicting policies. One major finding is that board policies are not reviewed or updated on a consistent basis (Appendix I) as stated in BP 0100. In fact, 56% of board policies reviewed had no revision date at all. Only two board policies contained guidance on ELs (still labeled

Limited English Proficient or LEP) specifically BP 6141.1 (1983) and BP 6141.2 (2001, 2004, 2005). Neither of these board policies has administrative regulations to guide specific action of the policy but neither are they inconsistent or conflicting with any other policies.

## **Goal 2**

Goal 2 required identifying the impact of the policies on diverse groups. Through interviews and document analysis, different participants clearly had different levels of knowledge of policies, depending on their role within the educational system of the district. District and site administrators directly leading and managing the daily educational services to students had the clearest and deepest knowledge of the governance structure. Board members and teachers not dealing with governance issues on a daily basis were either unaware or knew little about specific policy existence or its impact on diverse groups. Board members and teachers believed policy guided action, however, no evidence was discovered regarding policy specifically guiding certain actions. The results of the 2008 DAS tool also assert that the respondents believed policies to exist when none did. Since no specific policies regarding curriculum adoption or quantity of instructional time could be found within the existing board policies, a distinct policy/practice knowledge gap for the respondents of the 2008 survey became clear.

Specific to the Local Educational Agency Plan Addendum and the monitoring of the district's plan for improvement, three of five board members did not know how it was

monitored. Of the eleven district office administrators, one mentioned that they knew of district protocols for classroom walk-through visits. Comparing different divisions of district office responsibilities, even administrators within the Educational Services division knew little about the monitoring of the LEAP. Nine district administrators knew of no monitoring of the LEAP, reporting, “I am not involved or included in those types of decisions, discussions, monitoring” (DA1), “I am out of the loop on that aspect” (DA6) and “In my capacity, I haven’t monitored it” (DA11). One Educational Services administrator declared, “I have never seen our LEAP, so I don’t know” (DA7). The site administrators collectively enumerated a number of contexts for LEAP monitoring. A variety of interviewees in this group mentioned the District Intervention and Assistance Team (DAIT), district informational reports on intensive intervention achievement, walk-through data, benchmark assessment data, and collaborative discussions with teachers (SA 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12). In particular, the advent of walk-through visits in the classroom to monitor the implementation of the curricula and the benchmark assessment data were discussion topics at the collaboration meetings and highly regarded by site administrators. Ten of the 13 faculty members responded that they didn’t know how or if monitoring of the LEAP occurred. The results of the interviews emphasized that the respondents each understood a portion of the current district practice to monitor the LEAP which correlates in many aspects to BP 6141.1 and BP 6141.2. A distinct policy/practice knowledge gap, this time for the 2011 interviewees, existed.



Goal 9 of the LEAP Addendum described the district's efforts to uncover issues related to the non-achievement of ELs. The new English learner instructional system that needed to be developed had four fundamental action steps: learning academic standards, English language development, effective instructional practices, district leadership and support. With regards to academic standards (Goal 9.1), progress benchmarks for action described a comprehensive Title III plan, site master schedules, class lists of ELs, implementation of new courses and increased re-designation of EL students. All of these action steps were evident from the document research of new courses such as Academic Language Development (ALD) in high school master schedules, walk-through classroom observational data, and re-designation data for Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs).

With regards to English language development (Goal 9.2), progress benchmarks for action consisted of developing and funding a system to provide ELD to ELs until they were re-designated Fluent English Proficient. This action needed to include placement and exit criteria as well as assessments to be identified, implemented, and monitored for progress. As of the writing of this study, placement criteria were clear but exit criteria were being revised. There were no progress monitoring assessments in evidence but differentiation had occurred to define differing levels of English learner proficiency and appropriate program options for newcomers and Long Term ELs (LTELs). Systematic administrator professional development had not yet been provided by spring, 2012.

As it pertained to effective instructional practices (Goal 9.3), action steps consisted of identifying, implementing, supporting, and monitoring effective strategies in the instruction of ELs, namely high engagement practices, building academic language, differentiation, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) and checking for understanding. Progress benchmarks were not identified for these action steps but professional development for administrators and teachers occurred primarily through specific Single School Plans and was not deemed to be systemic.

Finally, Goal 9.4 of the LEAP, district leadership and support, required that the Superintendent's Cabinet write or re-write administrative procedures and policies to codify the K-12 district expectations, assessment criteria, and English learner base program. As of the writing of this study, no such policies were evident. Specifically, Goals 9.1 through 9.3 were essentially implemented, except for certain professional development for administrators and teachers. The fourth action step, Goal 9.4 (policy writing), had not been implemented to any degree and timelines set within the LEAP Addendum had passed due to the policy actors having changed or the timelines being too ambitious.

### **Goal 3**

Goal 3 required understanding a foundation for District administration to re-write policy. Offered next is a more complete analysis of certain overarching board policies, and a case for why they should be written in a collaborative manner, communicated throughout the system, and then professionally developed with the policy actors. A

deeper look at the vision, mission, policies, and priorities of the district, the communication system, and the alignment of the SPSA and the LEAP drove the achievement of Goal 3 of this study. The following is an examination of the policies specific to those three subsections of the DAS.

Section A.2 of the DAS (DAS) required that the LEA's vision, mission, policies, and priorities be focused on the academic achievement of all students, especially ELs (ELs), students with disabilities (SWDs), and other high priority students (Appendix B, p.1). Analysis of DAS data collected in 2008 when the District Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT) first began to work with the district indicated that the district office and site administrators who responded to the quantitative tool believed the LEAP was only partially implemented. A complete search of the current board policies yielded no evidence of even partial implementation of mission, vision, or prioritization of a particular subgroup of students. Digging further into each specific board policy determined that no policy guidance existed in written form, thus nullifying the 2008 responses that implementation was in progress.

Full implementation of section A.5 of the DAS required that the LEAP be the guiding document for school sites' Single Plan for Student Achievement. BP 0421 addressed the role of School Site Councils, a topic on which interview question number five of this study also focused. The concept of board approval being required for the School Site Council activities, especially in the realm of school improvement, was clear in the wording of this policy yet none of the board members interviewed realized that

they were responsible for the approval of sites' Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), a document created by the School Site Council. Section A.5 of the DAS required that the LEAP be developed with all stakeholders and in alignment with accountability requirements. The staff who answered the 2008 quantitative survey question about this alignment believed implementation of the SPSA and the LEAP was in progress (Appendix B). The sporadic knowledge regarding the LEAP and the SPSA alignment, required examination of the policy guiding the governance of the district. One board policy exists in Section 2000, the administration section of the board policy guidelines. Board Policy 2231 offered a picture of the district-level governance structure, an executive committee. No date of adoption on BP 2231 was evident. While multiple re-organizations of district level personnel had occurred during the previous four years, none had been recorded in policy. The current superintendent's re-organization was in first reading at the time of writing of this study.

Interviewed board members did not know how the SPSA was monitored or their role in the process. Neither did they express certainty about how the sites' SPSA was aligned to the district's Local Educational Plan (LEAP). Of the District Office Administrators, primarily the Education Services administrators knew what was in the SPSA for each site, how it was monitored, and that it was board approved.

Administrators in the Business Services division did not indicate depth of knowledge about the SPSA or the existence of the school site council. DA6 stated that she had no role in monitoring the SPSA whatsoever yet, contradictorily, DA10 stated that "we're

currently working on a model...so it's a little more standardized...and so it matches the LEAP better.” One hundred percent of the Associate Principals and 100% of the Site Administrators knew that the school site council created and monitored the school improvement plan and knew what was in their school's plan. Only 25 percent of faculty knew anything about the school site council or the SPSA as derived from the answers to interview question number five. The knowledge of the faculty described who created the SPSA, and that administration's role was to monitor it. But no one mentioned the faculty's role in monitoring the SPSA.

Section A.7 of the DAS (Appendix B) ascribed to a communication system for student achievement. Full implementation of the system required timely, two-way communication with all stakeholders regarding achievement, expectations, and accountability. Nothing in the quantitative DAS questionnaire of 2008 indicated a communication system that was two-way. All board members indicated that improved communication with the board, the public, the administrators, the certificated, and the classified employees (BM 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) was evident due to the most recent change in superintendent (2011) because of her vision to communicate, collaborate, and celebrate. In the first year of the current superintendent's tenure, increased and two-way communication was noted publicly via Twitter and Facebook postings, weekly E-News blasts to the entire district via the internal email system, and highlights of board meetings sent to everyone in the district prior to their occurrence. A distinct shift toward a more

frequent and open communication system as suggested by the DAS A.7 was definitely evident on the district's website and through internal email.

The district office and site administrators substantiated the finding that communication had improved with the change in superintendent. Attributed to a desire to reach a younger, more digitally competent group of employees, DA 9 stated, "the response has been fabulous; they feel included and in the know". During previous superintendents' tenures, "reactive rather than front loaded or proactive communication" (DA9) was the norm. Site administrators clearly indicated that the beginning of the tenure of the new superintendent showed transparency of communication and a "congenial, non-threatening atmosphere" (SA 3, 6). Site administrators were clear that, while decisions and information were communicated well, how decisions took place was not always clear (SA 1, 2, 6). Faculty Members agreed that the communication from the current superintendent had increased dramatically in frequency and clarity over the previous superintendents (FM 3, 7, 10, 12, 14). FM4 stated, "It's something totally new in the seven years that I have been here." FM7 agreed, stipulating that "in the past, that office has not necessarily been an open door." FM10 asserted that "just having any conversation regarding ELs to me is a breath of fresh air."

The deep analysis of the three sub-sections of the governance section of the DAS created the foundation for the district to write policy to include all action steps being implemented within the LEAP Addendum. Further, a need for the district to collaboratively write the policy to guarantee all stakeholders were represented existed.

Following the creation of policy, it would be necessary to teach the policies through professional development to the policy actors.

Policy analysis revealed a need for updating and revising policy to include specificity regarding governance issues of significant sub-groups of students. Still not evident in the policies of this district were guidelines for equity of programming, instruction, and assessment for ELs (Klenowski, 2009; Rorrer, 2006; Tsang, Katz, & Stack, 2008), nor was there evidence of a specific professional development focus based on student achievement goals. While there has been a significant amount of progress in the action plan of the LEAP Addendum, the actions have stalled on the DAS recommendations, codifying the actions into policy. The findings of this study determined that no current LEA plan and no policy guidance regarding mission, vision, or prioritization of a particular subgroup of students existed for this particular district (Callahan, 2005). While an LEAP Addendum from 2008 guided implementation of evidence-based practices, no policy documentation or support guided the actions required in the LEAP Addendum, especially in Goal 9, the goal focused on ELs. Through the interviews and the examination of the Single School Plans for each school, clear similarities were discovered between the schools. The following recommendations provide guidance for a district with the same issues to move forward with action and reduce the inequity of an achievement gap.

## **Recommendations**

Establish a clear, district-wide direction for teaching and learning related to a mission and vision focused on the academic achievement of all students. The mission and vision should reflect a commitment to equity. Goal setting for ELs should be collaborative and result in non-negotiable goals. The school board should fully support the adopted goals. Clear in the scholarship is the importance of having a vision, mission, policies, and priorities outlined in a specific LEA plan in order to increase student achievement in school districts (Bryk, Bender-Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Fullan, 2010; Levin, 2008; Waters & Marzano, 2009; Wade, 2004). Research has posited that the role and responsibility of the school board was developing collective capacity of the district's personnel as related to raising the bar, closing the achievement gap, and creating high expectations of students (Callahan, 2005; Fullan, 2010).

Communicate the direction of the mission, vision, goals, and priorities to all levels of policy actors, from the board room to the classroom, to foster an organizational culture of shared core values and norms observable at all levels of leadership and across all schools. Maintain this focus over time. These professional learning communities first must create a shared vision and a collective moral purpose that transcends their individual pursuits to improve instruction (Elmore, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2005).

Prioritize the State Board of Education's Essential Program Components (EPCs) to further the district's strengths in intervention programs, instructional materials, and



instructional time to focus on assessments for ELs regarding placement into Academic Language Development classes, reclassification, and content knowledge. Guidelines for the assessments should be communicated and supported through professional development. Policies guiding district goals and benchmarks for progress in language acquisition and content acquisition are essential (Christensen & Stanat, 2007) and should be simultaneous (Linguanti, 2001). Policies for instructional programming to support a rigorous college preparatory course of study are crucial for learning both academic content and acquiring English and should consider that content acquisition and English acquisition are both sequential and simultaneous (Linguanti, 2001). Further, English Language Development standards have considerable gaps and districts need to define high quality literacy development for ELs (Maxwell-Jolly, Gandara, & Mendez Benavidez, 2007).

Communicate the policies through an effective, two-way information system. Timely and accurate information about achievement, accountability, and expectations is critical to policy actors trying to achieve the district's mission and vision. Constant discussion about the goals and the successes of goal achievement should infiltrate the entire system. Policy guiding the strategic enactment of a clear mission and vision must focus on developing effective instruction to ensure that all students perform well (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Cloud, Genesse, & Hamayan, 2009).

Communicate the roles and responsibilities of the district-level administrators to enact the policies and monitor the implementation in order that each level of the system

has equally profound knowledge regarding English learner typology and appropriate instructional methodology (Christensen & Stanat, 2007; Maxwell Jolly et al, 2007; Olsen, 2010).

Define a system of collaborative time for policy actors to use professional learning community practices effectively. Discussion of student work, instructional reform through coaching, and measurements of student assessments should be constant topics during the designated collaboration time. The work of Schmoker (2006) and Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour, (2004) placed the role of leadership squarely in the arena of developing professional learning communities.

Provide outreach to the English learning students' parents to engage them in the educational process and increased English proficiency. In addition to language acquisition for parents, districts needed effective strategies for EL parent outreach to encourage and teach families how to support and participate in their students' schooling (Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007; Gold 2006).

Commit to professional development on the legal aspects of teaching and learning of ELs to all levels of the district's personnel. It is deemed a district responsibility to include both teachers and administrators to create greater advocacy for ELs (Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007; Maxwell Jolly, Gandara, & Mendez Benavidez, 2007; UCLMRI, 2008).

Review and update all policies in the current policy document with the above recommendations under consideration, including the composition of the Superintendent's

Cabinet. Continue to review policies annually to ensure compliance with all accountability measures on both the federal and state levels. Honig and Coburn (2007) espoused the use of local knowledge and suggested funding district administrators to monitor policy implementation and provide professional development opportunities for people within the system to understand and research educational improvements.

Monitor and coach the goals of the district through walk-through observations, data collection, and collaborative conversations. Linqanti (2001) suggested that teachers and administrators needed to monitor the academic success of ELs both before and after reclassification. The requirements of the education profession necessitate collective peer sharing and seeking of knowledge (Lambert, 2002; Schön, 1983).

## Appendix B: The District Assistance Survey (DAS)

A. Governance	Criteria and Clarifications	Implementation Status: Circle the most accurate descriptor of implementation		
<p>A.1 The local governing board works within the scope of its role and responsibilities as a member of the district governing team, setting policies and aligning the budget to support the successful implementation of the Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan</p>	<p>Full implementation means that the local governing board has established a process with the LEA superintendent to ensure that policies are implemented and monitored and that funding is allocated to support the successful implementation of the LEA Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Board policies and regulations explicitly address the roles and responsibilities of the local governing board, superintendent and staff in the governance structure.</li> <li>•Board members support and follow their adopted policies as reflected in their decisions regarding student achievement, curriculum, assessment and accountability, personnel and budgetary allocations.</li> </ul>	Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2) Documentation	Minimal (1)
<p>A.2 The LEA's vision, mission, policies and</p>	<p>Full implementation means that the local governing board, upon recommendation of the</p>	Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)

priorities are focused on the academic achievement of all students, especially English learners, (ELs), students with disabilities (SWDs), and other high priority students, and reflect a commitment to equitably serving the educational needs and interests of all students.

superintendent and with input from stakeholder groups, adopts a long-range vision for the LEA focused on student learning and sets priorities based on student achievement, including ELs, SWDs, and all other high priority students.  
Prior to adopting board policies, the governing board reviews how the proposed policy will support the stated vision, mission, and priorities, including ELs, SWDs, and all other high priority students.

Documentation

A.3 The LEA leadership fosters an organizational culture that supports educational reform based on a coherent research-based instructional program. This culture of shared core values and norms can be observed at all levels of leadership and across all schools.

Full implementation means that the board and district superintendent, together with district leaders, foster an organizational culture characterized by:

- A commitment to a district vision of universal student achievement realized through a rigorous, coherent standards-based instructional program anchored in the Essential Program Components (EPCs) for Instructional Success.
- A transparent communications structure so that personnel in schools and the wider community understand how decisions are made and how communications are shared across the district.
- Positive working relationships among adults based on mutual trust.

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		

- Collaborative team work among LEA and site-level leaders.
- Participatory decision making among all stakeholders, including district and school administrators, teachers, parents, and community members.
- Allocation of appropriate time and resources to support and sustain reform initiatives.

A.4 The LEA has policies to fully implement the State Board of Education (SBE)-approved EPCs for Instructional Success in all schools in the LEA. These include evidence of implementation regarding instructional materials, intervention programs, aligned assessments, appropriate use of pacing and instructional time, and alignment of categorical programs and instructional support.

Full implementation means that the LEA has policies addressing the full implementation of each of the EPCs in all schools in the LEA. These policies guide the LEA in establishing:

- Process for selection and monitoring implementation of SBE-adopted standards-aligned instructional materials, including intensive intervention programs.
- Expectations for the appropriate allocation of instructional time, as outlined in the state’s curriculum framework, and implementation of the annual district instructional/assessment pacing guides to ensure that all students receive sufficient time to learn grade-level standards incorporated in the adopted instructional materials.
- Expectations for the regular and uniform administration and analysis of common district benchmark assessments and formative/curriculum-embedded assessments and the use of

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		

placement/exit criteria to provide students strategic and intensive interventions, as well as grade-level instruction.

- Professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators, including SBE-adopted materials-based professional development; ongoing training and in-classroom support, including content experts, coaches, specialists, or other teacher support personnel with subject matter expertise, and monthly structure teacher collaboration meetings (preferably twice per month) by grade or course or program level.
- Alignment of fiscal and human resources to support the EPCs

A.5 The LEA Plan is developed in alignment with the accountability requirements at both the state and federal levels and with input from all stakeholders. It is grounded in sound, research-based instructional practices and is the guiding document for the development of the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) in each of the LEA’s schools.

Full implementation means that the LEA Plan is fully aligned with all accountability requirements, including any federal Title I, Title II, and/or Title III requirements to which the LEA may be subject. Research-based practices to improve student achievement are evident throughout the plan.

- The development process for the LEA Plan includes a representation of district stakeholders and is based upon a comprehensive needs assessment and analysis of student achievement data.
- The SPSA for each school is clearly aligned to the LEA plan; incorporating the activities from the LEA plan in order to support a

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		

coherent implementation of the LEA plan in all schools.

- The LEA Plan describes how the district provides support to all schools through the seven areas of district support. Underperforming schools are targeted for additional support in fully implementing the EPCs.

A.6 The LEA's fiscal policies and adopted budget are aligned with the LEA Plan and reflect a coherent instructional program based on state standards, frameworks, SBE-adopted standards-aligned materials, sound instructional practices, and the EPCs.

Full implementation means that sufficient fiscal resources are allocated to support the full implementation of the LEA Plan.

- LEA budget decisions and priorities are determined by the priorities established in the LEA Plan which are to include all ELs, SWDs, and other high priority students in the district whether the students are attending a categorically-funded school or not.
- The SPSA and other site-level budget allocations are aligned to the LEA Plan, with an emphasis on meeting the instructional needs of high priority students.

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		

A.7 The LEA uses an effective two-way communication

Full implementation means that the LEA has in place timely two-way communication systems with

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
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system and provides timely and accurate information to all stakeholders, especially students, parents/families, teachers and site administrators, about student achievement, academic expectations, and accountability requirements.

all stakeholders regarding student achievement, academic expectations, and accountability requirements. All communication is rendered in a format and language that is understandable to all stakeholders.

- The LEA has established channels to facilitate ongoing and frequent communication from the stakeholders to the LEA. Examples of these communication channels are evident.
- The LEA annually sets student performance goals and clearly communicates these goals to all site administrators, teachers, students, and parents/families. Goals are measurable, achievable, and evaluated annually.

Documentation

A.8 The LEA holds teachers, site administrators, and district personnel accountable for student achievement and meeting federal, state, and local accountability requirements.

Full implementation means that all LEA personnel, site administrators, and teachers throughout the LEA are accountable for meeting specific teaching and student achievement goals, as defined in the LEA Plan.

- The LEA has clearly communicated the actions required by teachers and site and district administrators in order to support implementation of the LEA Plan.
- There is a clearly defined method of monitoring the implementation of the plan, including benchmark activities and timelines and the persons responsible for carrying out each activity. Follow-up action is taken when revisions to the plan are needed or when benchmark activities are not completed.

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
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Documentation

•If the LEA is in Title I, Title II, and/or Title III improvement status, all LEA and site personnel are knowledgeable of and accountable for implementing the accountability requirements.

A.9 The LEA provides all schools with the infrastructure to collect and interpret student achievement data in order to establish and communicate instructional priorities and strategies for improved student achievement.

Full implementation means that the LEA provides all schools and teachers with a data system to collect and track student achievement data. The system provides timely turnaround of data reports and maximizes the use of data within a continuous improvement process.

•The adopted data system:

1. Is implemented in all schools within the LEA.
2. Is supported by the LEA (e.g. fiscal and personnel resources).
3. Provides continually-updated student achievement and demographic data for analysis and decision making by teachers and administrators (for example re-rostering of class lists).
4. Provides varying levels of access to data (educators, administrators, parents).

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		

5. Has the ability to report data in multiple formats and for multiple users.
6. Enables rapid turnaround of data reports for teachers.

B. Alignment of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	Criteria and Clarifications	Implementation Status: Circle the most accurate descriptor of implementation		
<p>B.1 The LEA has a coherent standards-based curriculum, instruction and assessment system. Curricular and assessment materials are aligned with one another and based on the SBE-adopted standards-aligned instructional materials.</p>	<p>Full implementation means that all components of the curriculum are aligned to the state standards and to state-mandated assessments. The LEA has SBE-adopted standards-aligned instructional materials for all students; teachers use the materials with fidelity and on a daily basis following the district pacing guide; and student assessments are aligned to the adopted instructional materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SBE-adopted standards-aligned instructional materials are adopted system-wide.</li> <li>•All site administrators and teachers are knowledgeable of the state content standards and skilled in the effective implementation of the adopted instructional materials to meet state achievement targets.</li> <li>•There is clear evidence of system-wide coherence in curriculum, instruction and assessment from</li> </ul>	Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2) Documentation	Minimal (1)

classroom to classroom and from grade level to grade level. This coherence is observable at the classroom level.

- For the core subjects, there are district instructional/assessment pacing guides based upon the adopted instructional materials. Pacing guides clearly describe the breadth and depth of content to be taught and are aligned with the standards tested on state standardized exams.
- District benchmark assessments are aligned to the SBE-adopted standards-aligned instructional materials and to the district pacing guides.

B.2 The LEA provides all schools with sufficient SBE-adopted core and intervention materials in reading/language arts, mathematics, history/social studies, and science. The LEA ensures that the materials are used with fidelity and on a daily basis in all classrooms.

Full implementation means that every student in every classroom and in every school has the most recent SBE-adopted standards-aligned core and/or SBE-adopted intensive intervention materials. Materials are implemented with fidelity as designed on a daily basis.

- A systematic textbook adoption process is in place and aligned to SBE adoption schedule and resource allocations.
- Program Improvement (PI) high schools or high schools in PI LEAs adopt the articulated high school versions of the SBE-adopted middle school core and intensive intervention mathematics and reading/language arts programs.
- The LEA monitors the

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		

implementation of core and intervention materials in all classrooms.

<p>B.3 The LEA ensures that all students, especially ELs, SWDs, and other high priority students, have access to the core curriculum and, based on assessed need, to English Language Development (ELD), strategic interventions, and SBE-adopted intensive interventions.</p>	<p>Full implementation means that all students in the LEA have access to the core curriculum and appropriate strategic and intensive interventions. All high priority students, including ELs, SWDs, and high priority students, are assessed, appropriately placed, monitored, and exited from intervention programs in a systematic way to accelerate progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•ELs receive the sufficient instructional time within the core instructional program as well as additional instructional time for ELD.</li> <li>•ELs are appropriately placed in ELD by language proficiency level based on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) and formative assessments. (See the Academic Program Survey (APS) for specific guidance on appropriate level of ELD instruction.)</li> <li>•LEA and site administrators schedule sufficient core and intervention time and/or classes,</li> </ul>	<p>Full (3)</p>	<p>Partial (in progress) (2)</p>	<p>Minimal (1)</p>
			<p>Documentation</p>	

as recommended in the state curriculum framework, to meet the assessed academic needs of all students.

- Intensive intervention students' core is the SBE-adopted intensive accelerated program.

- SWDs have access to the core curriculum and to all curricular materials with appropriate accommodations and/or modifications of curriculum or instruction, as specified in their individualized education programs (IEPs).

B.4 The LEA fully implements adopted materials and provides and monitors appropriate instructional minutes and pacing for all core subjects and interventions.

Full implementation means that grade-level, standards-based instruction is taking place in all classrooms throughout the LEA; the materials adopted by the LEA are used consistently and uniformly in all classrooms; the state-recommended instructional minutes are allocated in all core, strategic and intensive intervention classes; and course and grade level pacing guides are in place and monitored for effectiveness.

- The LEA has collaboratively developed and implemented reading/language arts and mathematics instructional/assessment pacing calendars for all grade levels in all schools, aligned to the adopted standards-based materials.

- LEA and site administrators visit classrooms on a regular basis in order to monitor full implementation of materials, as defined above.

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		

- Schools' schedules and structures protect required instructional time and reflect a priority on the core, as well as on strategic and intensive interventions.

<p>B.5 The LEA requires and supports the regular collection and analysis of common formative and summative assessment data to establish instructional priorities, inform classroom instruction, appropriately place and exit students from intervention programs, and monitor student progress in core and intervention programs.</p>	<p>Full implementation means that the LEA has developed a common assessment system. Teachers and administrators receive timely and reliable data, which they use to determine student mastery of key standards, inform classroom instruction, and make decisions about additional supports needed for high priority students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The LEA has explicit expectations and procedures for data use among all principals and teachers. These expectations are communicated to all site staff.</li> <li>•The LEA provides training and ongoing support for district and site administrators and teachers on use of the adopted system and on data analysis.</li> <li>•LEA and sites administrators ensure that all schools have the necessary common curriculum embedded/benchmark assessments materials that are needed to administer the assessments.</li> <li>•LEA and site administrators</li> </ul>	<p>Full (3)</p>	<p>Partial (in progress) (2)</p>	<p>Minimal (1)</p>
Documentation				

monitor the administration of common curriculum embedded/benchmark assessments on an agreed-upon timetable.

- The LEA establishes common cut points for proficiency levels and common rubrics for curriculum embedded/district benchmark assessments.
- The LEA ensures that all teachers apply these common cut points and rubrics to assess student work.
- The LEA establishes a district-wide assessment calendar that includes formative and summative assessments for the core curriculum.
- LEA and site administrators continuously analyze student achievement data and CELDT data, to gauge student progress towards mastery of standards and identify students in need of additional instruction or interventions and exit in a timely manner.

C. Fiscal Operations	Criteria and Clarifications	Implementation Status: Circle the most accurate descriptor of implementation		
C.1 The LEA meets all fiscal health criteria, as	Full implementation means that the fiscal criteria and standards guide the LEA in the budget	Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)



measured by the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) Fiscal Health Risk Analysis survey.

development process and in its periodic self-evaluations of solvency, and the LEA meets all fiscal health criteria, as measured by the FCMAT Fiscal Health Risk Analysis Survey. Indicators of fiscal health include:

- Adequate reserves and ending balances.
- Budgets that reflect LEA priorities.
- Reasonable assumptions regarding changes in student attendance and compensation costs based on data.
- Evidence of data-driven program planning and adequate funding to support long-term LEA Plan goals.

Documentation

C.2 The LEA Plan and the SPSA allocate and align general and categorical expenditures to improvement activities based on the identified needs of high priority students in all of the LEA’s schools.

Full implementation means that LEA and site budgets are aligned with one another and with the priorities of the LEA, as documented in the LEA Plan. These priorities are determined by student achievement data, including LEA-wide and disaggregated student data on the California Standards Tests (CSTs), California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE), California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA), and the California Modified Assessment (CMA); CELDT data; and data from local curriculum-embedded/benchmark assessments.

- Funds allocated to all activities identified in the LEA Plan and SPSA accurately reflect the true

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
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Documentation

costs of these activities.

- The LEA monitors how resources are used and funds are expended to meet its achievement needs.

<p>C.3 The LEA considers the academic achievement of the schools within the LEA, especially those in PI to determine appropriate site budget allocations.</p>	<p>Full implementation means that the LEA differentiates funding to sites based on academic need, with highest priority given to schools in PI status, and allocates funds to programs aligned to the LEA Plan goals which have a direct impact to student achievement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Adequate funding is provided to address the needs of all high priority students, regardless of whether these students are in PI schools.</li> </ul>	<p>Full (3)</p>	<p>Partial (in progress) (2)</p>	<p>Minimal (1)</p>
<p>Documentation</p>				

D. Parent and Community Involvement	Criteria and Clarifications	Implementation Status: Circle the most accurate descriptor of implementation		
<p>D.1 The LEA has implemented parent/family</p>	<p>Full implementation means that the LEA has established and is implementing district</p>	<p>Full (3)</p>	<p>Partial (in progress) (2)</p>	<p>Minimal (1)</p>

involvement policies and programs at all schools, including community partnership programs that meet state and federal requirements.

parent/family involvement programs that address all components required by law and that are designed to support the LEA Plan goals for student learning.

- The LEA Plan has specific parental involvement goals and provides technical assistance to their schools for implementing parent/family programs. Technical assistance includes oversight, support, coordination, and monitoring of parent/family engagement policies, and programs.
- LEA and school administrators monitor level of parent involvement at the district and in all schools.

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D.2 The LEA has systems in place that provide timely and two-way communication in a format and language understandable to parents/ families and community members about student achievement, academic expectations, accountability requirements, and how parents can help improve their students' academic success.

Full implementation means that the LEA works with school administrators to communicate with parents, in a language they can understand and in a timely manner, information on academic proficiency levels, grade-level standards, high school graduation requirements, data reporting for the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program, local assessments, available interventions in reading/language arts and mathematics for students needing assistance, and strategies for supporting the academic achievement of students.

- The LEA has a system in place to facilitate the two-way flow of information between parents and

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		

teachers/site administrators.

- The LEA provides parents with information on students' results on local and state assessments in easy-to understand reports.

Reports clearly define proficiency and report student progress in terms of proficiency in the state content standards.

- The LEA assists parents to interpret student report cards and state reports on state standardized exams so that parents can understand the extent to which their children are meeting state standards.

- The LEA and site administrators inform all parents of English learners of the student's identification as an EL, local re-designation criteria, and a student's annual progress towards attaining these criteria. In addition, parents are informed of student proficiency level as measured by the CELDT, the benefit in receiving ELD instruction, and the program's specific re-designation criteria.

- The LEA and site administrators inform all parents of students with disabilities of opportunities to participate in any decision-making meeting regarding their child's special education program.

D.3 The LEA's teachers and parents/families

Full implementation means that LEA and site administrators actively solicit the participation of

Full  
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(2)

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(1)

participate in instructional program and budget decisions affecting the development, implementation, and evaluation of core and categorical programs.

teachers and parents/families and consider their input into decisions affecting the development of the LEA Plan and SPSA goals and budget.

- Teachers and parents receive training on their roles and responsibilities and serve on various LEA and school committees and are consulted in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of school and LEA programs.

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D.4 The LEA and all schools provide multiple opportunities for parents/ family members to access school programs and staff, receive student and school information and resources, and be a part of decision-making.

Full implementation means that the LEA employs a broad range of strategies and hosts a wide variety of programs and activities to actively engage parents in their students’ education. All parents understand how to contact teachers and school staff and are encouraged to do so.

- The LEA collaborates with site principals to offer parent activities and workshops, such as family literacy workshops, math/science events, and college scholarship information nights.
- At the elementary school level, parent involvement activities focus on building parent strategies to help their students learn, i.e., home work support, family math.
- At the secondary level, parent involvement activities additionally focus on providing parent information so that they can guide their students through the many decisions they face in high school, e.g., University of California a-g

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		

requirements, Career Technical 2+2+2 programs, CAHSEE remediation programs.

E. Human Resources	Criteria and Clarifications	Implementation Status: Circle the most accurate descriptor of implementation		
<p>E.1 The LEA recruits principals with demonstrated instructional leadership skills and places them at underperforming schools.</p>	<p>Full implementation means that principals with demonstrated instructional leadership are equitably distributed throughout the LEA, with priority given to placement of principals in underperforming schools.</p> <p>•Demonstration of instructional leadership among principals is characterized as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support for the effective and full implementation of the district-adopted core and intervention programs and research-based teaching strategies.</li> <li>2. Analysis and use of student achievement data to monitor the effective implementation of programs and inform student placement in various interventions.</li> <li>3. Collaboration with staff to</li> </ol>	<p>Full (3)</p>	<p>Partial (in progress) (2) Documentation</p>	<p>Minimal (1)</p>

identify targeted professional development to help move school staff toward specific instructional and achievement goals.

4. Leveraging of all available resources, both inside and outside the school, to fully implement the SPSA to maximize learning.

- The LEA monitors the mobility of principals at underperforming schools and provides incentives to retain highly effective principals to work in underperforming schools.
- The LEA offers leadership programs for site administrators.
- The LEA opens leadership programs to teachers in order to build a potential pool of highly qualified administrators.

E.2 The LEA provides an ongoing support system for administrators, especially those new to the profession and/or placed in underperforming schools so that they can effectively support and monitor the implementation of the adopted standards-based instructional program, the intervention system, and the academic achievement of all

Full implementation means that the LEA provides all administrators with ongoing professional development, with priority given to new administrators and to those placed in underperforming schools.

- The LEA has articulated policies and practices to support new administrators and those assigned to underperforming schools.
- The LEA provides principals with structured and ongoing professional development focused on the specific needs of high priority students and their teachers.
- The LEA develops systems and networks to build instructional

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		

students.

leadership skills. These may include principal support networks, coaching systems, peer support networks, and leadership assessment systems.

- The LEA develops and trains administrators to use classroom observation protocols to ensure that all teachers are implementing instructional materials with fidelity.

E.3 The LEA monitors the performance of all principals in the LEA, including their implementation of the SPSA.

Full implementation means that the LEA has developed and uniformly applies clear criteria for monitoring and measuring the performance of principals, including their implementation and monitoring of activities documented in the SPSA. These criteria are articulated in LEA policies and clearly communicated to all principals in the LEA. Performance is monitored regularly.

- Criteria include:

1. Implementation of district adopted, standards-based curriculum in all classrooms, as detailed in the district instructional/assessment pacing guide.
2. Implementation of the district assessment system so that all students are appropriately placed in core and intensive and strategic intervention programs in reading/language arts and mathematics and in ELD.
3. Academic achievement of

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		



all students in the school, including ELs, SWDs, and high priority students.

- LEA ensures that administrators regularly conduct classroom walkthroughs and informal observations to monitor alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessments.
- LEA administrators regularly examine student achievement data (both aggregated and disaggregated) from formative and summative assessments to determine growth trends and areas of need.

E.4 After consulting with the teachers’ association, the LEA develops and implements a plan to attract and retain No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001- highly-qualified and appropriately credentialed teachers and to equitably distribute them in underperforming schools within the LEA. This plan includes incentives to recruit highly qualified teachers to underperforming schools within the LEA.

Full implementation means that highly qualified teachers are equitably distributed across the LEA in accordance with Title II requirements.

- In consultation with the teachers’ association, the LEA has developed a plan to employ and certify all teachers as highly-qualified under NCLB and recruit highly-qualified teachers from high-achieving schools to teach in underperforming schools within the LEA. The plan includes monetary and non-monetary incentives to recruit highly qualified teachers to underperforming schools.
- The LEA has established a staffing goal to achieve equitable distribution of fully prepared, experienced teachers in all schools.
- To the extent possible and in consultation with the teachers

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		

association, the LEA assigns the most effective teachers to those students with the highest academic needs.

- The LEA monitors teacher transfers to ensure that underperforming schools retain highly qualified teachers and maintain a balance of experienced and new teachers.

- The LEA recruits and hires teachers as early in the spring as possible.

E.5 The LEA provides competitive salaries, wages, and benefits to classroom personnel.

Full implementation means that teacher salaries, wages, and benefits are sufficiently competitive to attract and retain highly-qualified teachers.

- LEA and site administrators conduct annual salary, wage and benefit surveys and analyze their relationship to teacher recruitment and retention data.
- In addition to offering competitive salaries, the LEA offers incentives to attract and retain teachers (i.e., professional development in leadership; opportunities to acquire advanced degrees in education; a supportive, collaborative environment).

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
	Documentation	

<p>E.6 The LEA provides an ongoing support system for teachers, especially those new to the profession and/or placed in underperforming schools, so that they can effectively implement the SBE-adopted, standards-based curriculum; deliver effective instruction; and monitor and support the achievement of all students.</p>	<p>Full implementation means that all teachers receive ongoing support in implementing the standards-based curriculum adopted by the LEA. Priority is given to new teachers and those assigned to underperforming schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The LEA provides an approved induction program for new teachers.</li> <li>•The LEA regularly monitors student achievement data in all classes and provides support structures and resources where appropriate, especially to new teachers.</li> <li>•To the extent possible, the LEA provides teachers with release time from classes to attend staff development.</li> <li>•The LEA provides coaching and lesson support in the adopted curriculum. Priority is given to teachers new to the profession or to their current subject area or grade level assignment, as well as to teachers working with ELs and SWDs and to those in underperforming schools.</li> <li>•LEA and site administrators monitor classrooms to ensure that professional development activities lead to improved instructional practice.</li> </ul>	<p>Full (3)</p>	<p>Partial (in progress) (2)</p>	<p>Minimal (1)</p>
Documentation				

<p>E.7 The LEA links evaluations of all certificated staff to implementation of standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments.</p>	<p>Full implementation means that all teacher evaluations are based upon criteria related to the implementation of the district’s standards-based curriculum and to the alignment of instruction to the district’s assessments. These expectations are articulated in LEA policies and clearly communicated to all teachers and principals in the LEA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•LEA and site administrators regularly conduct teacher evaluations which may include the following activities:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regular classroom walkthroughs and informal observations to monitor the implementation of the grade-level, standards-based, adopted curriculum, including adherence to instructional minutes and pacing guides, and the delivery of effective instructional practices.</li> <li>2. Monitoring of the timely administration of student curriculum-based assessments.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<p>Full (3)</p>	<p>Partial (in progress) (2)</p>	<p>Minimal (1)</p>
			<p>Documentation</p>	

F. Data Systems and Monitoring	Criteria and Clarifications	Implementation Status: Circle the most accurate descriptor of implementation		
<p>F.1 The LEA has a system of regular data collection and analyzes data from multiple sources, tracked over time, to determine the effectiveness of the district's academic program and the implementation of the instructional materials. Data are both summative and formative, aggregated at the district level, and disaggregated by student subgroups.</p>	<p>Full implementation means that the LEA has adopted a user-friendly and easily accessible data management system that tracks data over time. The system is implemented to regularly assess and monitor over time student achievement on formative, curriculum- embedded and benchmark assessments at all grade levels and in all schools in the LEA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The adopted system provides data necessary to follow trends as well as growth of individual students or cohorts of students over time.</li> <li>•The data are examined by grade, subject, course, and subgroup and tracked over time to determine student achievement in the LEA's adopted core and intervention programs across all classrooms and in all schools throughout the LEA.</li> <li>•The data are used to target fiscal and human resources to specific areas of need, such as additional teaching sections in the master schedule, professional development at a grade level, and collaboration time for teachers to analyze student data to improve instruction.</li> <li>•Data include student</li> </ul>	<p>Full (3)</p>	<p>Partial (in progress) (2) Documentation</p>	<p>Minimal (1)</p>

achievement results from state standardized tests and district approved entry-level placement and/or diagnostic assessments; progress monitoring, including frequent formative curriculum-embedded assessments; and standards-based summative assessments, including common benchmark assessments.

F.2 The LEA provides the necessary technology and expertise to ensure data collection and analysis and maintains assessment data and student information in readily accessible forms.

Full implementation means that the LEA maintains student data, including assessment data, in readily accessible forms and provides all schools with the technology, expertise, and support to access the data.

- The LEA employs and designates staff to support the data management system at the district and all school sites.
- The schools have the technology and software to ensure that teachers and administrators can retrieve and create reports which integrate and/or disaggregate such data as demographic data and student achievement data on formative, curriculum/embedded assessments, and state standardized exams.

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		

<p>F.3 The LEA has procedures and processes to monitor the accuracy of the data and support teachers and administrators in accessing timely school- and classroom-level data based on common formative and summative curriculum-embedded and standards-aligned assessments. The data are used for student intervention, placement/exit, instructional decision-making, progress monitoring, teacher collaboration, targeted professional development, and monitoring of instruction by site and district leaders.</p>	<p>Full implementation means that the LEA has established and fully implements procedures to ensure accurate and timely scoring, storage, and retrieval of student assessment data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The LEA has assigned and trained staff to maintain and update the data system.</li> <li>•The LEA has taken steps such as data audits and centralized validation programs to ensure that the data captured by the system are accurate.</li> <li>•The analytical procedures used by the LEA are statistically valid and appropriate.</li> <li>•The LEA provides all site administrators, teachers, and counselors with professional development and ongoing support on the data management system and on the accurate entry and retrieval of data in the system.</li> <li>•The LEA evaluates the technology proficiency of school staff on an ongoing basis and provides targeted training to non-proficient staff.</li> </ul>	<p>Full (3)</p>	<p>Partial (in progress) (2)</p>	<p>Minimal (1)</p>
		<p>Documentation</p>		

<p>G. Professional Development Criteria and Clarifications</p>	<p>Criteria and Clarifications</p>	<p>Implementation Status: Circle the most accurate descriptor of implementation</p>		
<p>G.1 The LEA provides district administrators with</p>	<p>Full implementation means that the superintendent, cabinet members, and other district</p>	<p>Full (3)</p>	<p>Partial (in progress) (2)</p>	<p>Minimal (1)</p>

leadership training, ongoing professional development, and support in aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment to state standards; providing an efficient data system to monitor student achievement; aligning human and fiscal resources to district goals; building effective parent and community involvement programs; and providing targeted professional development for teachers and site administrators.

leaders receive both collective and individualized professional development in the seven areas of district work (DAIT Standards), identified in the California Education Code Section 52059(e), so that each person understands his or her role in the systemic improvement process as well as the interconnection of these roles in building a coherent system.

- The district cabinet and leadership work together as a “learning organization,” investing in ongoing and system-wide professional development and support for all district administrators in all seven areas of district work.
- The district cabinet and leadership assess the knowledge and expertise of each person on an ongoing basis and provide job-alike mentoring when appropriate.

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G.2 The LEA provides resources to deliver coherent professional development that is based on standards-based content knowledge and the instructional materials adopted by the LEA; reflects research-based strategies for improved student achievement; and

Full implementation means that the LEA allocates funding to provide all site staff, including site administrators and teachers, especially mathematics, reading/language arts, and ELD teachers, with professional development related to standards-based content, district-adopted instructional materials, research-based strategies for improved student achievement. In addition, the LEA provides both site administrators and teachers with opportunities for leadership

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		



includes effective leadership training for site administrators and teachers to implement systemic reform.

- training.
- The LEA has a coherent vision of professional development for all teachers within and across grade levels and departments. This vision is articulated by a common understanding among all teachers of the content standards, the adopted curriculum, and the instructional and achievement priorities of the LEA.
  - The LEA’s professional development plan, as documented in the LEA Plan, is based on student needs, as determined by formative and summative assessment data.
  - LEA and site administrators monitor the impact of the targeted professional development by observing classroom instructional practices and analyzing student assessment results to determine the measurable impact on student achievement.
  - The LEA ensures that each school’s SPSA and budget are aligned with the specific professional development goals of the LEA.
  - The LEA provides leadership training in implementing systemic reform and encourages teachers to attend this training.

G.3 The LEA ensures that all school principals

Full implementation means that all site administrators in the LEA have completed materials-based

Full  
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and vice principals complete materials-based professional development, as well as targeted, follow-up support, in the most recent SBE adoptions in reading/language arts and mathematics, which includes strategies for English learners, students with disabilities and other high priority students.

professional development in the LEA-adopted reading/language arts and mathematics instructional materials and receive structured and targeted follow-up support.

- The LEA trains site administrators in the LEA-adopted curriculum before or at the same time that it trains teachers in order to ensure that site administrators understand what their teachers are learning.
- The LEA monitors principal attendance and completion of materials-based professional development.
- The LEA meets with all principals and vice principals that have not completed materials-based professional development to collaboratively schedule specific dates for completion.

Documentation

G.4 The LEA ensures that all teachers complete materials -based professional development in reading/language arts, mathematics, English Language Development, and interventions.

Full implementation means that all appropriate teachers in the LEA are provided with and complete materials-based professional development in the SBE-adopted reading/language arts, mathematics, and ELD instructional materials adopted by the LEA. Training includes strategies for use with English learners.

- LEA and site administrators monitor teacher attendance and completion of materials-based professional development.

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
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<p>G.5 The LEA provides teachers with ongoing and targeted support focused on district-identified research-based instructional practices to improve student learning. Such support includes content experts, professional development and coaching that is differentiated by content, grade/course level, and individual teacher need.</p>	<p>The LEA provides all teachers in the LEA with ongoing support, differentiated by grade/course level, subject, and teacher need. Support includes targeted professional development in district-identified teaching strategies and ongoing classroom support from content experts and coaches in implementing these strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All professional development activities are structured around specific learning targets and aligned with the state standards and adopted instructional materials.</li> <li>•The LEA provides accessible and structured follow-up support for materials implementation and identified district priority instructional strategies. Such support may include:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assignment of instructional specialists and coaches to classroom teachers to model lessons and effective instructional strategies</li> <li>2. Principal walkthroughs to review implementation of strategies and practices introduced in teacher training</li> </ol> </li> <li>•The LEA prioritizes the professional development needs of schools, grade levels/courses and/or individual educators in order to fully implement the</li> </ul>	<p>Full (3)      Partial (in progress) (2)      Minimal (1)</p> <p>Documentation</p>
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curriculum and instructional priorities of the district to increase the achievement of all students.

G.6 The LEA provides professional development to site staff on effectively analyzing data from common standards-based assessments to inform instructional decisions and increase student achievement. The LEA monitors professional development activities to ensure effective implementation.

Full implementation means that the LEA provides all site administrators and teachers with professional development and ongoing support on the use and analysis of student achievement. The LEA monitors professional development activities to ensure that they are being implemented effectively.

- The LEA provides all teachers with training in student goal setting, progress monitoring, data analysis, intervention placement, and monitoring of students placed in interventions.
- Staff applies this training to inform classroom instruction, identify students in need of additional support and/or interventions, and plan future lessons.
- LEA and site administrators monitor teacher application of data on an ongoing basis to ensure that data are effectively applied to inform instructional decisions and improve classroom instruction.

Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation		

G.7 The LEA ensures that teachers are provided with frequent and structured opportunities to meet and collaboratively focus on the use of curriculum-embedded assessment data, data analysis, instructional planning, and lesson delivery in order to adjust and strengthen instructional practices and address the needs of all students. All teachers of high priority students are included in this collaboration. The LEA monitors teacher collaboration meetings to ensure effective implementation.	Full implementation means that structured collaborative time is assigned and documented in the calendars of all schools for teachers to meet regularly by grade, course and/or content area to examine student assessment data and plan lessons and activities to improve student achievement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The LEA supports site administrators in setting aside adequate time, on at least a monthly basis, for collaborative data-based discussions.</li> <li>•LEA administrators collaborate with site administrators and teachers to develop a timetable for monthly grade-level or course/department-level meetings in which teachers collaboratively discuss and analyze student achievement data, plan lessons, share materials, and instructional strategies.</li> <li>•Teachers come together as a professional community and are encouraged to ask questions, seek help from one another, and use student achievement data to reflect on the effectiveness of their instructional practice.</li> <li>•LEA and site administrators visit/monitor teacher collaboration meetings on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that they follow local protocol and lead to constructive dialogue around student achievement data and on the implications of the data for classroom instruction.</li> </ul>	Full (3)	Partial (in progress) (2)	Minimal (1)
Documentation				

<p>G.8 The LEA provides ongoing professional development and support to content experts and coaches and monitors their effectiveness in strengthening the instructional practices of teachers.</p>	<p>Full implementation means that all content experts and coaches deployed by the LEA are provided with rigorous and ongoing professional development in district-identified, research-based instructional practices to improve achievement among all students, including ELs, SWDs, and high priority students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Using the LEAP and SPSA goals, the LEA and site administrators establish instructional priorities and specific academic goals, across grades and content areas, for all content experts and coaches. These goals are communicated clearly to coaches and used to assess their impact and effectiveness.</li> <li>•The LEA has developed reporting and monitoring mechanisms to ensure the effective delivery of these services:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regular classroom visits and observations of coaches/content experts.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p>Monitoring of implementation of daily coach/specialist schedules.</p>	<p>Full (3)</p>	<p>Partial (in progress) (2)</p>	<p>Minimal (1)</p>
Documentation				

#### High School District's District Assistance Survey (DAS)

Completed June 2008

The District Assistance Survey is divided into seven sections:

1. Standards-based Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
2. Professional Development
3. Human Resources
4. Data Systems/Data Analysis/Ongoing Monitoring
5. Parent and Community

6. Fiscal Operations
7. Governance/Leadership

**Notes:**

1) In addition to looking at the numbers of participants who responded to certain rating for each question, consider also where the responses of the site administrators differ from those of the district office staff. Some of the more pronounced sets of disparate responses have a comment that signals this situation.

2) The review of data should also consider also how many administrators chose the “I don’t know” option. This response can be telling.

3) Percentages may vary from question to question based on the number of responses; not everyone taking the survey answered every question. Information about the number of respondents who skipped a question is provided.

## 7. Governance and Leadership Section

### Governance – All Essential Program Components (EPCs)

1. The vision, mission statement, core values, and beliefs of the LEA are:

*1.a. In alignment with the nine EPC's and reflect a commitment through measurable goals to improving the achievement of all students (required of PI Districts)*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	24% (6)	32% (8)	20% (5)	8% (2)	16% (4)	
DO	20% (4)	15% (3)	30% (6)	20% (4)	15% (3)	

Comments:

*1.b Reflected in written district goals which are both measurable and achievable.*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	16% (4)	32% (8)	32% (8)	4% (1)	16% (4)	
DO	21.1% (4)	10.5% (2)	36.8% (7)	21.1% (4)	10.5% (2)	1

Comments:

2. The LEA plan and its implementation have a strong, coherent focus on:

*2a. Improving the achievement of all student groups.*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	16% (4)	32% (8)	40% (10)	4% (1)	8% (2)	
DO	20% (4)	30% (6)	20% (4)	15% (3)	15% (3)	

Comments: Note the spread of DO responses.

*2.b. Closing the achievement gap for all student groups (e.g. specific research-based strategies are identified to assist schools in improving students' achievement)*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	8% (2)	36% (9)	44% (11)	4% (1)	8% (2)	
DO	20% (4)	20% (4)	30% (6)	15% (3)	15% (3)	

Comments:

*2c. Providing data to assess objectives of the LEA plan implementation*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	4% (1)	36% (9)	28% (7)	8% (2)	24% (6)	
DO	20% (4)	25% (5)	30% (6)	10% (2)	15% (3)	

Comments:



*2d. Linking each LEA plan objective with an associated budget source and amount*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	4.2% (1)	20.8% (5)	25% (6)	8.3% (2)	41.7% (10)	1
DO	10% (2)	15% (3)	35% (7)	20% (4)	20% (4)	

Comments:

3. The local governing board and LEA have policies and evidence of implementation regarding the following:

*3.a. the instructional program, including State-board adopted materials, textbook adoption cycles, local assessments, and graduation requirements.*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	20% (5)	60% (15)	12% (3)		8% (2)	
DO	30% (6)	35% (7)	15% (3)	5% (1)	15% (3)	

Comments:

*3.b. Intensive intervention programs for students*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	12% (3)	16% (4)	32% (8)	28% (7)	12% (3)	
DO	10% (2)	30% (6)	10% (2)	30% (6)	15% (3)	

Comments: Note the polarized DO results

*3.c. Strategic intervention programs for students*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	16% (4)	20% (5)	36% (9)	20% (5)	8% (2)	
DO	10% (2)	20% (4)	20% (4)	30% (6)	20% (4)	

Comments:

*3.d. Instructional time for appropriate grade levels and subjects.*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	16% (4)	44% (11)	32% (8)	4% (1)	4% (1)	
DO	25% (5)	35% (7)	10% (2)	10% (2)	20% (4)	

Comments:

*3.e. Alignment of all categorical programs and instructional support programs (such as extended day, summer school, etc.) with the standards*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	16% (4)	32% (8)	28% (7)	16% (4)	8% (2)	
DO	10.5% (2)	31.6% (6)	15.8% (3)	21.1% (4)	21.1% (4)	1

*3.f. Alignment of fiscal commitments to district objectives for implementing EPC's*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	4% (1)	36% (9)	28% (7)	16% (4)	16% (4)	
DO	10% (2)	25% (5)	10% (2)	30% (6)	25% (5)	

Comments: Note the discrepancy between site and DO responses

4. District and site administrators support the implementation of the Essential Program Components (EPC's) through:

*4.a. Clear expectations in writing provided to administrators and teachers*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	12% (3)	24% (6)	48% (12)	16% (4)		
DO	5% (1)	25% (5)	10% (2)	20% (4)	40% (8)	

Comments: Note the large number of DO responses: "I don't know."

*4.b. Clear and frequent communication with the local governing board regarding the implementation of the Essential Program Components.*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site		28% (7)	36% (9)	16% (4)	20% (5)	
DO	10% (2)	15% (3)	25% (5)	25% (5)	25% (5)	

Comments:

*4.c. Frequent school visits by district staff and classroom visits by site administrators to monitor implementation of the EPC's and to provide feedback on levels of implementation.*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	8% (2)	12% (3)	24% (6)	52% (13)	4% (1)	
DO	10% (2)	35% (7)	15% (3)	15% (3)	25% (5)	

Comments: Note the discrepancy between site and DO responses.

5. The LEA collects, analyzes, and uses data to:

*5.a. Set instructional priorities based on needs indicated by patterns in the data (e.g. strategies to close the achievement gap for all student groups)*

Finding:	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
Site	8% (2)	32% (8)	52% (13)	4% (1)	4% (1)	
DO	10.5% (2)	31.6% (6)	26.3% (5)	10.5% (2)	21.4% (4)	1

Comments:

5.b. Allocate resources based on greatest academic needs, with priority given to Program Improvement schools, in order to accelerate achievement through targeted instruction, frequent assessment, and support

<b>Finding:</b>	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
<b>Site</b>	8% (2)	24% (6)	44% (11)	12% (3)	12% (3)	
<b>DO</b>	10% (2)	30% (6)	40% (8)	5% (1)	15% (3)	

**Comments:**

5.c. Provide support for district personnel to enhance student achievement.

<b>Finding:</b>	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
<b>Site</b>		40% (10)	32% (8)	16% (4)	12% (3)	
<b>DO</b>	15% (3)	25% (5)	35% (7)	15% (3)	10% (2)	

**Comments:**

5.d. Hold district personnel accountable for student performance through performance evaluations.

<b>Finding:</b>	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
<b>Site</b>		24% (6)	28% (7)	28% (7)	20% (5)	
<b>DO</b>	10% (2)	30% (6)	30% (6)	15% (3)	15% (3)	

**Comments:**

5.e. Strengthen community knowledge, trust, and participation through sharing student data with parents and the community and providing accurate and objective interpretations.

<b>Finding:</b>	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
<b>Site</b>		32% (8)	28% (7)	28% (7)	12% (3)	
<b>DO</b>	5% (1)	25% (5)	35% (7)	15% (3)	20% (4)	

**Comments:**

**6. The LEA has support systems in place to promote effective implementation of EPC's through:**

6.a. LEA specialists, such as reading specialists, mathematics specialists, and English learner specialists, and coaches/content experts who work inside the classroom to support teachers.

<b>Finding:</b>	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
<b>Site</b>		32% (8)	32% (8)	32% (8)	4% (1)	
<b>DO</b>	10.5% (2)	26.3% (5)	31.6% (6)	15.8% (3)	15.8% (3)	1

**Comments:** Note the spread of site admin responses.

6.b. *A pacing calendar for delivering mathematics and reading/language arts instruction, observed and monitoring for implementation*

<b>Finding:</b>	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
<b>Site</b>	12% (3)	48% (12)	24% (6)	12% (3)	4% (1)	
<b>DO</b>	15% (3)	65% (13)	5% (1)		15% (3)	

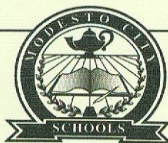
**Comments:**

6.c. *A curriculum-embedded assessment schedule (e.g. there are agreed-upon common assessments provided in the adopted textbooks and a timetable for administration of the assessments; there are common cut points for proficiency levels used to monitor student progress and to make instructional decisions)*

<b>Finding:</b>	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Minimally	Don't know	Skipped Question
<b>Site</b>	12% (3)	52% (13)	24% (6)	8% (2)	4% (1)	
<b>DO</b>	20% (4)	35% (7)	25% (5)		20% (4)	

**Comments:**

Appendix C: Letter of Cooperation

ADMINISTRATION		BOARD OF EDUCATION
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]

**APPENDIX C: Letter of cooperation from the district's Superintendent**

October, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter will serve as an acknowledgement that I have received a request by Lynn Lysko to conduct a research study entitled, "A Local Policy Analysis: The Academic Experience of Secondary English learners" in the [Redacted] High School District.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Governing Board of the [Redacted] and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as Superintendent of [Redacted] I agree to allow access to administrators, teachers, and students. The participants' names and contact information will be anonymous, their participation voluntary and at their own discretion.

We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change. I understand that the data collected will remain confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside the research team without the permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

10-12-2010

Date

[Redacted Name] Superintendent,

Print Name and Title

A DIPLOMA IN EVERY HAND!

## Appendix D: Sample Emails to Potential Participants

To:  
From: Lynn Lysko  
Date: April, 2011  
Re: Research study for doctorate

Good morning!

You are being invited to participate in a research study that has the approval of the University of Walden's Institutional Review Board (Approval # 05-06-11-0125605) and the Governing Board. The purpose of this study is to learn about your experience with the board policies around governance within the district. This study is being conducted by Lynn Lysko and is sponsored by doctoral chair Dr. Pamela Harrison.

Your participation in the research study is voluntary and there is no compensation for participants. If you agree to participate, you will participate in a 30 minute interview. You may decline to answer any question and you may choose to opt out at any time with no professional or personal penalty. There are no risks or benefits to you personally for participating: however, the knowledge gained may help with examining policy that may impact future learners in City Schools or other districts in Program Improvement.

Your answers to the questions will be stored by Lynn Lysko. However, the data will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law.

You may refuse to participate without being subject to any penalty or losing any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the principal investigator, Lynn Lysko, at 209-555-5555. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can contact the Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at 800-925-3368, extension \*1210. The committee has reviewed this study. To protect your privacy, no consent signature is requested. Instead, your assent by return e-mail will indicate your consent if you choose to participate.

Please rsvp to Lynn Lysko @ [llysko@yahoo.com](mailto:llysko@yahoo.com)

Thank you!

To:  
From: Lynn Lysko  
Date: April, 2011  
Re: Research study for doctorate follow-up

Good morning!

Recently, you received a request from me inviting you to become a participant in my research study. The purpose of this study is to learn about your experience with the board governance policies within the district.

I remind you that your participation in the research study is voluntary and there is no compensation for participants. If you agree to be involved, you will participate in a 30 minute interview. You may decline to answer any question and you may choose to opt out at any time with no professional or personal penalty. There are no risks or benefits to you personally for participating; however, the knowledge gained may help with examining policy that may impact future learners in City Schools or other districts in Program Improvement.

I hope you to consider being a participant and look forward to your return email. Thanks so much!

Lynn

## Appendix E: Interview Questions

### Introduction:

You may decline to answer any question and you may choose to opt out at any time with no professional or personal penalty. There are no risks or benefits to you personally for participating; however, the knowledge gained may help with examining policy that may impact future learners in City Schools or other districts in Program Improvement. Please answer all questions with secondary (9-12) ELs in mind.

Research question: How does district board policy meet the academic needs of English-learning students at the secondary level?

1. How do you support the board's adopted policies when deciding about student achievement, curriculum, assessment and accountability, personnel and budgetary allocations?
2. What is the board's long-range vision for the district focused on student learning? How do you set priorities? How do you consider disaggregated data re: ELs to equitably meet their academic needs?
3. Describe the organizational culture of the board and district/site leadership re: vision of student achievement and standards-based instructional program. Describe the communications structure. Describe the working relationships, the decision-making processes, and the allocation of time and resources to support and sustain reform initiatives.
4. What is the process for monitoring the LEAP addendum re: monitoring implementation of curriculum, intensive intervention (READ180), benchmark assessments, allocation of instructional time, and professional development for teachers? How do you monitor the alignment of fiscal and human resources to support the state's EPCs?
5. How do you monitor the sites' SPSA? Are they aligned with the district's LEAP? How are under-performing sites supported?
6. How do budget decisions reflect priorities such as ELs in the LEAP?



7. Describe the communication system between the board and the district personnel. How does the board set student performance goals and communicate these goals to the site personnel?
8. How does the board ensure that the LEAP is understood by all district personnel and that follow-up action is taken when needed?
9. How does the district's data system provide information for a continuous improvement process?

## Appendix F: District Observation Protocol 2009

Site \_\_\_\_\_ Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Essential #1: Rigorous and Relevant Instructional System:**

Evident

Not Evident

**I. District-adopted instructional program is being implemented:**

ELA:            Math:            Science:        Social

Science:

**II. District pacing calendar is being implemented****III. Full Implementation of the district-adopted Instructional Program**

## A. 1.

Learning goal is clearly communicated (orally/ written)

## A.2.

Learning goal is matched to course specific standard.

## A.3

Learning goal is matched to cognitive level of student learning (i.e. analyze, compose, identify)

## B.

Instruction is focused on the learning goal.

## C. Active Participation

- Speaking (Pair/share, choral/unison, individual...)
- Writing (White boards, entrance, exit cards...)
- Interaction with Manipulatives (Algebra tiles,...)
- Other (gesturing...)

## D. Checking for Understanding (CFU)

## Appendix G: Sample Emails to Participating High Schools

To:  
From: Lynn Lysko  
Date: April, 2011  
Re: Research study for doctorate

Good morning!

You are being invited to participate in a research study that has the approval of the University of Walden's Institutional Review Board (Approval # 05-06-11-0125605) and the district's Governing Board. The purpose of this study is to learn about your experience with the board policies around governance within the district. This study is being conducted by Lynn Lysko and is sponsored by doctoral chair Dr. Pamela Harrison.

There is no compensation for participants. As a Title I high school in the district, you will permit a 30 minute observation in each of the following classes using the district-adopted Teaching and Learning Protocol: freshmen and sophomore English, Science, Social Science, and Math classes where there is a large number of long-term English learners. There are no risks or benefits to you personally for participating; however, the knowledge gained may help with examining policy that may impact future learners in City Schools or other districts in Program Improvement.

The results of the observations will be stored by Lynn Lysko. However, the data will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the principal investigator, Lynn Lysko, at 209-555-5555. If you have any questions about rights during the research, you can contact the Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at 800-925-3368, extension \*1210. The committee has reviewed this study. To protect your privacy, no consent signature is requested.

Please RSVP to Lynn Lysko @ [llysko@yahoo.com](mailto:llysko@yahoo.com)  
Thank you!

## Appendix H: Log of Data Collection

Binder 1	Interview Transcriptions*	Participants	Pseudonyms
	Board Members	5	Board Member 1 - 5
	District Administrators	11	District Administrator 1 - 11
	Principals	8	Site Administrator 1-8
	Associate Principals, Curriculum and Instruction	5	Site Administrator 9-13
	Teachers/Counselors	15	Faculty Member 1-15
Total Interviews: All Participants		44	
Binder 2	Observations		Schools
	8		A
	8		B
	8		C
	8		D
Total Observations Collected	32		4
Binder 3	Board Policies		Administrative Regulations
Section 0000: Philosophy, Goals, Objectives, Comprehensive Plan	4		2
Section 2000: Administration	3		0
Section 5000: Students	49		32
Section 6000: Instruction	46		39
Total Policies Examined	102		75

## Appendix I: Adoption and Revision Cycle for District Board Policies

Section	Board Policy	Policy Topic	Adoption Date	Revision Year
0000	0100	Philosophy of Education		
	0420	District Master Plan	6.5.1978	
	0421	School Site Councils	6.5.1978	1997
	0440	District Technology Plan	2.11.1997	2000, 2002, 2004, 2004, 2011
2000	2120	Superintendent of Schools		
	2231	Superintendent's Committee		
5000	2240.1	Use of District Name	6.6.1983	
	5022	Student/Family Privacy	3.5.2007	
	5030	Student Wellness	6.12.2006	
	5111.1	Age Eligibility – Kindergarten	10.4.1982	1989
	5111.2	Eligibility Admission – 18 year olds	9.20.1982	
	5111.3	Residency Requirements	11.4.1985	1987 1993
	5112.1	Exclusion from Attendance	2.18.1986	
	5112.2	Noon Pass – K-6	12.6.1982	1993
	5112.5	7-12 Closed Campuses	9.20.1993	
	5113.2	Work Permits	2.18.1992	
	5115	Grade Placement- K-8	5.8.2000	
	5116	Intra-district Open Enrollment	4.25.1994	AR: 1994, 1995, 2009
	5117	Intra & Inter District Attend.	4.19.1982	1987, 1990, 1993, 1994, 2005
	5118	Open Enrollment Act Transfers		AR: 2011
	5121.1	Grading Policy, Grades 4-6	9.2.1986	1990, 1992, 2000
	5121.11	Grading Policy, Grades 7-12	2.18.1992	1999, 2000
	5121.4	Granting Units, Grades 9-12	7.11.1988	2000
5123	Promotion, Acceleration, Retention, K-8	10.25.1999		
5124	Marking Periods, K-12	4.23.1984	AR: 1978, 2003	
5127	High School Graduation	2.6.1989	2006	

5131	Student Conduct Code	9.17.1984	1998, 1999, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011
5131.6	Alcohol and Other Drugs	3.31.2008	
5132.1	Suspension/Expulsion –Special Education Students	8.20.1990	1995
5133	Athletic Code of Conduct 7-12	1.7.1985	
5134	Conduct on Buses	11.21.1983	1995
5135	Dress and Grooming	11.15.1982	1995, 1997, 2005
5135.1	Prohibited Dress/Adornment	8.28.1989	

Section	Board Policy	Policy Topic	Adoption Date	Revision Date	
5000	5136	Class Rings and Pins	4.18.1983		
	5137	Gang Symbols	8.28.1989		
	5138	Electronic Signaling Devices	3.24.2003	2011	
	5141.12	First Aid, Emergency Accidents, Illness	9.20.1982	AR: 1988	
	5141.21	Administering Medication	9.20.1982		
	5141.31	Immunizations	12.5.1983	1993	
	5141.32	Child Health and Disability Prevention Program	7.10.2000		
	5141.4	Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting	4.18.1983	2008	
	5141.6	Aid for Students in Need	12.6.1982		
	5142.1	School Traffic Patrol	5.16.1983		
	5143	Student Accident Insurance	5.13.1982		
	5144	Subpoena Power	8.25.1997		
	5145.12	Search and Seizure	7.31.1995	1996	
	5145.2	Student Free Speech	5.16.1994		
	5145.3	Non-discrimination in Education Programs and Activities	4.25.1994	2003	
	5145.4	Principles of Rights – Safe Schools	1.20.1998		
	5145.7	Student Sexual Harassment	7.19.1993	1994, 1997	
	5146.1	Married Students	11.15.1982		
	5022	Student and Family Privacy	3.5.2007		
	6000	6020	Parent Involvement	2.18.1992	2004
6112.1		Minimum School Day K-12	1983		
6114		Emergency Procedure for War	1983		
6114.1		Fire Drills	1983	1997	
6114.2		Bomb Threats	1983		
6115		Ceremonies and Observances	1982		
6115.1		Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag	1982		
6116		Classroom Interruptions	1985		
6127.7		Use of Technology	1992	2011	
**		6141.1	Services to LEP Students	1983	
**		6141.2	Testing English Learners 2-11	2001	2004, 2005
		6142.1	Physical Education 9-12	1983	
	6142.11	PE Dress Requirements 7-12	1983	1988	
	6142.111	Exemption from PE 9-12	1988	2007, 2007	

6142.2	Drivers Education	1983	1991
6142.3	Outdoor Education	1985	
6144	Controversial Issues	1973	
6145.1	Inter-High Student Council	1983	

Section	Board Policy	Policy Topic	Adoption Date	Revision Date
6000	6145.5	Associated Student Body	1998	
	6146	Graduation Requirements High School CAHSEE	1988	2000, 2002, 2003, 2006
	6146.1	Graduation Requirements Continuation High School	1988	1998, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2006
	6146.2	Honorary Diplomas Foreign Exchange Students	1983	
	6146.4	Differential Graduation Requirements – Special Education	1989	2002, 2003, 2004, 2006
	6146.5	Graduation Proficiency – Junior High	2002	2003, 2004, 2010
	6147	Waiving Graduation Requirements	1988	
	6151.1	Class Consolidations K-6		
	6151.2	Busing of Students	1987	
	6152	Changing Class Schedules	1988	
	6153	Field Trips	1989	
	6154	Homework K-6	1989	
	6158	Independent Study Program	1991	2000, 2005
	6161	Equipment Books and Materials	2001	
	6161.1	Selection and Evaluation of Instructional Materials	2001	
6161.11	Supplementary Instructional Materials	1998	2001	

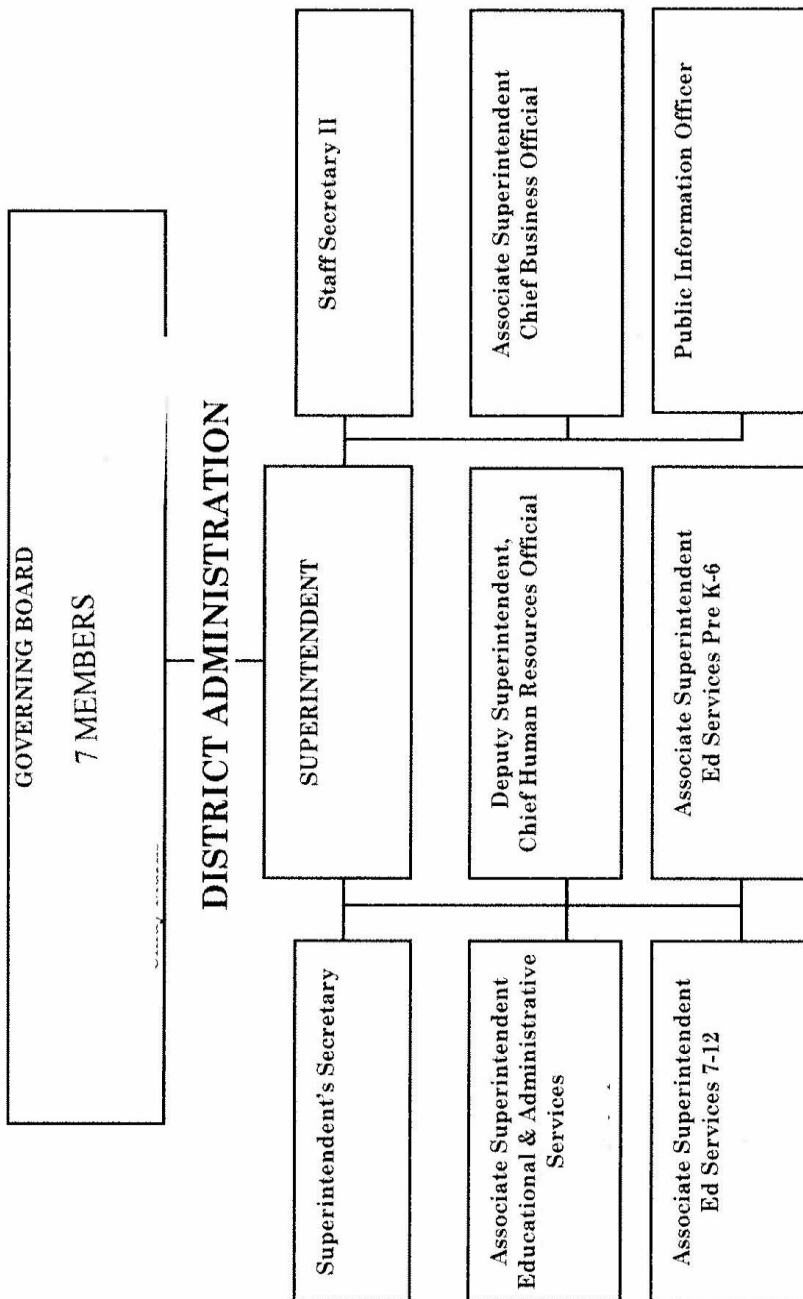


6162.6	Use of Copyrighted Materials	2011	
6163.1	Library Media Centers	2000	
6163.4	Student Use of Technology	2011	
6164.2	Guidance/Counseling	2008	
6164.6	Identification/Evaluation Special Education	1993	2003
6170	Education for Homeless Children	2005	
6171	Title I Programs	1989	2007
6173	Home and Hospital Instruction	1983	2005
6174	Alternative Education Programs	1983	
6174.1	Independent Study K-12	1984	
6191	Criteria for Annual Evaluation of Consolidated Programs	1985	1997, 2001
6200	Adult Education	2005	2009

Appendix J: District Organizational Flowcharts 2010-2012

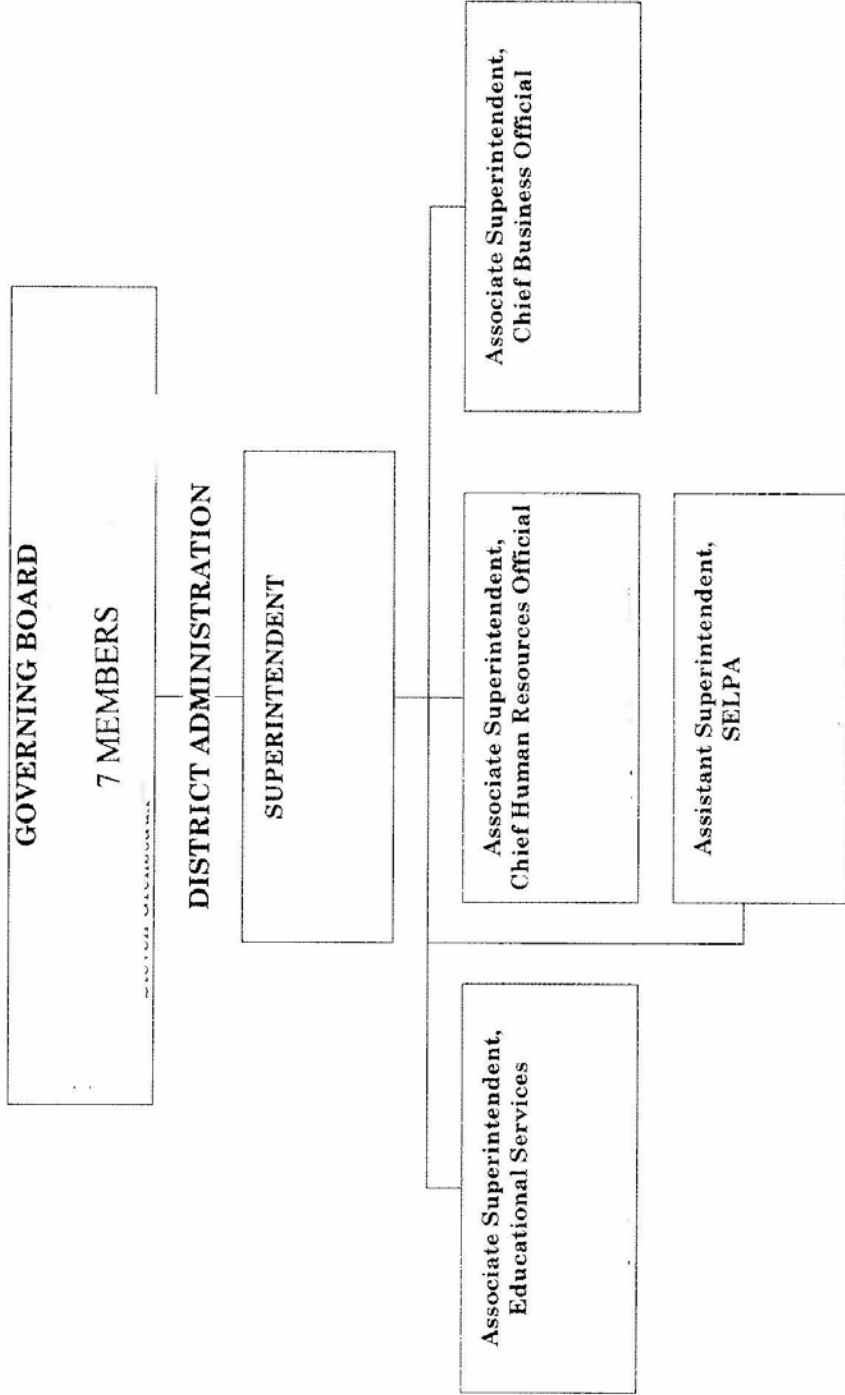
2010-2011

**ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**



**DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION**

**ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**      2011-2012



## Appendix K: LEAP Addendum Goal 9

LEA Addendum Question 6. English Learners: Title I Program Improvement Status Only: *Include specific academic achievement and English Language Proficiency goals, targets and strategies for English Learners consistent with Goal 1 and Goal 2 of NCLB. (See Title III Accountability Report Information Guide available on the Title III Accountability Technical Assistance Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/t3/acct.asp>).*

**Goal 9.** English Learners: the District will develop, implement, and monitor a system of accelerated support for English Learners in the areas of learning academic content and the English language.

### DAIT Standards: Alignment of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment to State Standards, and Governance )

Please describe the specific professional development needs and how they will be addressed. (Action Steps)	Persons Involved	Timeline	Progress Benchmarks	Expenditures and FundingSource
--	------------------	----------	---------------------	--------------------------------

**9.1 Learning Academic Standards**

9.1.1 Develop, fund and implement a K-12 district system that provides a sequence of instruction for English Learners in learning grade- level, standards-based, course level academic content and the English language. This system will

9.1.1.a ensure that EL students have access to and support for achieving high school level ELA and Algebra standards.

9.1.1.b include at its base, a coherent core curriculum, intensive reading interventions ( if appropriate) and strategic periods (ALD Class) for core classes.

9.1.1.c identify, implement and monitor diagnostic, placement and exit criteria and assessments and summative and formative progress monitoring assessments.

9.1.1.d develop specific protocols to ensure collaboration among general education and EL

Associate Supts. A, B, C and Director A and Coordinator B

Full plan will be implemented Feb. 09 to fall 2012.

9.1.1/a. February 09 plan submitted which defines a comprehensive, structured EL program

9.1.1.b-e. Implementation begins in Spring/Summer 09 :

- Written placement/ exit criteria

Data Team protocols which disaggregate data

9.1.1c & f Fall 2010

Comprehensive Title III plan

Site master schedules and matrix of EL student placement at each school.

Class lists by Eng. Prof. provided to all teachers

Students enrolled in core ELA & ALD class or Read 180

Implement ALD course 7-9 Fall 09  
Gr. 10 Fall 10  
Gr. 11 Fall 11

Increase re-designation rate of EL students & decrease ALD classes

Costs for developing the plan included in current Title III Funding

<p>9.1.2 Provide clear direction to and training in ELA, Read 180, Algebra I for teachers who are instructing EL students enrolled in these courses and administrators responsible for these programs.</p>	<p>Associate Supt. A, Director s A, B, C</p>	<p>Fall 2010 9.1.2b. Spring/ Summer 09</p>	<p>Results of classroom visits; progress of EL's at each benchmark; review of Principal summaries 9.2.1b Implement Read 180 &amp; ALD classes &amp; provide teachers appropriate Staff Development</p>	<p>9.1.2.a See 3.2.2 , 3.3.2 9.1.2. b See 5.1.2 9.1.2.c See 6.1.3 and 6.2.1</p>
<p>Training is to include:</p>				
<p>9.1.2 a. utilization of the core program and ancillary materials to scaffold instruction for EL's in learning the academic content.</p>		<p>9.1.2.c District &amp; Principals: Fall 08 Collaboration Teams Spring 2010</p>		
<p>9.1.2 b. effective implementation of targeted instructional practices</p>				
<p>9.1.2 c. disaggregation and analysis of EL benchmark and curriculum embedded assessment data to inform changes in</p>				
<p><b>9.2 English Language Development (ELD)</b></p>				
<p>9.2.1 Develop and fund a system that provides English Language Development to English Learners until they are reclassified.</p>	<p>Associate Supt. A, Director A Coor. A</p>	<p>Fall 09 plan submitted which defines a comprehensive , structured ELD program  Implementation Spring/Summer 09 – Admin. Training Summer 09 -Placement/ exit criteria</p>	<p>Comprehensive Title III plan  Implement ALD and Language Institute</p>	<p>Costs will be determined as part of the Title III planning process. Presently district supports ELD sections in the schools: 182,000 current non-EIA/Title III funding</p>
<p>9.2.1 a. Placement and exit criteria and assessments and progress monitoring assessments will be identified, implemented and monitored.</p>				
<p>9.2.1 b. The district will offer an instructional program to build English Language skills that can be responsive to students with various CELDT levels and academic progress (for example, ELD classes for more advanced CELDT levels, school-wide practices to support academic</p>				

9.3	<p><b>Effective Instructional Practices</b></p> <p>9.3.1 Identify, implement, support and monitor in all classrooms those evidence-based instructional strategies that are effective in the instruction of English Learners (i.e., high engagement practices, building academic language, specific differentiated practices, SDAIE strategies, checking for understanding, direct instruction)</p> <p>9.3.1 a. ELPD (or equivalent) training for all teachers who have completed at least 40 hours of SB 472/466 (or equivalent) instructional materials training.</p> <p>9.3.1 b. Training for all teachers in effective instructional practices for EL's</p> <p>9.3.1 c. Training for administrators in effective EL instructional practices and</p>	<p>ALC Directors/ Coord. A</p>	<p>9.3.1.a – Starting in Summer 09</p> <p>9.3.1.b. Implement EL training for teachers and administrators starting in Spring/summer '09 –complete Fall '10.</p> <p>9.3.1.c – Fall 09 Principal monitoring begins.</p>	<p>9.3.1.a ELPD 472 (or equivalent) Training Funding Source: State SB 472 ELPD: TBA</p> <p>9.3.1.b/c Funding Source: Title III</p>
<b>9.4</b>	<p><b>District Leadership and Support</b></p> <p>9.4.1 Regulations, administrative procedures and policies will be written/rewritten, if necessary, to codify the K-12 district expectations, assessment criteria and base program guaranteed to English Learners.</p> <p>9.4.2 District leadership and responsibility for the English Language Learner System and student progress in the system will</p>	<p>Cabinet  Cabinet</p>	<p>Spring 2010</p>	<p>Policies &amp; guidelines rewritten/created to support the EL system</p> <p>No additional funding needed</p> <p>Clear line of district responsibility</p>

## Appendix L: Summary of High School 2011-12 Master Schedules Showing Support

School	System				
	ELA Support Sections	Academic Language Development	Algebra Support Sections	Intensive Intervention (Reading)	Intensive Intervention (Mathematics)
A*	2 @ 9 <sup>th</sup> 1 @ 10 <sup>th</sup>	2 @ 9 <sup>th</sup> 1 @ 10 <sup>th</sup>	3	2 x 2 periods (General Education) 1 x 2 periods (Special Education)	3
B*	2 @ 9 <sup>th</sup> 1 @ 10 <sup>th</sup>	3 @ 9 <sup>th</sup> 2 @ 10 <sup>th</sup>	2	1 x 2 periods (General Education) 2 x 2 periods (Special Education)	2
C*	2 @ 9 <sup>th</sup> 1 @ 10 <sup>th</sup>	2 @ 9 <sup>th</sup> 2 @ 10 <sup>th</sup>	3	2 x 2 periods (General Education) 2 x 2 periods (Special Education)	0
D*	2@9 <sup>th</sup> 2@10 <sup>th</sup>	3@9 <sup>th</sup> 3@10 <sup>th</sup>	3	2 x 2 periods (General Education) 3 x 2 periods (Special Education)	3
E	2 @ 9 <sup>th</sup> 1@ 10 <sup>th</sup>	1 @ 9 <sup>th</sup> 1@10 <sup>th</sup>	1	2 x 2 periods (General Education) 1 x 2 Periods (Special Education)	0
F	3 @ 9 <sup>th</sup> 1 @ 10 <sup>th</sup>	1 @ 9/10 <sup>th</sup>	3	3 x 2 periods (General Education)	0



G	1 @9 <sup>th</sup>	1 @9 <sup>th</sup> 1@10 <sup>th</sup>	6	2 x 2 periods Special Education 1x2 periods (General Education)	0
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Appendix M: Sample Completed Teacher Collaboration Protocol

# MCS Teaching & Learning Protocol

Date: November 2011      School: GDHS      Dept/grade: ELA 9

Data Review:			
Student Growth	Areas of Strength	Areas for Growth	Agreed Upon Effective Evidenced Based Teaching Practices
School-wide:	Reading 2.4 Writing 1.1	Reading 3.9 Writing 2.1	Goal Setting System for increased accountability
*Significant Sub: *only differences	Same	Same	Same
Instructional Practices	Areas of Strength	Areas for Growth	
Walk-Through Trend Data:	Student Friendly Objective	Frequent Checking for Understanding	
Continuous Improvement (How will we know it worked?)			
	Data	Walk-thru	
How might students demonstrate proficiency?	If F or D at pgrading period, mandated to tutoring. If EL student, then use ALD class for extra test time.		
Assessed Progress	Emphasize low achieved standards throughout next unit.	More use of Whiteboards More frequent engagement strategies	

## Appendix N: Sample Class List by English Proficiency

Student	Name	Ins Set Res	Prim Lang	Eng Prof	DT Date Overa	List	CEL			ST		C				
							Spk	Read	Writ	Date	ELA	Math	Scienc	SS		
<b>GRADE: 09</b>																
801757	AJ	01	01	EL	9/4/11	INT	ADV	ADV	E A	E A	4/1/11	BB				
397254	BE	01	00	EO							4/1/11	BAS	BB	BAS	BB	
402848	CR	01	00	EO							4/1/11	FBB	BB	FBB	FBB	
319038	CF	01	00	EO							4/1/11	ADV	BAS	ADV	ADV	
332684	CA	01	01	RFEP	9/6/08	ADV	E A	ADV	ADV	ADV	4/14/10	PRO	PRO			
345765	ED	01	00	EO							4/1/11	BAS	PRO	BAS	BB	
802891	FJ	01	00	EO												
801716	FK	01	01	RFEP							4/15/10	ADV	BB			
802726	GH	01	00	EO												
801653	HT	01	00	EO							4/15/10	PRO	BB			
800902	HN	01	00	EO							4/15/11	PRO	BAS	ADV	PRO	
801700	HR	01	01	RFEP							4/1/11	PRO				
328896	KM	01	09	RFEP	9/5/09	E A	E A	E A	E A	E A	4/1/11	BAS	BAS	BB	BAS	
802232	KK	01	00	EO												
328787	LT	01	00	EO							4/1/11	PRO	PRO	PRO	BAS	
330191	MV	01	01	RFEP	9/5/05			E A	E A	ADV	4/1/11	ADV	PRO	ADV	PRO	
328598	OM	01	00	EO							4/1/11	FBB	BAS	FBB	BB	
805136	PE	01	00	EO												
800959	PG	01	01	RFEP							4/15/11	ADV	PRO	ADV	PRO	
318643	RC	01	01	IFEP	10/1/02					E A	4/14/10	BAS	BAS			
801782	RI	01	01	EL	9/4/11	INT	E A	E I	E A	INT	4/15/09	BB	BB			
9/10/04	347257	SC	01	00	EO						4/1/11	BB	BB	PRO	BB	
365781	SS	01	01	IFEP												
8/1/02	339309	SA	01	22	RFEP	9/4/06	E I	INT	E A	E A	INT	4/1/11	PRO	BB	ADV	BAS
350119	SH	01	01	RFEP	9/5/09	E A	ADV	E A	INT	E A	4/1/11	BAS	BAS	BAS	BAS	
801713	TJ	01	01	RFEP							4/1/11	PRO				
8/26/02	800963	WS	01	00	EO						4/15/11	PRO	PRO	BAS	PRO	
801774	YE	01	00	EO							4/15/10	ADV	PRO			

Appendix O: Summary of Title I High Schools' Categorical Spending for Professional  
Development for Effective Instructional Practices

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Title I High Schools			
A (ADA=1700)	\$16,300	\$44,000	\$32,600
B (ADA =1800)	\$43,000	\$53,750	\$43,000
C (ADA=1800)	n/a	\$44,000	n/a
D (ADA=2500)	\$47,300	\$80,000	\$30,000
Non-Title I High Schools			
E (ADA=2000)	\$0	\$0	\$0
F (ADA=2500)	\$0	\$0	\$0

## Appendix P: Confidentiality Agreement with Doctoral Peer

**Name of Signer:**

During the course of collecting data for this research: “A local policy analysis: The academic experience of a secondary English learner” I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

***By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:***

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant’s name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.
7. I will only access or use systems or devices I’m officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

***Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.***

**Signature:****Date: 2.21.11**

## Appendix Q: Referenced District Board of Education Policies

Board Policy

**BP 0100****PHILOSOPHY-GOALS-OBJECTIVES AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN****Philosophy of Education**

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of an equal, but not identical, educational opportunity for everyone. The success of our representative democratic government depends upon the wise, mature and intelligent decisions of the people being represented.

The philosophy of the Board of Education is expressed in the following statements:

The system of public education should be free, so that no one be denied an opportunity because of financial limitation; universal, available to all, regardless of race, color, creed, or sex; and compulsory, in order that every citizen may be made aware of his rights and responsibilities in a democracy.

The aim of education is to develop a mature citizen, with this maturity being evidenced in four ways:

First, the educated citizen must have an awareness of his strengths and limitations and be constantly striving to attain the highest goals of which he is capable.

Second, he must be a responsible, contributing member to the development of a better community, nation, and world.

Third, he must be an economically productive citizen, working at a job which enables him to utilize his greatest talents.

And, finally, he must be adept in his relationships with his family, his community, nation, and his world.

Public education must concern itself with the mental, physical, social and emotional development of every child that attends the public schools. Further, we believe that there is an inter-dependence of these areas, one upon the other, and that neglect of one area may affect the successful development of another.

BP 0100 (a)

## PHILOSOPHY-GOALS-OBJECTIVES AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### Philosophy of Education

Mental training is a difficult process. It can be accomplished only by meaningful drill and discipline in certain fundamental skills or tools of knowledge which should be the foundation of an integrated course of study from kindergarten through twelfth grade. We consider that skill and knowledge in themselves are means to be an end, the development of an effective individual. A child must learn to think for himself, to recognize problems and solve them by using the facts he has acquired.

The physical development of each child is of paramount importance; therefore, the public school must do everything in its power to help each child develop those skills and abilities, knowledge and attitudes which will enable him to participate successfully in the society of which he is a member.

City Schools must give serious attention to the social development of every child entrusted to its care.

The area of human relationships is one of the most complex, yet one of the most important, in determining the successes which individuals and nations experience in the course of their history. The school is partially responsible for teaching these relationships, so that every youngster may experience success in his associations with others.

Man's actions, to a great degree, are influenced by and reflect his emotional condition. Thus, if society is to be served to advantage, it is essential that every child be helped by City Schools to develop emotional maturity.

It is the function of the school to help each child understand the nature of the universe in which he lives--the world outside and the world within himself--and the changing nature of his role in a dynamic society.

The public schools are entrusted with the charge of making children proud of their heritage as citizens of this country, of awakening in them enthusiastic appreciation of their privileges, and of instilling in them the realization that only as they accept the responsibilities of a democratic citizenship can they hope to enjoy its rights. In order to accomplish this, the schools must provide each student with an understanding of the social and cultural values upon which American democracy was founded.

## PHILOSOPHY-GOALS-OBJECTIVES AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### Philosophy of Education

Good facilities and instructional materials are essential for quality education. More important, however, are good teachers. A good teacher must have at his command a mastery of the subject areas he is attempting to communicate to children, a familiarity with successful teaching techniques and procedures, an understanding of the love for children, and a dedication to the belief that an educated citizenry is the only means of insuring a continuation of our democratic way of life. The teacher is worthy of the best the community can give in money, respect, and appreciation.

The role of administration should be a democratic, not an autocratic, one. Successful leadership will depend greatly on the ability to inspire self-confidence and successful actions in others. It is our belief that as agents of the community, school administrators should carry out the policies of the community with energy, loyalty, and enthusiasm.

City Schools should be governed by written policies, rules and regulations adopted by the Board of Education and which have been developed cooperatively by the pupils, teachers, and administrators who are affected by them. It is our further conviction that all written policy statements should be reviewed periodically by these people.

Lay participation in school affairs is essential if the schools are to serve the residents of City Schools. It is the responsibility of the administration to provide means whereby citizens may make known their desires for the education of their children.

The American way of life, despite its shortcomings, is the best way that has yet been devised for men to live together in potential harmony and quality. In its flexibility and adaptability is its strength. Its survival depends upon the success with which public education can meet the needs of a rapidly changing world. The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to constantly re-think the educational objectives, re-examine the content of the curriculum; and modify the methods of instruction to meet the ever-changing needs.

Education is among the most challenging, frustrating, and rewarding of human endeavors. It demands vision, integrity, vigor, optimism, and courage. The greatest of all resources are--our children. They are entitled to the best in time, money, and effort that a responsible public and dedicated profession can provide for them.



**Board Policy****BP 0421****PHILOSOPHY-GOALS-OBJECTIVES AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN****School Site Councils**

It is a goal of the Board to enable students to grow toward the full development of their talents. To this end, the Board directs that school programs shall be developed to encourage and assist each child to meet his/her needs. It is the policy of the Board that the school programs and the results obtained be regularly evaluated as to how well they meet the needs of students.

The Board recognizes the necessity to modify or redesign programs when they no longer effectively meet the needs of students and reaffirms that the education of students is a cooperative responsibility shared by the pupils, parents, teachers, administrators, and other representatives of the community.

A School Site Council, composed of representatives of these groups, shall be established at each school to ensure that each group has a recognized and cooperative process for recommending to the Board the interests, desires and expectations for student achievement and growth at each school.

Each school in the District, under the direction of the principal, shall establish a Council in accordance with the Education Code (Sections 54725 and 52852). School Site Councils shall operate in accordance with current District policies except for those from which they may be specifically exempted by the Board upon request.

Final approval by the Board is required for the following School Site Council activities:

- A. A recommendation to have a school site excluded from a “school improvement program.”
- B. A recommendation to proceed with a “school improvement program.”
- C. A school improvement program planning grant.
- D. A school improvement plan.

## PHILOSOPHY-GOALS-OBJECTIVES AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### School Site Councils

Should the Board approve exclusion from participation in “school improvement plan,” they shall establish plans to reconsider this action no later than three (3) years from the date the decision not to participate.

To insure effective communication and reasonable participation with the Site Council(s) the Board shall, upon disagreement with a Site Council’s recommended action, return the recommendation with suggestions for alternatives, additions and reconsiderations.

All proposals and their consequent disposition shall be in accordance with State law and Title 5, Administrative Code.

ADOPTED: June 5, 1978  
REVISED: October 6, 1997

### **Board Policy**

#### **BP 2120**

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **Superintendent of Schools**

#### Authority

The Board of Education may employ a Superintendent of Schools according to the Education Code Sections 35026-35035 and the City Charter, Article XV, Section 1500.

#### Responsibility

The Superintendent shall:

1. Annually prepare the proposed school budget with staff's cooperation and present to the Board of Education for its consideration and adoption.
2. Serve as the executive office of the Board of Education and the school system. All administrative staff members shall report to the Board of Education through the Superintendent.
3. Be responsible for presenting to the Board of Education for consideration and action appropriate educational theory, philosophy, program, and procedure which shall have been cooperatively developed.
4. Be responsible for all matters relating to the conduct of instruction and recommend to the Board the curricula, textbooks, apparatus, and educational supplies.
5. Recommend to the Board of Education the appointment, resignation, and dismissal of all certificated and classified personnel.
6. Attend all meetings of the Board of Education, except when excused by the Board of Education when his own tenure or salary are under discussion.
7. Serve as Secretary to the Board of Education and perform the duties set forth in Board Policy 9122.
8. Provide means by which the public may be continuously informed as to the policies and actions of the Board of Education, the work and progress of the schools, and meet with citizens' community groups and organizations for the presentation, study, and discussion of school problems.
9. Issue all publicity releases pertaining to policy or executive action by the Board of Education or administrative staff.
10. Hear and investigate all complaints about the school and investigate matters of controversy between school employees and pupils, parents of pupils or patrons when the controversies relate to school affairs.

## **Board Policy**

### **BP 6141.1**

#### **INSTRUCTION**

##### **Services to Limited English Proficient Students**

The Board of Education recognizes that:

1. All students should develop an understanding of the history and culture of the state and the United States as well as an understanding of the customs and values of the cultures associated with the language being taught.
2. In the District there are children of school age who are limited-English proficient.
3. Every individual in the state is entitled to equal access to educational opportunity.
4. The United States Supreme Court rules in the case of Lau vs. Nicholas that to provide limited-English proficient students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum as are provided all others does not constitute equality of treatment.
5. There are available a variety of resources to meet the educational needs of limited-English proficient students, both state and local.

The Board of Education recognizes that:

1. There are many ways to meet the needs of limited-English proficient students and that, regardless of the approach, proficiency in English language skills is a major objective.
2. In schools where there are 10 or more limited-English proficient students in a grade level or in one age group in multi-graded schools and additional resources are available, classroom instruction for meeting the needs of limited-English proficient students will meet the criteria of a program option as required in State guidelines.

REVISED: February 22, 1983

**Board Policy****BP 6141.2****STUDENTS****Testing English Learners (Grades 2-11)**

English Learners pupils may be tested with the following test variations on STAR (Standardized Testing and Reporting) tests and the High School Exit Examination (HSEE) as determined by the principal:

Additional supervised breaks following each section within a test provided that the test section is completed within a testing day.

Testing is permissible in a separate room with other English Learner pupils if the room is regularly used for classroom instruction or for assessment.

Translate into the primary language any test directions the test examiner is to read aloud and allow the student the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about any test directions presented orally in their primary language if regularly used in the classroom or for assessment.

Access to translation glossaries/word lists (English-to-Primary Language).  
Glossaries/word lists shall not include definitions or formulas not allowed for Standards Test, English-Language Arts Test.

ADOPTED:            March 19, 2001  
                             April 26, 2004  
                             February 28, 2005

**Board Policy****BP 6142.3****INSTRUCTION****Outdoor Education**

City Schools supports the concept of the Outdoor Education and Conservation Education programs and classes sponsored by the County Superintendent of Schools for sixth grade students enrolled in our District.

Student participation may occur only if parents and community organizations set up a fund raising mechanism independent of schools to pay for the total cost of student participation in the program.

Participation in this program would be at no direct cost to City Schools.

REVISED: July 15, 1985

## Curriculum Vitae

Lynn Lysko

## Education

## USA

Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential 2002

AB75 Module I – Days 1 &amp; 5 – CDE 2004

AB466 Training – *Holt, High Point, Prentice Hall*,  
2003 Strategic Instruction Model – University of Kansas  
2004

Education Leadership Institute – International Center for Leadership in Education 2007

Doctoral Student – Walden University - *in progress, 4.0 GPA* 2012

## Canada

Bachelor of Education University of Toronto 1986

Master of Arts University of Western Ontario 1985

Bachelor of Arts Wilfrid Laurier University 1983

## Additional Qualifications – Ontario, Canada

Principal Qualification Program Part 1 &amp; 2 York University 2000

Junior Basic Qualification (grades 4-6) University of Toronto 1999

Cooperative Education Part 1 University of Toronto 1995

Dramatic Arts Part 1 Brock University 1992

## Professional Experience

Principal	July 2011- Present
Associate Principal	July 2010 – June 2011
Director, Instructional Services 7-12	July 2007 – June 2010
Director, Curriculum and Staff Development 7-12	August 2005 – June 07
Educational Consultant, School and District Support	September 2002 -05