

Colorado Department of Education

**Comprehensive Appraisal for District
Improvement**

Boulder Valley School District

May 1 - May 11, 2007

PREFACE

The Boulder Valley School District requested an appraisal of current practices to address performance concerns expressed by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) in its review of the district's accreditation status. This appraisal is designed to provide the district with information to analyze its current status and performance and to help address the concerns identified by the Colorado Department of Education.

This appraisal report consists of four sections (in three separate documents):

Section I. Introduction

Section II. School District Appraisal Report Summary

- District Strengths and Assets
- Core Themes that Outline Challenges and Recommendations
- Important and Immediate Next Steps
- Questions for the District

Section III. Summary of Finding and Next Steps

- Summary of Standards 1-9: Finding & Recommendations

Section IV. Standards & Indicators – District Rubric Ratings

- Detail Report: Ratings and Descriptors for the 60 Indicators of District Performance
- Landscape Summary Report – Standards and Indicators

Boulder Valley School District Appraisal Report

Section I

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Project Mission

This appraisal is intended to serve the district and community by providing data, observations, and feedback relative to the current status of the district’s educational program and recommendations to improve district performance. The appraisal assessed the district in nine standards of district effectiveness that are consistently identified in the professional literature relative to academic performance, learning environment, and organizational effectiveness. In addition, separate reports were written about Special Education and English Language Acquisition programs.

Purposes

The purpose of the appraisal is to support the district’s self-assessment and planning efforts by providing factual and objective feedback. It is intended to help the district assess its current functioning, support the district in improving its overall performance, and to provide data for developing and implementing a new Comprehensive District Improvement Plan. It is also hoped that this appraisal will serve as a tool to guide continuous district and school improvement.

Operating Assumptions

- The appraisal process was primarily based on the *Standards and Indicators for District Improvement: District Version*, developed by the Colorado Department of Education and utilized a rubric rating scale along with narrative observations and comments.
- This appraisal provides an assessment of how the district is currently performing. It is designed to help identify what has occurred or might be occurring within the district that impacts the performance of the district.
- The appraisal was supported by the Boulder Valley School District’s Board of Education.
- Staff, parents, and community members were informed of the appraisal, its purpose and the processes used.
- Selected staff, parents, and community members participated in this appraisal through interviews and/or observations.
- The district provided all requested documents, policies, and manuals for review by the appraisal team.
- This appraisal does not address “operation” functions such as business operations, finance, transportation, maintenance, etc., except as they relate directly to the district’s educational program.

Appraisal Process

During the appraisal process, appraisal team members conducted formal interviews and other numerous informal discussions with staff and community members. Visits to schools included several classroom observations and “walkthroughs,” (112) and meeting observations (7). Formal interviews included the following individuals:

- Central administrative staff (50)
- Building Principals and Assistant Principals (24)
- ELL Staff (12)
- Special Education Teachers (21)
- Instructional Coaches (11)
- Teachers (73)
- Coordinators (18)
- Specialists (13)
- Students (79)
- Parents (17)
- Counselors (2)
- District Accountability (4)
- School board members (6)

Additionally the appraisal team reviewed numerous documents and artifacts compiled by the district. Documents and artifacts included information from surveys, written documents, policies, procedure manuals, and accreditation and improvement plans. Specific documents reviewed included:

- Profile of the New Century Graduate—Knowledge and Skills
- District Mission and Vision
- District Accreditation Report
- Technology Master Plan
- Information Literacy and Library Media Continuous Improvement Plan 2006-2010
- District Calendar
- District Survey Results
- Title 1 Improvement Plan
- Consolidated Improvement Plan
- School Accountability Reports
- Customized School Reports in English and Spanish
- “What You Want to Know About (School)” Reports
- Students’ Rights and Responsibilities Guides
- Achievement of Board Goals Reports
- Two, Three, Four and Five Years Matched Group Analysis: CSAP
- CSAP Weighted Indices 2002-2006
- CSAP Results—2002-2006
- Budget Reports—2004-2007
- Community Reports in English and Spanish

- District Brochure
- No Child Left Behind Annual Report in English and Spanish
- News Releases on web site
- Current Grants
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report—June 30, 2006
- Administrative Team Agendas
- Agreement Documents Between Board of Education and Employees—2006-2008
- Administrator Evaluation Documents
- Teacher Evaluation Documents
- Rubric for Evaluation Standards and Criteria for Classroom Teachers
- Licensed Administrative Support Personnel Evaluation Documents
- Licensed Instructional Support Personnel Evaluation Documents
- Board Policies and Regulations
- Crestview Elementary Building Level Writing Assessments and Rubrics—2003-2004
- Graduation Requirements Task Force Document—January 2007
- TIES/SIP/Accreditation Portfolio
- TIES Reporting for Accreditation Checklist and Inquiry Templates
- Grade 4 Report Card Materials—2005-2006
- DAC Notebook—2006-2007
- Curriculum Documents for K-12 Science, Math, Social Studies, Literacy, Music, Art, PE
- Literacy Guidebook
- Alternative Language Arts (English Language Development) Curriculum
- Secondary Grading and Reporting Document
- Professional Development Survey Results
- Description of Professional Learning Opportunities—2006-2007
- Special Education Improvement Plan

APPRAISAL TEAM MEMBERS

Jean Bonelli, retired teacher, high school principal, executive director of high schools, school board member

Elizabeth Carlson, retired teacher, high school dean

Carolyn Griffis, retired teacher, elementary school principal

Dianne Harper, retired teacher, central office administrator

Kyle Hughes, retired special education teacher, educational consultant-special education

Shelly Lantz, retired teacher, middle school principal, director of personnel and auxiliary services

Judy Metz, retired teacher, district assessment specialist

Colleen Rickert, retired teacher, district Title I director

Larry Sargent, retired teacher, state special education consultant, special school principal, district supervisor of special education, elementary principal, director of special education, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction.

The appraisal team extends appreciation to the district, community members, and school staff members for their cooperation and support in conducting this appraisal. The team found the district to be open, cooperative, and concerned about its current status. The team also found a staff and community that have pride in their schools and want the district to be the best it can be.

Boulder Valley School District Appraisal Report

Section II

Appraisal Report Summary

This section includes:

1. Strengths and Assets
2. Executive Summary

District Strengths and Assets

The appraisal team identified a number of strengths and assets evident in the district:

- The staff is hard working and cares about the students and their successes.
- The school board strongly supports the staff in their school improvement efforts.
- Parents and community are involved in decision making about goals.
- There is an open and welcoming environment throughout the district.
- There are strong working partnerships between the district and the community.
- Examples of excellent instruction and building leadership were observed.
- The Tools of Inquiry for Equitable Schools (TIES) process provides a solid platform for planning.
- The special education department is an integral part of the district's learning services department, ensuring that all children will have access to a high quality and challenging curriculum.
- The district is training principals to be stronger instructional leaders by devoting the time at District Leadership Team (DLT) meetings to professional development.
- The district has been active in applying for grants and has used these to supplement district funds for needed programs.
- The implementation of the freshman seminar in all high schools will support the students' transitions into the high school culture.
- A partnership program with the University of Colorado provides mentor support for new teachers.
- A collaborative approach is in place for revising curriculum in a timely manner.
- The district provides several pathways by which students may receive their high school education besides the traditional ones.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While the Boulder Valley School District has considerable strengths, the district is concerned about how to close achievement gaps and provide an equitable education for all students. Using the strengths within the district and community, the CADI appraisal team believes that the district can meet the challenges ahead.

As the appraisal team reviewed the district, they examined academic performance, learning environment, and organizational effectiveness. The team identified issues and problems in these areas and made recommendations that are intended to help the staff and community focus on ways to address them.

Academic Performance Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Alignment

This area addresses district curriculum, evaluation and assessment of student performance, and the schools' instructional programs. It includes what students learn, how they are taught, and the methods that are used to assess acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Reform efforts in this area center around developing standards and benchmarks for various grade levels, aligning curricula with standards, identifying effective instructional strategies, and redesigning assessments to better measure student achievement and progress.

According to research, the one action a district can take to produce the most significant gains in student achievement is the alignment of curriculum, assessment and instruction. A district-wide curriculum, aligned to the appropriate standards and benchmarks, is essential to engage students in rigorous and challenging educational pursuits and provide consistency within each grade level and continuity K-12.

After alignment it is critical that adopted district curricula, assessments, and research-based instructional strategies are implemented by all district teachers. High expectations for all students must be embraced by all stakeholders and communicated throughout the district and community.

The district must also examine its vision, mission, beliefs, and practices to ensure that all existing barriers to high academic performance are addressed and eliminated.

Data analysis is a guide to make decisions for teaching students. It is important for all staff to understand that the tools to teach not only include curriculum and materials, but also the knowledge of how well students are learning as indicated by a body of evidence. Sources for this body of evidence include items such as CSAP, CELA, district-wide assessments, QRI, SDRT, DRA, school constructed common assessments, monthly action plans, and students' daily work.

Exemplary districts use data to identify strengths and weaknesses in student, teacher, and school performance. They then modify their practice to correct weaknesses. Finally they collect data again to identify whether the change in practice solved the problem. Instead of continuously adopting programs

and innovations, they track and share across the district, the results of various interventions in order to pinpoint successful strategies for achieving goals. Incremental growth in student academic progress is also compiled and reported.

Recommendations

In support of the focus on learning, the Boulder Valley School District employs high quality teachers and instructional leaders. Support and guidance for teaching and learning are extensive and supported by research. To extend the already quality aspects of the district, strategies that are used to meet the needs of all students in an environment of changing student demographics requires greater consistency and vigilance from the district. In addition, the increased use of formative assessments in targeted schools offers the potential for rapidly impacting instruction and closing the achievement gaps. The close collaboration of schools with similar demographics will enable school and district personnel to learn from each other's successes and failures and to achieve results in the most efficient and effective ways.

Learning Environment Culture, Communications, and Collaboration

This area addresses district culture, student, family and community support, and professional growth and evaluation. Issues related to the attitudes, skills, and behaviors of people are examined along with programs and activities to increase educators' skills and assist people to communicate and work together effectively.

As an organizational arrangement, the professional learning community (PLC) is a powerful staff development approach and a potent strategy for district change and improvement. A district that operates as a professional learning community has supportive and shared leadership, guidance and focus from shared values and vision, supportive conditions, collective creativity, and shared practice. However, no PLC structure is effective until the organization moves from theory to practice.

Recent studies of districts identified as high performing, relative to the poverty level of their students, reveal the following themes:

- a sense that achievement is the primary responsibility of every staff member in the district
- a shared sense of the central office as a proactive support for schools in terms of their practices
- focused attention on analysis and alignment of curriculum, instructional practice and assessment with ongoing job-embedded professional development
- principals are trained and held accountable for providing guidance as instructional leaders
- district supervisors are accountable for monitoring, supporting, and guiding their performance throughout each school year.

Recommendations

The Boulder Valley School District maintains a culture for high levels of student achievement. In support of this culture, schools are typically safe and orderly places where the diverse needs of students are addressed with resources, training and commitment. Families and community are engaged with the schools and communication with stakeholders is frequent. The district places great emphasis on equity, and all students have access to the adopted curricula and instruction in pursuit of high standards.

Challenging the tradition of high achievement for all is the factor of changing demographics and the need to prepare instructional staff to meet diverse needs. To be effective, a district-wide commitment to focused professional development becomes a necessity. The past practice of making most staff training optional may need to be reconsidered.

Schools and departments are often operating in isolation, immersed in a somewhat “hands-off” district approach. When the district gives support, it is often in the form of another training, program, or initiative.

A cohesive district plan designed around the needs of students is necessary for supporting professional development in buildings. All professional development opportunities should require time and structure for ongoing discussion and reflection—depth vs. breadth. Sustained, in-depth training of teachers based upon identified needs of students would improve student learning. Further, new skills and strategies learned by staff must be supported and evaluated by district and building leadership to ensure they are used in classrooms throughout the district.

Organizational Effectiveness Leadership, Use of resources, and Effective planning

This area addresses leadership, district and school structures, resources and comprehensive and effective planning. Comprehensive improvement planning at the district level is critical to long-term sustainable growth in student achievement. The district leadership holds the major responsibility for developing a vision, a plan for achieving the vision, promoting a culture of urgency about improved student achievement, and providing the structures, training, and accountability for the achievement goals to be realized.

The *Achievement of Board Goals Report* lists strategic priorities about maximizing learning and achievement, fostering collaboration and partnerships, valuing diversity, and documentation of action steps taken. While these are vital elements of Boulder Valley’s district improvement plan, they are not understood as such by many district personnel. People report that the district is focused on closing the achievement gap and providing equitable education for all students, but they are unsure of what common steps are being taken at individual school sites that are based in research. They also report that accountability for achieving those steps is lacking.

Recommendations

Within the Boulder Valley School District, indicators of high quality professional and operational practices are present but not pervasive. From site to site, application of best practices is inconsistent resulting in a somewhat clouded picture of overall district excellence.

As well as establishing expectations for student achievement, consider establishing clear expectations for implementing research-proven operational and instructional practices across all schools. Further, collaboratively come to agreement on non-negotiable procedures and practices.

The development of a comprehensive district improvement plan based upon a thorough analysis of data could provide a more intentional focus and direction for the entire school district. School improvement plans could be more tightly aligned with the goals of the district improvement plan and address the specific needs of each school within the district.

A district improvement plan would provide a means for implementation and impact checks to be conducted on a regular basis throughout the year to ensure that appropriate instructional practices are used consistently.

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Section III

Summary of Findings and Next Steps

This section includes:

1. Findings, Recommendations, Guiding Questions
2. Factors Unique to District
 - English Language Learners
 - Exceptional Student Service

STANDARD 1: Curriculum

The district develops and implements a curriculum that is rigorous, intentional, and aligned to state and local standards.

Area:	Academic Performance
Indicators	1.1a Aligned with academic expectations, core content, program of studies
	1.1b Discussions among schools regarding curriculum standards
	1.1c Discussions between schools to eliminate gaps, overlaps
	1.1d Vertical communication with focus on key transition points
	1.1e Systematic process for monitoring and reviewing curriculum
	1.1f Access to rigorous academic program
	1.1g Integration of educational technology and information literacy

1. Findings

- Many individuals appreciate the curricula revisions that will allow teachers to focus on essential learnings in each content area.
- The scheduling of more frequent revisions is also valued.
- Although rigorous curricula aligned with standards are available in all content areas, curricula must be modified in schools with large populations of low income and second language students.
- The model for developing new curricula includes both vertical and horizontal teacher collaboration.
- The monitoring of curriculum implementation is primarily the responsibility of principals; therefore, it is not fully consistent from school to school.
- High risk schools have been identified and staffed with coaches to assist with implementation of curricula, assessment, and instruction.

2. Recommendations

Short Term: The Central Office must take a leadership role in

- Facilitating target schools as they identify one common area of curriculum to modify that will align with the district improvement plan and focus on a subject area where an achievement gap exists.
- Assisting principals and teacher leaders at target schools as they create a culture of collaboration by
 - facilitating the creation and use of norms for working within and across schools,
 - setting explicit goals focused on the identification of common curriculum modifications and necessary support materials,
 - creating a time line for accomplishing the goals,
 - scheduling specific meeting times to carry out the work, and
 - assessing the professional development needed by principals and teacher leaders to achieve goals.

Long Term: Commit to creating a collaborative culture in target schools to facilitate the modification of curricula to meet student needs.

- Provide on-going facilitation and technical assistance to target schools as they modify curricula so that the expectations for what students know and are able to do remains aligned with standards and consistent for all target schools.
- Identify clear procedures for holding all target schools accountable for implementing the revised curricula.
- Provide district recognition for steps that target schools take individually and collectively toward using the revised curricula to narrow achievement gaps.

3. Guiding Questions

- What are the key curricular issues that target schools must address in order for our students to be successful?
- How can we align our work with school and district improvement plans?
- What structures will facilitate the work of schools with similar demographics to effectively and efficiently collaborate to design appropriate curricula for their students?
- What are some of the lessons we can learn from each others' experiences?

STANDARD 2: Assessment and Evaluation

The district uses multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously inform and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.

Area:	Academic Performance
Indicators	2.1a Classroom assessments are frequent, rigorous, aligned
	2.1b Staff collaborates to design assessments aligned with standards
	2.1c Test scores used to identify gaps
	2.1d Multiple assessments provide feedback on learning
	2.1e Performance and proficiency standards defined, communicated, evident

1. Findings

- The district leadership values collecting and analyzing data.
- Literacy assessments for ILP students are administered and reported two to three times per year.
- Assessments that are used consistently across grade levels and at all schools are primarily summative rather than formative.
- Rigorous district assessments exist in most content areas; however, these assessments are not consistently monitored or required.
- The district has a clear process for involving teachers in the design of high quality district assessments.
- The district's data warehouse has the capacity to provide information on a variety of assessments to schools.
- Use of assessment data to guide instruction varies widely across the district.

2. Recommendations

Short Term: Create structures that will enhance the ability of target schools to address common assessment issues.

- Identify one area linked to the revised curriculum and school / district improvement plans where common formative assessments would assist in narrowing achievement gaps.
- Identify the technical support and staff development that target schools will need to appropriately select and administer common formative assessments linked to the revised curriculum.
- Design a plan for principals and teacher leaders at target schools to support each other as common assessment needs are identified.
- Agree upon a timeline for the selection and administration of formative assessments.
- Identify how assessment results will be used to guide instruction and ultimately help to close achievement gaps.

Long Term: Create an assessment plan for target schools and commit to sustaining its implementation.

- Provide ongoing technical support to representatives from target schools as they select assessments.
- Provide ongoing technical support to target schools as they administer and use the data from common formative assessments.
- Support target schools as they create action plans to address needs identified by formative data.
- Bring target schools' representatives together as appropriate to learn from each other by discussing the implications of data from formative assessments and comparing their action plans.
- Involve principals at target schools in creating common, ongoing methods for consistently monitoring the administration of selected assessments and the use of data to guide instruction.
- Require that teachers participate in scoring training as needed to ensure inter-rater reliability.
- Implement ongoing processes as needed to ensure that scoring remains standardized.
- Provide representations of data from the formative assessments so that it is easy for teachers to determine the effectiveness of their instruction.

3. Guiding Questions

- How can we ensure that our efforts to gather data consistently impact student learning?
- How can we work together to save time and energy?
- What do our assessments tell us about the effectiveness of our instruction?
- What are we learning from comparing our work to that of other target schools?
- What assessment data is most valuable when planning our instruction to narrow achievement gaps?

STANDARD 3: Instruction

The district’s instructional program actively engages all students by using effective, varied, and research-based practices to improve student performance.

Area:	Academic Performance
Indicators	3.1a Instructional strategies aligned with standards & assessment expectations
	3.1b Teachers demonstrate content knowledge to motivate and challenge.

1. Findings

- Most assessment data is used for summative rather than formative purposes.
- Implementation of best practices and differentiated instruction varies from classroom to classroom.
- The district provides many professional development opportunities, but few include ongoing, job-embedded support to ensure implementation in the classroom.
- The district actively recruits and retains a diverse staff of highly qualified personnel.

2. Recommendations

Short term

- Develop a plan so available coaches can provide ongoing, job-embedded support for the implementation of best practices and differentiated instruction in classrooms.

Long Term

- Implement and institutionalize the coaching plan.

3. Guiding Questions

- What training do all coaches need so they can truly function as coaches to improve classroom instruction?
- How can all coaches (ESL, literacy, math) collaborate on a regular basis so they can coordinate provision of services?

STANDARD 4: Culture and Climate

The district functions as an effective learning community and support a climate conducive to performance excellence.

Area:	Learning Environment: District Culture
Indicators	4.1a Leadership support for safe, orderly, equitable environment
	4.1b Leadership beliefs and practices for high achievement
	4.1c Multiple communication strategies used to disseminate information
	4.1d Student achievement valued and publicly celebrated
	4.1e Equity and diversity valued and supported
	4.1f Teachers accountable for high expectations

1. Findings

- The bond which was passed in November will help to alleviate the structural safety issues in many schools.
- In some district schools people are able to walk into the building without checking in at the main office or being stopped or questioned by staff.
- Schools are inconsistent in the way campus monitors are used.
- There are limited times that teachers are able to share innovative teaching ideas district-wide.
- The new communications plan will be fully implemented in the near future.
- The superintendent and school board recognize and celebrate school and student accomplishments on a regular basis.
- In some schools, no one oversees whether or not equity policies are incorporated in the curriculum.
- Equity training is offered to teachers throughout the district; however, all staff members have not been trained.
- Behavioral expectations and consequences are inconsistent throughout the district and vary from school to school.
- The use of data obtained from school climate surveys is inconsistent and dependent upon the individual school leadership.
- The district is considering using the Positive Behavior Support model for student discipline.

2. Recommendations

Short Term

- Consider equity training for all staff members.
- Ensure that high behavioral expectations are met consistently in every school.
- Ensure that district established job descriptions for campus monitors are being followed at all schools.

Long Term

- Consider having at least one campus monitor in each middle school.
- Consider dividing the position of Operations Director into two jobs with Security Director as a separate position to oversee the campus monitors.

3. Guiding Questions

- What specific rules and consequences does our district have in effect that ensure a safe, equitable environment for students, faculty, and staff?
- Who oversees the rules and consequences of individual schools to ensure equity in discipline throughout the district?

STANDARD 5: Families and Community

The district works with families and community groups to remove barriers to learning in an effort to meet the intellectual, social, career and development needs of students.

Area:	Learning Environment
Indicators	5.1a Families and communities are active partners
	5.1b Structures ensure all students have access to all curriculums
	5.1c District provides organizational structures to reduce barriers to learning
	5.1d Varied student instructional assistance outside of the classroom
	5.1e Accurate student record keeping system

1. Findings

- Many schools have community liaisons who provide valuable communication between teachers and parents.
- The amount of parent involvement varies considerably from school to school.
- The equity training begun last year has raised the level of teachers' awareness regarding race, poverty, and other factors which interfere with student achievement.
- Program evaluation at the district level seems inconsistent. When a new program is implemented, an evaluation piece is not necessarily built in, and as a result the district may not be able to judge its value.
- After-school programs exist in some schools for students requiring additional assistance.
- Guidance and counseling programs are in place in most schools and are being added in more elementary schools next year.
- The lack of differentiation in instruction is perceived to be one of the biggest problems in school's overcoming the achievement gap.
- Teachers do not have adequate time in most cases to collaborate and plan, and this is especially noticeable between teachers who work with special populations and regular teachers.
- The district is in the beginning stages of developing the Response to Intervention (RTI) process.
- The student record keeping system provides good data.

2. Recommendations

Short Term

- Continue to find ways to include more Latino parents in school and district activities.
- As new programs are introduced, build in evaluation tools and methods for monitoring.

Long Term

- As master schedules are built, consider including time for teachers to collaborate. This should include ELL and special education teachers working with each other and regular education teachers.
- Consider ways to increase the numbers of coaches and native language tutors in schools with high numbers of ELL students.
- Focus on providing a few research-based programs/processes that impact student achievement. Identify how they are connected and make the connections clear and comprehensible for all staff, parents, and community members.
- When programs or materials are selected to be used, provide the necessary ongoing training and monitoring to ensure fidelity and viability.
- Some high schools with low CSAP math scores have no math tutors but will be required to offer basic algebra for all students next year. Since many students arrive at high school without the skills to succeed in algebra, some planning needs to happen about how to address the needs of these students.

STANDARD 6: Professional Growth, Development and Evaluation

The district provides research-based, results-driven professional development opportunities for staff and implement performance evaluation procedures in order to improve teaching and learning.

Area:	Learning Environment
Indicators	<u>Professional Development</u>
	6.1a Long-term professional growth planning
	6.1b Building capacity with ongoing professional development
	6.1c Professional development aligned with student performance goals
	6.1d District / school staff development connected to student learning goals
	6.1e Ongoing and job embedded professional development
	<u>Professional Growth and Evaluation</u>
	6.2a Clearly defined evaluation process
	6.2b Leadership provides sufficient resources for professional development
	6.2c Evaluation and growth plans effectively used
	6.2d Evaluation process meets or exceeds standards in statute and regulation
	6.2e Leadership provides evaluation follow-up and support

1. Findings

Professional Development Opportunities

- All veteran administrators have been provided a series of trainings with little follow-up.
- New principals are provided with a mentor who is an outside consultant hired by the district to provide support and guidance. The directors meet regularly with new principals.
- Elementary and secondary district coaches provide job-embedded professional development in buildings.
- New instructional literacy coaches are provided intensive, ongoing training and support as they assume their new role.

Professional Development Plans

- The district does not have a comprehensive professional development plan. Each building develops its own professional development plan based on its school improvement goals. Schools frequently function independently which often leads to duplication of efforts. There is no explicit guidance from the district to buildings on content and/or format of the professional development they offer.
- There is limited, if any, follow-up to professional development.

2. Recommendations

Short Term

- Coordinate services to provide a continuum of support from the district to schools. Include ELL staff who work (or could potentially work) in a coaching role in the professional development provided for instructional literacy coaches and Title I teachers.
- Develop a cohesive plan for supporting professional development in buildings that is designed to meet the needs of students and brings focus and consistency to the professional development that is provided for teachers and staff across the district.
- Provide time and structure for discussion and reflection in all professional development opportunities. Strive for depth vs. breadth.

Long Term

- As the Response to Intervention process is developed, consider using the instructional coach as a resource in determining what interventions are available and are the best match for a child at different tiers.
- Provide sustained, ongoing, and in-depth training based on needs identified by teachers to improve student learning.

3. Guiding Questions

- What are the various professional development opportunities we offer our staff, and how well are these opportunities targeted to their identified needs as well as being continuous and job-embedded?
- What systems are in place to ensure the alignment of professional development activities with instructional priorities and targeted needs of our schools and district, both short and long term?
- What professional development do we need to have in place to ensure effective instructional practices for ELL students in all classrooms?

STANDARD 7: Leadership

District instructional decisions focus on support for teaching and learning, organizational direction, high performance expectations, creating a learning culture and developing leadership capacity.

Area:	Efficiency
Indicators	7.1a Leadership developed a shared vision and mission
	7.1b Leadership decisions are collaborative, data-driven, and driven by student performance
	7.1c Leadership has a growth plan focused on effective leadership skills
	7.1d Leadership disaggregates data to meet student needs, and uses results for school improvement planning
	7.1e Leadership ensures access to standards, curriculum and data
	7.1f Leadership provides resources, monitors progress, removes barriers to learning
	7.1g Leadership policy and infrastructure ensures safe learning environment
	7.1h Effective accountability committees

1. Findings

- The district's mission was developed by staff and community members. It is posted on the web site, in all facilities, and on written documents. District employees, parents, and community members are very familiar with the mission statement. The district has made a concerted effort to make it visible in the schools and to the community.
- The district leadership shares student performance data results and assists schools in reviewing and documenting the data; however, it was not always evident that the data is used in academic decision-making and in designing instructional programs and interventions to meet student needs.
- The district leadership has developed a Strategic Plan which addresses academic achievement performance for all students, the recruitment and retention of school employees, and replacement, upgrade, and maintenance of facilities. Each school staff has written a school improvement plan, but a district improvement plan targeting specific goals and a plan of action to improve student achievement has not been developed.
- There is a lack of seamless integration between the district and the schools resulting in schools “doing their own thing” and not being tied to an overall vision and district plan.
- School staff report that district leadership sometimes initiate new programs and initiatives in a reactive rather than proactive approach.
- The administrator evaluation document does not include a growth plan section. Principals report that they informally discuss goals with their directors.
- The district often takes a "hands-off" approach to directing and monitoring programs and practices at the building level.

2. Recommendations

Short Term

- Develop a comprehensive district-wide improvement plan.
- Include professional growth plans for each administrator in the district as part of the evaluation documentation.

Long Term

- Align the school improvement plans with a comprehensive district improvement plan.
- Ensure that a seamless integration of priorities, planning, leadership, and practice exists between the district and all schools.
- Ensure that proactive monitoring and focused support about targeted issues occurs between the principals and district supervisors.

3. Guiding Questions

- What are the action steps needed to achieve the priorities of the district and how can we bring focus to them?
- How are we using the student disaggregated data to identify specific student learning gaps and to develop specific interventions in meeting student needs?
- How do we ensure that the results of data analysis promote needed changes in instruction?
- How do we ensure that we follow through with existing programs and initiatives before moving on to new ones?

STANDARD 8: Organizational Structure & Resources

The organization of the district maximizes the use of time, available space and other resources to maximize teacher and learning and support high student and staff performance.

Area: Efficiency

Indicators: Organization of the School

8.1a Staffing based on student needs

Resource Allocation and Integration

8.2a Resources used, equitable

8.2b Discretionary funds allocated on data-based on needs

8.2c Funds aligned with school/district goals

8.2d State/federal funds allocated and aligned with school/district goals

1. Findings

- The district provides differentiated resources to high-needs schools.
- The district policies and procedures ensure that resources are focused on student achievement.

2. Recommendations

Short term

- Create a district improvement plan with actions steps and timelines to guide budget allocations.

3. Guiding Questions

- What is the specific evidence that all staffing allocations are based on school needs?
- How do we ensure that resources are adjusted as needed to support identified needs for maximum impact on student achievement?

STANDARD 9: Comprehensive and Effective Planning

The district develops, implements, and evaluates a comprehensive improvement plan that communicates a clear purpose, direction and an action plan focused on teaching and learning.

Area:	Efficiency
Indicators:	<u>Defining the District's Vision, Mission, Beliefs</u>
	9.1a Collaboration process to develop vision, mission, beliefs
	<u>Development of the Profile</u>
	9.2a Planning process collects, manages and analyzes data
	9.2b District uses data for school improvement planning
	<u>Defining Desired Results for Student Learning</u>
	9.3a District plans reflect research, expectations for learning and are reviewed
	9.3b District analyzes students' unique learning needs
	9.3c Desired learning results are defined
	<u>Analyzing Instructional and Organization Effectiveness</u>
	9.4a District strengths & limitations identified using data
	9.4b District goals are defined
	<u>Development of the Improvement Plan</u>
	9.5a Action steps for school improvement aligned with district improvement goals/objectives
	9.5b Plan identified resources, timelines, and persons responsible
	9.5c Process to evaluate effectiveness of the plan
	9.5d Plan aligned with district mission, results and organizational effectiveness
	<u>Implementation and Documentation</u>
	9.6a Plans are implemented as developed
	9.6b Process to evaluate plan and student learning
	9.6c District evaluates impact on classroom practice and student performance
	9.6d Evidence to sustain the commitment to continuous improvement

1. Findings

- Accountability for achieving goals for student learning rests mainly with individual principals and teachers.
- The district has not been proactive in terms of monitoring student learning on an ongoing basis throughout the school year. With the new TIES protocol, schools now report progress toward meeting school improvement goals four times a year using a written, narrative format that is given to district leadership.
- Actions that schools initiate for school improvement have not been proactively monitored by the district as a means of providing ongoing support and expertise.
- Schools report that the actual support from the district for the implementation of the goals from their individual school improvement plans is minimal.
- School personnel report that the implied message from the district is, "If you need something, let us know."
- Principals and coordinators report that timelines for implementing initiatives are not provided by district leadership and, therefore, implementation is delayed or does not happen at all sites.
- Although there are processes in place for reviewing school improvement plans, implementation and impact checks of a district improvement plan do not appear to be a consistent practice.

- CSAP appears to be the only data used at the district level to determine progress toward the targeted achievement goals of the district improvement plan. Therefore, data is only collected one time per year.
- The format for each school improvement plan is consistent and based on the TIES model.
- The goals for student achievement that the district identifies for each school are based upon weighted index scores. It is not clear that all building leadership teams understand how to interpret school data as it relates to weighted index scores.
- Both school and district climate surveys are given.

2. Recommendations

Short Term

- Develop a comprehensive district improvement plan based upon a thorough analysis of data to provide a focus and direction for the entire school district. Include action steps and timelines in the plan. Determine persons responsible for the actions and timelines.
- Develop school improvement plans that are aligned with the goals of the district improvement plan and that address the specific needs of each school within the district.

Long Term

- Assure that checks for implementation and results of actions are completed on a regular basis for both district and school improvement plans.
- Provide ongoing guidance, support, resources and professional development to monitor progress and implementation of each school's improvement plan.

3. Guiding Questions

- What does a comprehensive district improvement plan include?
- How might we begin the work of developing a comprehensive district improvement plan?
- What kinds of things will help us to know whether we are making progress toward our district and school goals?
- How might we establish benchmarks and implementation checks for our district improvement plan?
- How will we assure that school improvement plans are aligned to the district goals?
- How will we evaluate the effectiveness of our district planning process?

English Language Learners

Closing the achievement gap for English Language Learners (ELL) is one of the greatest challenges facing school districts across the nation. The Boulder Valley School District addresses this challenge with resources, staff training and implementation of a variety of research-based programs and instruction.

1. Findings

Academic Performance Curriculum

1. An alternative language arts (English language development) curriculum is in place for use with teaching ESL and sheltered classes. The curriculum provides a clear continuum of essential learnings for listening, speaking, reading and writing.
2. The alternative language arts curriculum was developed by a wide representation of teachers across the district and grade levels.
3. A clear progression of performance standards for listening, speaking, reading and writing for beginning, intermediate and advanced ESL levels are included in the curriculum.
4. Teachers report using the curriculum to plan instruction.

Assessment

1. The Colorado English Language Assessment (CELA) placement and progress instruments are used to identify language levels of students to screen for placement in appropriate programs and to determine language levels.
2. The District annually provides training for valid administration of the CELA secured assessment.
3. A centralized intake center operates for new students coming into the district in grades 6-12. Assessment for placement of students in a program includes the CELA placement test, observation by the assessor, and the analysis of any other assessment information available for the student. Secondary teachers appreciate the support provided through a centralized intake system.
4. Teachers use a body of evidence to determine each individual student's movement from one language level to the next (NEP, LEP, FEP) and movement into mainstream classes. The body of evidence includes scores from CSAP and CELA, course grades, performance in class and teacher recommendations.
5. Teachers report using summative assessments (QRI, guided reading levels) to measure the progress of ELLs, but none report using common formative assessments to monitor student progress throughout the year.
6. The practice of regularly monitoring the progress of student achievement varies from teacher to teacher.
7. The Student Profile Form is used to record student progress on performance indicators for speaking, listening, reading and writing. Although the profile is intended as a tool to monitor student progress and plan instruction, most teachers view it as paperwork to be completed at the end of the year and provision of summative information about students. Teachers report varying views on the usefulness of the profile. Some are uncertain how to determine student

proficiency on all of the indicators. Elementary more than secondary teachers tend to use the student profile as a formative tool.

8. There is no indication that formative assessments are consistently used by all ESL teachers across all levels to monitor student progress and plan instruction.

Instructional Models

1. There are different programs for ELL students available in schools in the district. Dual Language, Bilingual and ESL programs deliver services differently in schools for ELL students.
2. Sheltered classes at the secondary level have moved sheltered classes in core content to only language arts. Teachers report this as a positive effort to mainstream students. Native language tutors work in core content classes to support ELLs in understanding the instruction. The training and effective use of tutors varies across and within buildings. Content teachers do not all use sheltered strategies to support the learning of ELL students in their classes.
3. Some schools are moving toward using a push-in model for supporting ELL students. There is not a common understanding of the purpose or role of the ESL teacher in these classrooms. Some function as paraprofessionals working with ELL students while others team teach by planning and providing instruction with the classroom teacher.
4. The Newcomers Center for secondary students new to speaking English provides students with an intensive, focused year of learning English, acculturation and preparation for mainstreaming to high schools. The vocational technical opportunities available to students in the Newcomers Center provide students with authentic, relevant, hands-on learning of skills and language. Students also have the option to stay at Arapahoe Ridge to the end of their high school career.
5. Most ESL instruction at middle and high schools is provided as a writing class because students are participating in a reading class designed for students on an ILP. Some elementary ESL classes focus on delivery through writing as students are pulled out of class during the time for writing.
6. A Dual Language or bilingual program is provided at two middle schools to provide a continuum of services to students involved in a dual language program in elementary school.
7. ESL programs are expanding to more schools as the need for these services grows and as the district implements their de-stratification efforts.

Learning Environment

Family and Community

1. Most schools are reaching out to Latino parents in a variety of ways to involve them in the school in different capacities.
2. A Latino parent group is functioning for the purpose of training parents to be leaders by learning about community resources, recruiting parent involvement in the schools, and knowing about their school and its offerings.
3. Interpreters are provided when and wherever they are needed for parents to understand a conversation.
4. Materials are routinely sent home in both English and Spanish.
5. Community liaisons are working at the targeted schools to provide support to teachers and parents. The liaisons are bilingual members of the community in which they work. They promote parent involvement through communication with parents, teachers and students.

Student Support

1. A variety of support is provided for high school ESL students through tutoring centers, such as the Adelante Program and study skills instruction.
2. Math support is provided through differentiated math classes, practice using a computer with the Carnegie Program, summer math academy for incoming 9th grade minority students and math workshop classes in some middle and high schools.
3. Native language tutors provide support for ESL students in core content classes.
4. Elementary schools provide students with differentiated and focused instruction through the daily small, guided reading group instruction.
5. Arapahoe Ridge provides an alternative learning environment with support for ELL and other students.
6. High schools offer a variety of options for credit retrieval.
7. A summer program is offered for elementary and middle school ELL students to increase their oral language development.
8. Although schools provide ELL students with many support programs, the programs lack focus.
9. Although Read 180 is intended to provide an intervention for students who have lower reading achievement, questions were raised about the appropriateness of this program for ELL students.

Professional Development

1. Extensive professional development opportunities are provided by the district for SIOP training. All teachers who have second language learners whose parents refused ESL services are required to attend two days of SIOP training. SIOP training is voluntary, although some schools have provided it as professional development for the whole staff. There is no indication of intentional follow-up to the SIOP training to support ongoing implementation of strategies in classroom instruction.
2. Many staff members in all schools have participated in equity training. Staff report greater awareness of equity issues as a result of the training.
3. Two ESL coordinators function as coaches this year. At the discretion of the principal, they provide services to schools with a high ESL population. Their roles vary depending upon the services requested, which include whole staff and small group professional development, modeling of strategies, and instructional planning discussions with content teachers. Services from the ESL coaches are slated to rotate to different schools each year.
4. Math coaches in the targeted schools are defining their role in each building. Their goal is to guide and support teachers in developing a deeper understanding of mathematics and using effective instructional strategies in the teaching of mathematics. Some coaches are working with small groups or individual students which diminishes the time they have available to model, plan, and support the classroom teacher in improving instruction.

Organizational Effectiveness

Collaboration and Coordination

1. Although some schools structure time for teachers to collaborate, the practice is not consistent

- across all schools.
2. In some schools, ESL teachers collaborate to coordinate instruction for students and provide necessary services.
 3. Structure and time is not intentionally designed for dual language and ESL program teachers in the same building to collaborate and coordinate.
 4. The district conducted K-12 ESL curriculum meetings so teachers across the district could collaboratively develop curriculum and units. Teachers report a need to resume collaboration opportunities to support ongoing, continuous implementation of the curriculum.
 5. Secondary ESL teachers met one time this year to share and collaborate. Teachers report a need for more interaction among secondary teachers to problem solve and share best practices.

Resources

1. The district provides additional resources for identified targeted schools that have the highest poverty, diversity and low achievement. These resources include the following:
 - ✓ Literacy and math coaches
 - ✓ Additional FTE to lower class size
 - ✓ Additional literacy FTE
 - ✓ All –day kindergarten and preschool at an elementary school
 - ✓ Avid program at middle and high school.
2. The district is supporting the development of a lead ESL teacher in schools to build the ESL leadership capacity in schools with a high concentration of ESL students.

2. Recommendations

1. As a district, analyze ESL instructional models and use data evaluate their effectiveness in increasing student achievement. Decide if some consistency of instructional models should exist across schools. Monitor all programs to ensure they are being implemented to best meet the needs of the students in the building.
2. Prior to a push-in model for ESL being implemented in a school, the district should ensure that aspects of a successful model are in place such as regular collaborative planning scheduled for the ESL and classroom teacher, delineation of roles, and ideas for monitoring student progress and using the data to plan instruction.
3. Consider including ESL as a Tier II (Circle of Intervention, level 3) RTI intervention for appropriately identified students. Examine the needs of ESL students in each building. Evaluate the instructional strategies used in classrooms and determine what needs to be refined and modified. Plan and implement ongoing, job-embedded professional development to meet the instructional needs of teachers so all are using best practices in ESL classrooms. Inventory interventions and programs available for ESL students and evaluate their effectiveness in meeting the needs of students. Determine if programs/interventions need to be deleted, modified, and/or added.
4. Ensure that each building provides planning time for teachers and native language tutors to maximize the tutors' effectiveness.
5. Develop a structure and plan for teachers providing ESL instruction to collaborate.

6. Focus professional development to make the initial classroom instruction the best it can be for ESL students, and consequently all students. Support and monitor the use of differentiated and sheltered strategies in all classrooms. Create a culture of comprehensible input for all classrooms, especially in schools with a high percentage of ESL students.
7. Provide ongoing training, which is job-embedded, with follow-up to support the consistent implementation of differentiated instructional strategies in all classrooms to meet the needs of individual students.
8. Move to more incremental monitoring of student progress. Use the information to plan instruction so it can be targeted to specific student needs.
9. Systematically monitor progress of ESL students and report growth to students, parents and community. Celebrate growth at various times rather than only reporting annual CSAP results.

3. Guiding Questions

1. What further professional development and support is needed so ESL teachers can effectively and efficiently use the student profile form as a tool for ongoing monitoring of student progress?
2. What do ESL teachers need to know and learn about formative assessment data to incrementally monitor student progress and plan instruction based on assessment?
3. What ESL models are being used in schools and what is the effectiveness of each? What changes or modifications need to be made?
4. How can the district guide schools so structure and time is provided for teachers working with the same students to collaborate to provide coordinated instruction?
5. How can coaches provide ongoing, job-embedded support needed to promote the use of sheltered and best- practice instructional strategies in all classrooms of schools where there is a high population of ELL students?

Special Education

The challenge of special education is not simply to accommodate, but to overcome inherent barriers to learning that accompany disabilities. Closing achievement gaps for ALL learners requires intentionality and commitment to apply the soundest, research proven practices with vigor, precision, and unrelenting persistence. To meet this challenge, a school district must establish a vision, structures, and systems that support daily work as well as the pursuit of continuous improvement.

Closing Achievement Gaps for Students with Disabilities

High performing schools that are beginning to close the achievement gap within their at-risk populations focus on the following:

Academic Performance

- Standards-based curriculum and research-based instruction
- Data-driven decision making process
- Individually designed instruction focused on student needs

Learning Environment

- Collaboration between educators and parent partnerships that focus on meeting needs of students
- High academic and behavior expectations for students within an environment that provides structures and supports to ensure success
- A continuum of instruction/intervention tiers with increasing levels of intensity
- Research-based and data-driven professional development

Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership

- A strong special education delivery model
(This model is supported by highly-qualified teachers who provide research-based instruction in the least restrictive setting. It is a model fostering the development of standards-based and data-driven IEP goals that enable students to pursue post-secondary options and to go on to be successful in their lives and careers.)
- A system designed to monitor the consistent implementation of intervention practices.

Commendations:

1. The district is in the process of compiling an instructional/intervention model guidebook (Circle of Interventions) for the Response to Intervention (RTI) initiative.
2. The Array of Services Task Force was developed with parent, special education, and general education representation to collect data and make long range planning recommendations for programs and support systems.
3. Information, services and programs for parents of students receiving special education are extensive and contribute to positive family and school relationships. These services are also available to parents who are non-English speaking.
4. Some schools are actively working to design restructuring plans for delivery of special education services that will align with RTI.
5. Some schools are redefining roles and responsibilities of service or support providers who work outside the general classroom to create a seamless instructional model.
6. The district is exploring the possibility of piloting the Positive Behavior Support model for school-wide discipline.
7. The roles and responsibilities of special education paraprofessionals are being redefined to align with RTI.
8. The process for allocation of special education paraprofessional staffing is being designed to enhance inclusion practices.
9. The Boulder Valley School District partnered with Front Range Community College to provide easily accessible and low cost college credit for special education paraprofessionals to become highly qualified.
10. A “significant needs” task force is designing a delivery model, moving towards more neighborhood school programs and including guidelines and job description for an Inclusion Specialist.
11. The district provides community-based services of an employment team to support career and life skill needs of students in the multiple-intensive programs.

1. Findings

Academic Performance

1. The district does not have an adopted process for frequent progress monitoring to inform instruction.
2. Many, but not all, special education teachers are trained in research-based instructional practices.
3. Some special education teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of research-based strategies for students reading significantly below grade level.
4. Explicit reading research-based instruction for small groups is not always part of the continuum of services in some buildings.
5. Explicit and systematic instruction in phonological processes designed for special education students and some students at-risk for special education is discouraged in some schools.
6. Little school to school consistency exists in applying intensive interventions and strategies with fidelity. A pattern of eclectic borrowing from the research-proven practices appears evident in some schools.

7. Some special education teachers and many general education teachers do not have intervention strategies for students in the autism spectrum.
8. The roles and responsibilities of special education teachers working in co-teaching assignments are not always defined or clear to the participants.
9. In some elementary schools, mathematics interventions are typically classroom based and not sufficiently intensive for severely delayed learners.
10. In some settings, Readers' Workshop is being perceived as a more intensive intervention than intended.
11. Some of the learning labs are focused on homework completion, while others focus on academic interventions.
12. Given the broad range of abilities in a multiple-intensive classroom and frequently high caseloads, the teachers in these programs are challenged in their capacity to meet student needs. For example, it is possible for a teacher in one of these classes to deal simultaneously with a highly aggressive student with autism and a medically fragile, non-ambulatory student.

Learning Environment

1. Time for collaboration between special education teachers, intervention specialists and general education teachers is not consistently available in all schools. A process is not in place for consistent, systematic sharing of student data between general education, special education, and other intervention providers.
2. In some schools, the emphasis on access to the general education curriculum and inclusion philosophy limits the provision of a continuum of services.
3. Vertical articulation between school levels is not ongoing and not consistent from feeder system to feeder system.
4. Special education teachers believe that the personnel evaluation process is narrowly focused on classroom instructional procedures and does not reflect performance on their full range of responsibilities.
5. Not all non-tenured special education teachers have been observed or evaluated by their building administrator.
6. Cross-categorical programs in elementary school have been designed to meet the needs of students with autism. However, these programs do not extend into secondary settings.
7. Some teachers in the multiple-intensity classrooms at the secondary level do not have the instructional and behavior management strategies for students with autism.
8. At some schools, diverse research-based approaches to teaching reading are not respected. In these cases, a formidable body of reading research (for example, that relating to dyslexia) is being discounted.
9. Some parents report that use of professional jargon confuses them and they leave staffings without an understanding of their child's needs and proposed delivery of service.

Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership

1. Communication regarding the planned implementation of the Circles of Intervention (Response to Intervention) is unclear to staff in the schools. This is especially the case for secondary level educators.

2. Staff development opportunities are seldom embedded into the instructional day and do not directly relate to responsibilities of special education teachers.
3. Not all special education teachers and related service staff can identify goals in the special education department plan for improvement.
4. The district Special Education Department goals are focused on increasing weighted index scores as evidence of improvement, and they do not reflect the precision typically necessary for monitoring and measuring growth of students with disabilities.
5. The current staffing formula for allocation of resources for special education is not transparent for teachers and related services providers. This creates concerns about lack of adequate input from building teams for staffing allocations. In addition, communication regarding how special education staffing will be impacted by RTI is not clear to service providers.
6. Related services professionals are unclear about what their role will be under RTI.
7. Teachers at the secondary level do not have a clear picture of how the RTI approach works in their milieu.
8. Special education teachers are positive about RTI but want direct support to help create an effective building model.
9. A perception exists in some parts of the district that RTI is a special education initiative and responsibility.
10. Professional development for related service providers is infrequent and is not driven by the needs of the population they serve.

2. Recommendations:

Short Term:

1. Develop a communication system between district special education administrators and building level service providers that allows for frequent input and feedback from service providers.
2. Provide professional development opportunities to help ensure that all special education teachers are trained in research-based instructional/intervention practices.
3. Provide professional development opportunities to help ensure special education teachers are using progress monitoring and data analysis to develop standards-based goals and inform instruction.
4. Provide ongoing opportunities for the systematic sharing of student data between general educators and intervention specialists.
5. Organize intervention services into a tiered model of increasing intensity.
6. Clearly define the role of Readers' Workshop and Learning Lab, and other support programs as intervention resources and specify level of intensity provided by each.
7. Provide opportunities for building teams to visit other districts with operational RTI models.
8. Clearly and systematically communicate that implementation of the RTI model is a shared responsibility between general and special education.

Long Term:

1. To gain support for district goals and initiatives, ensure that stakeholders are educated, informed and that their input is valued.

2. Provide ongoing professional development for implementation of RTI.
3. Ensure that special education teachers are highly qualified in content areas.
4. Create agreements within all areas of district leadership to articulate responsibilities within the RTI model for special education providers, general education providers, and support services, e.g., counseling.
5. Research, identify and adopt formative assessments and frequent progress monitoring strategies to augment data-driven decision making for teaching students with special needs.
6. Create an evaluation document that is relevant to the roles and responsibilities of the interventionist and inclusion specialist.
7. Ensure that a continuum of research-based reading strategies is provided in each building and access is based on student needs.
8. Ensure that every school has a menu of research-based, intensive reading interventions for students demonstrating needs after the age when the CLIP program is no longer appropriate.
9. Design a model for conducting special education staffings that is parent friendly.

3. Guiding Questions:

1. How do we foster a sense of community between special education teachers and general education teachers as we move into an RTI model?
2. How do we create a sense of shared responsibility between general and special education teachers for the implementation and monitoring of effective intervention strategies?
3. How do we ensure the effective delivery of special education services through an RTI model?
4. How do we create an environment of trust and openness where communication is frequent and reaches all who need to know?
5. How do we ensure that decisions are made collaboratively?
6. What staffing and programming configurations will best address and meet the needs of students with diverse and significant disabilities?
7. As students with significant needs are being included in general education classrooms, how do we provide professional development and supports to the teachers?
8. How do we ensure that staff development is relevant to providers?
9. Is adequate consideration given to students who may need explicit and systematic instruction in phonics?
10. How do we convey pertinent findings from special education evaluations in parent friendly language?

