Phase III: Educational Audit Comprehensive Report

for Hillsborough County Public Schools

Prepared and Submitted by:

GIBSON
AN EDUCATION CONSULTING & RESEARCH GROUP
# Table of Contents

Executive Summary ........................................................................................................................................... 2

Chapter 1 – General Education Program .................................................................................................... 10

Chapter 2 – Instructional Technology ......................................................................................................... 73

Chapter 3 – Exceptional Student Education Programs ............................................................................... 86

Chapter 4 – Programs for English Language Learners .............................................................................. 120

Chapter 5 – Career and Technical Education ............................................................................................ 146

References ................................................................................................................................................ 175

Appendices
Executive Summary

In December 2015, Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) contracted with Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. (Gibson) to conduct an Educational and Operational Efficiency Audit to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the district’s major operations and programs over a 14-month period. This work was conducted in three phases, as described below:

- Phase I: Operational Audit, Major Cost Savings (January – April 2016)
- Phase II: Operational Audit, Comprehensive Review (January – September 2016)
- Phase III: Academic Management Audit (June 2016 – April 2017)

The results of the Phase I and Phase II audits identified numerous opportunities for HCPS to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its central office operations, which resulted in a potential net savings of approximately $100 million per year. The review team is pleased to report that HCPS is already taking steps to implement these recommendations.

The Academic Management Audit represents the third and final phase of the Educational and Operational Efficiency Audit. Programs included in this review are:

- General Education Programs
- Instructional Technology
- Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Programs
- English Language Learner (ELL) Programs
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs

Once again, Gibson wishes to express our appreciation to the HCPS leadership and staff for its responsiveness in providing us the needed information to perform this important work, and the cooperation and willingness to assist us during our site visits.

Methodology

The Phase III work began in September 2016, with issuance of a comprehensive data request. The Gibson review team collected and analyzed data, conducted numerous interviews, focus groups, and school site visits, and then synthesized all of this information into the findings and recommendations presented in this Phase III final report. Below is a more detailed description of each of these activities.

Data Collection

To conduct a comprehensive Educational and Operational Efficiency Audit of HCPS, the review team used a variety of data collection and analysis approaches. This comprehensive review of HCPS’ instructional areas included the following data collection approaches.
Existing HCPS Data
To provide proper context for the review, Gibson requested from the HCPS a broad spectrum of data and documents related to the instructional areas under review. The purpose of this data request and subsequent analyses was to gain a deeper understanding of HCPS programmatic operations and provide background and context for the review. In addition, these data and documents were utilized to help formulate questions for the interviews and focus group sessions held with district administrators, department heads and staff, school administrators and staff, and teachers.

Interviews with District Staff
To ensure that the review team had a complete and thorough understanding of district programs, processes, and procedures, interviews with key staff were conducted. Interviews included district leadership, department heads and staff, and school administrators and support staff, among others.

School Site Visits
A sample of 35 HCPS schools was selected for site visits based on school type, geographic location within the district, and in some cases, programmatic information. The primary objectives of the school visits were to interview school leaders, and conduct classroom walkthroughs to observe teacher practices, student participation, and classroom design.

Focus Group Sessions
Focus groups are an effective way of obtaining more in-depth information from staff than a one-on-one formal interview or other data collection instruments. In addition, the dynamics of a focus group often stimulate the expression of ideas that might otherwise go unstated. The project team conducted focus group sessions with varying groups of stakeholders (e.g., principals, teachers, operational area leads, departmental and school staff).

Peer, State and National Comparisons
Gibson used the most recent state academic, expenditure and staffing reports to compare HCPS to state and peer averages. These reports are available annually; the most recent reports available at the time of this study contained actual expenditure and staffing data through the 2014-15 school year. Unaudited actual expenditure data for 2015-16 was also included. Where applicable, Gibson also applied national or other benchmarks for comparison to HCPS.

Analysis
Data Analysis
During the assessment phase of this project, data for each instructional area was reviewed and analyzed to assess student enrollment trends, organizational alignment and staffing, resource allocation, student performance trends, major compliance requirements, and programmatic design and implementation.

Interview and Focus Group Data
Qualitative interview and focus group data were analyzed by functional area leads conducting the focus group sessions to determine common themes across the various stakeholder groups (e.g., district
Executive Summary

administration, school leaders and staff, department heads and staff). Other sources of input (e.g., observations, district data, and industry best practices) were also included in analyses.

Background

HCPS is the eighth largest school system in the U.S. with more than 207,000 students enrolled in 2016-17. Student enrollment has increased nearly 7 percent in the past five years, primarily due to significant increases in charter school enrollment. Excluding charter schools, total K12 enrollment is approximately 190,000, and has grown less than 2 percent over the past five years – an average of 0.33 percent annually.

Student performance in HCPS over the past few years has been relatively flat, and scores on the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) exams have been consistently below or at the Florida state average. HCPS’ passing rate (Level 3 and above) for English/Language Arts (ELA) is below the state average for all grade levels, and the performance gap widens as students move from elementary to high school (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Florida Standards Assessments, ELA by Grade Groupings, Spring 2016 Compared to Spring 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 3-10 FSA English Language Arts % Level 3 or Above</th>
<th>Grade 3-5 FSA English Language Arts % Level 3 or Above</th>
<th>Grade 6-8 FSA English Language Arts % Level 3 or Above</th>
<th>Grade 9-10 FSA English Language Arts % Level 3 or Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCPS</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Florida Department of Education

Student performance in Math is higher overall; however, HCPS performance lags significantly behind the state average in elementary school but rises to the state average in middle school.

Figure 2. Florida Standards Assessments, All Math by Grade Groupings, Spring 2016 Compared to Spring 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 3-8 All Mathematics (FSA and EOCs) % Level 3 or Above</th>
<th>Grade 3-5 All Mathematics (FSA and EOCs) % Level 3 or Above</th>
<th>Grade 6-8 All Mathematics (FSA and EOCs) % Level 3 or Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCPS</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Florida Department of Education
By the time students are in high school, HCPS students outperform the state average on the Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 End of Course (EOC) exams.

Figure 3. End of Course (EOC) Exams, Spring 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>Algebra 1 EOC</th>
<th>Geometry EOC</th>
<th>Algebra 2 EOC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCPS</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Florida Department of Education

One of the most important aspects of a school district’s mission is to provide a high quality education that sets high standards for all students, including those in special populations. Mirroring national statistics, student performance for HCPS’ economically disadvantaged, SWD, and ELL students is significantly below that of their general education peers. In 2015-16, the performance gap between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students in Math and ELA is 34.8 and 34.3 percentage points, respectively. From 2014-15 to 2015-16, economically disadvantaged student performance in Math increased slightly (from 36 to 36.8 percent), while their non-economically disadvantaged peer’s performance decreased (from 73.3 to 71.6 percent)—narrowing the gap by 2.5 percentage points. The performance gap narrowed slightly in ELA as well (1.2 percentage points), although ELA performance for all students declined from 2014-15 to 2015-16.

Not surprisingly, the achievement gap on the FSA is wider for HCPS special education students – 42.9 percentage points in Math and 38.9 percentage points in ELA. From 2014-15 to 2015-16, SWD performance decreased in both ELA and Math, while the performance of their non-disabled peers increased slightly. When compared to the state average, HCPS SWD students consistently perform below their disabled peers at every grade level in both Math and ELA. The passing rate for SWD students (all grades) on the Algebra 1 EOC exam is 18.8 percent, which is 41.5 percentage points below the HCPS non-disabled peer average of 60.3 percent.

ELL student performance on the FSA shows lower but improving performance. Over the past two years, ELL passing rates in ELA increased from 12.7 to 13 percent, while non-ELL student passing rates slightly declined from 55 to 54.5 percent. The achievement gap in Math is much narrower: ELL passing rates increased from 43.4 to 45.8 percent, while non-ELL student passing rates remained flat at 53.9 percent.

At HCPS, CTE concentrators (i.e., students who earn three or more credits in a single CTE program) experience a graduation rate that, on average, is 19.5 percentage points higher than the overall district average.

Report Summary

It is important to acknowledge that the Phase III work assessing HCPS academic programs was conducted during a time of significant change in the district. Major district-level organizational changes had occurred
or were still being implemented; area superintendent responsibilities were just changed to include academic oversight; major cost reductions were being implemented; student data analysis tools were being expanded; and other academic programming changes were occurring. The impact of these recent changes was obviously not fully realized during the Phase III work. The review team attempted to acknowledge recent efforts, provide recommendations that may help this transition be more successful, and provide additional recommendations to improve student achievement at HCPS.

Research suggests the factors that most improve student learning are excellent teachers, high expectations, a rigorous curriculum aligned with standards, and instruction that is adjusted to meet specific student needs based on ongoing formative assessment of student progress against standards. Most of the recommendations in this report are focused on those areas specifically aimed at improving student performance in HCPS. With the exception of one recommendation to invest more in instructional technology, the review team has concluded that nearly all of the recommendations in this Phase III report can be implemented using the district’s existing resources.

First, the review team identified several areas of best practice for which the district should be commended.

- **HCPS provides early screening and intervention programs to identify and serve special education students from birth to age five.** HCPS has partnered with other community-based organizations to provide a developmental screening program to identify children who may have delays in speech and language, hearing, vision, cognitive development, motor skills, or have other social-emotional challenges, so they can be referred for further evaluation and/or assistance. In addition, HCPS’ Early Childhood ESE program has more than doubled the percentage of students served inside the general education classroom in the past three years (from 24 to 51 percent), the least restrictive setting. These two initiatives are significant, as research shows that 1) high quality early intervention is likely to lead to improved outcomes for children, which is less costly over time, and 2) young children who spend most of their day alongside their non-disabled peers benefit from having positive role models for all of the key areas of development, not to mention the numerous benefits non-disabled children receive.

- **HCPS utilizes an on-line comprehensive assessment system, SchoolCity, to develop, score, and report student assessment data.** SchoolCity allows teachers and administrators to create formative, interim, and diagnostic assessments that are aligned to the Florida state standards. The easy-to-use scoring process and robust reporting capabilities allows for instructional staff to review results that are timely and insightful. SchoolCity is popular and widely used throughout the district.

- **HCPS has forged relationships and garnered strong support from the community, evidenced by numerous partnerships with community-based organizations, local businesses, and parent involvement programs.** Leveraging the support of outside partners to the district is an excellent mechanism to improve the quality of education and at a lower cost. The ESE program has partnered with the Early Childhood Council of Hillsborough County (ECC) and the Florida
Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) to provide an early childhood development screening program (described above), and the CTE program has established partnerships with the Outback Restaurant, Gregory Foundation, University of South Florida, Career Source, and many others. These partnerships give students opportunities for hands-on and real-world experiences, as well as the potential for internships and scholarships. The ELL program has a multifaceted parent outreach initiative to encourage parent involvement in their child’s schooling, as well as linkages to a variety of other community-based programs and services. The Gifted and Talented program also has an innovative program to “spark interest” of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students through targeted learning experiences followed-up with parent informational sessions and suggested activities to do at home.

The findings identified during the Phase III audit yielded several recommendations that are generally applicable to all of the district’s instructional programs included in the scope of this review.

- **Increase the academic rigor of instructional programs and ensure that the curriculum is aligned to standards.** One of the biggest barriers to improving student performance in HCPS is the lack of rigor in many of its instructional programs, particularly for struggling students. Rigor, in this case, is meant to describe instruction, school work, learning experiences, and educational expectations that are academically, intellectually, and personally challenging for all students. HCPS is working hard to address this challenge and is continuing the transition from teaching and learning practices that are program and textbook driven to a standards-based education system. Although this process takes significant time and effort, adjustments to the districts implementation plan would help to facilitate a smoother and more efficient transition to the standards-based instructional model. With respect to SWD students, the review team found that when compared to the state average, HCPS has a lower percentage of students placed in the general education setting and a higher percentage of students placed in a resource room setting. This raises the concern that SWD students do not have sufficient access to a rigorous curriculum taught by teachers with content area expertise, particularly in reading and math, where they are likely to need the most support. When looking at the district’s CTE program, the review team also found that many of the Programs of Study currently being offered were “hobby”-type classes, as opposed to instructional programming that is more college and career-ready. HCPS needs to better integrate and align technical education and academic standards while providing students with opportunities to connect to real-world experiences in those areas where labor market trends are favorable.

- **Negotiate with the Hillsborough County Classroom Teachers Association to allow for at least 60 to 90 minutes of collaborative planning time (or PLC meetings) per week.** Research shows that collaborative planning time (CPT), when used well, is an important predictor of student achievement and one of the best uses of teacher time. The current teacher union contract specifies that “no more than one hour per month may be used for PLCs or other data gathering/planning intended to increase student achievement”. Best practice school districts support schools in providing 90 minutes of weekly collaborative planning time to allow teachers
to meet in grade level and/or subject area teams, often with the support of an instructional coach or teacher leader, to review student formative assessment data, and discuss strategies to adjust instruction to better meet individual student needs.

- **Provide more guidance and structured support to teachers on the effective use of formative assessments to drive student learning.** The central idea behind the use of formative assessments is that evidence of student learning is used to adjust instruction to better meet student learning needs. The review team did not find sufficient or consistent evidence that teachers are systematically reviewing and analyzing formative assessment data with the specific goal of modifying teaching strategies for students that are struggling in a particular area or with a specific concept. This was especially true for SWD teachers. The need for additional support and guidance is exacerbated by the fact that collaborative planning time in most schools is limited to the monthly PLC meetings. The district could better support teachers during their PLC meetings by providing protocols to help structure the work of responding to short-cycle formative assessments, and holding principals accountable for making sure this time is used well.

- **Ensure that professional development is primarily job-embedded and supported by lead teachers or instructional coaches.** Research has shown that teacher quality is the single most important factor influencing student achievement. And despite investing significant funds over the years to improve teacher quality through professional development activities, HCPS’ professional development efforts can be characterized as fragmented, unfocused, and workshop-based. Faced with reduced funding levels due to the termination of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant, it is imperative that HCPS align its limited resources to ensure that all professional development activities revolve around how students are performing and what information and supports teachers need in order to continuously improve their instruction to meet student needs. Ensuring that professional development is job-embedded and supported by an instructional coach or teacher leader is best practice. Together, with the implementation of 90 minutes of weekly collaborative planning time, HCPS could lay the foundation for student achievement to improve at a faster pace.

- **Develop a district-wide Instructional Technology Strategy and Plan.** Without an instructional technology plan in place to serve as a guide for decision-making as well as a tool to monitor and evaluate progress toward identified goals and objectives, instructional technology throughout the district is sparse, antiquated, not well-integrated with curriculum and instruction, and is severely underfunded. This is evidenced by the fact that HCPS has more students per device than peer districts; the median age per device is 6 years old; and, 83 percent of devices are more than 5 years old, which is generally considered to be at the tail end of the replacement lifecycle. Further, 68 percent of devices are desktop computers and more than a third are located in computer labs, which limits their accessibility and use. Despite these statistics, HCPS has no immediate plans to make significant investments in instructional technology. A well-integrated instructional technology program enhances and enriches learning opportunities for students, and increases the effectiveness of educators and support staff. Although a detailed needs assessment will need to
be conducted, the review team estimates that if HCPS were to fully upgrade its inventory, as well as maintain an average replacement life cycle, then it will need to make a one-time investment of $20 million, with annual investments of $10 million each year. Some of these costs can be mitigated with expansion of the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program.

Embedded in the remainder of this report are many other recommendations aimed at improving the overall efficiency and effectiveness of HCPS’ instructional programs.

Organization of Report

The remainder of this report is organized into the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 – General Education Program
- Chapter 2 – Instructional Technology
- Chapter 3 – Exceptional Student Education Programs
- Chapter 4 – English Language Learner Programs
- Chapter 5 – Career and Technical Education Programs
Chapter 1 – General Education Program

Introduction

The mission of Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) is “to provide an education and the supports that enable each student to excel as a successful and responsible citizen.”\(^1\) The primary means through which the district fulfills this mission is through the general education program. This chapter presents findings and recommendations related to the HCPS general education program. Special programs, including Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs for student with disabilities and gifted students, English Language Learner (ELL) programs, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are also key to this mission and are addressed in separate chapters of this report.

**Student Performance at Hillsborough County Public Schools**

HCPS has experienced enrollment growth over the past five years, from 191,777 in 2010-11 to 206,371 in 2015-16, but most of this growth has come from the district’s charter schools. Figure 1.1 presents non-charter and charter school growth since 2010-11. Non-charter enrollment growth remained flat until 2015-16, while charter school enrollment increased threefold during this same time period.

![Figure 1.1. HCPS Non-charter and Charter School Enrollment Growth, 2010-11 to 2015-16](source)

\[^1\] HCPS website: [http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/](http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/)
Unlike many urban school districts in the U.S., the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in HCPS has declined in recent years, albeit slightly. Figure 1.2 shows that the percentage of economically disadvantaged students has declined annually from 60 percent in 2013-14 to 58.2 percent in 2016-17.

Figure 1.2. HCPS Economic Disadvantaged Student Percentage, 2012-13 to 2016-17

The Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) is the state’s assessment system that “measures students’ achievement of Florida’s education standards, which were developed and implemented to ensure that all students graduate from high school ready for success in college, career, and life.” Students in Grades 3-10 take the English Language Arts (ELA) FSA, and students in Grades 3-8 take the math FSA. The same standards have been applied during the past two years.

HCPS’ ELA passing rates have remained fairly constant over the past two years, lagging the State average by 2 percentage points. Figure 1.3 compares HCPS and State ELA passing rates – Level 3 and above – for all students tested during 2014-15 and 2015-16.

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2 Florida Department of Education website: http://fsassessments.org/
With the exception of grade 7, HCPS performed below the state average in all grade levels, with the widest gaps seen in Grades 8, 9, and 10.
Students overall performed better in math than ELA, although HCPS still lags slightly behind the State average. Figure 1.5 compares HCPS and State math passing rates for all students tested during 2014-15 and 2015-16.

Figure 1.5. FSA Math Passing Rates – Level 3 and Above, 2014-15 and 2015-16

Source: Florida Department of Education

Figure 1.6 compares HCPS to the state average for Grades 3 through 8 in math. HCPS is above the state average in Grade 7 but below the state average in all other grade levels. The widest performance gap is in Grade 8.

Figure 1.6. FSA Math Passing Rates – Level 3 and Above, Grades 3-8, 2015-16

Source: Florida Department of Education
The Statewide Science Assessment measures student success with the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and includes assessments in Grades 5 and 8. The same standards have been in place for the past five years. Figure 1.7 presents FSA Science passing rates – Level 3 and above – for HCPS Grade 5 and Grade 8 students for the past five years. Fifth grade students experienced increases in passing rates from 2011-12 to 2013-14, but have dropped somewhat since then. Grade 8 passing rates have remained fairly flat, showing slight increases over a 5-year period.

Figure 1.7. HCPS FSA Science Passing Rates – Level 3 and Above, 2011-12 to 2015-16, Grade 5 and Grade 8 Students

Source: Florida Department of Education

The End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments are computer-based tests designed to measure student achievement of the specified standards for middle and high-school level courses in math (Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2), science (Biology 1), and social studies (Civics and U.S. History). Figure 1.8 shows HCPS’ performance on the Algebra 1 EOC for Grades 7 through 12. With the exception of Grade 9, HCPS showed gains in every grade level.
The data above also show that middle school students significantly outperform high school students. This pattern is typical given that fewer middle school students take EOC exams than high school students.

Figure 1.9 compares the same HCPS Algebra 1 passing rates for 2015 to the State average. HCPS middle school students perform better than the State average, while HCPS high school students lag the State average in Grades 9 and 11.

HCPS performance on the geometry and Algebra 2 EOC exams follow a similar pattern, as shown in Table 1.1 below.
Table 1.1. Geometry and Algebra 2 EOC Passing Rates – Level 3 and Above, 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
<td>93.7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>89.8%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Florida Department of Education

Another critical indicator of progress in public education is the closing of the achievement gap between students of different social and economic backgrounds. Mirroring a national pattern, the achievement gaps between HCPS’ economically disadvantaged students and non-economically disadvantaged students are wide. Figure 1.10 presents the HCPS FSA passing rates for ELA for these two demographic groups during the past two years. The gap in 2015-16 is more than 34 percentage points, and the reduction from the prior year is due primarily to a larger decline in non-economically disadvantaged student achievement than economically disadvantaged students.

Figure 1.10. HCPS FSA ELA Passing Rates for Economically Disadvantaged and Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students – Level 3 and Above, 2014-15 to 2015-16

![Graph showing ELA passing rates for economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students]

Source: Florida Department of Education

Mathematics shows a similar picture and trend, although economically disadvantaged students showed a slight increase in performance. Figure 1.11 presents the HCPS FSA passing rates for math for these two demographic groups during the past two years.

![Graph showing Math passing rates for economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students]

Source: Florida Department of Education
Achievement gaps in Science are smaller for HCPS Grade 5 students than Grade 8 students. Figure 1.12 shows a 5-year trend of FSA science passing rates for Grade 5 economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students. Both demographic groups showed significant gains from 2011-12 to 2013-14, but declines since then.

Source: Florida Department of Education

Figure 1.11. HCPS FSA Math Passing Rates for Economically Disadvantaged and Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students – Level 3 and Above, 2014-15 to 2015-16

Source: Florida Department of Education

Figure 1.12. HCPS FSA Grade 5 Science Passing Rates for Economically Disadvantaged and Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students – Level 3 and Above, 2011-12 to 2015-16

Source: Florida Department of Education
The science achievement gap grows in Grade 8 with both economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students showing some gains but lower overall performance. Figure 1.13 shows a 5-year trend of FSA science passing rates for Grade 8 economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students.

Figure 1.13. HCPS FSA Grade 8 Science Passing Rates for Economically Disadvantaged and Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students – Level 3 and Above, 2011-12 to 2015-16.

Finally, HCPS’ high school graduation rates have increased steadily over the past five years, and were just below the State average in 2015-16.

Figure 1.14. HCPS and State High School Graduation Rates, 2011-12 to 2015-16.

Source: Florida Department of Education
As discussed in the remainder of this chapter, HCPS is undergoing significant changes to address these academic challenges, including:

- Expedited implementation of a standards-based curriculum
- Adding academic oversight responsibilities to the area superintendent offices
- Reorganizing central office curriculum and instruction functions
- New student data dashboards and improved data analysis capabilities
- Re-engineering instructional support
- Increasing student engagement

The review of the general education program acknowledges and comments on these changes, and includes commendations, findings and recommendations in the following areas:

- Academic Program Organization and Management
- Standards-Based Instruction
- Curriculum Guides
- Lesson Plans
- Teacher Planning Time
- Model of Instruction
- Student Data Analysis and Use
- Instructional Resources and Support
- Teacher Evaluation and Observation
- Teacher Professional Development

Curriculum and Management of Academic Programs

To ensure the academic success of its students, it is essential that a district have a comprehensive and coherent curriculum that is consistently implemented. The term coherent curriculum, or aligned curriculum, refers to an academic program that is: (1) well organized and purposefully designed to facilitate learning, (2) free of academic gaps and needless repetitions, and (3) aligned across lessons, courses, subject areas, and grade levels. In addition to the alignment between the academic expectations for students and the instruction in the classroom, there should also be coherence or alignment among assessments, standardized tests, and instructional materials.\(^3\)

A district lacking a coherent curriculum puts students at risk of encountering content based on the individual interests of teachers that may or may not build on previous grade level learning, may be repetitious from one grade level to the next, and may not prepare them for success on the state

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summative assessment (FSA). In addition to the consequences for students, when a district lacks a coherent curriculum, it places a burden on teachers to work harder to plan instruction that is aligned to grade level and content area expectations.

This section examines curriculum implementation in HCPS in the context of the following questions:

1. Is the HCPS curriculum system implemented in a manner that achieves the highest academic value for the students?
2. Is the curriculum system implemented as intended and consistently across the district?
3. Does instructional staff receive adequate curriculum training and support?
4. How does district academic management ensure that its curriculum is being implemented with fidelity?
5. Are walkthroughs used to validate curriculum implementation?
6. How are lesson plans used to monitor curriculum implementation?
7. Does the district analyze walkthrough results to identify needed improvements?

HCPS Board Policy 2210 – Curriculum Development⁴ outlines the board’s expectations regarding curriculum development. The policy states that the Superintendent of the district is responsible to the Board for the development and evaluation of curriculum and the preparation of courses of study. The policy defines curriculum as all of the planned activities of the school, including formal classroom instruction and out-of-class activity, both individual and group, necessary to accomplish the educational goals of the district.

Board policy also states that the curriculum of the district will:

- Be consistent with the district’s philosophy and goals and ensure the possibility of their achievement.
- Allow for the development of individual talents and interests as well as recognize that learning styles and needs of students may differ.
- Provide for continuous and cumulative learning through effective articulation at all levels.
- Utilize a variety of learning resources to accomplish the educational goals.
- Encourage students to utilize guidance and counseling services in their academic and career planning.

⁴ http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/policymanual/detail/66
Provide instruction in courses required by statute and Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) regulations.

The Superintendent submits annual reports to the Board on the academic progress of the district. The district also has established procedures for curriculum development and refinement based on the ongoing review of district formative assessment data and state summative student performance data. The curriculum revision process responds to changes in state academic standards and textbook adoption cycles.

**Standards-Based Instruction**

From a curriculum and instruction perspective, HCPS is a district in transition. With the new and more rigorous Florida Standards, the district set a goal to transition from the existing teaching and learning practices to become a standards-based teaching and learning district. In education, the term “standards-based” refers to the systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating understanding or mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education. In a school that uses standards-based approaches to educating students, learning standards (i.e., concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education) determine the goals of a lesson or course, and teachers then determine how and what to teach students so they achieve the learning expectations described in the standards (Standards-Based, 2014).

Until the 2011-12 school year, when the district formally declared the adoption of a district-wide transition to standards-based teaching and learning, the HCPS instructional program has been primarily program and textbook driven, with some individual content area exceptions. Even though the district provides a curriculum with supporting tools, teachers have addressed grade-level content area instruction by relying primarily on the use of instructional programs, such as *Journeys* for elementary reading/ELA, *Go Math* for elementary math instruction, and *SpringBoard* for secondary ELA and math. When instruction is based primarily on programs, teachers work their way sequentially through the program and rely on the assurances of the developers that these curriculum materials are aligned to state standards and support instruction at the level of rigor necessary for success on state summative assessments. In a standards-based education system, teachers use instructional programs as one of many resources rather than as their roadmap for instruction.

The transition to a standards-based approach to education is no small undertaking. It requires that the district provide supportive conditions necessary for success and ensure that all district and school staff understand and implement standards-based practices. District and school leadership must commit to provide the infrastructure and support that builds the capacity of teachers, and school leaders must commit to monitor and support the practices necessary for the successful implementation of standards-based teaching and learning.

Comprehensive standards-based practices involve more than knowing state and district standards; posting standards, learning goals, or objectives in a classroom; referencing standards in lessons or units;
“covering” a curriculum; or following a set of prescriptive lessons (Benson, 2012). In districts successfully implementing standards-based education, teachers consistently teach with activities, lessons, and units specifically designed to ensure every child learns the grade-level expectations that lead to mastery of the standards. With a standards-based model of teaching and learning, teachers have wide discretion in their instructional decision making process (the “how”), utilizing student learning data and research-based strategies. The “what” is defined by the standards and the “when” is defined by district curriculum and pacing guides. With these supports in place, teachers innovate and apply research-based instructional strategies to ensure all students master grade-level standards. With a deep understanding of their grade-level standards and the progression of standards from one grade level to the next, the expectation is that teachers, working collaboratively with their colleagues, are better equipped to ensure student learning.

**Recommendation 1-1: Increase the specificity of the district’s implementation plan for standards-based teaching and learning.**

The original planning of standards-based instruction began in 2011. The district has a current implementation plan that addresses the work, timeline, and persons responsible for standards-based implementation. The plan addresses three phases:

1. Orientation and Foundational Professional Development
2. Curriculum and Assessment Alignment
3. School-wide Implementation

The district has reported that the Chief Academic Officer will convene a newly created Standards-Based Teaching and Grading Task force for the purpose of revising, updating, and strengthening the plan.

To help create clarity for all stakeholders regarding the purpose of moving to a standards-based education system, it is recommended that the district leadership team, together with the newly formed Standards-Based Teaching and Grading Task Force revise and strengthen the implementation plan to include the following:

- Describe the rationale for standards-based teaching and learning and align instruction with the goals of the district.
- Develop implementation goals with milestones and timelines.
- Describe specifically how the work will change for teachers, principals, students, and district leaders.
- Describe the evidence that will be used to demonstrate that the work has or is changing.

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5 Hillsborough County Public Schools Standards Implementation Summary 2011 to 2016.
Based on how the work will change, delineate the systems of support and support strategies that will be put in place by central office, for principals and teachers, and by principals for teachers.

Describe how time and resources will be allocated or in some cases reallocated to support implementation.

Ensure the working team meets periodically to monitor implementation and address implementation issues.

Provide periodic progress reports to the board.

Having a better defined plan that all members of the school community agree upon will help teachers make sense of the change they are experiencing, and should help district and school leadership focus on what is relevant. District leaders can use the plan to align professional development content, make decisions about instructional materials, prioritize staffing and purchasing of resource materials, and in general, as a decision-making filter.

Table 1.1 provides an example of how classroom practices differ in a traditional versus a standards-based classroom. Describing the specific behaviors that teachers will adopt makes it easier to plan the support they need, and establish systems for mutual accountability. A similar table should be constructed for how the instructional leadership teams’ focus and behavior change in a standards-based school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Classroom</th>
<th>Standards-Based Classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers select topics from the curriculum.</td>
<td>Teachers identify and analyze concepts and skills to be learned based on the district’s curriculum framework and pre-assessments of student performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers use textbooks or published materials as a basis for planning instruction.</td>
<td>Teachers first identify what students must learn and how they will demonstrate that learning at a mastery level, and then plan instruction based on those learning targets, i.e., backwards design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers create and/or administer tests at the end of lessons or units.</td>
<td>Teachers use a variety of assessments throughout a lesson or unit to ensure students are learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons focus on teacher-directed activities.</td>
<td>The focus of lessons is on what type of thinking and learning students will engage in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on the teacher’s instruction and performance.</td>
<td>The focus is on instruction that leads to student engagement in learning and mastery of grade-level expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers give a grade and record that grade as part of a final grade or report card.</td>
<td>Teachers provide ongoing feedback to students regarding their learning and additional opportunities to learn, practice, and demonstrate their knowledge and skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Traditional Classroom vs. Standards-Based Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Classroom</th>
<th>Standards-Based Classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers cover the curriculum within pre-planned units and time frames.</td>
<td>Teachers continually monitor and adjust their instructional practices to ensure students have learned before moving on to new topics or units.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Fiscal Impact

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### Curriculum Guides

The ability for teachers to deliver standards-based instruction relies on the foundation of a comprehensive district curriculum based on adopted standards. Teachers must be able to rely on curriculum documents to guide what should be taught as well as how to measure student learning. Curriculum documents help teachers organize and plan standards-based units and lessons and they should be clearly organized and teacher friendly.

The HCPS developed curriculum documents are housed in the district’s email system – called IDEAS – and each content area has a log-in page unique for elementary, middle, and high school. While the curriculum documents vary significantly across the content areas and grade level, they do have some attributes in common. Each content area, regardless of grade level is supported by:

- Global Concept Guides (GCG’s) for – The GCG serves as the pacing guide that informs teachers and administrators of the sequence and timeline for addressing academic standards.

- Instructional resources – each of the content sites provide additional resources for teachers to examine and utilize. For example, content sites include sample lessons, strategies, performance tasks with scoring rubrics and links to the Florida Standards and other tools to support teachers as they plan instruction.

Some of the content areas such as elementary ELA and middle school math are more comprehensive and include week by week planning guides that provide unit plans, formative assessment items, sample lesson plan templates, and references to align the weekly or multi-week unit plan with the textbook and other adopted instructional resources. However, most curriculum planning guides lacked a reference to modifications and adaptations for English Language Learners or students with disabilities. English Language Learner programs and Exceptional Student Education are discussed in *Chapter 3 – Exceptional Student Education Programs* of this report.
Recommendation 1-2: Enhance curriculum guides to better support standards-based instruction and support efficiency in the instructional planning process.

A review of the district curriculum documents revealed that, in general, there is a significant amount of variation across the four core content areas in terms of the comprehensiveness of materials available to the teachers, the organization of the curriculum documents, and the range of supporting resources and tools. In addition, some curriculum documents, such as elementary writing, send teachers outside of the IDEAS system to other locations such as Moodle, an open-source learning platform developed by Google. This is especially problematic for elementary teachers who often teach four content areas.

Benson (2012) describes the attributes of curriculum documents essential for standards-based instruction. The review team looked for these attributes in the HCPS curriculum documents. Table 1.2 compares the HCPS elementary curriculum documents housed in IDEAS against these criteria. An “X” indicates that the attribute is present.

Table 1.2. Comparison of Elementary Curriculum Documents against the Qualities of Curriculum Documents to Support Standards-Based Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>S/Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District curriculum provides a scope and sequence of grade-level expectations organized to show progressions from preschool to high school.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum identifies and describes both the scope and the sequence of the big ideas and the concepts and skills students should learn through a school year or within a designated time period.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The scope and sequence is clearly identified in curriculum guides, documents, or frameworks and is readily available to all teachers.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum documents include supplemental instructional planning tools such as curriculum maps, or pacing guides that provide general time frames for addressing grade-level expectations.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum guides identify instructional strategies to support classroom delivery.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum guides provide examples of formative assessment practices; interim assessments; and summative assessments (post-tests, chapter or unit assessments, student products, performance assessments, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum guides provide references to supplemental instructional resources or tools.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum guides provide references to strategies to differentiate for varying student learning levels and need.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher focus group input confirmed the review team’s findings. Elementary teachers reported frustration with moving from one system to another and the number of “clicks” it takes to find their curriculum documents. While some content areas, such as elementary Reading/ELA, have additional support materials (ELA Planning Support Tool) that were spoken of very highly, other content areas such as high school math lack these additional resources. While principals praised the week-by-week planning support tool for elementary ELA/Reading, their overall perception is that there is not a curriculum that is “sitting there” but rather, teachers need to “dig” to find what they should be teaching. The difficulty some teachers noted in navigating through curriculum documents, combined with the lack of complete curriculum documents, and the limited planning time, at least at the elementary level, contributes to a teaching approach that overly relies on instructional programs.

A number of the elementary and secondary content areas have unit plans but they are also lacking uniformity and not all of the essential components are represented. There is an example of a unit plan housed in the middle school math curriculum area on IDEAS with a corresponding weekly lesson plan that is very strong and lacking only in the strategies to accommodate and adapt learning experiences for ELL and ESE students. These two documents can be viewed in Appendix A. Most of the other grade and content areas have either fairly complete unit plans or the skeleton of unit plans in their respective curriculum materials. Once the district agrees on a common unit plan format, it should not be too challenging for teams to finish building out complete unit plans as some of the attributes listed below are already included in existing curriculum documents. Unit plans, or units of instruction developed with the backwards design model, typically have these common features addressed in this order:6

- The subject of the unit and the timeframe
- The standards covered by the unit – typically differentiating priority and supporting standards
- The important factual knowledge students will acquire (students will know…)
- A list of skills to be taught or reinforced (students will be able to do…)

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• Three or four “big ideas” or “Enduring Understandings” (students will understand that…)

• Assessments (quizzes, tests, performance tasks) written in advance to assess student learning formatively during the unit of instruction and summatively at the end of the unit

• Strategies for differentiation based on an anticipation of where students may struggle and a plan to address it along the way rather than after students fail

• A lesson-by-lesson instructional plan that describes the instructional strategies, resources, etc. that will be used during the unit of instruction

In general, the HCPS curriculum documents have many strengths and with additional enhancements will be well suited to support teachers with the implementation of standards-based instruction. Special effort should be made to create more standardization across the four elementary core content areas. At a minimum, the login page for each of the content areas should be organized the same and efforts should be made to keep all resources within the one system.

**Fiscal Impact**

The Office of Teaching and Learning has the responsibility for developing and keeping the district curriculum documents up to date. As a result there is no fiscal impact for this recommendation. However, over time, when the curriculum documents are fully developed, the district may be able to reduce their reliance on supplemental instructional materials and could experience cost-savings.

**Lesson Plans**

In addition to examining district curriculum materials, the review team visited schools and conducted short classroom observations. Seven schools were visited over a two-day period and 38 classrooms received an observation. The primary goal of classroom observations was to determine the extent to which lesson plans or other sources of information referenced curriculum standards or provided data to help a principal determine whether or not instruction was standards-aligned and on pace with district expectations. A secondary goal was to examine the quality and comprehensiveness of lesson plans and the extent to which they support standards-based instruction. Principals invited teachers to submit lesson plans for the team’s review and all but five observations were supported by a lesson plan.

Lesson plans were generally found to be lacking the level of specificity that would support a principal’s evaluation of whether or not a teacher was on pace in the district’s curriculum. The lesson plans ranged from very detailed to nothing more than a few notations on the schedule for the day. While some pre-printed plans from *SpringBoard* Math referenced instructional materials such as math manipulatives, these were not observed in use. There was variation in terms of the components and design of the lesson plan templates across each school and within schools, and within and across grade levels and content areas. In essence, the lesson plans were individual teacher dependent, requiring the instructional leaders to adapt their strategies for determining whether or not the teacher is on pace with the district curriculum to each individual teacher’s classroom.
Regardless of format or title, effective lesson plans should generally contain the following minimum components (Stout, Kachur, & Edwards, 2010):

1. **Introductory matter** – Information such as the grade level of the students, content area, name of the unit of which the lesson is a part, the standards being addressed or other information that communicates “where” in the curriculum the teacher is.

2. **Instructional objective** – What is to be learned and applied by students?

3. **Prerequisites** – What must the student already know or be able to do in order to be successful with the lesson?

4. **Instructional procedures** – What will the teacher do to teach the lesson, including how the lesson will be introduced, activities and instructional strategies, and how the lesson will be closed?

5. **Materials and equipment** – What materials and equipment is needed by the teacher and students to complete the lesson?

6. **Differentiation Strategies** – How will teachers meet the diverse learning needs of their students? What strategies will teachers use if they have students struggling with the content of the lesson and how will the teacher provide enrichment opportunities for students who have already mastered the content of the lesson? How will teachers accommodate for ELL and ESE students?

7. **Assessment/evaluation** – How will teachers determine the extent to which the students have attained the instructional objective? In standards-based instruction, teachers engage in a backwards design process. Meaning, they have determined the evidence that demonstrates student mastery, based on a deep understanding of the standards, and then develop the unit of instruction and lessons that will lead students to mastery.

8. **Post lesson reflection** – What went well, and what needs to be adjusted to improve the lesson? This is important in a standards-based teaching and learning design in that it gives teachers the opportunity to continuously improve first-time instruction with the goal of preventing failure rather than remediating failure.

This information, in a well-designed lesson plan, assists administrators to easily identify if the teacher is on pace in the curriculum. Without this information, principals have to cross reference the lessons with district curriculum support documents to determine if the teacher is on pace or not.

**Recommendation 1-3: Improve the consistency and timeliness of lesson plan development.**

While there were some excellent examples of comprehensive lesson plans found in several of the schools, only three teachers (out of 38 classrooms visited) had a plan for addressing strategies and accommodations for ELL and ESE students. Additionally, only four lesson plans included strategies for enrichment or struggling students.
Table 1.3 provides a summary assessment of the lesson plans against the eight components of an effective lesson plan referenced above. In the absence of a printed lesson plan, the observer relied on information posted on the board or other areas of the classroom that informed the lesson.

Table 1.3. Lesson Plan Assessment of Classrooms Observed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of Effective Lesson Plans</th>
<th>Elementary (N=17)</th>
<th>Middle School (N=11)</th>
<th>High School (N=11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Objective</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisites</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Procedures</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials and Equipment</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment / Evaluation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

The HCPS teacher contract addresses lesson plans.\(^7\) Section 3.2.1 states the following:

> The principal or principal’s designee may request teachers to submit a copy of their lesson plans or outlines used for the teaching week at the end of the last day of that teaching week. The principal may request the copies at the end of a particular unit. The teachers’ plans are to be used as a guide in order to fulfill the county’s instructional objectives and to assist the teacher in conducting a planned instructional program. Current lesson plans shall be available in the classroom for inspection at all times. Teachers shall not be routinely required to submit a copy of their lesson plans or outlines to the site administrator.

Submitting lesson plans at the end of the week, post-instruction, decreases the opportunity for instructional leaders to provide input regarding potential improvements to the lesson, and does not support the principal in planning classroom walkthroughs. Having the opportunity to preview and review lesson plans prior to walkthroughs helps instructional leaders target their walkthroughs as well as inform what they expect to see when visiting the classroom. While the lesson plan is supposed to be available in the classroom for inspection, the notion that principals cannot routinely require lesson plans or review lesson plans prior to instruction is contradictory to best practice in instructional leadership and supervision.

\(^7\) http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/doc/405/teachercontract-document
Principals perceived that they could not “prescribe” the template that teachers use nor require the components of the lesson plan. In general they stated they lacked clarity about what they could and could not do regarding lesson plans.

HCPS should attempt to negotiate the lesson plan provision in the teacher contract to reflect best practice. Lesson plans should be submitted to principals the week before instruction and should contain the essential elements supported by research and best practices.

**Fiscal Impact**

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources. However, additional common planning time will be required for elementary teachers. See Recommendation 1-4 in this chapter regarding teacher planning time.

**Teacher Planning Time**

When a school system is implementing standards-based teaching and learning, adequate common planning time and high quality teacher collaboration are essential for success. The structure for collaborative planning that most school systems adopt is commonly referred to as professional learning communities (PLCs). The intention and purpose of PLCs is often misunderstood and teachers will sometimes say we “do” PLCs. PLCs are not something you “do” but rather it is a way of working that engages teachers in deep learning of their content and grade-level standards and in the cycle of planning, delivering, and assessing instruction.

PLCs are separate and apart from the teacher’s individual planning time. The PLC structure addresses the time that teachers are working together in grade level and/or content teams and is essential for effective teacher collaboration that makes a difference in student academic achievement. The most commonly accepted model for PLCs is based on the design developed by Rick and Rebecca Dufour (2012). In the DuFour model, the focus of all PLC meetings is based on addressing the following four questions:

1. **What is it we expect our student to learn?** Teachers delve deeply into the priority and supporting standards for a unit of instruction and identify what they want students to know, understand, and do as a result of mastering the given standards.

2. **How will we know when they have learned it?** Teachers develop common short-cycle formative and end of unit summative assessments that provide evidence of the students’ ability to apply their learning and demonstrate that they have mastered the standard(s).

3. **How will we respond when some students do not learn?** When teachers design units of instruction and lessons, they anticipate the modifications/adaptations they may need to make for ELL and ESE students as well as anticipate how to differentiate for students who may struggle. This is essential for preventing versus responding to failure.
4. How will we respond when some students already know it? Answering this question causes teachers to address enrichment strategies for students who have already mastered or who will quickly master the standard(s).

In regular, weekly PLC meetings, teachers should engage in a cycle of planning that follows the graphic in Figure 1.9.

Figure 1.9. PLC Procedural Flow of Work

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. 2016.

The University of Virginia has a nationally renowned school turnaround program that partners with school district leadership teams to address the district conditions, systems, and processes, essential for schools to thrive, improve, and in cases of chronic low performance, turnaround. One of their essential, non-negotiable conditions for a partnership is the district’s ability to create a once a week 60-minute PLC meeting for teachers during year one and a once a week 90-minute consecutive PLC meeting in year two of the partnership (Partnership for Leaders in Education. University of Virginia, n.d.). This is based on their experience with multiple districts over many years and supports the concept that it is unrealistic to expect teachers to plan, deliver, and respond to the expectations of standards-based teaching and learning without adequate time to collaborate.

Common errors of PLC implementation include the failure to provide adequate time for deep, rich discussion and/or lack of training in the protocols and practices that ensure the PLC is not just “another meeting.” When PLCs are implemented, it is essential that leadership and skilled facilitators be in the
meetings using a gradual release model until teachers have built their capacity to lead their own PLCs with occasional administrative support.

**Recommendation 1-4: Develop and support a model of teacher collaboration that includes the planning and data analysis cycle and increased common planning time for teacher collaboration.**

A review of the district’s teacher contract, bell schedule, and comments from the teacher and principal focus groups reveal there is insufficient time, as it is currently structured, for the amount of collaborative planning necessary to successfully implement a standards-based teaching and learning model, particularly for elementary teachers.

Table 1.4 describes the planning time by grade level as it is currently structured followed by the language in the HCPS teacher contract that relates to planning time. The information for high schools is based on the traditional schedule. There are a number of alternative schedules and extended day options to increase instructional times for students, but in general, this provides a picture of the “current state” in HCPS.

**Table 1.4. HCPS Teacher Planning Time by Grade Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Bell Schedule</td>
<td></td>
<td>8:00am – 2:15pm</td>
<td>9:00am – 4:15pm</td>
<td>7:33am – 3:05pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Planning Time</td>
<td>Individual teacher planning time</td>
<td>30 minutes before or after the student day and 30 minutes during the school day during specials (Art, Music, and PE)</td>
<td>55 minutes during the school day</td>
<td>55 or 60 minutes during school day based on design of schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Time</td>
<td></td>
<td>55 or 60 minutes during school day based on design of schedule</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Release Monday</td>
<td>Teacher work time</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes per Monday*</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.7.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Day Tuesday</td>
<td>Necessary school related meetings</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HCPS Proposed Bell Schedule 2017 and the 2013-2106 School Board of Hillsborough County and Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association Teacher Contract

Language and guidance regarding teacher planning time can be found in **Section 2 – Work Year and Hours** and **Section 3 Teacher Rights and Responsibilities** in the teacher contract. The most relevant sections are described below.
Section 2.1 Work Year

2.1 The District shall establish early release days. Early release days shall be designated as teacher work time. The scheduling of early release days may be changed upon consultation agreement between the School District of Hillsborough County and the Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association. If specials and/or a duty-free lunch are not provided during the student portion of early release days, comp time shall be granted for loss of planning and/or lunch. If both specials and a duty-free lunch are not provided during the student portion of early release days, the teacher shall be provided with a restroom break in addition to comp time. No more than one hour per month may be used for PLCs or other data gathering/planning intended to increase student achievement. A different activity may be scheduled during that time if a faculty – through a secret ballot vote with 2/3 approval – agrees to do so. Activities should be intended to increase student achievement.

Section 2.4 Duty Hours

2.4.1 The duty day for teachers shall be eight hours. The normal hourly duty day for eight-hour teachers shall be followed during pre-planning, post-planning and teacher workday. On conference days/nights, the length of day for eight-hour teachers shall be six hours, including one hour for lunch.

Section 2.7 Planning and Lunch Periods

2.7.1 Teachers shall have daily planning time during which they will not be responsible for students, attendance at faculty meetings, or be assigned to other duties except for emergencies. The school office shall maintain a duty roster available for teacher examination, to ascertain the equity of emergency assignments.

2.7.2 Secondary teachers (6-12) in schools with planning periods of 55 minutes or less shall have no duty assignments during their planning period.

Secondary teachers (6-12) in schools with planning periods of at least 60 minutes shall have a scheduled planning period of at least one full period during half the school year. During one half of the school year, their planning period may be shortened to forty-five consecutive minutes in order to complete duty assignments, as may be necessary to ensure student safety. Such duty assignments shall be posted. (Exceptions may be necessary during lunch period supervision if other alternatives have been exhausted.)

In secondary schools (6-12) where the schedule permits a 50-minute lunch period, teachers may be assigned a maximum of 15 minutes duty for student supervision for half the school year during lunch or a comparable duty assignment within the regular teacher day except those times set aside specifically for teacher planning. (See contract section 2.7.1, 2.7.3)
2.7.3 Secondary teachers in schools with seven student instructional periods shall have a scheduled planning period of at least one full period per day.

2.7.4 Planning time for teachers, working on teams, shall normally be scheduled to accommodate team planning.

2.7.5 Elementary teachers, K-5, shall be provided with a weekly minimum of two and one-half hours of planning time within the student day (equivalent to thirty consecutive, uninterrupted minutes per day). Elementary teachers’ planning time shall take place before or after the student day and during the day when students are with special services teachers or in the case of kindergarten teachers when an aide is present.

Section 3.7 Faculty Meetings and Professional Development

3.7.3 Tuesdays shall be used for necessary school related meetings including, but not limited to, principal-called faculty, building committee, and grade level meetings. This day may be extended by 25 minutes beyond the work day and is set aside specifically for all necessary meetings to help insure guaranteed personal planning time for teachers on the remaining days of the work week. This language is not intended to prohibit teachers from collaborating with colleagues on an informal basis.

Creating time for a weekly PLC meeting is limited by additional language in section 2.1.9 of the teacher contract:

No more than one hour per month may be used for PLCs or other data gathering/planning intended to increase student achievement. A different activity may be scheduled during that time if a faculty – through a secret ballot vote with 2/3 approval – agrees to do so. Activities should be intended to increase student achievement.

The review team recommends the following two strategies to improve teacher collaboration and increase time for teachers to work together in content and grade level teams:

1. **Adopt a model for PLCs and provide ongoing professional development and support as well as accountability for implementation and outcomes.** For PLCs to have the desired impact, they need to be focused, purposeful, and have a clear outcome for every PLC meeting. PLCs should be supported by protocols that guide teachers through the four essential questions and facilitated by members of the instructional leadership team and/or instructional coaches until such time teacher leaders and/or department chairs can assume leadership. In most high functioning districts, this process typically takes two academic years and even then, campus instructional leadership staff should maintain an active role in the PLC meetings.

   Based on information provided by district-level administrators, the district introduced an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) model in the 2014-15 school year to provide an opportunity for site-teachers and administrators to deepen their understanding of the application of
standards-based instruction in all classrooms and to build teacher leadership capacity at each site. The ILT was expanded from the initial implementation of a core team of teacher leaders to PLCs in 2015-16. The focus is on using data to identify students’ standards-based instructional needs, teachers’ professional learning needs, and triangulation of data to address prioritization of instruction along with prioritization of professional learning needs. Teacher focus groups indicated that there is inconsistent implementation and they lack adequate time to complete the work to a level of depth that impacts instruction. With increased accountability for implementation, paired with the recommendation to increase weekly PLC planning time, this model could be leveraged to accomplish its intended goals.

2. Work with the Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association and if necessary, scheduling consultants, to increase the daily planning time for elementary teachers and to create a once a week PLC meeting that allows for a minimum of 60 consecutive minutes within the school day and ideally 90 consecutive minutes in year two and subsequent years. The lack of adequate individual and common planning time at the elementary level is a significant barrier to the implementation of standards-based teaching and learning. While secondary teachers have a longer daily planning time, they too are lacking a structure for a once a week PLC meeting with their grade level/course colleagues for the purpose of engaging in the work of the PLC planning cycle.

Fiscal Impact

Unless scheduling consultants are required, this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. District leaders are confident that if they could reallocate existing planning time and re-work master calendars, that the time currently exists to achieve the goal of assuring at least a one time per week PLC meeting while maintaining existing individual teacher planning time.

Model of Instruction

Models of instruction represent the broadest level of instructional practices and reflect the philosophy of the school district regarding its beliefs about effective instruction. Instructional models can be used as a basis to improve instruction, as a guide for classroom observations, and as a framework for professional development. A district-wide model of instruction serves to create a common language to discuss effective teaching and it establishes a set of common expectations about instruction across the district.

One example of a model of instruction is the 5E Model, an instructional model based on the constructivist approach to learning, which says that learners build or construct new ideas on top of their old ideas. Each of the 5 E’s describes a phase of learning, and each phase begins with the letter "E": Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate. A district using this model of instruction would ensure that all teachers have a rich repertoire of strategies to successfully implement each phase of the model and classroom walkthrough instruments would look for implementation of these strategies. Other examples of system alignment around the district’s model of instruction include lesson plan templates that contain these phases, as well as professional development opportunities for teachers to deepen their skills in these
Another model with elements the team observed sporadically during classroom observations is the Gradual Release of Responsibility model of instruction (GRR). This model is broadly recognized as a successful approach for moving classroom instruction from teacher-centered, whole-group delivery to student-centered collaboration and independent practice. A number of lesson plans or statements written on the board included the “I do, We do, You do,” statements representative of the GRR model.

The review team is not advocating any one model of instruction but share these as two examples of models that describe a common vision of what good instruction looks like, and provides some ways in which district systems can align around the vision.

**Recommendation 1-5: Clarify and support the implementation of a model of instruction to guide instruction and professional development in HCPS.**

During focus group meetings, when asked about the district’s model of instruction, the general consensus of the principals was that there is no district-wide model of instruction and that it varied from school to school based on the individual philosophy of each school. The closest document provided to the review team that reflects a district-wide model of instruction is the draft of the Essential Practices that was under development led by the recently departed Chief Academic Officer. While district curriculum leaders point to models of instruction, for example in ELA there is Gradual Release of Responsibility, Understanding by Design, Literacy Design Collaborative, that are embedded in the instructional support tools, the teachers and principals in the focus groups could not speak to, nor were they aware of, a district model of instruction.

The district should develop a working committee of district curriculum leaders, teacher leaders, and principals to explore the various models of instruction and develop strategies to deepen administrator and teacher understanding of these models. Where possible, the district should streamline and adopt the “HCPS Model of Instruction”. It is essential that any model of instruction is built on a strong research base and is reflective of the beliefs of the district, especially the teachers. District leaders should carefully clarify the purpose of developing a model of instruction, the benefit at the district-, school-, and classroom-level, and the expected impact on district systems such as professional development and the teacher induction program.

Once a model of instruction is agreed upon, the team can then focus on the high-impact professional development strategies the district believes will best support implementation of the model. Having clarification around a core set of instructional strategies that the district expects all teachers to successfully implement will help to provide a focus for professional development. The core instructional

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strategies are not meant to be exclusive of other strategies but rather represent the foundation that all teachers are expected to have.

**Fiscal Impact**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**Student Data Analysis and Use**

A robust student data reporting system should deliver a complete performance picture, including results from all of the district’s assessments, including formative assessments, benchmark or interim assessments, state summative assessments, and early literacy assessments, among other sources. It is essential that the data system supports teachers and administrators in the early identification of which students and which schools need assistance. It is equally important to use this information to alter instruction. Student data provides rich and insightful information that should point to specific opportunities for improvement in the form of alternate teaching strategies. Student data analysis allows school systems and schools to individualize education programs for students by isolating specific student needs.

Student data analysis should also include the analysis of possible influencing factors in student performance, such as attendance in class or discipline referrals. The root cause of student under-performance may not relate to a teaching strategy.

The timeliness of student performance data is critical to making decisions regarding the students’ education. Performance data should be analyzed in time to affect instruction so that the student may keep pace with the curriculum scope and sequence. Districts and schools need access to a continuous stream of data to monitor students’ progression through the curriculum and to identify students at risk of under-performance when there is still time to proactively intervene. This information can also be used to identify school-level and teacher needs and improvement opportunities.

The examination of student data analysis and use addresses the following questions:

- Are HCPS program administrative and instructional staff effectively using automated or other tools to support the analysis of student outcomes and variables that might influence those outcomes?
- Is the analysis of data resulting in modification of instruction in order to improve academic results?

Having a valid and reliable assessment system has an additional level of importance in that HCPS uses a value-added model (VAM) as a component of their teacher pay system. In 2009, HCPS applied for and won a major grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation aimed at transforming how teachers are recruited, developed, rewarded and retained. As part of this grant, *Empowering Effective Teachers (EET)*, teachers could receive a pay for performance bonus in part based on student data. While the district is deciding
how much of this system it can continue to fund, the inclusion of student performance data is a requirement of the Florida teacher evaluation system and continues to be important regardless of the decisions made regarding the pay for performance system.

An added benefit of the EET grant was the additional investment in the district’s data system infrastructure. The funds supported extensive work to ensure that the district assessments were valid and reliable and the district was able to purchase and partner with SchoolCity to design a data warehouse that also serves as the vehicle for authoring, delivering, and scoring assessments. District leaders are able to see formative and summative test data in SchoolCity. These data can be disaggregated and viewed for the entire district, by area, by school, by teacher, and student. These data can also be broken down demographically. There are many custom reports already available that will populate with the most current data. All core content data can be viewed as well as summative data for all middle and high school courses. The platform is robust and the district efforts continue to make the data warehouse even more beneficial to the district. The district is hoping that a percentile ranking will be a new feature available across all tests in the fall 2017.

Each of the area office Academic Leadership Teams includes a professional development liaison that provides training for SchoolCity. These individuals also provide professional development on the district’s assessment system for all new assistant principals and principals. Additionally, “help” documents and training documents for the use of SchoolCity are housed in IDEAS.

The Office of Assessment and Accountability has recently been reorganized, moving it from the Office of Information Technology to the Office of Teaching and Learning. In addition, the Office of Teaching and Learning has funded an additional position in Assessment and Accountability. This position is primarily focused on reading, with the responsibility for managing the state mandated Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading Florida Standards (FAIR-FS), including analysis and communication to the schools of school and student level data. The goal is for the schools to understand the implications of these data.

Current research and discussions of approaches to assessment make the distinction between two purposes of an assessment system: (1) assessment “for learning” (Brookhart, 2009; Stiggins, 2005) which includes assessment activities that assist teachers to improve instructional practice and student learning and (2) assessments “of learning” to provide information for education accountability purposes. Formative assessments, such as daily checks for understanding, and short-cycle unit assessments are examples of formative assessments for learning, while summative assessments, like End-of-Course and Florida Standards Assessment tests are examples of assessment of learning.

Many assessments serve both purposes depending on the user and the timing of the assessment. Formative assessments for learning, such as unit assessments, can be used for that purpose at the classroom level but when aggregated to the school and district level can provide evaluative information of learning. Interim assessments, often referred to as benchmark assessments, assist the district with a system-wide look at student achievement including identifying patterns and trends across the district as well as providing an advance look at how well students are prepared for state summative assessments.
With the timely turnaround of data, the right level of reporting, and a deep data analysis process, interim benchmark assessments can provide a robust assessment “for learning” as well as “of learning.”

For a district to have the full range of data necessary to improve student achievement, track the effectiveness of its instructional practices, assess implementation of its curriculum, and respond to student learning needs prior to state summative assessments, it is essential that the district has a fully developed assessment system. The National Research Council defines a quality assessment system as one that is: (1) coherent, (2) comprehensive, and (3) continuous (NRC, 2001).

In a coherent system, all components are aligned with the key goals (standards) for student learning. A comprehensive assessment system addresses the full range of knowledge and skills expected by the standards and it provides different users at different levels in the system (district, school, classroom) with the right kind of information, at the right level of detail, to help with decision-making. A system that is continuous provides ongoing data about student learning throughout the year so that the district can respond to student and teacher learning needs prior to state summative assessments (NRC, 2001).

Figure 1.10 highlights the interrelationships between three types of assessments—formative, benchmark, and annual—in a comprehensive assessment system. The learning targets assessed by frequent formative assessment in the classroom build toward the longer-term targets addressed by periodic benchmark assessments. Benchmark data inform teaching and learning that occurs prior to the annual assessment, which in turn transfers into subsequent years of teaching, learning, and assessment. The smaller, more frequent assessments build on and support each other to keep learning moving forward.

Figure 1.10. Interrelationships among Assessments

Source: Data Use for Improving Learning, A Part of AACC http://datause.cse.ucla.edu/
HCPS has a robust system of data that addresses all the components of a comprehensive assessment system. The district also has the technology infrastructure to house and report data in a timely manner and produce teacher-friendly reports. Principals and teachers interviewed in the focus groups spoke highly of SchoolCity and the responsiveness of the Office of Assessment and Accountability to their requests for additional data, customized reports, and support.

To address the need for quickly and easily creating standards-aligned formative assessments, SchoolCity houses item banks and teachers can build their own assessments within the platform for end of unit or weekly unit assessments. In fact, there were several examples of these formative assessments within the elementary ELA and middle school math curriculum support materials. All core content areas at the elementary and secondary level have formative assessment item banks that can be accessed through SchoolCity.

At the elementary level, the content supervisors in the Office of Teaching and Learning have worked closely with the Office of Assessment and Accountability to create benchmark or interim assessments in reading and math that are correlated to the FSA item specifications and show a high likelihood of success on the FSA. In addition to the ELA interim assessment, the state provides, and in certain grades requires, districts to administer the FAIR-FS assessments.

The FAIR-FS provides teachers with screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic information for guiding reading instruction. The K-2 assessment is designed as a broad screening and progress monitoring tool while the FAIR-FS in Grades 3-12 is a computer-based, adaptive reading comprehension assessment, aligned to the Florida reading standards and designed to predict success on the FSA9.

Students take the assessment three times a year during a designated testing window. Districts with elementary schools that fall into the category of the state’s 300 lowest performing schools based on FSA reading scores, of which there are 40 in Hillsborough County, are required to provide additional reading time and complete a district reading improvement plan. The FAIR-FS assessment data from the identified schools is reviewed by the state through a performance reporting management system.

Given the fact that the FAIR-FS assessment is required three times per year in Grades 3-5, schools were given the option to use the FAIR-FS in lieu of the ELA interim assessment. This was in response to a concern that too much time was being lost to testing. However, the vast majority of schools elected to give the ELA interim assessment, especially the mid-year administration, as it is a reliable predictor of performance on the state summative exam and mirrors the format and test stamina required for the FSA.

The Office of Assessment and Accountability will build interim assessments for science and social studies upon request.

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9 http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7506/urlt/JRFUD.pdf
At the secondary level, there is a system of semester exams that are constructed under the leadership of the content supervisors in Teaching and Learning in collaboration with the Office of Assessment and Accountability. The content supervisors convene teachers to assist with writing standards-aligned test questions that are placed in the item bank in SchoolCity. Teachers are paid a stipend for their time and the Office of Assessment and Accountability builds the tests from the item bank. All reports that go back to the school include the standards that were assessed so teachers can analyze results by standard. Semester exams are considered a high stakes assessment in that they count for percent of a student’s grade.

As an example of a best practice, the middle and secondary ELA (language arts and reading) worked with consultants from the Center of Assessment to write new standards-aligned semester exam items. A cadre of teachers were selected to learn the process of understanding standards’ expectations and then used that knowledge to select appropriate text and create assessment items that align to standards’ expectations. The plan is for the teacher cadre members to provide workshops for other ELA teachers to support the classroom teachers’ development of formative assessment items.

Formative, interim, and summative data each have a unique value to the district and campus leadership and to classroom teachers. Formative assessments help teachers make corrections while instruction is still taking place and corrections can be made to prevent failure. Interim assessments help teachers and school leaders identify students who are on or off track for success on end of year summative assessments. Interim assessments can also identify weaknesses in the curriculum and instruction system, the effectiveness of various programs, identify school and district-level learning problems, track students’ progress, and identify professional development needs.

Ultimately, the goal of each of these forms of assessment is to strengthen first time teaching and prevent student failure. However, without adequate time and robust processes and protocols for examining and acting upon data, the assessment strategy will not impact this goal and teachers will most likely view assessment as a compliance activity that does not add value to the teaching and learning process.

**Recommendation 1-6: Create a protocol for analyzing and taking action on formative assessments.**

The current practice for analyzing and acting upon formative data across HCPS is fragmented with no one consistent model of PLCs trained, supported, and monitored. Additionally, the limited amount of common planning time that elementary teachers have within the workday is a barrier to using data to improve instruction. A common observation of the elementary teacher focus group was that they talked about data but then just moved on.

There are numerous protocols available to structure the work of responding to short-cycle formative assessments. The process should not be complex and at a minimum should do the following:

1. Identify students who need additional instruction.
2. Identify students who should have access to enrichment.
3. Capture insights about potential changes to first time instruction – what strategies worked well, which ones fell short.

4. Include the action(s) that the team and/or individual teachers will take to respond to the data.

The assumption is that the analysis is completed based on the planning and delivery of common lessons and common formative assessments. With this structure in place, teachers can learn from one another, assist each other with strategies, and if they capture insights about effective and ineffective strategies of first-time instruction, when they reteach the unit the following year, the unit and lessons can be modified to reflect the prior year learning. In addition, generating a team action plan can be used to focus classroom walkthroughs. Members of the instructional leadership team can observe instruction as one strategy for monitoring implementation of the action plan.

The expertise to guide teachers through the process of analyzing and acting upon formative assessment data resides in the district.

**Fiscal Impact**

This fiscal impact of this recommendation is influenced by the outcome of a separate recommendation related to increasing the planning time for elementary teachers (see Recommendation 1-4). Without common planning time, then at least one of the early release Mondays should focus solely on analyzing formative assessment results and creating a next steps action plan. It is assumed that common planning time can be negotiated and that no additional cost will need to be incurred.

**Recommendation 1-7: Conduct detailed analyses immediately following the administration of district interim assessments.**

Information from interim assessments is typically aggregated and reported at the school and district levels to inform principals and central office staff. These data can be used to review the effectiveness of various programs, identify school and district-level learning problems, track students’ progress, and identify professional development needs. Benchmark assessments should be cumulative in nature—meaning they test the content taught during the identified time period as well as the priority standards from previous testing periods. This allows teachers and administrators to see how students are progressing through the district’s curriculum and how well they are retaining previously taught content (Bambrick-Santoyo 2010).

It is essential that the district provide time in the school calendar for deep data analysis following the return of interim assessment data. Some school districts and schools create an early release or late start day to provide extended time during PLC meetings for deep data analysis and action planning (minimum of two hours). Others engage in creative scheduling such as extra-curricular teachers covering an extended class to provide at least two hours for a data meeting. Another best practice is the scheduling of a district professional development day with the sole purpose of data analysis and action planning. This creates the opportunity for focused central office support for the process and the opportunity for vertical planning and content specific strategies training to address weaknesses identified by the assessments. Regardless of the strategy the district chooses, it is imperative that teachers be provided with the time to analyze the
results of interim assessments or it will become a compliance exercise that does not impact instruction or student achievement.

Two implementation strategies for this recommendation are presented below:

1. **Revise the district assessment calendar.** The district assessment calendar should be revised to reflect the window of time not only for the assessment but also for the analysis and action planning process. This demonstrates the district’s commitment to providing time to analyze and act upon the data. It also creates a structure for guiding principals and coaches through a common process for leading and facilitating the deep data dives.

2. **Provide resources and tools that support moving from analysis to action planning.** Data analysis that does not lead to action is not useful. Discussions that are limited to simply observing that data exist (e.g., results are up) do nothing to improve teaching and learning.

Instructional leaders at the campus level should consider adding individual data meetings with teachers or teams of teachers to discuss interim assessment results. According to Bambrick-Santoyo (2012), “Effective 30-minute analysis meetings between leaders and teachers are the highest-leverage time a leader can spend” (p. 35). While classroom walkthroughs provide a brief glimpse at instruction, a well-designed data analysis meeting provides an opportunity for the administrator to gain an in-depth understanding of a teacher’s thinking, and to influence the next steps to improve instruction and support struggling students. A sample guide for planning and leading an effective data analysis meeting is included in Appendix B.

In order to make this task more manageable, administrators may want to pilot it with one or two grade level teams to start. Principals may want to model the process with their assistant principals so they too can hold data meetings thus distributing the workload. Additionally, time spent in individual data analysis meetings should offset district expectations for classroom walkthroughs.

Each data analysis meeting should conclude with a teacher action plan that addresses the following questions:

- What will the teacher do differently as a result of the data analysis process?
- What standards need to be retaught to the class as a whole, what standards warrant small group instruction and what students need individual intervention?

A sample assessment analysis and instructional plan to guide this process is included in Appendix C. These forms as well as the others provided in the Appendix are samples that HCPS may want to modify to meet their unique needs.
Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact of this recommendation will depend on the approach for creating time for deep data analysis the district chooses to pursue. At the low end of impact is a strategy to expand a 60-minute PLC meeting to a 120-minute meeting. At the higher end of impact is a district half or full professional development day that would involve renegotiating the existing teacher contract as it relates to days of instruction and professional development days.

Instructional Resources and Support

Instructional resources are defined as all resources designed to support the instruction of a subject or course. Instructional resources include, but are not limited to, textbooks, teacher manuals, apparatus, kits, games, computer software, library books, films, periodicals, speakers (from inside or outside the school district), photographs, videos, DVDs, online databases, selected Internet sites and other print and non-print resources.

Figure 1.11 describes the relationship between what teachers want students to know and be able to do (learning objectives), the activities that will reinforce the learning objectives (instructional activities) and prepare students for the assessments, and the kinds of tasks (assessments) that will reveal whether or not the students have achieved the learning objectives.

Figure 1.11. Alignment of Learning Objective, Assessments and Instructional Strategies


A coherent student learning experience is based on an alignment between all three components. If there is misalignment in any one area, it can undermine student motivation and learning. The alignment of instructional activities presumes that teachers have access to an array of curriculum-aligned resources to support the learning objectives and the instructional activities associated with a given unit of instruction.
The examination of instructional resources and support addressed the following questions:

- What instructional resources are available to schools and teachers to support the effective delivery of curriculum?
- What instructional resources are available to schools and teachers to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching practices?

The district has a strong process in place for ensuring supplemental instructional materials meet a standard of quality and are supported by the Office of Teaching and Learning. Most supplemental resources beyond the adopted textbooks are purchased with Title 1 and Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) funds. In many districts, especially a district the size of Hillsborough County, the district Title 1 office frequently makes decisions about and purchases supplemental instructional programs for district-wide use in isolation or without consultation with curriculum and instruction. As a result, there is often poor implementation with instructional materials not being used or being used inappropriately, and the district may be unable to provide professional development support for implementation.

The Title 1 Office shared an example of a purchase they made for district-wide implementation (Success Maker) that had exactly this result, and as a result the Title 1 Office no longer makes district-wide purchases. Rather, the funds go to the schools and schools select from an approved list that was developed in concert with the Office of Teaching and Learning. If a principal requests a supplemental resource not on the list, the Title 1 Office does not approve the purchase until an instructional materials review committee has investigated the program and determined if it is an appropriate investment. A similar process is in place for the purchase of supplemental resource materials for ESE.

All the supplemental resource materials purchased with Title 1 and IDEA funds must meet a standard of evidence or research-based effectiveness. The most rigorous evaluation of a district instructional resource is the implementation of i-Ready. The i-Ready program is a computer-based, state approved program for reading interventions. The state of Florida identifies the 300 lowest performing elementary schools in the state based on student performance and improvement in reading on the Florida Standards Assessment. Schools on the list are required to add an extra hour of reading instruction to the school day, which could be at the beginning of the day, the end of the day or a combination of both. The Title 1 Office has a position that is responsible for ensuring fidelity of implementation. Program implementation is monitored through:

- Classroom walkthroughs
- Periodic data analysis and reporting directly to the Florida Department of Education. Analysis examines:
  - Student time on task
  - Use of materials, specifically teachers’ use of the teacher handbook, student workbook, and lessons. These artifacts are examined during the classroom walkthroughs
Contracted professional development from Curriculum Associates, the publishers of i-Ready

The expectation is that students will experience at least a year’s worth of growth.

Beyond the i-Ready program, there is no formal evaluation process for supplemental instructional resources beyond the requirement that they be research or evidence-based if using Title 1 or IDEA funds.

Supplemental instructional resources are often used to supplement the strategies and resources teachers have to differentiate instruction and to meet the needs of students receiving ELL and ESE services. The absence of differentiation strategies was noted during the classroom visits and the review of lesson plans.

The various content area curriculum sites are inconsistent in identifying the supplemental resources that teachers can use to support and supplement core instruction beyond the adopted textbook series or primary instructional resource, e.g., SpringBoard. Having the supplemental resources identified and aligned with the units of instruction will help teachers more efficiently plan to address options for differentiation as well as provide an additional resource for teachers when they are seeking alternative teaching strategies from those used in first-time instruction.

**Recommendation 1-8: Align supplemental instructional resources that support core content instruction with the district’s curriculum and integrate with units of instruction.**

A component of the unit plan (discussed in the previous section) is the identification of instructional materials and supplemental resources that support the standards-based unit of instruction. As an example, the unit plans housed in the elementary ELA planning tool provide teachers with the information they need regarding the content and its location in Journey’s, the district’s primary ELA instructional resource. This encourages standards-based instructional planning in that it assists teachers to align instruction with the district curriculum pacing guides, rather than working their way sequentially through the Journey’s reading program. In addition, teachers have access to other online and hard copy resources.

Identifying the primary supplemental resources that the district recommends to address the need for differentiation as well as the modifications and adaptations for ELL and ESE students, and adding that information to the unit planning template, should increase the likelihood that teachers will integrate these additional steps into the planning and delivery of instruction. This should be applied to the unit planning documents for all core content areas and all grade levels.

**Fiscal Impact**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**Teacher Evaluation and Observation**

Decades of research has demonstrated that teachers are the most important within-school component of student learning and achievement growth (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2010), and that they play a fundamental role in improving student performance (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, &
Wahlstrom, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004). Evaluation systems can provide useful information to inform efforts aimed at raising overall performance, closing achievement gaps, and creating cultures of continuous improvement in schools and districts.

Well-designed and well-implemented aligned evaluation systems, as described in Goe, Biggers, and Croft (2012), provide assessment-centered environments that have the potential to help teachers learn and improve. They suggest that this can be done by: (1) establishing a shared understanding of effective practice, (2) producing evidence-based feedback, and (3) assessing learning and collaboration. Successful systems also involve expert evaluators looking at multiple sources of data and providing timely and meaningful feedback to the teacher (Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012).

In this section, the examination of the HCPS teacher observation and evaluation process addresses the following questions:

1. Is the current approach to evaluating instructional staff meaningful and effective?
2. Are teacher evaluations done frequently enough to make any needed improvements?
3. Does HCPS use classroom observation instruments to support the evaluation of teachers?
4. Does the district use classroom observations instruments and analysis to support the implementation of academic programs or teaching strategies?
5. Are standard observation instruments used by qualified and trained personnel to ensure the highest value of classroom observations?

The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) does not present a single state model for teacher evaluation but rather defines the requirements that district systems must meet. The requirements are described in Section 1012.34, Florida Statutes\(^\text{10}\). The FLDOE clearly states the purpose of district evaluation systems is to increase student learning growth by improving the quality of instructional, administrative, and supervisory services in the public schools of the state.

Specific criteria include:

- A performance evaluation must be conducted for each instructional employee and school administrator at least once a year and twice a year for newly hired classroom teachers in their first year of teaching in the district.

- District evaluation systems must be based upon sound educational principles and contemporary research in effective educational practices and must support continuous improvement of effective instruction and student learning growth.

\(^{10}\text{Florida Department of Education – Information and Resources. http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/performance-evaluation/}\)
Evaluation procedures for instructional personnel and school administrators shall be based on the performance of students assigned to their classrooms or schools, as appropriate. Student performance must be measured by the required state assessments as specified in Section 1008.22, Florida Statutes, and local assessments for subjects and grade levels not measured by the state.

Districts are given the discretion to select the instructional framework they will use to build and organize their evaluation system from a list of approved research-based frameworks. HCPS selected the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching. The Framework for Teaching is a research-based set of components of instruction, grounded in a constructivist view of learning and teaching that breaks the activity of teaching into 22 components (and 76 smaller elements) clustered into four domains of teaching responsibility. Figure 1.12 provides a description of the four domains and 22 components.

Figure 1.12. Domains and Components of the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching

- **Domain 1: Planning and Preparation**
  - Demonstrating knowledge of content pedagogy
  - Demonstrating knowledge of students
  - Setting instructional outcomes
  - Demonstrating knowledge of resources and technology
  - Designing coherent instruction
  - Designing student assessments

- **Domain 2: The Classroom Environment**
  - Creating an environment of respect and rapport
  - Establishing a culture for learning
  - Managing classroom procedures
  - Managing student behavior
  - Organizing physical space

- **Domain 3: Instruction**
  - Using questioning and discussion techniques
  - Engaging students in learning
  - Using assessment in instruction
  - Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness

- **Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities**
  - Reflecting on teaching
  - Maintaining accurate records
  - Communicating with stakeholders
  - Participating in a professional community
  - Growing and developing professionally
  - Showing professionalism

Source: Hillsborough County Public Schools Teacher Evaluation Handbook

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The Framework is the foundation for the HCPS observation process and it informs how HCPS defines effective teaching. As part of the grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, HCPS established and implemented their current teacher evaluation system.

As required by the grant as well as the FLDOE, the system includes a student performance measure that is based on a value-add model. Value-added models attempt to measure a specific impact or influence on a performance outcome, in this case, student achievement as measured by state summative and end of course assessments. The FLDOE describes the meaning of a VAM score as follows:

*The amount of the teacher's contribution to student learning is provided through a value-added score. Using the developmental scale of the assessment, the teacher's value-added score reflects the average amount of learning growth of the teacher's students above or below the expected learning growth of similar students in the state, using the factors accounted for in the model. For example, if a teacher's value-added score is 10, that means students taught by that teacher, on average, demonstrated learning growth of 10 points on the developmental scale higher than expected for similar students in the state. In this instance, "similar" means students that share the same student, classroom and school characteristics accounted for in the model. A score of 0 (zero) reflects average or typical performance*.

Not all teachers have a VAM score. For teachers of courses other than those associated with FSA tested grades and Grade 9 Algebra 1, districts select other assessment data to include as measures of student performance. In HCPS, elementary grades not tested by the FSA use district constructed end of year tests for specials teachers, the SAT 10 for grades one and two, and the Kindergarten Readiness evaluation for kindergarten. The district semester exams are used at the secondary level.

The HCPS formal evaluation system is supported by an evaluation rubric for each of the 22 components in the Framework for Teaching. The principal evaluates all teachers on all of the components. Sixteen components are evaluated using the same rubric by specially trained designated peer evaluators or mentor evaluators. Including the identification and training of these additional raters is a direct outcome of the work with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Mentor Evaluators evaluate all first and second year teachers. Peer Evaluators evaluate all other teachers. Their evaluation rating is based primarily on classroom observations. The Peers/Mentors evaluate all of the components in Domains 1, 2, and 3 of the evaluation rubric.

These additional evaluators are paid stipends and teachers can receive pay for performance bonuses based on their evaluation results. The continued inclusion of these evaluators as well as the pay for performance bonus is under review by the district due to current budget constraints.

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12 What does a VAM score mean? http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/performance-evaluation/
The VAM comprises 40 percent of a teacher’s overall annual evaluation, the principal evaluation comprises 35 percent, and the peer/mentor evaluation comprises the remaining 25 percent.

The Division of Human Resources uses Lawson Talent Management, one of three suites within the Strategic Human Capital Management System to create a teacher specific “space” where informal observations that are intended to inform the final evaluation are uploaded by observers. Teachers can also journal about their reflections on their teaching and can respond to informal observation feedback within this system. If the teacher marks his or her journal public then the principal and peer or mentor evaluators review the journal as part of the evaluation process.

After the ratings are completed, the results are uploaded in the teacher’s electronic record in Lawson Talent Management. The ratings are scored on a continuum with four possible ratings:

- Requires Action
- Progressing
- Accomplished
- Exemplary

Evaluators are required to provide written explanation for all indicators rated as “Requires Action.”

The HCPS Teacher Evaluation Handbook describes the frequency of evaluation and the evaluators. Table 1.5 describes the evaluation cycle and timeline.

Table 1.5. Evaluation Cycle and Timelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Evaluator</th>
<th>Evaluated</th>
<th>Date Due for Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Evaluation</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>- Teachers with 3 years of experience or less</td>
<td>Mid December (prior to Winter holiday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Teachers in their first year of employment in the district</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Teachers with more than 3 years’ experience, at principal’s discretion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Evaluation</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>- Teachers with 3 years of experience or less; recommended for non-re-nomination</td>
<td>Mid-March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer/Mentor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Evaluation</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>- Teachers with 3 years of experience or less, eligible for re-nomination</td>
<td>Final day of post planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer/Mentor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Evaluation</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>- Teachers with more than 3 years of experience</td>
<td>Final day of post planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hillsborough County Public Schools Teacher Evaluation Handbook
First year teachers and experienced teachers who are in their first year of employment with the district are required to have at least two evaluations during their first year in the district, and as a result, have a fall evaluation in addition to their spring evaluation. The principal conducts the fall evaluation.

The formal evaluation process in HCPS is typical of most observation systems. Figure 1.13 describes the steps in the process from the initial need to conduct the observation to the conclusion of the observation process.

Figure 1.13. HCPS Teacher Evaluation Process

By the end of the school year, teachers receive their annual principal evaluation ratings and their annual peer/mentor evaluation rating. When the VAM scores are released in the fall, they are combined with prior end of year evaluation scores and a final performance level rating is assigned. The HCPS rating levels are the same as the FLDOE ratings. Table 1.6 describes the scores and ratings assigned by the district and state.

Table 1.6. Classroom Teacher Performance Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Evaluation Score Range (Principal + Peer/Mentor + VAM)</th>
<th>District Level</th>
<th>State Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70-100</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Highly Effective (HE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63-69.9999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Highly Effective (HE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-62.999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Effective (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-45.999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Needs Improvement (NI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-41.999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory (U)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Classroom Teacher Performance Levels. Hillsborough County Public Schools

Recommendation 1–9: Require principals to tier teachers into performance quadrants based on clear and agreed upon criteria.

Research has demonstrated that many teacher evaluation systems are ineffective, failing to include meaningful measures and involving minimal room for teacher growth and few consequences for poor ratings (Brandt, Mathers, Oliva, Brown-Sims, & Hess, 2007; Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008). Few existing appraisal systems successfully differentiate between effective and ineffective teachers, and in fact, in many school
systems, nearly all teachers are rated “Satisfactory” or “Excellent”, even as many of their students are failing to graduate from high school.

The HCPS evaluation system is not immune to this criticism. In the latest district report\(^ {13} \) (see Table 1.7), the aggregate average overall score rated the elementary, middle and high schools as “Effective.” The high schools in this table do not include career centers or alternative education or technical schools. The FLDOE identifies the 300 lowest performing elementary schools in the state based on reading scores and HCPS have 40 of these elementary schools, including two of the lowest five.

Table 1.7. Average of District Level Teacher Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Average of Overall Score</th>
<th>Average of District Level (Includes VAM Score)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>63.7672</td>
<td>3.7594 Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>62.2486</td>
<td>3.6142 Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>61.7763</td>
<td>3.5591 Effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hillsborough County Public Schools Teacher Evaluation Score Comparison

A deeper analysis of schools with an A rating – compared to schools with an F rating while showing more variation – still had the teachers in selected F schools rated on average as effective. This was particularly telling at two of the elementary schools that are rated by the state as in the lowest five statewide for reading performance.

Table 1.8 shows a comparison of the score components for three elementary schools with an A rating compared to five elementary schools with an F rating, including the two schools (*) identified by the FLDOE as included in the state’s five lowest performing elementary schools based on reading scores.

Table 1.8. Average Classroom Teacher Performance Level by A and F rated schools 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Average of Peer/Mentor Rating</th>
<th>Average of Principal Rating</th>
<th>Average of Final VAM 2016</th>
<th>Average of Overall Score</th>
<th>Average of District Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thompson</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>13.2157</td>
<td>20.6056</td>
<td>23.7138</td>
<td>57.5351</td>
<td>3.1774</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^ {13} \) Hillsborough County Public Schools Teacher Evaluation Score Comparison
Chapter 1 – General Education Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Average of Peer/Mentor Rating</th>
<th>Average of Principal Rating</th>
<th>Average of Final VAM 2016</th>
<th>Average of Overall Score</th>
<th>Average of District Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edison</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>14.1578</td>
<td>21.5496</td>
<td>24.3722</td>
<td>60.0796</td>
<td>3.3500 E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>14.0924</td>
<td>20.9166</td>
<td>22.8894</td>
<td>57.8984</td>
<td>3.1944 E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaw*</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>13.1180</td>
<td>20.4852</td>
<td>23.9190</td>
<td>57.5222</td>
<td>3.1458 E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hillsborough County Public Schools Teacher Evaluation Score Comparison

While the system shows the differences in the average of classroom teacher performance levels between schools rated A and schools rated F, it is difficult to understand how the teachers at two of the state’s lowest five performing schools have an overall rating of “Effective.”

This is consistent with information from the Assistant Superintendent focus group and interviews with district leaders that there is a need to more accurately address teachers who are not meeting performance expectations and increase the number of teachers on assistance plans. The shift in focus of Area Superintendents, who are the principal supervisors for the district from management to instructional leadership focused, is beginning to address this issue.

HCPS should apply a performance quadrant approach in evaluating teachers. Having principals place their teachers into one of four quadrants – based primarily on student learning data – can yield insights and generate important conversations between the principal and the principal’s supervisor. In implementing this approach, the following implementation strategies should be considered.

- **Use district formative and interim assessment data to rank order teachers** – The teachers should be rank ordered by their students’ performance on interim assessments, end-of-unit formative assessments, or other district measures of achievement and that data should be compared to the principal’s ranking of his or her teachers. There may be a well-founded reason for a discrepancy between the two, but at a minimum, the discrepancy creates the opportunity for a productive discussion.

- **Develop teacher support plans for teachers who are struggling but are not at the level that requires a formal assistance plan** – This group of teachers is frequently overlooked. They are not performing poorly enough to be on a formal growth plan, but are just barely getting a year’s worth of growth for their students or not quite getting a year’s worth of growth. Taking the time to identify one or two opportunities for improvement, followed by a well-crafted teacher professional development or support plan, can make a significant difference with this group of teachers. When teachers have honest feedback regarding their performance, reasonable improvement goals, and support to achieve their goals, teachers experience improvement in their performance and this ultimately improves teacher retention (Platt, A. 2000).
Use the information to prioritize walkthroughs and academic coaching – Once principals have accurately identified teachers by tier, this information can be used to prioritize and assign walkthroughs. For example, the principal may want to take responsibility for the teachers in the bottom quadrant and/or ensure that these classrooms receive more frequent visits. This information should also be used to prioritize the support offered by the campus academic coach.

Fiscal Impact

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 1-10: Expand and improve walkthrough observations and communication of results.

The goal of walkthroughs is to help administrators and teachers learn more about instruction and to identify what training and support teachers need. These observations typically involve looking at how well teachers are implementing a set of practices that the district or school has adopted (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007).

Although research on walk-throughs is limited, available studies reveal wide variation in their usefulness and effects. According to an in-depth study of three urban districts conducted by the Rand Corporation, administrators find walkthroughs more useful than do teachers, and those doing the walkthroughs report learning more than do those who are observed. However, when the walkthrough is paired with specific and timely feedback teacher perception of usefulness increases (Marsh et al., 2005).

Walkthroughs that yield the most useful/actionable data have the following characteristics:

- Focused “look-fors” that describe the critical instructional components identified by the district.
- Include “look-fors” that are linked to program goals and to areas of documented need.
- Include “look-fors” that are differentiated based on grade, instructional level, and identified student needs.

The University of Oregon has researched and published extensively on classroom walkthroughs, especially in the area of promoting effective literacy practices, and they suggest there are three types of walkthroughs:

1. Implementation Walkthrough – The purpose is to determine if an instructional program (e.g., reading) is being implemented as planned.

2. Instructional Walkthrough – The purpose is to determine if the instruction being delivered within the classroom reflects best practice for instructional effectiveness.
3. **Informational Walkthrough** – The purpose is to determine if the students are learning from the instruction being provided, and what evidence exists to back up the determination.\(^{14}\)

As an example of an implementation walkthrough, the University, in collaboration with the Oregon Department of Education, developed a Classroom Walkthrough Checklist specifically for observing elementary teachers during their 90-minute literacy block (see Appendix D). The checklist examines the instructional practices that teachers are expected to implement during the reading block as well as student engagement and specific teacher behaviors. An analysis at this level of depth supports focused feedback, informs the need for professional development and coaching, and supports the improvement of literacy instruction.

If HCPS elementary administrators routinely observed instruction during the 90-minute literacy block, using a detailed walkthrough instrument, they would generate the level of information necessary to plan and differentiate professional development to support implementation of the HCPS literacy framework.

An instructional walkthrough instrument should have enough specificity for each of the instructional strategies promoted by the district so that administrators know what to look for when they are conducting their walkthroughs. The walkthroughs should yield actionable data to support conferencing with individual teachers, whole faculty discussions, PLC meetings, and planning professional development. HCPS has at least two examples of content specific instructional strategies walkthrough guides in the secondary level curriculum materials on IDEAS.

With a more focused walkthrough instrument, campus leadership teams can highlight one or two areas at a time rather than trying to “cover the waterfront” during their walkthroughs.

The district should modify the Calibration Walkthrough Instrument to provide more specificity and differentiation for purpose and instructional level. With an increased level of specificity of walkthrough instruments, the district will be able to aggregate and analyze walkthrough data at a more granular level. The quality of the walkthrough must be high regardless of the observer.

Walkthrough instruments can be valuable if they are conducted consistently and rigorously across all observers. HCPS has a new Chief of Schools who joined the district for the 2016-17 school year. The Chief of Schools, together with the Superintendent, is leading the redesign of the area superintendents’ position to have a greater focus on supporting the instructional leadership responsibilities of the principals. A key initiative of the Chief of Schools is working with his team of assistant superintendents and their respective principals to conduct classroom walkthroughs, calibrate their observations and ensure that teachers have accurate, candid and constructive feedback within a 48-hour time period. At the time of this review, there was not a technology “container” to capture walkthrough data to identify trends, professional

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\(^{14}\) *Conduct classroom walkthroughs regularly and provide effective feedback* (2011). Retrieved from [http://oregonliteracypd.uoregon.edu/topic/conduct-classroom-walkthroughs-regularly-and-provide-effective-feedback](http://oregonliteracypd.uoregon.edu/topic/conduct-classroom-walkthroughs-regularly-and-provide-effective-feedback)
development needs, etc. but the district was investigating various options for moving in this direction. The review team supports this effort.

**Fiscal Impact**
This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**Teacher Professional Development**

Good teachers form the foundation of good schools, and improving teachers' knowledge and skills is one of the most important investments of time and money that a school district can make. In education, research confirms that the most important factor contributing to a student’s success in school is the quality of teaching.

Students need well-prepared teachers to implement curriculum or instructional strategies. To implement research-based instructional methods effectively, teachers need exposure to such approaches and support as they learn to implement them (Benton & Benton, 2008). For teachers to be as effective as possible, they must continually expand their knowledge and skills to implement the best educational practices (Mizzel, 2010). Teacher professional development is a common approach used to improve student achievement, school performance, and teacher quality (Benton & Benton, 2008; Colbert, Brown, Choi, & Thomas, 2008).

In effective professional development, district and school leadership teams analyze student achievement data to identify learning problems common to students in a particular grade or class, determine which problems educators have the most difficulty addressing, and investigate what they need to know and do to be more successful in helping students overcome learning challenges. Professional development that focuses on research-based instructional routines, involves active learning by the teachers, and allows teachers to adapt the instructional routines to their classrooms has been found to be effective in improving student achievement (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007).

This section examines the professional development strategy in HCPS in the context of the following questions:

1. What are the major elements of the current teacher professional development program?
2. How are professional development needs identified?
3. How does student performance drive the identification of teacher professional development?
4. How do teacher evaluations inform professional development needs?
5. How does HCPS determine whether its teacher professional development program is adding value to teacher effectiveness and student achievement?
6. What does HCPS spend annually on its teacher professional development program?
7. Does the district provide professional development in an efficient manner?
HCPS teachers have a limited number of professional development days designated in the teacher contract. The week prior to the start of school date for students, includes a Pre-Planning Week for teachers. During this week, four days are designated for teacher professional development that is planned and led by the district with the remaining day reserved for teacher planning and preparation. Beyond that, attendance at district sponsored professional development is largely at the discretion of the teacher, is voluntary, and in most cases on their own time after school, on Saturdays, and online outside of the school day. An exception to this is the professional development for teachers new to the profession and new to the district. They report a week early and participate in a new teacher induction program.

The leadership for professional development is in transition. Historically, the planning for professional development occurred in the Office of Teaching and Learning. However, as part of the current district reorganization plan, in July of 2016, leadership was moved to the Assistant Superintendent for Leadership and Professional Development. A rationale for the change was to improve the integration of the various departments into a more coordinated, and aligned approach to planning and delivering professional development. This should also increase the alignment between teacher and principal professional development.

As part of the transition, a new internal team, the Professional Learning Oversight Team (PLOT), has been formed and includes representation from the various divisions in the HCPS organization including representation from the eight area offices. While it is too early to assess impact, the goals of the reorganization include:

- Increase the collaboration across the school organization and decrease competing and duplicative professional development offerings.
- Design strategies to assess impact of professional development including rate of return on investment.
- Determine a mechanism for determining evidence of application of new learning.
- Ensure principals also receive the professional development they need to support classroom instructional goals.
- Increase the amount of professional development that is delivered at the school site based on individual school needs.

The new organizational structure holds the promise of addressing a number of identified problems with the planning and delivery of professional development in HCPS.

To further address the goal to drive professional development closer to the school sites and to provide differentiated support based on the unique needs of the schools in each of the eight areas in the district, the district is strengthening the eight area offices by creating an Academic Leadership Team (ALT) in each regional office. There is a professional development liaison in each of the eight ALTs with the responsibility
of representing the needs of the area schools back to the coordinating team and accessing and coordinating professional development from central office out to the area schools.

Each school in the area has a school-wide professional learning plan based on teacher and student learning goals and it is the responsibility of the professional development liaison and area superintendent to assist principals with the development of the plans including impact strategies and alignment of the professional learning plan with the school improvement plan. The PLOT team has developed a simple rubric to capture evidence of impact and the professional development liaisons are reporting this information back to the larger PLOT team for review at their monthly meetings.

The new approach to professional development, combined with the termination of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant ($3.5 million used for professional development in 2015-16; $0 budgeted for 2016-17) resulted in a net cost reduction of approximately $5 million in 2016-17. However, since this is the first year of implementation there is no specific data regarding increased effectiveness of the new professional development approach.

Table 1.9 presents professional development expenditures, all funds, for the past five years and budgeted expenditures for 2016-17. Most of the expenditure reduction in 2016-17 related to HCPS staffing costs and professional development materials and supplies.
Table 1.9 Professional Development Expenditures (Function 6400), all Funds, 2011-12 to 2016-17 (Budget)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Object Type</td>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 Salaries</td>
<td>$30,784,878</td>
<td>$30,483,213</td>
<td>$27,615,030</td>
<td>$27,351,679</td>
<td>$26,189,235</td>
<td>$23,874,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 Employee Benefits</td>
<td>$6,027,772</td>
<td>$6,008,681</td>
<td>$5,845,622</td>
<td>$5,811,227</td>
<td>$6,448,116</td>
<td>$5,908,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 Purchased Services</td>
<td>$4,628,638</td>
<td>$5,963,791</td>
<td>$5,378,269</td>
<td>$5,623,811</td>
<td>$5,556,895</td>
<td>$5,142,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700 Other</td>
<td>$3,758,598</td>
<td>$3,788,829</td>
<td>$1,761,887</td>
<td>$2,764,255</td>
<td>$1,753,357</td>
<td>$1,847,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 Materials &amp; Supplies</td>
<td>$1,664,357</td>
<td>$1,653,054</td>
<td>$1,600,498</td>
<td>$1,468,907</td>
<td>$1,700,107</td>
<td>$801,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 Capital Outlay</td>
<td>$25,181</td>
<td>$205,605</td>
<td>$234,976</td>
<td>$78,780</td>
<td>$1,027,089</td>
<td>$54,341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$46,889,423</td>
<td>$48,103,173</td>
<td>$42,436,281</td>
<td>$43,098,660</td>
<td>$42,674,799</td>
<td>$37,629,163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HCPS Expenditure Download, 2011-12 to 2016-17

**Recommendation 1-11: Increase the amount of core content professional development.**

Since an understanding of content and content pedagogy is critical for the implementation of standards-based teaching and learning, and teachers in both the elementary and secondary focus groups indicated a need for more content specific training, the HCPS Professional Development Catalog was analyzed to identify professional development offerings for the four core content areas of ELA/Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

The Excel spreadsheet that represents the 2015-16 professional development catalog indicates a total of 7,511 professional development events offered by the district as well as professional development that is school site specific.

For each professional development offering, the catalog lists:

- Category
- Course ID number
- Course title
- Start and end date
- Course description
- Credits
- Maximum enrollment
- Total enrolled
- Total complete
Table 1.10 presents an analysis of professional development offerings by core content area. This is based on a duplicated count of sessions that include both district and site-specific training with any reference to one of the four core content areas. Some content areas are duplicated due to a descriptor such as math/science.

In an effort to determine unique secondary course specific content professional development, additional filters unique to secondary were added after the initial count. For example, after searching on math; algebra, geometry, calculus, and statistics was added to get a sense of how many sessions had a secondary course content specific focus and title that was not included in the initial count.

Table 1.10. Analysis of Content Specific Professional Development Offerings, 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Reading / English Language Arts</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content offerings – all level</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary course specific sessions</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HCPS Professional Development list/catalog

A total of 1,329 content area related sessions were identified, representing 18 percent of the total offerings in the professional development catalog. Given the importance of depth of content knowledge, and content pedagogy to standards-based teaching and learning, there appears to be an under-representation of core content area specific professional development.

While there is no “formula” for the percent of teacher professional development that should be allocated to content area training, it is widely recognized that the importance of professional development within the context of a teacher’s content area is crucial for a change in teacher practice in the classroom. For example, in a study of a mathematics reform in California, Cohen and Hill (2000) examined teachers’ professional learning activities and found positive changes in practice for teachers who attended workshops on how to teach the new mathematics curriculum. In contrast, teachers who attended workshops that were not centered on the mathematics teaching practices had almost no effect. The conclusion of their study was that professional development focused not just on content but on the teaching and learning of content is most likely to be associated with positive change in teacher practice.

**Recommendation 1-12: Reduce the amount of traditional workshop professional development offered in lieu of job-embedded professional development.**

Professional development can no longer just be about exposing teachers to a concept in a one-time workshop, or giving teachers basic knowledge about a teaching methodology. Instead, professional development in an era of accountability requires a fundamental change in a teacher’s practice that leads to increases in student learning in the classroom.
The Center for Public Education (2013) examined the “current state” of professional development as it relates to effective professional development in light of high-stakes accountability for teachers. Their report presented the following conclusions:

- Most teachers only experience traditional, workshop-based professional development even though research shows it is ineffective.
- The largest struggle for teachers is not learning new approaches to teaching but implementing them.
- In order to truly change practices, professional development should occur over time and preferably be ongoing.
- Coaches/mentors are found to be highly effective in helping teachers implement a new skill.
- Professional development is best delivered in the context of the teacher’s subject area.
- The largest cost of effective professional development is actually teachers’ time; there are many ways districts might think about purchasing this including providing stipends for professional development that are calculated at a different pay rate than teaching hours; paying for substitutes to cover teachers’ classes, etc.
- Case studies suggest that districts may be able to restructure spending for effective professional development without spending significantly more.

This report includes information that may be helpful to HCPS to rethink how they allocate professional development dollars, preferably moving from a predominantly workshop model, to a job-embedded professional development model by increasing the amount of collaborative time for teachers and supporting it with skilled facilitators to support the instructional planning process.

In a well-known model for restructuring from the 1990s, District 2 in New York City revamped its professional development approach to improve student achievement with great success. The district created coaches for teachers as well as professional learning labs where teachers could observe excellent instruction. At the same time, the district eliminated isolated, single event workshops. They noted that the revised approach to professional development did not require significant extra spending, but rather a reallocation of funds to buy teacher time and coaching staff (Elmore and Burney, 1997).

Given that high-stakes teacher evaluation systems include student achievement as a significant portion of the measure of teachers’ effectiveness, it is incumbent upon districts to deliver professional development that truly makes a difference in teacher practice and student achievement. While there are numerous reports over the years about the shortcomings of the workshop format for teacher professional development, it is still the predominant delivery model for most districts, including HCPS. As noted earlier in this chapter, the new leadership and coordinating structure (PLOT) for HCPS professional development
has identified the need to reduce the number of centralized, district professional development offerings and move professional development closer to the school site.

This is not to say that there should not be any professional development delivered in a workshop format. Workshops are appropriate for introducing and teaching content; but if the expectation is that it will change classroom practice, it has to be supported with practice opportunities, follow-up, and coaching support for implementation. The district has a successful model that it can use as an exemplar – the Principal Pipeline initiative. This initiative was developed with great intention, detail, structure, and follow-up over many years. The teacher professional development strategy should be just as thoughtful and intentional.

**Fiscal Impact**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

*Recommendation 1-13: Develop a comprehensive professional development plan that specifically supports the implementation of standards-based instruction.*

The plan should include a capacity building model that is in-depth, multi-year, and focused on the individuals the district and campus leaders rely on to work with teams of teachers during their planning time. This cadre of professionals will be the “backbone” to support the implementation plan.

If PLCs are to serve as the primary vehicle for job-embedded professional development, and the process through which teachers engage in the standards-based instructional planning cycle, it is critical that a cadre of skilled facilitators be available to support teachers through the instructional planning process.

HCPS has invested significantly in instructional coaches and other positions such as the Talent Developer Teacher position to increase onsite support for teachers. Leveraging this investment with a comprehensive professional development curriculum aimed specifically at the work of the planning and delivery cycle of standards-based instruction would provide an organizing focus for these professionals and increase the quality and consistency of support available to the district’s teachers. This is especially important given the decentralized approach to professional development and instructional leadership through the eight area offices.

At minimum this should include:

- Teacher Leaders
- Department Chairs
- Instructional Coaches
- Talent Developer Teachers

Table 1.11 describes the primary tasks that teachers engage in as they plan and deliver standards-based instruction. The description of the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully implement the work...
provides a roadmap for some of the professional development that is necessary to support teachers and could inform the curriculum for instructional support staff as well as teachers and administrators.

Table 1.11. Standards-Based Instruction Knowledge and Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Knowledge &amp; Skills Needed to Accomplish the Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selecting and unwrapping standards</td>
<td>▪ Identifying priority and supporting standards for an identified unit of instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ “Unpacking” standards to determine the key elements students need to achieve and what students need to know and be able to do to meet the standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Drawing upon deep content knowledge related to the standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing assessments</td>
<td>▪ Designing formative and summative assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Determining criteria for success and the level of quality required for success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Designing standards-aligned performance tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Creating aligned scoring rubrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing learning opportunities</td>
<td>▪ Designing lessons to support the instructional unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Applying best practice content pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Selecting high impact, research-based instructional strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning instruction that each student has adequate opportunities to learn</td>
<td>▪ Differentiating instruction for different learning styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Selecting strategies to address students who struggle and students who need enrichment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Designing adaptations and accommodations for ELL and ESE students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using data from assessments to give feedback, reteach, or move to the next level</td>
<td>▪ Examining student work in a collaborative setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Designing and applying evidence based scoring of student work – informed by rubrics or other scoring criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Reteach strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflecting on the lesson or unit or instruction to strengthen and/or redesign first time instruction</td>
<td>▪ Examining patterns of learning to determine – what did most students do well? Where did most students struggle? What should be taught differently? How should first-time instruction be revised or improved?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. 2016

In schools that have successfully implemented standards-based instruction, including creating time for teachers to plan and work together, teacher practice undergoes dramatic change. Teachers think more deeply about their content and content area instruction and the quality of instruction improves in part due to the collaboration with their colleagues. Teachers value that they are no longer working alone and can rely on the experience and knowledge of their colleagues (Improving Standards-Based Instruction 2009).
Separate and apart from the work directed at building the knowledge and skills of the professionals who work and plan with teams of teachers, there is a set of competencies that individual teachers and principals need related to standards-based instruction and learning.

While job-embedded professional development is the most powerful strategy for developing and supporting teachers’ skill development, some content should be identified for more formal professional development. Where possible, this should be differentiated for teachers’ current knowledge and skills and take advantage of the opportunity to embed this professional development within the context of the new teacher program and the principal and assistant principal pipeline curriculum.

Developing a professional development plan that describes the knowledge and skills teachers need for standards-based instruction will help teachers map out an individual professional development plan. These same competencies can be used to develop specialized walkthrough and observation forms that principals could use to assess implementation and determine where more support is needed.

**Fiscal Impact**

The instructional coaches, Teacher Talent Developers, and other campus support personnel currently participate in monthly meetings and professional development. This time could be focused on this skill set and as a result there would be no increase in cost to the district.

**Academic Organization Structure**

Over the past year, HCPS underwent a major organizational realignment. A “Chief of Staff” model was implemented whereby virtually all district programs and functions report up to a chief of staff. Previously, many functions and programs reported directly to the Superintendent. In Gibson’s Phase II report, no recommendations were made to alter the new high level organizational alignment of “operational and administrative” functions included in the scope of the Phase II review. Virtually all of these functions reported directly to the Chief of Staff.

The alignment of schools and area offices under the Chief of Schools Administration did not change; however, the position title and responsibilities changed and the scope of area office activities was expanded to include instructional support. In prior years the focus of the area offices was on operational support. While the transition has been challenging, this strategy places academic support closer to the schools and should prove to be an effective long-term model.

The Phase II report included a recommendation to “develop a decision-making framework for the central office, area offices and schools”. Other examples supporting the need for this framework were identified in Phase III.

The current job description for an Area Superintendent includes a responsibility to “take action to continuously improve procedures, services and support for schools.” Under the new organizational structure, Area Superintendents have been assigned a larger role in academic performance, and have
assumed responsibility for student achievement in their area. This specific responsibility, while supported by district leadership, has not been articulated in the area superintendent job description however. The job description states that they are “responsible for helping principals increase their capacity to improve teaching and learning in their schools by providing coaching and training as well as through the directing of resources and support provided by the Areas Leadership Team.” The job description for the Chief Academic Officer establishes “primary authority for the academic performance of all schools...and strategic direction for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.”

Examples regarding Principal, Area Superintendent, and Chief Academic Officer authority in academic decision making were brought forth in Phase III by principals, district administrators, and board members. During interviews and focus groups, Area Superintendents, the Chief of School Administration, and the Chief Academic Officer all acknowledged that decision-making authority was in transition under the new organizational alignment and that some additional refinements were needed and in process. The additional information gathered in Phase III validates the need for a decision-making framework recommended in the Phase II report.

**Recommendation 1-14: Consider a long-term organizational strategy to align all academic programs under the Chief Academic Officer position.**

The alignment of “academic” functions under the new organizational structure is presented in Figure 1.15. Under the current organizational structure, the Chief Academic Officer, the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Leadership and Professional Development, the Assistant Superintendent of Outreach/School Improvement, and the General Manager of Information and Technology (overseeing Instructional Technology) report directly to the Chief of Staff. Six other academic-related functions report to the Deputy Superintendent, including the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, the Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support and Federal Programs, and the Director of Low Performing Schools.

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15 HCPS Area Superintendent job description: https://www2.sdhc.k12.fl.us/jobdescrs/PDF/10400_Superintendent_Area.pdf
While all academic program management and school support responsibilities flow up to the Chief of Staff, the current HCPS alignment beneath the Chief of Staff may not be the best long-term strategy for the district.

Exceptional Student Education and Career and Technical Education are major programs and both fall under the responsibility of the Deputy Superintendent. Academic Support and Federal Programs (e.g., Title I) also report to the Deputy Superintendent. General education programs and programs for English Language Learners fall under the responsibility of the Chief Academic Officer, who reports directly to the Chief of Staff. The Chief Academic Officer job description states that the position “will have primary authority and accountability for the academic performance of all schools and will provide leadership, vision, and strategic direction for HCPS curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The job description also includes language to “support and work in conjunction with the Student Services, Academic Support and Federal Programs Divisions.”

The Chief Academic Officer is charged with a district-wide responsibility for academic performance, but does not have authority over several academic programs. The inconsistency between the responsibility and authority of the Chief Academic Officer position diffuses accountability, and may be adversely affecting these other programs. Separate chapters in this report address ESE and CTE programming, and in both of these programs academic rigor was found to be lacking.

16 HCPS Chief Academic Officer job description: https://www2.sdhc.k12.fl.us/jobdescrs/PDF/10107_Chief_Academic_Officer.pdf
HCPS should consider as a long-term strategy the alignment of all academic programs under the Chief Academic Officer. This will balance the position’s responsibility and authority, and establish stronger academic leadership over these programs. Since the district’s most recent reorganization is less than a year old, the realignment should be thoughtfully evaluated over the next two to three years.

**Fiscal Impact**

HCPS can implement this recommendation with existing resources.

**Instructional Resource Allocation**

The Phase I Report included a recommendation to “Improve teacher scheduling within legal constraints.” This recommendation stemmed from a comparative analysis of pupil-teacher ratios, comparing HCPS to its peer districts. Figure 1.16 presents a four-year comparison of HCPS (red column) to peer districts (blue columns). As shown in Figure 1.16, HCPS has consistently maintained a lower pupil-teacher ratio than any of the peer districts.

**Figure 1.16. HCPS and Peer District Pupil-Teacher Ratios, 2012-13 through 2015-16**

![Image](attachment:image_url)

Source: Florida Department of Education – Pupil-Teacher Ratios, 2012-13 through 2015-16

These peer districts are subject to the same state laws as HCPS; however, because of the way the average class size law was structured during this period of time, districts having charter schools or choice schools could calculate average class size at the “school” level for each grade level grouping. Traditional schools were required to calculate average class size at the class level.17 Based on the distribution of school types for each of these peer districts, this likely contributed to the variances in pupil-teacher ratios when compared to HCPS. Table 1.12 presents the number of schools, by type, for HCPS and the peer districts.

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17 Florida Statutes Sections 1003.03(1), 1002.33(16)(b)3 and 1002.31(5).
Chapter 1 – General Education Program

Table 1.12. HCPS and Peer District School Types, 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Pinellas County Schools</th>
<th>Palm Beach County Schools</th>
<th>Duval County Public Schools</th>
<th>HCPS</th>
<th>Orange County Public Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Schools</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Schools</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice Schools</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Florida Department of Education – School Type Report, 2015-16

HCPS’ school type distribution is closer to Orange County Public Schools and Pinellas County Schools than the other peers, yet both have higher pupil-teacher ratios. Other factors may also be influencing the variance, including:

- The degree of virtual learning
- The number of secondary school course offerings
- Teacher planning period time
- The district’s ESE (exceptional student education) population percentage
- Other specialized academic programs having smaller class sizes

The law recently changed, allowing HCPS to calculate class size at the school level.

The fiscal impact of the difference in pupil-teacher ratios noted in the Phase I report was significant. If HCPS were able to achieve a 15.9 to 1 pupil-teacher ratio (the average ratio among the four peers), 1,031 fewer teachers would be needed. At an average salary and benefits level of $64,246, this equates to $66 million per year.

In 2016-17, HCPS did in fact reduce teacher positions. Figure 1.17 presents a five-year history of HCPS teacher counts, showing that after three years of consecutive growth in teacher counts, a 251 full-time equivalent reduction was achieved in 2016-17. Based on the average teacher pay and benefits of $64,246, the total amount saved in 2016-17 to date is approximately $16.1 million. While the Phase I report estimated a year 1 phase-in of $22 million in savings, the district’s achievement in such a short timeframe reflects a significant accomplishment, and a visible commitment to better managing its pupil-teacher ratio. It is possible that additional savings could be achieved before the 2016-17 school year ends.

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18 \[(1,301 \times 64,246 \text{ [average salary and benefits]})\]
Figure 1.17. HCPS Teacher FTE Counts, 2012-13 to 2016-17

Note: The above counts are based on the HCPS teacher classifications as opposed to the definitions used for state reporting.
Source: HCPS Staffing Data Extract

**Recommendation 1-15: Evaluate budget allocations to understand the drivers of variances among individual schools.**

HCPS allocates General Fund expenditures to schools primarily through “unit” or personnel allocations. Other formulas exist for items such as instructional supplies. Allocations for federal funds are based on specific criteria that must be met, and these funds are generally used to supplement instruction for eligible students.

Even with funding formulas, General Fund expenditures per student cannot be expected to be identical for all schools. Larger schools are able to achieve economies of scale, allowing them to use resources more efficiently. Assuming other factors are constant, the larger the school the lower the General Fund expenditures per student. This relationship is evident in HCPS elementary and middle schools. Figure 1.18 presents General Fund expenditures per student (orange dots) and student enrollment (blue line) for each elementary school in 2015-16. A general downward trend occurs as the school enrollment increase, although the highest per student amount (a magnet school) is more than double the lowest elementary school.
A similar pattern is seen in HCPS middle schools although the degree of the spending variance per student is slightly less. Figure 1.19 presents General Fund expenditures per student (orange dots) and student enrollment (blue line) for each middle school in 2015-16. The per student variance ranges from $4,969 to $8,300 per student.

High schools have a substantially different spending pattern. Figure 1.20 presents General Fund expenditures per student (orange dots) and student enrollment (blue line) for each high school in 2015-
16. There is no discernable relationship between the enrollment of the high school and expenditures per student, and the three lowest cost schools are actually in the bottom half in terms of student enrollment.

**Figure 1.20. General Fund Expenditures per Student, High Schools, 2015-16**

![Graph showing General Fund expenditures per student](source)

Source: HCPS Expenditure and Student Data Extract

To explore other possible factors causing these spending variances, General Fund expenditures per student were mapped against district grade for 2016 as assigned by the Florida Department of Education. Figure 1.21 presents General Fund expenditures by grade level. Grade levels are indicated by color:

- Green: A
- Blue: B
- Yellow: C
- Red: D
While D schools (having the highest needs) incur more General Fund expenditures per student than most other schools, there is no apparent relationship and wide variances among the other A, B, and C high schools.

HCPS should evaluate its unit allocations to understand the causes of variances among individual schools. The district should also compare formula to actual spending to ensure that exceptions are not granted to individuals schools unless an academic need justifies the investment.

**Fiscal Impact**

HCPS can implement this recommendation with existing resources.
Chapter 2 – Instructional Technology

Introduction

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), a non-profit organization that serves educators using technology in education, describes integrating technology into curriculum in the following way:

“The integration of technology should serve to guide, expand and enhance learning objectives. It is understood that teachers and students do need to spend time learning the basics of using a computer. This is necessary in order to move to effectively integrating technology. Curriculum integration with the use of technology involves the infusion of technology as a tool to enhance the learning in a content area or multidisciplinary setting. Technology enables students to learn in ways not previously possible. Effective integration of technology is achieved when students are able to select technology tools to help them obtain information in a timely manner, analyze and synthesize the information, and present it professionally. The technology should become an integral part of how the classroom functions, as accessible as all other classroom tools.”

Technology in classrooms can be used to help students strengthen a certain set of skills needed to be successful in the 21st Century. It can also support differentiation for individualized learning and allow students to learn both in and outside the classroom. Accordingly, the integration of instructional technology into the overall curriculum strategy will allow it to play an even more influential role in student learning and success.

At present, HCPS does not have an effective instructional technology program. There are too few technology devices; most desktop computers are antiquated and significantly under-performing; and, computers and other devices are not effectively integrated into classroom instruction. HCPS does not have an instructional technology strategy or plan, and funding levels have been woefully insufficient. As a result, the district is at least a decade behind where best practices would suggest.

The recommendations in this chapter will help provide a needed focus and direction for instructional technology at HCPS.

Organization Structure and Staffing

The organizational placement of instructional technology resources within the district is currently divided into three separate organizational units:

19 http://etad.usask.ca/802papers/antifaiff/antifaiff.pdf
**Information and Technology Department:** Led by a manager, this group is comprised of three units:

- **District Resource Teachers (DRT):** Six DRTs provide district gradebook software support to all sites and evaluate new technologies while advising schools on appropriate technology purchases.

- **Architecture and Integration:** This organizational unit includes one manager position (currently vacant), a coordinator position, and an analyst. This group is responsible for bringing in new technologies related to instruction, supporting the curriculum area in the implementation of these new technologies, and evaluating instructional software and hardware applications for the district.

- **Instructional Technology for Administrators:** This organizational unit includes one manager position and one senior analyst, who provide support to school-based administration teams for Instruction Planning Tool (IPT), EdConnect, and the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) module of the EdConnect system.

**Office of Teaching and Learning - Middle School Division:** This organizational unit includes one Instructional Technology Supervisor, who has three primary responsibilities. First, this position attends weekly meetings with the Instructional and Technology Support group to represent the Office of Teaching and Learning and acts as a liaison between these two divisions. Second, this position is responsible for supporting district staff in choosing and implementing instructional materials and using personal devices in classroom instruction. Lastly, the Instructional Technology Supervisor is responsible for conducting cyber safety training and working with vendors on data sharing agreements.

**Professional Development Department, Technology Training and Support Team:** In November 2016, this unit was effectively dismantled and nearly all the positions (mostly teachers) were reassigned to schools in a different role. At the time of the review team site visit (October 2016), only one supervisor and six trainer positions remained. These trainers were assigned to various district areas to deliver instructional technology training to teachers and district staff. They also offer courses such as Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Classroom Management, Engaging Students with Technology, and Integrating Technology. This group has the most interaction with teachers and school staff and delivers more instructional technology training than the other organizational units.

**Recommendation 2-1:** Develop a district-wide Instructional Technology Strategy and Plan that supports the district’s overall strategic goals and objectives and includes key components such as: a needs assessment, goals and measurable objectives, key initiatives, resource requirements (e.g., hardware, software, and facility), professional development, and funding requirements. Ensure that the plan is consistent with the State’s Five-Year IT strategic plan.
HCPS’ 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, commended in Gibson’s Phase II report, includes a vision of “preparing students for life”. One means of realizing this vision is to ensure that students and teachers have access to instructional technology resources in the classroom to enhance and enrich learning opportunities for students and to increase the effectiveness of educators and support staff. In today’s day and age, preparing students for life demands effectively using technology in the classroom.

At the time of this review, this district’s long-range technology plan was outdated (covered the period July 2013 through June 2016) and staff reported that there were no substantive long-range planning activities taking place. A long-range instructional technology plan would allow HCPS to assess where it is now and where it would like to be in the future with respect to instructional technology and infrastructure. More specifically, a comprehensive instructional technology plan should include the following fundamental components:

- Needs assessment
- Goals and measurable objectives
- Key initiatives and resource requirements (e.g., hardware, software, and facility)
- Professional development
- Funding requirements

A well-developed plan should serve as a guide for decision-making as well as a tool to monitor and evaluate progress toward identified goals and objectives. The key to a successful strategic plan is that it be conducted as an ongoing process, and is continually reviewed and updated. As time passes and the district’s needs evolve and change, the plan should be reassessed and revised.

The primary effort for developing the plan should be led by the Office of Teaching and Learning, with input from the Information and Technology Department. This will help to ensure that instructional technology is well-integrated with the district’s curriculum and instruction strategy. It is important to remember that in addition to developing the strategic planning document, much of the value comes from the planning process itself. Having all appropriate stakeholders involved in the process will help to ensure that leadership is supportive of the plan, that key initiatives are aligned to the instructional vision of the district, and funding is appropriately allocated. As a starting point, HCPS could review the instructional technology plans of other large Florida districts—a suggested resource is Broward County Public Schools (BCPS), which appears to have a well-developed and comprehensive plan that could serve as a model for HCPS.

Fiscal Impact

HCPS could implement this recommendation using existing resources.

**Recommendation 2-2:** As part of the instructional technology strategic planning process, conduct a detailed needs assessment to determine the level of investment needed to modernize HCPS’ instructional technology program.
In 2014, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) developed a five-year strategic technology plan for assisting districts in establishing Florida Digital Classrooms. The plan’s vision is for Florida to have an efficient world-class education system that engages and prepares all students to be globally competitive for college and careers. Through this initiative, districts were asked to present digital classroom plans that work towards the following four goals:

**Goal 1: Highest Student Achievement**

*Student Performance Outcomes:* Districts shall improve classroom teaching and learning to enable all students to be digital learners with access to digital tools and resources for the full integration of the Florida Standards.

**Goal 2: Seamless Articulation and Maximum Access**

*Digital Tools:* Districts shall continue to implement and support a digital tools system that assists district instructional personnel and staff in the management, assessment and monitoring of student learning and performance.

**Goal 3: Skilled Workforce and Economic Development**

*Professional Development:* Instructional personnel and staff shall have access to opportunities and training to assist with the integration of technology into classroom teaching.

**Goal 4: Quality Efficient Services**

- *Technology Infrastructure:* Districts shall create a digital learning infrastructure with the appropriate levels of bandwidth, devices, hardware and software for students in all classrooms.
- *Online Assessment Readiness:* Districts shall work to reduce the amount of time used for the administration of computer-based assessments.

Through the Florida Digital Classrooms initiative, the FDLE requires districts to provide a digital classroom plan using a template provided by the FLDOE. Once the plan is approved, the FLDOE then assists districts in the implementation of their plan. After implementation, districts are required to participate in the bi-annual Technology Readiness Inventory (TRI) survey which measures their progress against plan.

HCPS’ digital classroom plan initiative, called “Project Innovate”, was first implemented in 2015. Through an application process, HCPS selected eight schools to receive 300 computers (100 for elementary schools and 200 for secondary schools) and provided professional development training for teachers and administrators. In the second year of implementation, HCPS selected 16 additional schools and provided them with 1,240 technology devices and professional development training.

Although the state’s technology plan does not mandate a set ratio of students per device, districts are encouraged to have an appropriate number of technology devices to support their current levels of
Chapter 2 – Instructional Technology

HCPS’ digital classroom plan sets a target of one student per one device to be achieved by 2020. Other than the initial student devices purchased through Project Innovate, however, HCPS has not made any significant investments in instructional technology.

A review of key metrics demonstrates just how far HCPS lags behind peer districts. The students-per-device ratio is perhaps one of the most commonly used measures to evaluate the intensity of instructional technology in a district. A higher ratio means that there are fewer devices per student. Figure 2.1 shows the students-per-device ratio for HCPS and its Florida peers based on fall 2016 TRI survey results. HCPS has the second highest students-per-device ratio among its peers, with 201,939 students supported by 71,822 technology devices.

According to HCPS’ digital classroom plan, the district will need more than 128,000 devices to reach a one student per one device ratio by 2020. This amount does not include any devices that may be needed if student enrollment increases, and it does not take into account any devices that will become obsolete and need to be replaced by 2020.

Most of HCPS’ technology devices are old and outdated, which effectively understates the district’s students-per-device ratio. The majority of the district’s technology devices – mostly desktop computers – are more than five years old. Figure 2.2 shows the distribution of the average age of devices located in the district’s schools. The median age of instructional technology devices is six years, which is well past the replacement cycle timeline of 3 to 5 years.

Anecdotally, the age and performance of HCPS’ instructional technology was also evident during the school site visits conducted by the review team. In one middle school computer lab, it took three minutes for a computer to turn on and boot up, approximately 6 percent of the class period time. In another
elementary school, kindergarten students struggled using a computer mouse and wondered why they could not touch the screen to execute commands.

Figure 2.2. Distribution of Average Device Age Among HCPS Schools

![Distribution of Average Device Age Among HCPS Schools](image)

Source: HCPS Information Technology Department Computer Inventory worksheet

As illustrated in Figure 2.3, the fall 2016 TRI survey also shows that HCPS has the highest percentage of student devices that are desktop computers. The primary disadvantage of desktop computers is the lack of mobility, which inhibits student’s access to them. In addition, desktop computers take up more physical space than laptops or tablets, making it more difficult to achieve the goal of one student per one device.

Figure 2.3. Percent of Instructional Technology Devices that are Desktop Computers

![Percent of Instructional Technology Devices that are Desktop Computers](image)

Source: Fall 2016 TRI survey
As illustrated in Figure 2.4, 33 percent of all HCPS student devices are located in computer labs or libraries, which is more than any of the peer districts. This limits student access to these devices in classrooms, where the majority of instruction takes place; and, the logistics of moving students in and out of computer labs and libraries would not a good use of valuable instructional time.

Figure 2.4. Percent of Student Devices by Location

![Figure 2.4](image)

Source: Fall 2016 TRI survey

The fall 2016 TRI survey also asked each Florida district for the number of student devices that they plan to replace in the next five years. As shown in Figure 2.5, HCPS’ response reflected by far the lowest number of replacement devices among its peers.

Figure 2.5. Total Number of Student Devices to be Replaced in 5 Years

![Figure 2.5](image)

Source: Fall 2016 TRI survey
Fiscal Impact

A detailed needs assessment will help HCPS to better determine the level of investment needed to modernize its instructional technology program. However, assuming 100,000 devices are purchased as an initial investment at an average cost of $200 per device, the estimated level of investment needed would be approximately $20 million (cost of devices only). Gibson also estimates that an additional 50,000 devices would be needed each year to support an average device lifecycle replacement program. Some of these costs could potentially be mitigated with the expansion of the district’s BYOD program (described in more detail in Recommendation 2-4).

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invest in additional technology devices</td>
<td>($20,000,000)</td>
<td>($10,000,000)</td>
<td>($10,000,000)</td>
<td>($10,000,000)</td>
<td>($10,000,000)</td>
<td>($10,000,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Investment</td>
<td>($20,000,000)</td>
<td>($10,000,000)</td>
<td>($10,000,000)</td>
<td>($10,000,000)</td>
<td>($10,000,000)</td>
<td>($10,000,000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Costs are negative; savings are positive

**Recommendation 2-3: Provide professional development to instructional staff on how to effectively integrate the use of instructional technology into teaching and learning.**

In 2015, AdvancedED, a non-profit organization that accredits school districts, conducted an external review of the district as part of their performance accreditation. Part of their review included the use of a classroom observation tool called the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT). ELEOT focuses on seven key learning environments that promote effective learning and student success, one of which includes digital learning. HCPS received a score of 1.38 out of 4.0 on digital learning—the lowest score of all seven areas measured. Table 2.1 presents the summary of the classroom observation results for Digital Learning at HCPS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Very Evident %</th>
<th>Evident %</th>
<th>Somewhat Evident %</th>
<th>Not Observed %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>Uses digital tools/technology to gather evaluate and/or use information for learning</td>
<td>7.83%</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
<td>11.17%</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems and/or create original works for learning</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>3.83%</td>
<td>8.17%</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning</td>
<td>5.67%</td>
<td>3.83%</td>
<td>8.17%</td>
<td>82.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2015 AdvancedED External Review Report
Fiscal Impact

Gibson did not estimate the cost of additional professional development activities; however, this information should evolve out of the instructional technology strategic planning process.

**Recommendation 2-4:** Require that technology expenditures are appropriately expensed using the correct account codes.

HCPS’ reported expenditures do not accurately reflect the district’s investment in instructional technology. Out of $36.9 million in total technology expenditures in 2015-16, $36.5 million, or 99 percent, was charged to instructional technology versus administrative technology. Below are the state’s definitions of the two function codes for technology expenditures:

**6500 Instruction-Related Technology.** Technology activities and services for the purpose of supporting instruction. These activities include expenditures for internal technology support as well as support provided by external vendors using operating funds. These activities include costs associated with the administration and supervision of technology personnel, systems planning and analysis, systems application development, systems operation, network support services, hardware maintenance and support services, and technology-related costs that relate to the support of instructional activities. Specifically, costs associated with the operation and support of computer learning labs, media center computer labs, instructional technology centers, instructional networks and similar operations should be captured under this code.

**8200 Administrative Technology Services.** Activities concerned with supporting the school district’s information technology systems, including supporting administrative networks, maintaining administrative information systems and processing data for administrative and managerial purposes. These activities include expenditures for internal technology support, as well as support provided by external vendors using operating funds. These activities include costs associated with the administration and supervision of technology personnel, systems planning and analysis, systems application development, systems operations, network support services, hardware maintenance and support services, and other technology-related administrative costs.

The district’s assignment of virtually all costs to instructional technology results in a significant overstatement of its investment in instructional technology and an understatement in administrative technology investment. Accuracy and transparency are needed in order to budget appropriately.

Fiscal Impact

Other than allowing for more transparency and accountability, there are no fiscal impacts associated with implementing this recommendation.
Recommendation 2-5: Expand the district’s “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD) program.

“Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD) refers to the policy of permitting students and staff to bring personally owned devices like laptops, tablets, and smart phones to schools, and to use those devices to access the district’s applications and instructional resources through its wireless infrastructure. Most school districts use BYOD policies to augment their instructional device numbers so that more students and staff use devices for instruction. School districts usually create a separate wireless infrastructure so the use of personal devices does not hinder the security and performance of the district’s internal network. BYOD policies also explain the acceptable usage of the devices so students and staff know the “do’s and don’ts” of using their devices in the classroom.

The key component of a BYOD policy is how well district teachers can incorporate BYOD into their daily instruction and lesson plans. The most important benefit of BYOD is that it can significantly reduce costs to the district by not having to procure its own devices that will eventually need to be upgraded and/or replaced in a few short years.

The HCPS board adopted a BYOD policy during the 2014-15 school year. The policy states that a BYOD device is “any district provided or personally owned computer or electronic device including, but not limited to, phones, tablets, notebooks/laptops, wearables (e.g., Google Glass, smartwatches), iPod touches (or similar), and e-readers”. Although the fall 2016 TRI survey shows that the majority of HCPS’ teachers know and understand the district’s BYOD policy, focus groups and school visits conducted during this review revealed that schools face many barriers to implementing and promoting BYOD in their schools, including:

- Lack of reliable and robust wireless infrastructure
- Not all devices (stated in board policy) are supported by the district’s technology infrastructure
- Lack of BYOD-based instructional technology training

HCPS is in the process of awarding a wireless infrastructure project to a vendor which is expected to improve the wireless infrastructure of the district. However, the district needs to address the other barriers regarding BYOD adaptation and usage in the district.

Based on the number and age existing student devices and the number of devices the district is intending to replace over the next five years, it will be difficult to reach a one-to-one student-per-device ratio and sustain it without fully expanding the BYOD program. HCPS should actively promote the BYOD program and encourage teachers to use it.

Fiscal Impact

Although parts of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources, training necessary for teachers to use BYOD in their lesson plans and curriculum will be an additional professional development activity for the district’s professional development staff because the district no longer has technology trainers. The additional professional development costs will vary based on training hours, number of teachers participating in the training, number of substitute staff and any training materials.
needed for this activity. The district should consider reconstituting school-based instructional technology support positions from computer maintenance to BYOD support as the district increases its technology devices pursuant to the previous recommendation.

**Recommendation 2-6: Budget to replace the district’s student information system (SIS) based on the results of a needs assessment and gap analysis.**

The district has an in-house developed student information system (SIS) that runs on an IBM mainframe environment and proprietary database, both purchased in 1984. Some portions of the district’s enterprise resource planning (ERP) system and adult education system also use the mainframe platform, but its primary usage is for the SIS. This is an old and outdated system, and the district is currently spending $1.5 million annually to maintain the hardware and software.

The SIS and the mainframe environment use the computer programming language COBOL, a language developed in 1959 that has not been widely used over the past 25 years. Many of the district’s COBOL programmers are near retirement, and finding new COBOL programmers to replace them will be extremely difficult. Currently, HCPS has 14 COBOL programmer and mainframe operator positions.

In addition to the challenges with replacing IT staff in this mainframe environment (i.e., finding COBOL programmers), current staff can only support this environment. Should the district move to another platform/environment, current staff will need to be retrained and/or replaced. Current SIS applications are server or cloud-based and are written in programming languages that can easily be used by IT staff to support other systems and applications throughout the district, assuming they have the skill sets to support these applications and environments. When resources are limited, it is especially important that IT staffs are able to support multiple systems and applications.

While many users of the current SIS believe that it meets most of their needs, the system simply cannot be sustained. A 2013 Information Technology assessment report by an outside consultant (described in Gibson’s Phase II report) recommended that the district move away from the in-house developed mainframe SIS system to a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) SIS system. The district accepted this recommendation and has been working on augmenting and replacing certain SIS functionalities with COTS systems. The district’s current gradebook system is a COTS system and they recently purchased a COTS student scheduler software. HCPS is also using a web-based system called *EdConnect*, which was developed by the district using current platform and programming languages to provide reporting, dashboards, and several SIS functionalities to district end users.

For HCPS to completely move away from the mainframe SIS, a multi-step process is needed to define requirements, analyze work processes, and evaluate commercially available systems to perform a detailed gap analysis. This analysis should lead HCPS in selecting a system or systems that will fulfill all of their critical requirements. Figure 2.9 illustrates eight key steps in a system selection process. Each of these steps is discussed further below.
### Key Steps for Selecting a District-wide System

1. **Step 1: Create a decision-making framework.** This step may include creating committees and selecting staff to key roles for the project. Usually, there are two committees in a system selection project: (1) an executive committee, which consists of senior district leadership and is responsible for making high-level decisions, and (2) an operational committee, which consists of subject matter experts, who performs the day-to-day work related to the system implementation.

2. **Step 2: Analyze processes.** The second step in the process includes capturing key “as-is” processes and reviewing the processes to identify how these processes can be changed so that they can be improved and or simplified.

3. **Step 3: Gather requirements.** In this step, the district should interview key staff to identify functional user requirements for the new system. The district should also ensure that all state, federal, and district compliance and reporting requirements are captured. Additionally, any requirements gathered from the process analysis are incorporated into the final requirements document. Once user requirements have been captured, the district should prioritize each captured requirement in order evaluate and rank new systems. If available the district can borrow documented system requirement from another Florida district which went through a similar system selection process. This can reduce the time to develop comprehensive requirements for the system.

4. **Step 4: Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP).** Step four is developing and publishing a competitive RFP. Prior to preparing the RFP, the district should identify and finalize the vendor evaluation and selection criteria, so that appropriate information is requested from responding vendors. The criteria should include cost, user requirement response scores based on priority, demonstration scores, references, and market information (such as number of installations in Florida schools).

5. **Step 5: Evaluate proposals and gap analysis.** Once all proposals have been received, HCPS should begin the evaluation phase of the selection process. This includes evaluating each vendor based on the evaluation and selection criteria developed by the project committees. Also in this step the
project committee should perform a gap analysis between the proposed systems functionalities and requirements in order to determine which legacy systems to keep if any.

- **Step 6: Check references.** Once finalists have been determined, HCPS should perform reference checks for each finalist. The district should create questions for each reference call and, if possible, conduct site visits to referenced school districts.

- **Step 7: Conduct demonstrations.** Finalists should be asked to visit HCPS and provide a product demonstration for the committees and key users. The district should create demonstration scripts that include key and unique processes to their school district that vendors should include in their product demonstration. Score sheets should be created for staff to use for scoring each vendor during demonstrations. If possible, requesting a demo system, or sandbox, for further review is recommended. All demonstrations should be videotaped or recorded, as vendors tend to make representations regarding product capabilities during these sessions.

- **Step 8: Finalize selection.** As a final step, the district should finalize its selection and start the price and contract terms negotiations. HCPS should seek legal advice to ensure that the contract adequately protects the district and holds the vendor accountable.

**Fiscal Impact**

The seven steps above can be accomplished with existing district resources. However, the fiscal impact of a new SIS system cannot be determined at this time, as final costs will be based on a multitude of factors, including the project scope and timeline. Estimates will be available when vendor proposals are submitted and evaluated.
Chapter 3 – Exceptional Student Education Programs

This chapter presents a review of the HCPS Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs. These programs include those for students with disabilities and those for gifted students.

Programs for Students with Disabilities

Programs addressing the needs of students with disabilities (SWD) are referred to as “special education” in federal law. In this report, the terms “programs for students with disabilities” and “special education” will be used interchangeably. These programs exist in an organizational unit in HCPS, called Exceptional Student Education (ESE), which also includes programs for gifted students.

According to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), special education is “specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.” Special education programs are designed for those students who are mentally, physically, socially, and/or emotionally delayed. This aspect of “delay,” broadly categorized as a developmental delay, signify an aspect of the child’s overall development (physical, cognitive, scholastic skills) which place them behind their peers. Special education programs and services adapt content, teaching methodology and delivery instruction to meet the appropriate needs of each child.

There are three key federal laws and additional rules and regulations that impact the education of students with disabilities. Each of these are discussed further below.

- IDEA (2004)
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – the December 2015 reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act passed in 2001
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Other federal rules and regulations

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The most comprehensive law related specifically to students with disabilities is the IDEA. Below is a summary of the six major principles of the IDEA (Heward, 2013).

---

20 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 300.39
21 http://teach.com/what-is-special-education
1. **Zero Reject**
Schools must educate all students with disabilities and public schools may not exclude students with disabilities, regardless of the nature or severity of their disabilities. *Child Find* is the term used for the requirement that school districts take responsibility for identifying and evaluating all children, from birth to 21, who are suspected of having a disability.

2. **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**
All children with disabilities, regardless of the type or severity of disability, have a right to a free and appropriate public education, and must be provided at public expense. An important part of the FAPE requirement is an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student. The IEP must articulate the student’s unique needs, present levels of performance, measurable goals and objectives, and a description of the special education and related services that will be provided so that the child can meet his or her goals and learning objectives.

3. **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**
The IDEA requires that students with disabilities be educated alongside children without disabilities to the maximum extent possible. Students with disabilities can be removed to separate classes or schools only when their disabilities are so severe that they cannot receive an appropriate education in general education classrooms with supplementary aids and services. The IDEA favors inclusion into general education and requires that a student’s IEP justify the extent to which the student will not participate with their non-disabled peers in the general education curriculum, extracurricular activities, and other non-academic activities like recess, lunch, and transportation. To ensure placement in the least restrictive environment, districts must provide a continuum of placement and service options.

4. **Nondiscriminatory Identification and Evaluation**
For students to receive special education services, the answers to both parts of a two-part question must be “yes”. The first part of the question is “Does the student have a disability?” and the second part of the question is, “Does the student require specially designed instruction due to that disability?” When assessing students to determine the presence of a disability, schools must use non-biased, non-discriminatory, multi-factored evaluation methods. Evaluations may not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, culture, or native language. All tests must be given in the student’s native language and placement decisions may not be made on the basis of any single test score.

5. **Due Process Safeguards**
Schools must provide due process safeguards to students with disabilities and their parents. One key safeguard is the requirement that school districts must obtain parental consent for evaluations and placement decisions. School districts must also maintain confidentiality of students’ records. If parents disagree with the results of an evaluation performed by the district, they can request an independent evaluation at public expense. Parents have the right to request a due process hearing, usually preceded by mediation, if they disagree with the district’s actions related to the identification, placement, related services, evaluation, or the provision of FAPE. Parents have the right to recover
attorney’s fees if they prevail in a legal proceeding related to special education for their child. Districts may recover attorney’s fees if complaints are frivolous or filed for an improper reason.

6. Parent and Student Participation and Shared Decision Making
Parents’ input and desires must be considered when districts write IEP goals, related service needs, and placement decisions. In addition, schools are required to collaborate with parents and students with disabilities when designing and implementing special education services.

Every Student Succeeds Act

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provisions – originated through No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – also impact students with disabilities in public schools. While ESSA was not aimed specifically at special education, it does address issues related to students with disabilities. Some of the key provisions in ESSA call for:

- The same challenging academic content and achievement standards for all students, including students with disabilities
- Annual assessments for all students aligned to standards
- Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities
- Alternate assessments for students with the most significant disabilities
- Measures of interim progress toward longer term goals

Public school teachers, including those who teach students with disabilities, are required to meet standards in order to be considered “highly qualified.” Special education teachers must have a bachelor’s degree or higher, state teaching certification, and be able to demonstrate competency in the core academic subjects they teach. The IDEA (2004) also added another requirement for special education teachers: their certification must include “…appropriate special education certification.” The exact qualifications vary depending on teaching level and whether a teacher is the “teacher of record” for a student.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights Fact Sheet provides a summary of Section 504:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a national law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. The nondiscrimination requirements apply to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any federal department of agency…Section 504 forbids organizations and employers from excluding or denying individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to receive program benefits and services.

Under this law, individuals with disabilities are defined as persons with a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one of more major life activities. Major life
activities include caring for one’s self, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working performing manual tasks, and learning.\textsuperscript{22}

In its online document \textit{Protecting Students with Disabilities}, The U. S. Department of Education elaborated on Section 504 as it relates to the IDEA:

\textit{Section 504 regulations require a school district to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school district’s jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. Under Section 504, FAPE consists of the provisions of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student’s individual education needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.}\textsuperscript{23}

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has responsibility for eliminating discrimination on the basis of disability. Complaints and inquiries in the area of elementary and secondary education involving Section 504 generally concern identification of students who are protected by Section 504 as well as obtaining an appropriate education for those students. Students who are identified with disabilities and provided services under Section 504 but not under the IDEA have plans similar to, but not exactly the same as, an IEP. Those plans describe services in general education as well as related services.

School districts provide services to students with disabilities under both the IDEA and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Decisions about identification, placement, and services are typically made at the local level. Districts should have clear policies and procedures in place to ensure appropriate services to all students with disabilities, regardless of whether they qualify for services under the IDEA of Section 504.

\textbf{Rules and Regulations}

In addition to the three key federal laws, there are federal regulations, state laws, and state rules that also govern the education of students with disabilities. Federal regulations clarify the intent of federal laws, so that states have guidance related to their implementation. These federal regulations can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations.

After federal regulations are adopted, each state develops and adopts its own rules implementing new IDEA requirements.

\textsuperscript{22} \url{http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/civilrights/resources/factsheets/504.pdf}

\textsuperscript{23} \url{http://www2.ed.gov/print/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html#}
HCPS Programs for Students with Disabilities

In 2016-17, there are 28,039 students with disabilities at HCPS, excluding district charter schools. Over the past five years, the percent of students with disabilities in HCPS has remained relatively steady, ranging from 13.9 to 14.1 percent of the total district enrollment (see Figure 3.1.).

Figure 3.1. Percentage of HCPS Students with Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>2,231</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>1,204</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt;1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>1,086</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HCPS ESE Department

In Florida, a child or student qualifies for services in special education only if they meet the eligibility criteria for one or more of the fourteen exceptionality (disability) categories in the Florida Department of Education Rules for ESE. Table 3.1 presents HCPS students with disabilities by the state-defined primary exceptionality.

Table 3.1. HCPS Students with Disabilities, by Primary Exceptionality, Number and Percent of Total, 2016-17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Exceptionality</th>
<th>SWD Enrollment</th>
<th>SWD Enrollment as a Percent of Total Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
<td>2,231</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf or Hard of Hearing</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmentally Delayed</td>
<td>1,204</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual-Sensory Impaired</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt;1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional/Behavioral Disability</td>
<td>1,086</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital/Homebound</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>&lt;1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
<td>2,098</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Impaired</td>
<td>3,211</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The special education category with the highest representation of students is the Specific Learning Disability category, representing 43 percent of all students with disabilities. The speech impaired and language impaired categories, combined, account for slightly more than 25 percent of students with disabilities. The remaining students are in the other disability categories, with the Autism Spectrum Disorder and Intellectual Disability categories representing about one-half of that remaining group.

Traditionally, students with specific learning disabilities are often served in a general education setting and their disability is usually in English Language Arts/Reading (ELAR) or in mathematics. For HCPS, the high proportion of students in the specific learning disability category is an indicator that many students with disabilities will likely need supports and services in ELA and math and will generally be educated in general education classrooms - taking the mandatory state tests with their nondisabled peers.

HCPS SWD student performance on the Florida Standard Assessments (FSA) shows a significant achievement gap between disabled and non-disabled students, and declining performance over time. Figure 3.2 compares disabled and non-disabled student passing rates (Level 3 and above) for English Language Arts for 2014-15 and 2015-16. (In 2014-15 the FSAs for English Language Arts and mathematics were changed to reflect more stringent standards, thus affecting comparability to more recent years.) Over the past two years, disabled student passing rates decreased from 16.9 percent to 15.9 percent while non-disabled student passing rates declined from 55.4 percent to 54.8 percent.

### Primary Exceptionality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Exceptionality</th>
<th>SWD Enrollment</th>
<th>SWD Enrollment as a Percent of Total Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedically Impaired</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>&lt;1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Impaired</td>
<td>1,464</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Disability</td>
<td>12,094</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Impaired</td>
<td>3,829</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visually Impaired</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>&lt;1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traumatic Brain Injured</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>&lt;1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28,039</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hillsborough County Public Schools, October 21, 2016
Figure 3.2. Comparison of Disabled and Non-Disabled Student FSA Passing Rates, ELA, Level 3 and Above, 2014-15 and 2015-16

Source: Florida Department of Education PK-12 education information portal

For math, the achievement gap and trend is similar. Figure 3.3 compares disabled and non-disabled student passing rates (Level 3 and above) for math for the same time period. Disabled student passing rates decreased from 18.6 percent to 16.5 percent while non-disabled student passing rates remained flat.

Figure 3.3. Comparison of Disabled and Non-Disabled FSA Passing Rates, Math, Level 3 and Above, 2014-15 and 2015-16

Source: Florida Department of Education PK-12 education information portal
Grade 8 science also shows a similar achievement gap and trend over a five-year period. Figure 3.4 compares disabled and non-disabled student passing rates (Level 3 and above) for Grade 8 science for 2011-12 to 2015-16. Disabled student passing rates decreased from 19.7 percent to 14.4 percent while non-disabled student passing rates increased slightly during the same time period.

Figure 3.4. Comparison of Disabled and Non-Disabled FSA Passing Rates, Grade 8 Science, Level 3 and Above, 2011-12 to 2015-16

The ESE Department supports the district in processes related to identification, evaluation, eligibility determination, educational placement and the provision of programs and services to students with disabilities. It is aligned organizationally under the Student Services Division, which reports to the Deputy Superintendent. Figure 3.5 presents the organization chart of the HCPS ESE Department.
The General Director is responsible for the oversight and daily operation of exceptional student education programs, and providing leadership in curriculum improvement programs for students with disabilities.

Each of the HCPS area offices also has an ESE Team which offers support and assistance to school staff and parents. Team supervisors report to the area leadership and coordinate their services with the ESE Department.

Table 3.2 presents ESE Program expenditures (which includes Gifted) from 2011-12 to 2015-16 (all funds). Total expenditures (unaudited) for 2015-16 were $240.6 million, up 23 percent, or approximately 5.5 percent annually on average from 2011-12 spending levels.
Table 3.2: HCPS ESE Expenditures, All Funds, 2011-12 to 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure Type (Object)</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>$138,962,741</td>
<td>$136,595,431</td>
<td>$148,921,063</td>
<td>$164,323,496</td>
<td>$166,817,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Benefits</td>
<td>$34,287,609</td>
<td>$33,383,429</td>
<td>$38,998,629</td>
<td>$45,027,095</td>
<td>$47,505,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchased Services</td>
<td>$14,383,888</td>
<td>$15,533,438</td>
<td>$17,517,809</td>
<td>$21,049,668</td>
<td>$21,451,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Services</td>
<td>$2,333</td>
<td>$2,233</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials &amp; Supplies</td>
<td>$1,902,672</td>
<td>$1,641,738</td>
<td>$1,847,145</td>
<td>$2,409,526</td>
<td>$1,239,327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Outlay</td>
<td>$2,974,482</td>
<td>$1,431,146</td>
<td>$1,839,873</td>
<td>$2,175,930</td>
<td>$1,559,123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$3,426,682</td>
<td>$2,896,556</td>
<td>$4,036,054</td>
<td>$1,782,673</td>
<td>$2,027,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$195,940,408</strong></td>
<td><strong>$191,483,972</strong></td>
<td><strong>$213,160,573</strong></td>
<td><strong>$236,768,387</strong></td>
<td><strong>$240,600,650</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HCPS Expenditure History, 2011-12 to 2015-16

**Assessment**

The review team identified two significant HCPS initiatives in its ESE program that represent best practices. These are discussed below.

**Community Based Screenings for Disabilities**

According to research by the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, “High quality early intervention services can change a child’s developmental trajectory and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.”  

Further, “intervention is likely to be more effective and less costly when it is provided earlier in life rather than later.”

In order to identify children who have development or behavioral disabilities or delays in language or other areas, the Early Childhood Council of Hillsborough County, Inc. (ECC) and the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) have implemented a developmental screening program for children ages birth to five. The screenings addresses several important developmental areas, including speech and language, hearing, vision, cognitive development, motor skills, and social-emotional development.

The screenings have the support of other agencies and are provided in various locations in the community, including churches, making it convenient for families to take their children in for screening. All screenings are free. FDLRS reports that over the past 24 years, the program has screened over 15,000 children. Each year, approximately 78 percent of the children screened are referred for further evaluation and/or to community services for further assistance.

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This early identification program is a positive initiative and a model for other districts because of several benefits it provides:

- Families have easier access to screening than they would have if services were offered only at a school or other central school district location. The screening is brought to them, which is especially helpful for low income families who lack transportation.
- The program demonstrates collaboration among various community agencies, FDLRS, and the school district.
- The screenings are a “one stop” shop – children can be screened in several different domains during one screening visit (e.g., speech-language, hearing, and cognitive delays can all be assessed during one visit).
- The early intervention that follows such screenings is cost effective.

**HCPS inclusive Pre-K ESE Program**

Over the past three years the percentage of young children ages 3-5 served inside the classroom has increased (from 24 percent to 51 percent) while the percentage of students ages 3-5 outside the classroom has decreased (from 50 percent to 31 percent). In addition, the program has expanded its educational environment options and designated specific program models and curricula for each.

There are three key educational programs for young children in HCPS, each providing different levels of service, curricula, and instructional strategies: PEEPS, iPEEPS, and cPEEPS. The PEEPs program currently has 8 classes. Curricula used in PEEPS target a variety of skills, including social/behavioral skills, literacy and language skills, self-determination and self-control, and an observations assessment.

There are 185 classrooms considered iPEEPS, 32 of which are fully inclusive. The curricula and materials used in the iPEEPS program include three of the curricula used in the PEEPS classes, and also use Conscious Discipline. Conscious discipline is a program that focuses on social problem solving and the development of executive functioning skills like impulse control and problem-solving.

The cPEEPS program serves approximately 170 students in HCPS and includes itinerant teachers who collaborate with community child care teachers. The curricula used at the child care centers are the primary source for the instructional program and are supplemented with two of the programs mentioned above as well as The Pyramid Model, which emphasizes positive adult-child relationships and explicit teaching of specific social-emotional skills.

There is also a networking and continuing education program for Pre-K ESE teachers, the Regional Communities of Practice. This program includes both in-person and online meetings, group coaching, and problem solving. It also offers a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers working with this subgroup of students.
These programs provide several benefits to children and to HCPS:

- When young children with disabilities are included in classrooms with their non-disabled peers, they have models for all of the key areas of development, including language and pre-literacy, social skills and social-emotional behavior, and academic readiness skills.

- Research supports inclusionary instructional arrangements and critical outcomes, “…of belonging, participating, and forming positive social relationships reflect success of inclusive placements for children with disabilities.” This is particularly important at a young age.

- Research also reports positive outcomes for non-disabled children when educated in environments that include children with disabilities, including academic progress, increased engagement, and positive socialization.26

The impact of this program is clearly seen in the movement towards less restrictive environments.

Table 3.3 shows the percent of HCPS students with disabilities ages 3-5 by instructional setting. Children receiving services inside the classroom – the least restrictive environment – more than doubled from 24 percent in 2013-14 to 51 percent in 2015-16.

Table 3.3. Percentages of Hillsborough County Public Schools Students with Disabilities Ages 3-5 by Education Settings, 2013-14 to 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Settings</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular Early Childhood or Kinder Receiving Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside the Classroom</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Early Childhood or Kinder Receiving Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside the Classroom</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate Class, Separate School, or Residential Facility</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home or Service Provider Location</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Florida 2016 LEA Profile

This positive approach to inclusion may set the stage for continued education in the least restrictive environment as these students continue to progress through school.

The above achievements notwithstanding, there are several significant challenges facing the HCPS programs for students with disabilities.

- The achievement gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers is wide and growing wider across all core subject areas tested. This gap is also evident in student graduation.

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rates. These problems appear to be due to a lack of academic rigor in the curriculum for students with disabilities.

- The district is at (compliance) risk of over-representation of minority students in ESE and in disciplinary matters (e.g., suspensions, expulsions, restraints and seclusion).
- Insufficient data analysis is conducted to identify root causes in potential problem areas and data driven solutions to those problems.

**Recommendation 3-1: Increase academic rigor in educational programming for Students with Disabilities.**

In comparison to the state average, HCPS SWD students consistently perform below the state average for disabled peers at every grade level tested. Figure 3.6 shows the FSA ESE passing rates (Level 3 and above) for English Language Arts for HCPS and the state average.

**Figure 3.6. FSA ESE Passing Rates (Level 3 and Above), Grades 3-10, English Language Arts, HCPS and State Average, 2015-16**

![Graph showing FSA ESE passing rates](image)

Source: Florida Department of Education PK-12 education information portal

The widest gap between the state average and HCPS on the FSA assessment is in Grade 8 ELA at 4.5 percent.

The lowest passing rates on the FSA for students with disabilities in HCPS are in ELA, ranging from 11.9 percent passing at Grade 7 to 22.6 percent passing at Grade 3. The fact that ELA passing rates for students with disabilities are at their highest in third grade and generally decline from that grade on indicates
instruction challenges for the district. Further, reading is a foundational skill, and students are unlikely to do well in other content areas if they cannot read at grade level.

Although HCPS math passing rates are higher than in ELA, HCPS still lags behind the state average for most grade levels, and by a wider margin. Figure 3.7 compares the FSA ESE passing rates (Level 3 and Above) in math for HCPS to the state average. Like ELA, the gap is widest in eighth grade (7.3 percentage points).

Figure 3.7. FSA ESE Passing Rates (Level 3 and Above), by Grade Level, Mathematics, HCPS and State Average, 2015-16

![Graph showing FSA ESE passing rates by grade level for HCPS and State Average, 2015-16.](image)

Source: Florida Department of Education PK-12 education information portal

For science, HCPS has virtually the same passing rate (Level 3 and above) for grade 5 (22.3 percent for HCPS and 22.2 percent for the state), but lags at grade 8 (14.4 percent for HCPS and 17.8 percent for the state).

All secondary students, including SWD, are required to pass the FSA Algebra 1 End of Course (EOC) assessment in order to graduate. Algebra 1 is often viewed as a “gatekeeper” subject, or a stepping stone to other math courses in high school and college, as well as the sources of basic skills needed in many professions. Many educators, including the founder of the Algebra Project, view Algebra 1 to be critical in the development of the abstract thinking skills necessary for 21st Century math and science skills.

Figure 3.8 presents the HCPS 2015-2016 passing rates for disabled and non-disabled students on the Algebra 1 EOC exam. SWD students have 12.8 percent passing rate in Algebra 1 at grade 9 and the passing rate declines further by grades 10 and 11. Students who took and passed the exam in grades 6 through 8 boost the overall Algebra 1 EOC passing rate to 18.8 percent, but this is still more than 40 percentage points lower than the total passing rate for HCPS non-disabled peers.
Chapter 3 – Exceptional Student Education Programs

Figure 3.8. HCPS Algebra End of Course Passing Rates, by Grade, for Disabled and Non-disabled Students. 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total Passing Rate</th>
<th>Disabled</th>
<th>Non-Disabled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Total passing rates include students that took the course in Grades 6-8.

Source: Florida Department of Education PK-12 education information portal

The state considers two measures related to graduation rates for students with disabilities: the Federal Uniform High School Graduation Rate and the Standard Diploma Graduation Rate. The first measure considers a cohort of students (first time ninth graders, plus students transferring in, minus students transferring out or enrolling in another education setting). The second measure, the Standard Diploma Graduation Rate, is the number of standard diploma graduates divided by the number of students with disabilities who completed their education or dropped out. This measure considered the number of students with disabilities exiting school in a given year, not over a four-year period.

Using the Federal Uniform High School Graduation Rate measure, students with disabilities in Hillsborough County have a lower graduation rate that the state and lower than HCPS’s enrollment peer group average. Figure 3.9 presents a three-year history of the federal uniform high school graduation rates for HCPS, its enrollment group peer average and the overall state average. When compared to the HCPS enrollment group and the state, the graduation rate for students with disabilities in HCPS is six percentage points lower than the enrollment group and four percentage points lower than the state rate.
Figure 3.9. Federal Uniform High School Graduation Rates for HCPS Disabled Students, Compared to the Enrollment Group Peer Average and Overall State Average, 2012-13 to 2014-15

Source: Florida 2016 LEA Profile

According to the district’s LEA Profile for 2016, the percentage point gap in graduation rates for students with disabilities and the graduation rate for all students in HCPS has ranged from 22 percent to 24 percent over the past three school years; it is currently 23 percent.

One of the driving factors behind an academically rigorous program for students with disabilities is the exposure to the general curriculum. There are several reasons that the IDEA favors more inclusive environments as opposed to those that are more restrictive. School is a social environment and discussions of the IDEA considered the impact of restrictive environments on students’ opportunities to make friends and establish peer relationships. However, as more requirements for standards-based curricula and statewide testing have been implemented, there is also pressure to place students in less restrictive environments so that they are guaranteed exposure to the grade level curriculum on which most of them will be tested.

While services in special education settings such as resource rooms, separate classes, and separate environments can theoretically provide the same level of expectations and curricular requirements, the move toward more inclusion into general education environments (general education classes) often occurs with the purpose of guaranteeing access to the same curriculum, expectations, teacher expertise,
and pace of instruction as that of non-disabled peers. Without such access, academic progress may be less likely to occur at satisfactory levels.\footnote{Copenhaver, J. (2006). The Least Restrictive Environment: A Primer for Parents and Educators. Legal Requirements and Best Practices. North Logan, UT: Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center.}

A commendation earlier in this chapter recognized HCPS’ dramatic shift in its programmatic approach to services for children ages 3-5 with disabilities, effectively doubling the percentage of students serviced inside a general classroom and now serving more than 50 percent in this setting.

For students with disabilities ages 6-21 in four settings, HCPS is slightly behind the state average in serving disabled students in the least restrictive environment. There are four major instructional settings for these students, which are described below:

- **Regular Class**, which includes students who spend at least 80 percent of their day in with non-disabled peers
- **Resource Room**, which includes students who spend between 40 and 80 percent of their school week with nondisabled peers
- **Separate Class**, which includes students who spend less than 40 percent of their week with nondisabled peers
- **Other Separate Environment**, which includes students served in public or private separate schools, residential placements or hospital/homebound placements

Table 3.4 compares the distribution of disabled students ages 6-21 by instructional setting between HCPS, its Florida peer enrollment group, and the state average. HCPS has a slightly lower percentage of its SWD students served in regular class environments than the state, but they are the same as its peer enrollment group. HCPS has a higher percentage of its SWD students served in the resource room setting than its peer group and the state. For the two most restrictive settings, HCPS has a lower percentage of students in separate classes but a higher percentage of students served in other separate environments than the enrollment group and the state. However, these statistics include charter schools, and some charters do not offer a full continuum of services as they may target a specific primary disability. This information does not include students who are served in correctional facilities or students in private schools who receive special education and/or related services from the district.
Table 3.4. Percent of SWD Students Ages 6-21 by Educational Environment, HCPS, Peer Enrollment Group, and State, 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regular Class</th>
<th>Resource Room</th>
<th>Separate Class</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HCPS</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Enrollment Group</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LEA Profile 2016

School visits, classroom observations and interviews by the review team led to findings that could explain the district’s achievement levels and trends for its student with disabilities:

- **Reading curriculum is not consistently applied at schools.** Many school systems use a balanced literacy approach at the elementary level and a menu of proven programs at the secondary level, with an emphasis on comprehension versus word identification or fluency. The district’s reading plan submitted to the state and its online list of reading resources and professional development is comprehensive and contains details about excellent reading curricula and supplementary resources. However, during observations and interviews, the review team learned that many of these resources are not consistently used in all schools.

- **Not all professional development programs undergo a data-based evaluation.** The district has begun to provide systematic professional development in reading instruction to teachers of students with disabilities through the ESE department. The program, called the Reading Intervention Master Teacher program, includes face-to-face workshops, online and video extension, coaching and feedback, and collaboration. Although this is an effective program, it is non-evaluative. HCPS is not evaluating the use of this support in the classroom and therefore cannot determine the fidelity of implementation or the effectiveness of its use.

- **Very little technology is used in classrooms for students with disabilities.** The lack of instructional technology is equally as prevalent in ESE programs as the general education programs. Students with disabilities had limited, if any, access to tablets or other devices unless they were in inclusive settings on the campuses with technology grants. Tablets and portable devices are cost effective tools for students with disabilities to practice skills, engage in motivating multi-media learning, and participate through accommodations like voice recordings and visuals. Instructional technology is addressed in a separate chapter of this report.

- **Lack of organizational alignment with Curriculum and Instruction.** The organizational alignment of ESE under Student Services and separate from Curriculum and Instruction may be contributing to the lack of academic rigor in programming for students with disabilities. This is discussed further in the General Education Programs chapter of this report.
To increase academic rigor, HCPS should consider the following implementation strategies:

- **Ensure that the district reading curriculum and supports are consistently implemented for SWD districtwide.** HCPS should expand its own walk-throughs specifically for SWD to ensure that the reading curriculum and supporting materials are used in the classrooms. Once fidelity of implementation is established, the effectiveness of the reading program can be better evaluated with respect to its impact on student achievement.

- **Expand and evaluate the Reading Intervention Master Teacher Program.** The ESE Department should continue the expansion of this program and implement an evaluations component to ensure its success. The department should work closely with principals to evaluate instruction in these teachers’ classrooms, use them for models when they demonstrate high levels of skills, and monitor, coach, and support them when they are under-performing.

- **In Algebra, HCPS should consider alternatives to current scheduling, curricula, and teaching methods.** These could include double blocking students in Algebra 1, using a proven curriculum that may or may not be the same used for students without disabilities, and re-teaching based on short cycle formative assessment data, so that problems are recognized early and interventions provided as soon as problems are evident.

- **The model demonstrated in Early Childhood instructional setting placements should be expanded into elementary and secondary grade levels.** The ESE department should set specific targets to increase the number of students with disabilities educated in less restrictive environments.

**Fiscal Impact**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**Recommendation 3-2: Increase ESE student data analysis and instructional support.**

As noted in the General Education Programs chapter, HCPS is starting to arm area offices and its schools with sophisticated data analysis that should help identify and address specific academic needs. This was not observed in the ESE program. Neither ESE central office staff nor area office ESE support staff conduct detailed analysis of assessment data or other student achievement outcome data at a detailed enough level to successfully analyze and address problems.

Based on the review of ESE job descriptions, there are many responsibilities related to compliance, administrative, and programmatic issues such as scheduling, assigning staff, meeting federal and state compliance requirements, collecting reporting data, and similar tasks. Some job descriptions, such as the Supervisors of ESE Curriculum Instruction, Elementary Education, and Secondary Instruction, include a responsibility to “develop programs and trainings based on student data to improve outcomes for student with disabilities.” However, this is done primarily at the program level and not at a student or even school level. The area ESE supervisor job descriptions do not include data analysis, and focus groups with area ESE staff confirmed this. Since 2016-17 is the first year that area offices have academic responsibilities,
the initial focus appears to be on general education programs. HCPS needs to apply the same student data reporting, analysis, and problem solving methodologies to the area office ESE support.

Following the lead of the General Education program, ESE should initiate and concerted effort to collect, analyze, and act on achievement data for students with disabilities. Below are suggested implementation strategies for consideration:

- **Create a system for reviewing academic data of students with disabilities.** This system should involve monthly reporting using a template common to all campuses. The system should articulate members of a team of ESE staff responsible for collecting, monitoring, and analyzing these data and then writing action plans based on the data.

- **Revise job descriptions to include more student data analysis.** The ESE department has an elementary supervisor and a secondary supervisor. These two positions could assume responsibility for academic progress and the ESE director could re-assign some of their procedural tasks to others in the department. Area ESE job descriptions should also be modified to include student data analysis and problem identification.

- **Increase the use of formative assessments for SWD students.** Develop and implement a calendar of short cycle, formative data collection and monitoring for ESE students with disabilities. The district improvement plan indicates that frequent formative assessments and longer-term benchmark assessments are used in HCPS. These should yield data on students with disabilities in co-teach settings, just like they yield data on nondisabled students. If students in resource or more restrictive placements are not taking regular formative assessments, other sources of information should be established and used for monthly data collection.

- **ESE data meetings, classroom observations, and follow-up.** Other processes for the team reviewing the academic achievement of students with disabilities should include a monthly meeting at which the data are presented, action planning and monitoring for students not making progress, observations of teachers whose results are not satisfactory, and coaching/support in classrooms demonstrating little or no progress.

**Fiscal Impact**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**Recommendation 3-3: Develop action plans and targets to balance demographic representation in ESE enrollment and disciplinary activities.**

The disproportionate representation of economically disadvantaged students in special education programs, especially in some specific disability categories, has been an on-going concern for states and districts across the country.
Some students are more likely to be exposed to the social, health, environmental, nutritional, language/literacy, social, mobility, and economic factors that may themselves contribute to the occurrence of disabilities. However, one of the important tenets of education for students with disabilities is that services be based on the presence of a student’s disability and his or her need for services and not based on other social factors that may impact student learning. For example, when students’ families are economically disadvantaged, that circumstance may or may not contribute to learning problems. However, students who are economically disadvantaged are not considered to have a disability solely because of their status as economically disadvantaged absent any of the recognized disability categories in the IDEA. In fact, the Specific Learning Disability category, which is the most commonly diagnosed disability under the IDEA, prohibits diagnosis when economic disadvantage is the primary cause of a student’s learning problems.

HCPS has adopted the state guidelines for eligibility which rule out diagnosis based on an economic disadvantage; however, the results show that in practice a demographic balance has been difficult to achieve. The demographic characteristics of students with disabilities in HCPS do not mirror the characteristics of the total district enrollment. Figure 3.10 shows the representation of economically disadvantaged students and non-economically disadvantaged students in the district, comparing the total enrollment distribution to that of disabled students. While approximately 59 percent of all students in HCPS are economically disadvantaged, nearly 68 percent of students with disabilities in the district are economically disadvantaged, a difference of more than 9 percentage points.

Figure 3.10. Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged and Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students, HCPS Total Enrollment and Students with Disabilities, 2015-16

Source: Florida Department of Education
The Florida Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services collects and analyzes data related to discipline rates for students with disabilities. This information is provided in each district’s LEA Profile. There are two key pieces of information provided:

- Discipline rates and discipline risk ratios for students with disabilities and nondisabled students are calculated and compared to the state rate.
- Discipline risk ratios by racial/ethnic group are calculated for students with disabilities and reported for the state and for districts.

To determine the discipline rates, the state considers the number of students who received out-of-school suspension or expulsions totaling more than 10 days and divides that number by total-year enrollment as reported at the end of the school year. The, “the risk ratio is calculated by dividing the discipline rate of students with disabilities by the discipline rate of nondisabled students. A risk ratio of 1.0 indicates that students with disabilities and nondisabled students are equally likely to be suspended/expelled.”28

Overall, HCPS discipline rates have declined slightly over the past three years from 2.95 to 2.27. These levels are higher than the state rates ranging from 1.21 percent in 2012-13 to 1.33 percent in 2014-15. The HCPS discipline risk ratio of 2.27 indicates that HCPS students with disabilities are more than twice as likely as non-disabled students to be suspended or expelled for more than 10 days during a school year.

A similar analysis can be performed by racial/ethnic groups. Figure 3.11 compares the discipline risk ratios for each racial/ethnic group for HCPS and the state for 2014-15. The information indicates that Black (or African-American) students with disabilities are 5.45 five times more likely to be suspended/expelled than all nondisabled students. This is approximately double the risk ratio of Black students with disabilities statewide. The risk ratio is also above 1.0 for students who are Hispanic (1.42) and above 2.0 for students of two or more races (2.05).

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28 2016 LEA Profile, Hillsborough, p. 6
These rates of suspension and expulsion for students with disabilities, especially for students with disabilities who are Black (or African-American), are not good for students and creates unacceptable risks for the district. Not only are the risk ratios of serious disciplinary actions unusually high, these data do not even consider students who are suspended or expelled for fewer than 10 days in a school year. When students with disabilities are removed from their educational environment for more than 10 days, several procedural safeguards in the IDEA are triggered. Consequently, many school districts work hard to keep the total days of suspension and/or expulsion below the 10-day limit. If the HCPS data for all suspensions and expulsions of students with disabilities, including those for students whose totals were less than 10 days, were calculated and analyzed, the disproportionate risk ratios would demonstrate even less favorable results.

In June 2014, a complaint was filed against the Hillsborough County School District and referenced in a letter from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR). The complaint described in the letter alleged that the district discriminates against African-American students in two areas, the first by “…subjecting them to harsher discipline than white students.” (US Department of Education, Letter to Superintendent of HCPS, June 4, 2014, p. 1).

The district’s response described a list of voluntary actions that would be taken to resolve this discipline issue. The district has made suggestions for changing school climate, school resource officer (SRO) responsibilities, Tier 1 behavior interventions, and training administrators. However, the ESE Department
did not have any data analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives, and the data analyzed by the review team during this study does not suggest any substantial improvement.

It is recommended that HCPS develop an action plan to implement their stated initiatives. The plan should be concrete and specific and should include:

- A timetable for completion,
- Assignment of responsibility, and
- The development of measurable outcomes.

Data should be tracked, compared to targets, and analyzed at least quarterly to evaluate progress.

**Fiscal Impact**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**Recommendation 3-4: Implement additional steps to reduce restraint and seclusion disciplinary practices of students with disabilities.**

In 2011, the Florida Department of Education developed standards for documenting, reporting, and monitoring the use of restraint and seclusion with students who have disabilities. These standards require districts to develop written policies and procedures for each of these steps, as well as for training personnel on the use of restraint and seclusion. Districts were also required to develop a plan for reducing the use of restraint and seclusion. The state guidelines include:

- Definitions of restraint and seclusion
- An explanation of when they may be used
- Restrictions on their use
- Training requirements for administrators and instructional personnel
- Requirements for documenting and reporting when restraint and/or seclusion are use
- Monitoring the use of restraint and seclusion
- Requirements for district and school guidelines and standards
- Requirements for seclusion time-out rooms
- Prohibited actions related to restraint and seclusion

As required by the state, HCPS, has a policy entitled *Restraint and Seclusion on Students with Disabilities.*

The district policy has many of the same requirements as the state and also requires a District Monitoring Team. The District Monitoring team, “…comprised of Area Office and District-level ESE administrators/personnel, administrator/personnel from Psychological Services and a representative

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29

30 HCPS Policy Manual, Section 5630.01
from the Severely Emotionally Disturbed Network (SEDNET), will review and monitor the data and provide support to schools in:

A. strategies and positive behavior supports and interventions;
B. progress monitoring;
C. additional training opportunities;
D. crisis management."

The Florida Department of Education has collected and posted data on restraint and seclusion incident reports from each district in the state from the 2010-2011 school year until the 2013-2014 school year, the most recent year state data is available, which is the most recent year for which the review team could obtain data on the state website. Figure 3.12 presents the number of restraints of students with disabilities for HCPS and its enrollment group peers (Broward, Dade, Orange, Palm Beach, and Pinellas). These data show that Hillsborough had the second highest number of restraint incidents among its peers for three of the four years and the highest number for one year (2012-2013).

Figure 3.12. Number of Restraints Reported, 2010-11 to 2013-14

![Bar chart showing restraint incidents](image)

Source: Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Because the state is monitoring the use of restraint and seclusion with students who have disabilities, it is important to note districts’ rates of decrease so that they can determine whether any steps they are taking to reduce the use of these techniques are working. Hillsborough’s rate of decrease (11 percent) was the lower than all but Dade County, which has significantly fewer restraint incidents. While Orange County still has a relatively high number of incidents of restraints, their rate of decline is 57 percent. Figure 3.13 shows the percentage decline in restraints reported from 2010-11 to 2013-14.
More recent district-level data shows more progress in 2015-16. In its *District Plan Related to Reducing the Use of Restraint* submitted to the Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, HCPS reported 949 total restraint incidents for 2014-15 (up slightly from 2013-14 level) and 661 restraint incidents for 2015-16, a decline of approximately 30 percent.

A similar peer comparison can be seen with seclusion incidents reported. Figure 3.14 presents seclusion incidents for students with disabilities for HCPS and its enrollment peer group. HCPS had the highest number of seclusion incidents among its peers in the 2010-11 school year and the second highest number each of the three remaining years. While three of the peer districts have had fewer than 15 incidents for three years in a row, HCPS continues to use seclusion more often than all but Pinellas County.
Figure 3.14. Number of Seclusions Reported

- Palm Beach: 100 (2010-11), 50 (2011-12), 25 (2012-13), 12.5 (2013-14)

Figure Note: Districts showing no seclusion incidents have 10 or less for the applicable year.

Source: Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

HCPS’ rate of decrease in the use of seclusion was the second highest among its peers. Figure 3.15 shows the rate of decrease in seclusion incidents reported from 2010-11 to 2013-14.
More recent data shows this favorable trend reversing. In its District Plan Related to Reducing the Use of Seclusion, submitted to the Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, HCPS reported 349 total seclusion incidents for 2014-2015 (significantly higher than prior year level of 181) and 241 seclusion incidents for 2015-2016, a decrease of approximately 31 percent.

In its plan submitted to the state related to reducing the use of restraint, HCPS reported that most of the restraint incidents were with students whose primary exceptionality is Emotional/Behavior Disorders, and the second highest disability represented was Autism Spectrum Disorder. Of the 660 incidents, 225, or 34 percent involved Black (or African-American) students. HCPS reported that it does allow prone restraints, which are prohibited in some states. A prone restraint means that the child is laid in a facedown position.31

For seclusion incidents in the district’s plan, HCPS reported that students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders were most often subject to seclusion and accounted for most of them (208 incidents). The information on the race of students involved of the seclusion incidents was not available.

The ongoing review of district restraint data by HCPS has resulted in specific actions including district wide and site based professional development (NCI, PBS, participation in the statewide module for reducing

31 Restraint & Seclusion, the National Autism Association
restraints and seclusion), site support through a triage process, and providing materials to provide explicit instruction of social skills for students.

While 2015-16 showed significant improvement in reducing the use of restraints and seclusion, HCPS needs to sustain these efforts and consider others to achieve further and consistent reductions. Several implementation strategies are suggested:

- Collect and monitor data monthly on suspensions and expulsions by student, by campus, by administrator, by referring teacher, by type of infraction, and by disability.

- Review the Behavior Intervention Plans of all students suspended or expelled. Consider whether shorter suspension periods are appropriate and whether there are off-campus alternatives to expulsion. Ensure that these options are being considered in all procedural meetings.

- Assign a behavior coach to each student who has been suspended or expelled within the first 6 weeks of school. Write a re-integration plan for those students, review the student’s BIP, observe the student in class, and review and analyze the data collected.

- Establish regular monthly meetings on those campuses with the highest number of suspensions and expulsions. Include special education teachers, general education teachers, the school psychologist, the behavior coach, the student, and the student’s parents or guardians. Using an action planning form, write an action plan for each student considered that has specific steps, assigned roles and responsibilities, and timelines for actions.

- Determine which campuses and administrators use suspensions and expulsions for students with disabilities the least often. Invite those campus leaders and teachers to share their strategies with others.

- Implement additional de-escalation professional development for all teachers on campuses with high rates of suspension and expulsion of students with disabilities. Also include training on alternatives to confrontation, require the use of monitoring, and require the use of positive reinforcement systems linked to both home and school.

- Require home visits by administrators and teachers for those students whose days of suspension and expulsion total more than 10.

- Prohibit the use of prone restraints. The use of prone restraints may put the student, staff, and district at risk.

- Review data regarding the use of restraints and seclusion monthly, by student, by campus, by administrator, by referring teacher, by type of infraction, and by disability.
Review the Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) of all students restrained or subject to seclusion. Based on the data, target professional development activities to those campuses, teachers, and administrators with the highest rates of restraint and seclusion.

Fiscal Impact

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Programs for Gifted Students

Gifted education in Florida is part of the Exceptional Students Education Program. The Florida Department of Education describes gifted students as children with superior intellectual development and who are capable of high performance.32

Districts are charged with developing programs that address the state’s goals for gifted education and must assure that their programs include the following:

1. A system for screening and identifying students with high potential
2. A continuum of evidence-based service models with an acceleration plan in place
3. Development of meaningful educational plans (EPs) for students with rigorous and challenging curriculum available to differentiate services for the gifted learner
4. Guidance and counseling strategies to meet the needs of the gifted
5. Monitoring to ensure students are making learning gains
6. Professional development supporting gifted education
7. A system for evaluating the program to facilitate effective changes as needed.

Students identified as gifted have an education plan with specific learning goals that is reviewed annually and updated every three years.

In HCPS, the gifted education program is led by the Supervisor of Gifted Education K-12 who reports to the Chief Academic Officer. The district offers gifted programs at all grade levels primarily through access to gifted classes part of the day taught by teachers with GT endorsement at the elementary level, advanced academic classes taught by teachers with GT endorsement at the middle school level, and special programs such as the International Baccalaureate and advanced courses at the high school level. Additionally, the HCPS is in the first year of implementing a full-day gifted education center as a school choice option for elementary students.

The examination of gifted education addressed the following questions:

- How are students identified for gifted education?
- Is there adequate representation of students in the program?
- Is the program meeting stated objectives?

HCPS has a comprehensive process to screen, assess, and identify students for the gifted education program. Screening and identification of gifted students is guided by state statute and rule\(^{33}\) and is reflected in the district’s ESE policies and procedures. At the elementary level, each school has a Child Study Team with members trained in screening and evaluating students who may be potentially gifted. The district uses district-wide assessment data from all students to cast a wide net and identify possible candidates for further evaluation and screening. Students who evidence potential of giftedness are then referred for additional screening and evaluation. In addition to student learning data, students may be nominated for additional screening by teachers, parents or other individuals who suspect the potential for giftedness.

To increase the likelihood that students with potential are identified, especially for historically underrepresented populations, the state allows districts to develop and administer a state approved Plan B as an alternative process to consider students who did not meet the standard eligibility requirements, but based on input from the team, demonstrate the potential for giftedness. The rule currently defines underrepresented groups as those who are limited English proficient or from a low socio-economic status family. According to Rule 6A-6.03019, FAC, Special Instructional Programs for Students Who Are Gifted part (2)(b), the intent is to foster and support students who are English-language learners or those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who may not have been exposed to the types of experiences necessary to acquire knowledge.\(^{34}\) According to district representatives approximately 35 percent of the students identified for the district’s gifted program qualified under Plan B alternative criteria.

**Commendation:** The district has an innovative program (Spark) to increase the representation of LEP students and students from low socio-economic families in the gifted program.

The district has established an overall goal to increase the representation of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and students from low socio-economic status families in the gifted program such that it mirrors the representation of the district’s all student group enrollment in gifted services program\(^{35}\). Currently a disparity exists.

\(^{33}\) Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., establishes requirements with regard to the identification, location, evaluation and provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students both with disabilities and who are gifted. The requirements apply K-12 with regard to the gifted population.

\(^{34}\) http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7567/urlt/stategiftedplan.pdf

\(^{35}\) Source: HCPS Instructional Planning Tool, October 2016.
Table 3.5 is an analysis of students identified as Limited English Proficient (LY, LN, LP, LF)\textsuperscript{36} status compared to total student enrollment in the gifted services program. The LEP representation (LY, LF) of 1.2 percent is significantly less than the 9.3 percent total student membership in gifted services. However, the district should be recognized for retaining students previously identified as LEP(LZ) in the gifted program after they have exited the LEP program and completed a two-year follow-up period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.5. Limited English Proficient Student Representation in Gifted Services Program 2016-17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English Proficient (LY, LF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English Proficient (LZ)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HCPS, 2016-17

To address this disparity, HCPS implemented Spark in eight elementary schools. In this program, classes are taught one-half day by the general education teacher and the other half day by a gifted endorsed “sparking interest” teacher. These teachers provide targeted learning experiences for students and train the general education teachers on an observation inventory to identify students with the potential for gifted eligibility. Additionally, the Spark teachers conduct parent sessions in coordination with other school events and give parents activities to take home and do with their children.

Based on the observation inventory, a pool of students is identified for further screening and based on the results of the screening for referral and evaluation. In one elementary school, seventeen students were identified as gifted, which is notable given that only two were identified the previous year. This initiative is targeted at schools serving under-represented populations, and is expected to further increase the number of historically under-represented students in the gifted program.

\textsuperscript{36} LY The student is an English Language Learner and is enrolled in classes specifically designed for English Language Learners.
LF The student is being followed up for a two-year period after having exited from the ESOL program.
LZ The student is one for whom a two-year follow-up period has been completed after the student has exited the ESOL program. Once a student completes the two-year post- reclassification monitoring period, they are re-coded LZ and remain so for the remainder of their school career. This code also applies to John M. McKay Scholarship students who were formerly in an English Language Learners program.
**Recommendation 3-5: Develop a program evaluation design to determine the effectiveness of the newly implemented Center for Gifted Studies.**

The State Gifted Plan provided by the FLDOE has two components related to assurances the district must provide relative to its gifted program:

- Monitoring to ensure students are making learning gains
- A system for evaluating the program to facilitate effective changes as needed

The state’s plan offers a number of suggestions regarding criteria to consider for designing a program evaluation strategy including the use of the *Florida School District Gifted Program Self-Assessment Tool.*\(^{37}\)

This tool is based on policy and programs identified from state and national guidelines for meeting the needs of gifted learnings and districts can use the tool to assess ongoing practices and to initiate a study of the value and impact of services in the district.

The supervisor of the gifted services program relies on a number of tactics for determining the effectiveness of the gifted program:

- A monthly review of how students are receiving services
- Two times per year there is a review of every gifted teacher’s schedule including a review of the students they serve
- Teachers in gifted assignments provide feedback to the program supervisor through an annual survey
- Parents of students enrolled in the four-day enrichment Summer Scholars program complete a parent survey

The district also tracks the growth of the program over time. Since 2005, the district has increased the number of gifted students served by 34.7 percent.

There is no formal evaluation of the gifted program overall, however. Conducting a true research design to determine the impact of the gifted services program on student achievement is challenging, primarily because it is difficult to isolate gifted education as an influencing variable among many other variables that may affect student achievement. A pure research design would require a control group of students with equal potential not enrolled in the gifted program whose academic achievement could be compared to like students enrolled in the gifted program.

The new full-day, self-contained gifted program, however, provides a unique opportunity to apply a more rigorous research design. Because these students are in a separate school, comparisons can be made of academic gains to peer groups in the traditional model offered at the elementary level throughout the district. Given the investment the district has made in this program, and the potential for expansion, it

would be helpful to have tangible, research-based results that speaks to the efficacy of this program design.

Fiscal Impact

The district can accomplish this recommendation with existing resources.
Chapter 4 – Programs for English Language Learners

Introduction

HCPS applies an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) approach to educate English Language Learners (ELL), which is a curriculum and delivery methodology that teaches language skills in English with differentiated instructional support to facilitate students’ acquisition of academic language. The curriculum is supplemented with the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach – an instructional approach based on cognitive theory and research that incorporates learning content knowledge and language skills while helping students value their own knowledge and cultural experiences. A whole language approach is also applied for English-Language Arts and reading. This is an instructional method where students learn to recognize words as whole pieces of language.

To meet the needs of English language learners in the district, ELL programs must adhere to the legal requirements set forth by the Florida Consent Decree. The Consent Decree is the State of Florida’s framework for compliance with federal and state laws regarding the education of ELL students. It encompasses a wide range of laws, legal policies, and federal court orders that ensure the civil rights of students whose language origin is other than English. To enforce access to an equitable education, the ESOL program and service delivery of classified ELL students must comply with a body of regulations brought upon by the requirements set forth in Section 1003.56 of the Florida Statutes, the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and other laws and U.S. Supreme Court decisions. The framework provides guidance for ELL programs through the following six area:

1. Section I. Identification and Assessment
2. Section II. Equal Access to Appropriate Programming
3. Section III. Equal Access to Appropriate Categorical and Other Programs for ELL Students
4. Section IV. Personnel
5. Section V. Monitoring Issues
6. Section VI. Outcome Measures

The review team sought to determine how well the HCPS Office of Programs for English Language Learners met these provisions, and ensured that ELL students entering the district with no or finite competence in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing English were taught through developmentally appropriate practices (e.g., intentionally teaching with the stages of language acquisition in mind). The ultimate goal

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38 Florida Department of Education website: http://www.fldoe.org/academics/eng-language-learners/consent-decree.stml
is that ELL students learn to communicate academically and socially in English, and consequently experience achievement in the content areas.

The review team explored the requirements outlined above by evaluating the policies and procedures found in these core areas:

- Registration and identification
- Placement and testing
- ELL plans and the ELL file folder
- ESOL instruction
- Accommodations for the FSA
- Progress monitoring
- ELL committee
- Parent notification and parent/student rights
- Professional development
- Title III
- Resources

**ELL Programs in HCPS**

At HCPS 45,000 ELL students, or approximately 22 percent of the total student population, represent nearly 200 countries and speak 198 languages and dialects. The Office of Programs for English Language Learners aims to serve that unique population of students and their families. The fundamental purpose of the Office is to provide support and assistance to schools to ensure that classified ELL students receive comprehensible instruction. The ELL program goals include:

- To develop the students’ English language proficiency in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension.

- To ensure that English language learners continue to develop and acquire skills and concepts in content area subjects while they are developing their English language skills.

- To encourage communication between school and home that will promote the educational success of ELL students.

- To promote cultural awareness among students and community.

ELL student performance on the Florida Standard Assessments (FSA) shows lower but improving performance. Figure 4.1 compares ELL and non-ELL passing rates (Level 3 and above) for English Language
Arts for 2014-15 and 2015-16. Over the past two years, ELL passing rates increased from 12.7 percent to 13 percent while non-ELL student passing rates slightly declined.

Figure 4.1. Comparison of ELL and non-ELL FSA Passing Rates, English Language Arts, Level 3 and Above, 2014-15 and 2015-16

For mathematics, the achievement gap is much narrower. Figure 4.2 compares ELL and non-ELL passing rates (Level 3 and above) for mathematics for the same time period. ELL passing rates increased from 43.4 percent to 45.8 percent while Non-ELL student passing rates remained flat.

39 In 2014-15, the FSAs for English Language Arts and mathematics were changed to reflect more stringent standards, thus affecting comparability to more recent years.
Grade 8 science shows a higher achievement gap, but with more rapid improvement over a five-year period. Figure 4.3 compares ELL and non-ELL passing rates (Level 3 and above) for Grade 8 Science for 2011-12 to 2015-16. ELL passing rates increased from 6.2 percent to 10.2 percent while Non-ELL student passing rates increased just under 2 percentage points over the five year period.

The Office of Programs for ELLs operates within the Office of Teaching and Learning. Figure 4.4 presents the organizational chart of the ELL unit as of September 2016. The unit is led by a supervisor, with eight
grade level district resource teachers (DRTs), a DRT for Title III, and a DRT for the Literacy Acculturation Center (LAC) who acts as a liaison for the community. The DRTs provide professional development and support to the ESOL resource teachers and bilingual paraprofessionals. Two secretaries, and accounting clerk, and a translator also report to the supervisor.

Figure 4.4. Organizational Chart - HCPS Office of Programs for English Language Learners

Since September 2016, all but one of the DRT positions (DRT Literacy Acculturation Center) have been transferred to other departments or eliminated.

The Office implements the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium’s standards-based system. The Florida State Board of Education adopted WIDA, which encompasses English language proficiency standards that teachers can use to guide their instruction of English language learners. WIDA addresses language proficiency through five standards: Social and Instructional Language, Language of Language Arts, Language of Mathematics, Language of Science, and Language of Social Studies. The latter four standards are designed to focus on language that learners must acquire to participate successfully in the content areas.

In terms of instructional support, the Office oversees Title III funding, which affords funds for individual schools to purchase supplemental materials designed to promote ELL students’ language acquisition, academic achievement, and promote parental involvement and family literacy. District-wide specified Title III funds have been used to buy *A+RISE, LeapFrog Language First!, Scholastic READ 180*, and *Rosetta Stone*, among other programs and materials. The Office also provides ESOL Resource Teachers (ERTs) a variety of resources and materials (e.g., books for classroom libraries, and dictionary and glossaries). Additional program services include professional development for ERTs and paraprofessionals, and summer institutes that support the ESOL instructional approach.

In terms of parent outreach, the Office implements a variety of programs to encourage parents/guardians of ELL students to become involved in their schooling. In addition to site-based Parent Advisory Council and District Advisory Council meetings where parents can learn more about ELL program services at their respective schools, they are also invited to participate in:

- Spanish Story Time at *Barnes and Noble* – held monthly, and parents who bring their children receive the featured book for their personal library.
- Literacy Nights at *Barnes and Noble* – held four times a year, parents at this information session learn about reading and family literacy and receive a free book.

- Parent University – forums that provide participants information on district initiatives and other information about ELL programs.

The Office also sponsors the Literacy Acculturation Center, which provides services to the immigrant and refugee community through a variety of program services, such as community- and faith-based service provider referrals and coordination of services, community education, community awareness, and interpretive services, among others.

In addition to the central office staff, ESOL Resource Teachers are staffed at individual campuses and provide site-based support to their respective faculty and staff. ESOL teachers utilize a variety of instructional strategies, materials, and modification to teach students to speak, read, and write English and to make content-area instruction understandable to ESOL students. Schools with large populations of ESOL students employ a full/time ESOL Resource teacher who coordinates all ESOL services at that school.

Table 4.1 presents ELL Program expenditures, which includes area and school-based ESOL staff. Total expenditures (all funds) for 2015-16 were $25.6 million, up 39 percent from 2011-12 levels. Virtually all of the increase was due to increased staffing costs. Because of the reorganization in 2016-17, expenditures are expected to be significantly lower this fiscal year.

Table 4.1. HCPS ELL Expenditures, All Funds, 2011-12 to 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C100 Salaries</td>
<td>$13,944,101</td>
<td>$13,364,214</td>
<td>$16,340,541</td>
<td>$18,080,412</td>
<td>$18,719,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 Employee Benefits</td>
<td>$4,380,615</td>
<td>$4,202,478</td>
<td>$5,206,420</td>
<td>$5,867,641</td>
<td>$6,353,984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 Purchased Services</td>
<td>$1,802</td>
<td>$959</td>
<td>$50,954</td>
<td>$145,160</td>
<td>$231,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 Materials &amp; Supplies</td>
<td>$33,509</td>
<td>$102,618</td>
<td>$607,009</td>
<td>$736,231</td>
<td>$222,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 Capital Outlay</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$7,622</td>
<td>$147,491</td>
<td>$282,873</td>
<td>$126,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700 Other</td>
<td>$53,217</td>
<td>$52,683</td>
<td>$60,298</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,413,244</strong></td>
<td><strong>$17,730,575</strong></td>
<td><strong>$22,412,713</strong></td>
<td><strong>$25,112,317</strong></td>
<td><strong>$25,653,831</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HCPS Expenditure History, 2011-12 to 2015-16

**Methodology**

The review team examined Florida Department of Education data for trends in HCPS ELL student achievement and factors that may contribute to their performance. Thirteen schools were selected for site visits. Table 4.2 presents the list of schools visited along with key performance information. To
determine aspects of the instructional program delivery that may be attributed to lower student achievement, a portion of the schools selected were based on:

- A high percentage of ELL students.
- Schools having an Informational Baseline 2015 and Preliminary Grade 2016 grades of C and below.
- Low percentages of ELL students passing the FSA at a level 3 and above in reading and math.

Other higher performing schools were selected to identify possible best practices and how these best practices are shared throughout the district.

Table 4.2. Schools Selected for Site Visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>% of ESOL Students</th>
<th>Info Baseline 2015</th>
<th>Preliminary Grade 2016</th>
<th>Reading 2016</th>
<th>Math 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruskin</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay Crest</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dover</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davidsen</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey Creek</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierce</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamberlain</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leto</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillsborough</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Florida Department of Education

Table 4.3 describes the activities at each school visited.

Table 4.3. ELL Program Site Visit Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Principal Interview</th>
<th>Number of Classroom Walk-Throughs</th>
<th>Library/Media Centers</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruskin</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ 8 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>✓ (AP)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ 9 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay Crest</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td>✓ (AP)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the classroom observations, a protocol was developed that encompassed five domains – instruction, best practices application, differentiation, classroom environment, and textbooks and instructional technology. Walkthroughs of 10 to 15 minutes were conducted in 51 classrooms. During the walkthrough information was gathered to determine:

- How much of the design and delivery of the instruction was teacher- or student-centered;
- How much time the teacher spent with whole and small groups as well as conferencing with individual students;
- How well the lessons correlated with the posted objectives;
- The degree of student participation and engagement; and
- The languages that were spoken by the teacher and the students during instruction

In classrooms, the review team looked for the implementation of ESOL strategies and modification of instruction, including the use of:

- Specific ESOL strategies – providing anticipation guides to individual students, using visuals/manipulatives, and allowing students to express key concepts in their own words.
- Instruction modification to strengthen students’ level of basic intercommunication skills and cognitive academic language proficiency (e.g., underscoring academic vocabulary).
- English translation in instruction.
Physical aspects of the classrooms and school were viewed to determine the degree of a print rich environment, the status of the classroom library, and the amount of instructional posters and anchor charts (i.e., an instructional tool used to visibly organize concepts on large chart paper) that were accessible to students.

**Summary Assessment**

Many of the classroom teachers at the elementary schools demonstrated best practices associated with meaningful engagement, total participation techniques, and visible thinking and learning. The review team witnessed differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching practices. In short, there were no major concerns for the elementary school sites; however, there are recommendations to improve professional development and classroom walkthroughs that will help all schools.

Secondary school programming for ELL students was not as strong. While there seems to be an authentic and concerted effort at keeping secondary education teachers abreast of ESOL instructional strategies by way of the ERT and the IDEAS e-platform, there is a need for additional professional development on how to best teach their ELL students their specific content area. Moreover, based on classroom observations, the review team did not observe consistent application of ESOL strategies, differentiated instruction, and culturally responsive teaching practices in secondary schools.

Based on the review of the ESOL Programmatic Procedures Handbooks and the District ELL Plan, along with other information, HCPS ELL Programs were found to be in compliance with the Consent Decree.

Most of the recommendations provided in this chapter are focused on professional development on ESOL strategies for secondary education teachers that are specific to the content areas. Additionally, the teachers may benefit from professional development on how to best build their ELL students’ literacy skills in the respective content area by integrating literacy strategies into their instruction. Research has found that teaching literacy skills in the content area increases students’ reading levels and improves their performance on content area standardized testing) (Johnson & Zabrucky, 2011). As the content area teachers acquire this expertise and learn to integrate the strategies in their instructional practices and learning activities, they are likely to modify their instruction and make their content more comprehensible for ELL students.

After a comprehensive review of student data, interviews with district and school-level leadership teams, site visits, classroom observations, and focus group interviews, the review team identified these key areas for improvement with respect to ELL programming:

- Inconsistent lesson plan formats in ELL classrooms across the district
- Insufficient differentiated instruction in secondary classroom settings
- Online instructional resources challenging to navigate
- Lack of understanding of district instructional support
Inadequate print-rich text environments in the middle and high school classrooms and too few books for ELL students in classroom libraries

Inadequate culturally responsive teaching practices in secondary classroom settings

The remainder of this section provides recommendations to address these issues and improve ELL programs. To facilitate the reader’s review, below are definitions of acronyms commonly used in connection with the HCPS ELL Program:

- CALLA – Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach
- DRT – District Resource Teacher
- ELAR – English Language Arts and Reading
- ELL – English Language Learner
- ERT – ESOL Resource Teacher
- ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages
- FAIR – Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading
- FCAT – Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
- FSA – Florida Standards Assessments
- IDEAS – IDE@S Cloud, HCPS Internal Communications Platform
- IRA – International Reading Association, now known as International Literacy Association
- PLC – Professional Learning Community
- WIDA – World-class Instructional Design and Assessment

Recommendation 4-1: Identify and spread ELL best practices found in elementary school classrooms.

In elementary schools, the review team found instructional practices associated with meaningful engagement, total participation techniques, and visible thinking/learning. Additionally, there was supporting evidence that teachers were differentiating their lessons, and planning for professional development based on their progress monitoring. There was a wide variance, however, in ELL student achievement across elementary schools.

There are schools in the district that have a large population of ELL students that is largely economically disadvantaged, and have significant percentages of ELL students who scored a 3 or above in reading and mathematics. Most of these schools had a preliminary grade (2016) of a C\(^{40}\), with the exception of Alexander which earned a B (see Tables 4.4 and 4.5).

\(^{40}\) Preliminary grades are determined by the Florida Department of Education
Table 4.4. Schools with >30% of ELL Students with > 25% Who Scored a 3 or Above in Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Preliminary Grade 2016</th>
<th>% of ELL Students</th>
<th>% of Economically Disadvantaged Students</th>
<th>% Who Scored a 3 or Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RCMA Wimauma</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampa Bay Blvd</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt Lake</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trapnell</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Florida Department of Education PK-12 Education Information Portal

Table 4.5. Schools with > 30% of ELL Students with > 40% Who Scored a 3 or Above in Mathematics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Preliminary Grade 2016</th>
<th>% of ELL Students</th>
<th>% of Economically Disadvantaged Students</th>
<th>% Who Scored a 3 or Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RCMA Wimauma</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trapnell</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickenson</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampa Bay Blvd</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Florida Department of Education PK-12 Education Information Portal

On the other hand, there are schools in the district that have a large population of ELL students with similar percentages of students who are economically disadvantaged; yet, the percentage of students who scored a 3 or above in reading and mathematics is considerably lower. Most of these schools have preliminary grades (2016) of C’s and D’s, with the exception of Miles which scored an F (see Tables 4.6 and 4.7).

Table 4.6. Schools with > 30% ELL Students with < 10% Who Score a 3 or Above in Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Preliminary Grade 2016</th>
<th>% of ELL Students</th>
<th>% of Economically Disadvantaged Students</th>
<th>% Who Score a 3 or Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mort</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town &amp; Country</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dover</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Florida Department of Education PK-12 Education Information Portal

Table 4.7. Schools with > 30% ELL Students with < 20% Who Score a 3 or Above in Math

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Preliminary Grade 2016</th>
<th>% of ELL Students</th>
<th>% of Economically Disadvantaged Students</th>
<th>% Who Score a 3 or Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter 4 – Programs for English Language Learners

#### Preliminary Grade 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>% of ELL Students</th>
<th>% of Economically Disadvantaged Students</th>
<th>% Who Score a 3 or Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thompson</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desoto</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town &amp; Country</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bing</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dover</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Florida Department of Education PK-12 Education Information Portal

Given that the populations of the students are somewhat similar (that is, they are ELL and economically disadvantaged), the data suggests that some schools tend to do a better job at preparing students for the FSA reading and math than others.

The Office of Programs for English Language Learners should examine more closely what the teachers of the schools in Tables 4.4 and 4.5 do differently than the teachers of the schools found in Tables 4.6 and 4.7.

The ELL Program Office can explore the practices applied by teachers of higher performing ELL students and attempt to replicate these best practices with lower performing ELL students. The following framework can be used to identify best practices:

1. **Classroom climate**
   - How do teachers build positive relationships?
   - How do teachers develop a culture of thinking and learning?
   - How do teachers develop a culture of engagement and enjoyment?

2. **Schedules and routines**
   - How are classrooms organized?
   - What rules are most effective?
   - What management procedures are most effective?

3. **Instruction planning and design**
   - How do teachers prepare students for learning?
   - How do teachers present new learning?
   - How do teachers deepen and reinforce learning?
   - How do teachers apply learning?

4. **Assessment**
   - What informal and formal assessments are more effective?
   - How do teachers celebrate learning?
   - How do teachers plan for progress monitoring?
   - What professional development was created to respond to students’ performance?
Teachers typically tailor their instruction to meet the unique needs of their students, which can contribute to instructional differences across campuses. However, some of the practices at the higher performing campuses may benefit other schools. The DRTs can observe in classrooms and explore through teacher interviews the instructional practices they deem worthwhile, and then share those practices with other schools.

**Fiscal Impact**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**Recommendation 4-2: Increase differentiation of instruction for ELL secondary students.**

Differentiated lesson plans work to help teachers meet targeted goals for ELL students, anticipate errors students might make in their learning, and evaluate student learning. Currently, HCPS teachers collaborate to a large degree with resource teachers, academic coaches, and others as they conduct their progress monitoring and common assessments. This work could easily be documented in a lesson plan that can be made available to principals and ELL staff before they are taught. These differentiated lesson plans, in turn, would provide valuable information to support a principal or ELL program staff walkthrough.

HCPS teachers are required (according to the teacher contract) to have their lesson plans on their desks. While the principals can ask for the lesson plans from teachers at the end of the week, they cannot ask for them in advance (see Recommendation 1-3 in Chapter 1 – General Education of this report.) Similar to what was found in the General Education review, lesson plans varied in content and format across and within schools.

During ELL Program site visits, it was observed that some teachers’ lesson plans only included an objective and did not include a state standard or modification/differentiation that supported ELL students. In one instance, a lesson plan was comprised of one line, and in another, it appeared the teacher had no lesson plan at all. This is concerning given that the purpose of lesson plans is to guide instruction, and for ELL students, differentiate instruction. Lesson plans help teachers think deeply about the lesson and have clear ideas about what to communicate to students so they fully understand the concept or skill and the rationale/purpose of learning. Lesson plans also serve to remind teachers to make connections to future learning.

The district has an *ESOL Strategies Checklist*. Teachers explained that this is the primary source for documentation of accommodations to make instruction comprehensible for ELL students. However, the form has several shortfalls:

- Each content area teacher receives one checklist form for all of their respective classes and students for the academic year. The form encompasses a checklist for four quarters with 23 strategies. The instructions read: “For audit purposes, check off the strategies on the table below every nine weeks or record the strategy number(s) on your lesson plans.” The form is turned in to school administration at the end of the academic year. According to some of the secondary grade
focus group members, no one monitors whether the teachers actually apply the strategies throughout the year, and the review team did not see consistent evidence of the strategies during classroom observations. Some of the participants in the secondary focus group mentioned they find the form to be a matter of record with little utility.

- While some of the strategies are easy to understand and apply (e.g., “Provide biographies of significant men and women from different cultures”), many strategies on the checklist seem ambiguous. One checklist item, for instance, was to “Apply cross-cultural knowledge when developing and using classroom management techniques;” another suggested “Using teacher behaviors that indicate sensitivity to cultural and linguistic differences.”

- However, if teachers do not have a strong knowledge of second language acquisition and development or a clear understanding of the “newer” cultures represented in the district, these two items on the checklist is not as useful. For example, how can a teacher be expected to behave in sensitive ways toward cultural differences if the teacher does not know what their students’ culture actually encompasses?

These above shortcomings contribute to the lack of differentiated instruction in secondary classrooms. Table 4.8 presents the number of walk-throughs and the prevalence of differentiated instruction and meaningful engagement at the secondary schools visited. Instruction in most of the high school classrooms was teacher-centered or whole-group instruction with students responding to general – and mostly convergent – questions the teacher asked. In some of the middle and high school classrooms, ELL students were completing fill-in-the-blank worksheets or were seated in groups, but not working toward the goal of the assignment, nor were they on task.

Table 4.8. Evidence of Differentiated Instruction and Meaningful Engagement in HCPS Secondary Schools Visited

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number of Walk-Throughs</th>
<th>Evidence of Differentiated Instruction</th>
<th>Observed Students in Meaningful Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Schools</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierce</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 Classroom</td>
<td>1 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davidsen</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 Classroom</td>
<td>1 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey Creek</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 Classroom</td>
<td>1 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Schools</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamberlain</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2 Classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leto</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 Classrooms</td>
<td>4 Classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 Classroom</td>
<td>2 Classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillsborough</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 Classroom</td>
<td>2 Classrooms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Note: *An assembly on Hispanic Heritage precluded walk-throughs

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.
During several secondary classroom observations, the review team also observed paraprofessionals doing concurrent translations to a small group of students in a corner of the classroom while the content teacher was engaged in whole group instruction. The paraprofessionals confirmed this consistent practice, which keeps ELL students segregated from the class and relying on the translation.

During focus groups, teachers and paraprofessionals indicated an increasing need for professional development on strategies for language development, and for strategies that support ELL students’ understanding of the content area. Some of the high school teachers stated they had not received professional development regarding ELL students in over two years. Others explained that there is little communication about ESOL strategies among the DRT, ERT, and the classroom teachers who have ELL students.

The review team found ample HCPS resources on differentiated instruction. The HCPS 6-12 ESOL Resource Teacher Log shows that professional development is provided by ERTs to their respective campus teachers. The district’s PDS Course Catalog also has a number of professional development opportunities specific to differentiated instruction, including *Your Way to a Differentiated Classroom*, *Extension Strategies for Differentiating Instruction*, *Using Learning Styles for Diverse Learners*, and *Foundations of Differentiated Instruction*, among others. The agenda for the Foundations of Differentiated Instructed demonstrates that the content of the training is closely aligned with meaningful engagement, total participation techniques, and culturally responsive teaching – all of which can help teachers make their content more comprehensible for ELL students.

There are other sources of information of which teachers were not aware. The district provides ongoing professional development on the instruction of ELL students through electronic resources found on the IDEAS e-platform; however, many teachers did not know about these resources or did not access them. The review team found several documents related to ESOL strategies on the IDEAS e-platform, such as ELL Scaffolding Ideas, Making Students’ Thinking Visible, Strategies for Teachers of ELL Students, and the Culturally Responsive Classroom, among others.

The instructional resource materials and professional development offerings described above are sufficient to implement effective, differentiated instruction, if they are used.

To improve the differentiation of instruction for ELL students, the following implementation strategies are recommended.

**Modify Lesson Plans for ELL**

Lesson plans should be modified to demonstrate differentiation of instruction for ELL students. By obtaining these lesson plans in advance, principals can conduct more effective walkthroughs to see if instruction is actually being differentiated. ELL staff could also conduct separate and more focused walkthroughs with lesson plans showing differentiation.

For the differentiation strategies section of the lesson plan, the *ESOL Strategies Checklist* should be improved to be less vague and more practical for use in the classroom. A checklist will help remind
teachers to regularly use the strategies and to alternate among them to maintain student interest. During classroom walkthroughs, observers can then reference the strategy and adjust it further to enhance student understanding.

Table 4.9 provides a sample checklist of implementation strategies that might help provide the link between instructional materials/training and classroom activities.

Table 4.9. Sample Checklist of Differentiation Strategies for ELL Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differentiation Strategies for ELL Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use demonstrations with visuals and manipulatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use extended thinking time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use longer pauses when speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use real-life objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use 3-2-1 Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have students make and use personal vocabulary bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask student to repeat in their own words what the teacher or student has said</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Build Student Literacy in Content Areas

Educational research shows that opportunities to differentiate instruction lie in building student literacy in the teachers’ respective content areas. Hosking and Teberg (1998) have noted that:

“Students in the middle years face increasingly complex literacy challenges as they move from a curriculum where acquiring initial literacy knowledge and competencies permeates the school day, to a time when their literacy skills and interests are prerequisites for success across the school curriculum.”

Other research indicates that teaching secondary education students basic literacy skills increases student achievement. The National Reading Panel Report (2000), the RAND study group report (2002), the International Reading Association’s (IRA) What Research Has to Say About Reading Instruction (2002), and Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy (Alliance for Excellent
Education, 2004) strongly support that literacy instruction be explicit and systematic in secondary school settings, and that teachers model reading and assist students with reading.

While HCPS teachers have personnel training requirements that inform them of the stages of language acquisition (with instructional strategies associated with the six stages), the content area teachers could learn to make their content more comprehensible to ELL students by learning:

- Instructional strategies designed to help students develop content area vocabulary, approach narrative and informational text, and reflect on readings.
- Differences between struggling readers and fluent readers as they approach specific content reading (before, during, and after the reading).
- How to teach students to read as content specific professionals (e.g., historians, scientists, and mathematicians).

ELL students tend to experience achievement gaps in the content areas because they have cognitive, linguistic, and affective needs. All students benefit from differentiated instruction and assessment because teachers provide them with different approaches to learning content, skills, and concepts. ELL students can make marked gains through differentiated instruction because teachers can use varied accommodations to make the content comprehensible respective to the level of each ELL student. Best practices instruction for ELL students encompasses making adjustments designed to accelerate the learning of the subject matter and English.

For example, teachers can meet ELL students’ cognitive needs by beginning instruction with clear content and language objectives that are displayed in student-friendly terms and read aloud, and making connections between the content to the real world. Linguistic needs can be met when teachers teach academic language through vocabulary building activities, initiate discussions with sentence stems, and use visuals. Further, affective needs are met when teachers work toward making the physical appearance of the classroom attractive, are welcoming, supportive, and focus their attention on the student, not their speaking abilities.

Differentiated instruction incorporates a combination of whole group instruction, collaborative group learning, student conferencing, and peer tutoring, all of which can be used to help ELL students to acquire the English language while learning content. Since the review team did not see consistent evidence of differentiated instruction in middle and high school classrooms, professional development is strongly recommended in differentiated instruction in the content areas, specifically in math and science courses where many concepts can be abstract and represent a greater challenge for ELL students.

The ESOL Strategies Checklist should also be modified so that specific strategies are suitable for each content area. Some of the strategies can remain as core ideas followed with strategies specific to the content areas. The Academic Coaches can create these strategies so that they are appropriate for the content area for each grading quarter. These can be designed from feedback from teachers who use
strategies that are most effective with their ELL students. The revised *ESOL Strategies Checklist* could also serve as a monitoring measure for principals or other ELL staff when they conduct their classroom walkthroughs. Table 4.10 provides a sample of strategies for a Grade 8 science checklist.

Table 4.10. Sample ESOL Strategies Checklist for Grade 8 Science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 8 Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Strategies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>In the first grading quarter, the teacher...</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeled thinking before, during, and after reading the text aloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had students make connections to prior lessons, experiences, texts, self and world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Drew student attention to distinguishing features in the respective textbook, websites, and other instructional features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinforced reading skills such as decoding and reading strategies such as determining main idea for the content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Provided regular opportunities for students to write in interactive journals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Specific Strategies**                              |
| *In the first grading quarter, the science teacher...* |
| ✔ Provided biographies of scientists from different cultures for independent reading, including Mario J. Molina, Ellen Ochoa, Jane Goodall, Jean M.J. Frechet, Charles K. Kao |
| Created an interactive academic word wall with terms associated with lab equipment; force, motion, and energy; and organisms and environments |
| ✔ Posted anchor charts on the scientific method, scientific notation, and forms of energy |
| Established a word study center on scientific root words focused on ante-, aster-, cirru-, and gluc- |
| ✔ Applied Thinking Stems as they relate to the science concepts in this quarter (I’m thinking..., I’m wondering..., I’m noticing..., I’m seeing..., I’m feeling...) |

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

**Modify Post Observation Conference Reflection Guide to include ELL Considerations**

The HCPS *Classroom Teacher Post-Observation Conference Reflection Guide*, located on the IDEAS e-platform, affords teachers the opportunity to reflect on their lessons after they have been observed and prior to the conference with their campus administrator. The questions that guide teachers include:

- Do you feel you successfully achieved the lesson objective(s)? Why or why not? What data support your answer to the previous question?
- What do you feel worked well and what would you refine if you were to teach this lesson again to the same class?
- Based on student learning of the objective(s), what are your next steps?
- As you reflect over this observation cycle, what ideas or insights are you discovering about your teaching?
This document can also be revised to include questions about strategies for specific populations, such as ELL students. The questions can include:

- What considerations did you make for the students’ background knowledge?
- What considerations did you make to honor the students’ cultural heritage?
- How did you activate students’ prior knowledge?
- How did you motivate and challenge the students?
- What strategies did you use to meet the language proficiency of your ELL students?

**Conduct a Teacher Needs Assessment**
Because of the apparent disconnect between district ELL instructional resources/training and teacher perceptions of their accessibility and usefulness, the district should conduct an ELL needs assessment of teachers through a survey. This survey should be administered to all teachers. Survey questions should include:

- How can the DRT best support your daily instructional practices?
- How can the ERT best support your daily instructional practices?
- How can the Academic Coach best support your daily instructional practices?
- How can the district best meet the technology needs on your campus?
- How can the district best support your need for cultural understanding of your students’ background and heritage?
- What instructional materials do you use in serving ELL students?
- What ESOL strategies are most helpful to you?
- What professional development has been the most helpful to you?
- What are your current professional development needs?

The district can use the results to identify areas of need for professional development as well as provide clarity to district initiatives and required practices. The survey will also offer the district an opportunity to inventory what the teachers know about the instructional and technological resources that are available and plan for how teachers can best access them. Classroom teachers have an incredible influence on the ELL students’ academic achievement. It is critical that they have clear understanding of the support and resources that are available to them.

All of the above implementation strategies should be applied to all grade levels. While secondary schools exhibited the greatest need and should be the first priority, all and ELL students and teachers will benefit from increased differentiation of instruction.
Fiscal Impact

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**Recommendation 4-3: Modify the HCPS ELL website to increase the ease of accessibility.**

The HCPS IDEAS e-platform has a wide-range of electronic resources and documents, and affords users opportunities to share instructional practices across varied contexts such as content areas, departments, and schools. Many of these resources inform users of the requirements necessary for meeting national, state, and district educational standards. IDEAS is beneficial because it provides teachers with a centralized platform to readily access materials that can directly and indirectly improve their instruction. During focus groups, teachers referenced IDEAS and mentioned that it is the primary site to turn to for reliable HCPS information. Some teachers, however, acknowledged that the platform was cumbersome to navigate.

The review team carefully explored the IDEAS e-platform and found that it was not particularly user-friendly, especially when looking for specific resources such as instructional and differentiated instruction strategies for the content areas. This may be deterring some teachers from exploring and taking advantage of these types of resources.

The ELL Department homepage should be redesigned so that information, resources, and materials relating to ELL students could be easier for teachers to access. The Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) ESOL Department homepage represents a best practice website. It is easy to navigate and user-friendly. The HCPS ESOL homepage could be similarly designed so that all ESOL information and materials could be centrally located and easily accessed by the teachers. Under the new design, the ELL link (found under the Department icon) should have an added tab or link that specifically contains instructional strategies since secondary teachers expressed the need for professional development in this area. Table 4.11 provides a sample homepage template layout similar to the BCPS Bilingual-ESOL Department homepage.
Table 4.11. The HCPS ELL Department Homepage Could Encompass Similar Links, an Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Access 2.0</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Florida Standards</th>
<th>Best Practices</th>
<th>ESOL Forms</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision and Mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Directory</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>District ELL Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESOL Program Handbook</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOL Program Information</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DI &amp; Instructional Strategies</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL &amp; Foreign Student Enrollment</td>
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<td>ESOL Contact Meetings</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines for ESE and ELLs</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mandatory Reporting &amp; Legal Notices</td>
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<td>Legislative Online Action Resources</td>
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</tbody>
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Information from the links that users open could appear in this area

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.; BCPS website

Fiscal Impact

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**Recommendation 4-4: Increase culturally responsive teaching practices in secondary classes.**

The demographics in HCPS are rapidly changing, contributing to a population of students who bring varied languages and ways of life to the classrooms. Approximately 45 percent of the students in the district are of an ethnicity other than white or black and nearly a third of the total enrollment is identified as Hispanic. Many of the students are immigrants who were born in and experienced growing up in another country, so they have markedly different experiences than most students.

So that ELL students have a strong sense of belonging to the community of learners, they must experience teachers who know and honor their values, prior experiences, and cultural knowledge in their instruction (Gay, 2000). Research (Billings, 1994) shows that “culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning.” Other
scholars mention that teachers are culturally responsive when they have an understanding and incorporate students’ various backgrounds” into their instruction and make frequent connections between the classroom and students’ lives. In other words, teachers must be highly in tune with the cultural aspects of each student that walks through the classroom door.

One of the tenets of culturally responsive teaching is to involve parents into the life of the school. The district is achieving this practice through the Family Literacy Program, Book Clubs at *Barnes and Noble*, Literacy Night, Parent University, and Pasos al Futuro. The ELL Office has scheduled these events for the 2016-17 school year, inclusive of locations, date, and meeting times. This is a significant step in bridging schools and the students’ cultures. The district also engages in culturally relevant activities, including the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Culturally responsive practices at the classroom level are not as strong or as consistent in HCPS secondary schools. Classroom-level practices include encouraging students to access prior knowledge and beliefs, using examples and analogies from students’ lives, and incorporating the students’ community into instruction. Posters and displays were evident that accentuated cultures or engendered cultural awareness (e.g., murals in the media center, and posters in the hallways), but only a third of the classrooms visited displayed the students’ work (a practice that honors students’ cultural beliefs, life examples, and knowledge). Few classrooms exhibited cultural awareness activities, such as activities that honored the cultures represented in the classroom. Table 4.12 presents the results of classroom observations in secondary ELL classrooms with respect to evidence of culturally responsive teaching practices.

Table 4.12. Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices in the Middle and High School ELL Classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number of Walk-Throughs</th>
<th>Classrooms with Evidence of Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pierce</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davidsen</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey Creek</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamberlain</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leto</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillsborough</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Note: *An assembly on Hispanic Heritage precluded walk-throughs

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

HCPS resources related to culturally responsive teaching practices are on the *IDEAS e-platform*. Teachers have received online training designed to develop their cross-cultural communication, cultural awareness, and cultural understanding. There has also been professional development and professional learning
communities focused on teaching with culture in mind, teaching with poverty in mind, engaging with poverty in mind; and there appears to be ongoing professional development designed to increase teachers’ cultural competence. However, based on classroom observations, there is a need for specific training on the unique student populations.

For example, if a school had a population of Hmong students, the teachers could receive professional development that captures the essence of the Hmong culture living in Hillsborough County. The teachers could explore with district resource teachers, academic coaches, and children themselves:

- What are some of the Hmong beliefs?
- What is important to the Hmong culture? What is relevant to their lives?
- What are some critical cultural differences?
- Who are historic, religious, and celebratory figures that are important to their culture?
- What is the Hmong communication style?
- Who are cultural informants that we can develop relationships with?
- What are some significant cultural events?
- Where do they congregate in the community?

The teachers could also participate in professional development that helps them design inquiry projects, explore authentic dialogues, use examples and analogies from the students’ lives, tap community resources, review the curriculum to see if it contains perspective inclusive of the Hmong culture, and review resources to find opportunities to include the Hmong perspective. Follow-up professional development could then focus on the traditional aspects of culturally responsive teaching, such as understanding bias and stereotypes, developing self-awareness of cultural and communication style, and reserving judgements about cultural behavior.

The district recently hired a Chief Diversity Officer and there is a current initiative to train teachers through Beyond Diversity, which is commendable. However, based on input from the middle and high school teacher focus groups and classroom observations, teachers seek and need specific knowledge about the cultures of the ELL students represented in their schools.

Fiscal Impact

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**Recommendation 4-5: Modify school and classroom environments for ELL students.**

HCPS does not have adequate, print-rich environments in secondary classrooms, and insufficient books in classroom libraries for its ELL students. During classroom walkthroughs, the review team was able to observe the degree of literacy development evidenced by classroom libraries and print-rich text environments in the classrooms. Nearly all of the schools that were visited had media centers that
included specific resources for ELL students, including books that encompassed parallel texts in Spanish. At one particular school, the media specialist had color coded Spanish materials and interest texts suited for the varying levels of English proficiency. However, there were inadequate print-rich text environments at the middle and high schools, and a paucity of books in classroom libraries.

ELL experts often note that it is critical that ELL students are provided regular opportunities to read comprehensible text that is of high interest and targets reading development in the second language. An instructional best practice is to allow ELL students the time to read text at their reading level for sustained periods so that they can work towards grade level reading proficiency. Teachers should therefore allow for independent reading in the ELAR classes as well as the content area classrooms.

To encourage the independent reading of selected materials, teachers should provide students books and assorted texts (such as journals, magazines, newspapers, or articles) that are content relevant (for the content area classrooms), high-interest, current, culturally or thematically relevant, and support the level of reading skills that ELL students demonstrate. Additionally, a common practice is to inform ELL students of their reading level in the second language so that they can read materials at the level that enables them to progress through the literacy continuum. Books and assorted texts that are leveled help the ELL student avoid reading materials that may be: (1) too difficult and may cause them to feel overwhelmed or (2) too easy and may cause them feel diminished or less abled than the other students.

Most of the classrooms visited had small classroom libraries with limited selections of books and other reading materials, as well as a limited selection of leveled texts. One ELAR classroom had a well-stocked library of approximately 600 books, but others had far fewer books or no library at all. All of the classrooms had dictionaries or thesauruses.

Middle and high school teachers should receive professional development related to classroom libraries in the secondary classroom that can cover such topics as how to create an inviting library, the books and materials germane to the content area, how to integrate the classroom library into lessons, and how to organize the books. Classroom libraries should include a wide range of reading levels as well as books that represent the diversity of the class to validate the ELL students’ identity and strengthen their sense of belonging.

The classroom library can be used for independent reading, class projects, and extra credit to motivate the ELL students to develop the reading habit. The ERT can help content area teachers determine the ELL students’ reading levels, which can then be used to guide them to read materials at their respective level of proficiency. Academic Coaches, DRTs, and campus media specialists can help content area teachers start their classroom libraries by providing them with a bibliography of texts, novels, and magazines to include in their classroom libraries that complement the content area Table 4.13 provides a sample bibliography.
Table 4.13. Sample Bibliography to Start a Classroom Library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graphic Novels</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Publisher and Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurie Halse Anderson</td>
<td>Chains</td>
<td>Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurie Halse Anderson</td>
<td>Forge</td>
<td>Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan Hale</td>
<td>One Dead Spy</td>
<td>Harry N. Abrams, 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Books</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lars D.H.Hedbor</td>
<td>The Prize: Tales from a Revolution: Vermont</td>
<td>Puddletown Publishing Group, 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magazines</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author and Date</td>
<td>Article Title</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danny Lewis</td>
<td>Revolutionary War Era Ship Found at Hotel Construction Site</td>
<td>Smithsonian Magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Palmer</td>
<td>The Revolutionary War Patriot Who Carried This Gunpower Horn Was Fighting for Freedom—Not Just His Own</td>
<td>Smithsonian Magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristin Romey</td>
<td>See Nine Amazing Artifacts from the Revolutionary War</td>
<td>National Geographic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Worrall</td>
<td>Making Maps Under Fire During the Revolutionary War</td>
<td>National Geographic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

In addition to enhancing the opportunities for ELL students to read independently, the language of the content area classroom should be supported through print-rich environments. A print-rich environment motivates and supports ELL students’ reading, writing, speaking, and listening in ways that are authentic and complement the content area. Anchor charts, content posters, interactive word walls, posted language objectives, and student work should adorn the classroom walls and bulletin boards (and hallways) to help build the ELL students’ language competencies. Access to digital media is also critical, as it can be used to enhance students’ understanding of particular concepts, strengthen linguistic and phonemic awareness, develop academic vocabulary, and facilitate language and literacy opportunities.

Print-rich environments are essential tools that allow ELL students the opportunity to make connections to the teacher’s direct instruction, as well explore varied elements of the content area without asking for continuous help from the teacher. Literacy experts Consalvo and David (2016) add that student work on
shared and displayed spaces such as classroom and hallway walls nurture 21st century skills, especially when they are used by students for socially situated work.

The HCPS elementary schools visited consistently demonstrated print-rich environments in their classrooms. However, middle and high schools visited were not consistent in creating print-rich environments for ELL students. Incorporating print-rich text environments should become a required classroom practice in middle and high schools. These practices can help bridge the learning gaps of all learners, but specifically the diverse needs of ELL students.

Professional development opportunities can be created for secondary school teachers on the instructional practice of supporting students’ learning through the material classroom, namely the characteristics of print-rich classroom environments at the secondary level with strategies for placing language in unexpected places (such as, character traits of efficient government officials posted at the door, or affirmations from great American writers painted in recessed spaced), and regularly engaging students in socially situated assignments where students have to engage in meaningful conversations. Some of the ideas for developing a print-rich environment can come directly from the district-provided Springboard, Milestones, and Keystone ESOL Curriculum Maps. The Springboard and Milestones documents have vocabulary terms for the word wall, essential questions that should be posted throughout the lessons, and a myriad of ideas for anchor charts and bulletin boards that are found in the Writing and Research, Language and Writer’s Craft, and Speaking and Listening sections. The section devoted to Speaking and Listening also provides teachers with ideas for instructing students to collaborate and share specific work, a culturally responsive teaching practice. The Keystone curriculum also offers a range of ideas for instructional charts.

Fiscal Impact

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Chapter 5 – Career and Technical Education

Introduction

Career and technical education (CTE) is an educational strategy for providing young people with the academic, technical, and employability skills and knowledge to pursue postsecondary training or higher education and enter a career field prepared for ongoing learning (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, Association for Career and Technical Education, & National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium, 2010).

CTE has been in existence for 100 years. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 was the first authorization for the Federal funding of vocational education. Subsequent legislation for vocational education included the Vocational Act of 1973 and the Carl D. Perkins Act of 1984, which began the focus on workforce development. Perkins was reauthorized as the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act – focusing on school to work – in 1990. The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 1998 focused on Tech Prep and students earning college credit while attending high school, and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 focuses on the development and implementation of “Programs of Study” and is the current legislation for federal funding.

A number of economic realities have required legislators, students, families, and educators to change their thinking about college and college preparedness. For example, the United States has shifted from a manufacturing economy to a service economy within the past 50 years. This means far fewer high-wage jobs are available for workers with only a high school diploma. Today’s jobs require critical thinking, problem solving, and perseverance maintaining contextual familiarity with work and school environments.

Today, CTE is a major component in the delivery of 21st century education programming and facilitates college and career readiness. The purpose of career and technical education is to develop more fully the academic, career, and technical skills of secondary and postsecondary students who enroll in CTE programs. Both the vision and mission statements of Hillsborough County Public Schools are directly related to student outcomes as lifelong learners. In other words, the district’s mission and vision directly align with college and career readiness.

High quality CTE programming attempts to eliminate low-level CTE courses, expand the vision beyond job training and single elective taking, and replace it with academically rigorous, integrated, and sequenced programs of study that align with and lead to postsecondary education and career readiness. Many school districts also combine their CTE and Counseling departments to create a more powerful, dynamic, and responsive College and Career Readiness function.
Delivery of effective career and technical education is driven by federal, state, and local plans and funding requirements:

State Plan - Perkins IV 12(c)

- Make available information about Programs of Study.
- Support partnerships that must enable students to complete programs of study and state academic standards.

Local Plan - Perkins IV 134(b)(3)

- Must describe how parents, students, academic and career and technical teachers, faculty, administrators, career guidance and academic counselors, Tech Prep, workforce investment boards, business, industry, labor organizations, and representatives of special populations are informed about programs of study.
- Implement and strengthen academic and technical skill attainment through programs of study.

Local Use of Funds - Perkins IV 135(b)(1); 135(c)(12); 135(c)(19)

- Link secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs.
- Improve career and technical education courses by adding new courses focusing on developing academic and technical knowledge and skills for high-skill, high-wage, high-demand occupations using dual, concurrent, Tech Prep, and/or online courses to earn postsecondary credit.

Federal funding through Perkins must meet the following requirements:

- Strengthen academic, career and technical skills through the integration of academics
- Link secondary and postsecondary education
- Provide a strong experience in and understanding of an industry
- Develop, improve and expand the use of technology
- Provide professional development
- Evaluate programs, including those that serve special populations
- Initiate, improve, expand and modernize programs
- Provide services of sufficient size, scope and quality
- Provide activities to prepare special populations

**CTE at HCPS**

Nationally, CTE serves 94 percent of all high school students, including male and female students, students from many races and ethnicities, and students from higher and lower income backgrounds. At HCPS, CTE
serves approximately 72 percent of the high school student population, or approximately 66,000 students. At the start of the 21st century, male students; students from smaller, lower income or rural schools; students who have disabilities; and students who enter high school with lower academic achievement were more likely to participate in secondary CTE at higher levels. At HCPS, there is a slightly larger female representation for CTE concentrators. Current practice to calculate grade point average (GPA) and class rank may also deter some students from enrolling in CTE courses as they may be penalized in their GPA and rank even if they earn exceptional grades in CTE courses.

Career and Technical Education is associated with higher on-time graduation. At HCPS, CTE concentrators experience a graduation rate on average that is 19.5 percentage points higher than the overall district average. The Florida Department of Education defines a CTE concentrator as a secondary student who has earned three or more credits in a single CTE program, or two credits in a single CTE program – but only in those programs where two credit sequences at the secondary level are recognized by the State and/or its local eligible recipients. The higher graduation rates for CTE concentrators support strong implementation of programs of study. As shown in Figure 5.1, this level of success has sustained over time.

Figure 5.1. HCPS District and CTE Concentrator Graduation Rates, 2010-11 to 2014-15

CTE is organized under the Division of Career, Technical and Adult Education, which reports to the Deputy Superintendent. Figure 5.2 presents the organizational chart for the HCPS central administration of CTE. This staff also supports the district’s Adult Education Program. The six CTE supervisors that provide support services to schools are divided by career cluster. Four district resource teachers report to the CTE Director and provide support services.
CTE program expenditures include the above central office staff and also teachers, counselors and other school-based staff. Table 5.1 presents a 5-year history of CTE expenditures from all sources of funds. CTE represents approximately 2 percent of the district’s total expenditures, and spends approximately $349 per CTE student.

Table 5.1. HCPS CTE Expenditures, All Funds, 2011-12 to 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object Type</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 Salaries</td>
<td>$30,988,895</td>
<td>$31,298,108</td>
<td>$32,363,965</td>
<td>$33,742,215</td>
<td>$33,420,830</td>
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<tr>
<td>200 Employee Benefits</td>
<td>$6,975,356</td>
<td>$6,869,761</td>
<td>$7,645,080</td>
<td>$8,133,628</td>
<td>$8,281,763</td>
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<td>300 Purchased Services</td>
<td>$2,222,443</td>
<td>$2,564,782</td>
<td>$2,587,827</td>
<td>$3,043,438</td>
<td>$4,140,906</td>
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<td>400 Energy Services</td>
<td>$17,976</td>
<td>$11,338</td>
<td>$10,671</td>
<td>$10,319</td>
<td>$10,009</td>
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<td>500 Materials &amp; Supplies</td>
<td>$1,536,240</td>
<td>$2,110,035</td>
<td>$1,782,685</td>
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<td>600 Capital Outlay</td>
<td>$2,745,904</td>
<td>$2,483,120</td>
<td>$2,519,030</td>
<td>$3,462,796</td>
<td>$3,442,430</td>
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<tr>
<td>700 Other</td>
<td>$1,264,546</td>
<td>$1,560,337</td>
<td>$1,407,772</td>
<td>$680,094</td>
<td>$682,272</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$45,751,359</strong></td>
<td><strong>$46,897,481</strong></td>
<td><strong>$48,317,029</strong></td>
<td><strong>$50,919,061</strong></td>
<td><strong>$51,595,306</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HCPS Expenditure History, 2011-12 to 2015-16

Currently, there are 527 CTE instructional staff serving over 66,000 CTE students. Figure 5.3 shows that CTE staff levels show little growth, and is consistent with the district’s overall student growth.
The most common uses of the program’s funds other than staffing include occupationally-relevant equipment, vocational curriculum materials, materials for learning labs, curriculum development or modification, staff development, career counseling and guidance activities, efforts for academic-technical integration, supplemental services for special populations, and expansion of tech prep programs.

**Assessment**

The review team noted several best practices and exemplary programming in place at HCPS.

The following best practice were noted in the HCPS CTE Program:

- The Culinary Arts program is used to prepare all students with common employability skills, regardless if they continue in the Culinary Arts profession. This is a positive outcome of the program. The Culinary Arts programs observed are stellar programs, with modern facilities and equipment at commercial standards providing many student opportunities.

- Popular and well attended career fairs are sponsored by the CTE office. The focus of one career fair was to “Reshape Tampa Bay” and was well attended. Approximately 1,400 students are expected this year at the event.

- The Outback Restaurant affiliation is utilizing partnerships to improve the quality and resources for a full service restaurant at current industry required standards.

- The Finance Magnet Advisory Board created internships for students as well as scholarships from the Gregory Foundation. Some students stay employed while attending college, and a credit union office is located in a HCPS High School.
Each school builds community partnerships through various initiatives led by teachers at each school. Community partnerships can provide scholarships, guidance, funding, job opportunities, community service opportunities, and engage students within a career cluster area. For example, Leonard High School partners with a large retirement center providing multiple opportunities for students to engage with seniors.

The state commitment to – and related grant funding for – manufacturing has provided an opportunity for HCPS to form an alliance between the district, community college, University of South Florida, and Career Source. This partnership will inform the district about high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand career opportunities in the manufacturing industry sector.

Classroom observations also provided insight regarding a well-functioning CTE program. Figure 5.4 presents several indicators of effectiveness noted in individual CTE classes.

Figure 5.4. CTE Classroom Observations

The facility has sufficient space, furniture, equipment, tools, materials and supplies to permit maximum student participation

The facility is maintained and in good condition

Strategies are used to ensure classroom interactions are polite, respectful, and professional

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

However, several major program improvements are needed to bring the CTE program to current day standards. There is insufficient rigor in CTE programming and classroom instruction, and course offerings
do not reflect market needs or student interests. Guidance counselors spend too much time on non-counseling activities, and the CTE Programs of Study are not implemented in the schools. As a result, the CTE program is outdated and needs to be upgraded to reflect new requirements and current best practices.

As Congress begins to explore reauthorization of the Perkins Act, HCPS should consider three recommendations that will modernize CTE programming to reflect Hillsborough County economic needs and the district’s college and career readiness needs.

**Recommendation 5-1: Implement rigorous Programs of Study.**

Perkins IV requires the development and implementation of “Programs of Study.” A Program of Study is a comprehensive education plan that identifies a recommended curriculum; extended learning experiences; options for obtaining college credit in high school; and value-added components, such as appropriate certification and licensure options; and clear support of the post-secondary transition. According to federal legislation, programs of study should include the following:

- Secondary and postsecondary elements.
- Rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant career and technical content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses that aligns secondary education with postsecondary education.
- Provide opportunities for secondary education students to participate in dual, concurrent, online enrollment programs or other ways to acquire postsecondary education credits.
- Lead to industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate, baccalaureate, or professional degree.
- Provide extended learning opportunities and work-based learning experiences, such as cooperative education, job shadow, internships, extracurricular, co-curricular, and service-learning experiences tied to the student’s Program of Study. Work-release programs are not recommended as they do not tie to direct instruction.
- Include occupational information about the careers aligned to the Programs of Study.
- Provide guidance and organizational tools for academic and career counselors.

Programs of Study help build seamless transition and facilitate program improvement by ensuring a comprehensive education model that does not duplicate, but clarifies academic and technical courses needed for postsecondary education, training, and employment. Programs of Study are for all HCPS students, not just students participating in CTE courses.
HCPS has 70 Programs of Study in 15 career cluster areas including Architecture and Construction, Business Management and Administration, Engineering and Technology, and Health Services. The Programs of Study were developed by HCPS CTE administrative staff using the national template designed by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. The design of district templates varies from state to state and district to district; however, there is no mandated template. Currently, HCPS offers courses in 15 of the 16 cluster areas defined by the U.S. Department of Education; programming is not provided in the Government career cluster.

The district currently satisfies the Perkins requirement of having Programs of Study made available to students, counselors and parents. However, based on the review team’s assessment, it was determined that while the district is in compliance with the technical requirements of Perkins, it is not realizing the benefits from its Programs of Study. This is due to several factors, including poor implementation of the Programs of Study and the lack of alignment between HCPS CTE programming, labor market needs, and student interests. HCPS currently uses the original national template for Programs of Study developed over 12 years ago. Many states have updated Programs of Study to be more detailed to specifically align academic and technical course work that reach objectives and facilitate successful postsecondary experiences.

Focus groups with high school counselors revealed that HCPS Programs of Study are significantly underutilized in the schools. Some counselors did not know that Programs of Study existed. Others were aware of the existence but do not use them. Others use them only for the CTE coherent sequence. Figure 5.5 shows the degree to which counselors and CTE teachers participating in focus groups agreed with the statement “the secondary schools in my district emphasize Career Clusters (in the Programs of Study). The scale ranged from 1 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree. Counselors were slightly below the midpoint (neither agree nor disagree) and CTE teachers were slightly above the midpoint.

Figure 5.5. Focus Group Survey of Counselors and FTE Teachers

Source: Gibson Consulting Group Focus Group Survey

The underutilization of Programs of Study is also contributing to a misalignment among HCPS CTE program offerings, labor market needs, and student interests. Figure 5.6 compares current HCPS CTE class periods to regional labor market needs and student interest across the 16 career clusters. With few exceptions,

41 HCPS web site: http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/docs/00/00/06/50/CTE_Programs_of_Study_15_16.pdf
there is a wide range in variance among these three elements. For example, Health Science shows a HCPS representation of 4.5 percent of CTE programming and 5 percent student interest, yet it represents 15.6 percent of the current labor market need for Hillsborough County.

Figure 5.6. Comparison of HCPS CTE Class Periods to Regional Labor Market Needs and Student Interest

Source: Labor Market: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics
Student interest was determined by analysis of *My Career Shines* software system. However, the student interest information above is based only on a small portion of HCPS secondary school student needs. Out of 92,234 secondary students, HCPS has completed valid, reliable assessments for only 7,400, or 8 percent.

One contributing factor to the low assessment rate is the existence of two competing information systems for identifying student interests.

- *My Career Shines*, powered by KUDER, is free for HCPS and is a nationally well-known, reliable, updated, and secure system for this purpose. This system provides extensive student services, as well as a comprehensive administrative component that captures data for decision making purposes. Many counselors across the county manage their entire career development program using the KUDER system.

- *My Future Plans* is another system that the district purchased for the same use.

The presence of two software programs has adversely affected the use of either system. Some educators are reluctant to use either system out of concern that one may be eliminated soon. This sentiment was also evident when counselors and teachers were asked to agree or disagree with the statement “the secondary schools in my district provide analysis of student interest data.” Figure 5.7 shows that neither counselors nor CTE teachers, on average strongly agree with the statement.

![Figure 5.7. Focus Group Survey of Counselors and FTE Teachers](image)

Labor market information in Figure 5.6 was obtained from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics using high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand criteria. Perkins IV uses these terms in defining labor market needs:

- **High-Skill**: The occupation requires training and certification beyond a high school diploma. This can include a three month certification program, one year licensure process, associate degree, or higher. For the purpose of HCPS analysis any further training past high school was considered.

- **High-Wage**: The occupation generally pays wages that are equivalent to the state’s median wage or above. For the purpose of this HCPS analysis $11.50 was used to be as inclusive as possible.

- **High-Demand**: The occupation appears to be growing, based on fluctuations in state employment patterns.
It is important to note that a career that is high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand in one state might not be in another. Also, because economies and employment patterns change, high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand careers also change over time, sometimes even from year to year. There also may be differences among regions in Florida due to size and natural resources. A career may be also be high-skill and high-wage but not high-demand. This should not dissuade students from pursuing careers to which they feel particularly drawn, but it should be discussed so students will have realistic expectations of challenges they may face during the career-hunting process. The same is true of careers that require skill and are in demand but do not pay particularly well. This is especially true in Hillsborough County within the Hospitality and Tourism cluster. Being familiar with the benefits of all three criteria—and the methods for learning about each criterion relative to a particular career area—will help students make career decisions that fit their priorities, goals, and circumstances.

HCPS counselors and teachers reported less access to labor market information than student interest information. During focus groups counselors and CTE teachers were asked to agree or disagree with the statement “my district provides adequate analysis of labor market information.” As shown in Figure 5.8, most counselors and CTE teachers, on average, slightly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 5.8. Focus Group Survey of Counselors and FTE Teachers

Below are recommended implementation strategies to improve the quality and use of Programs of Study at HCPS.

**Improve and fully implement Programs of Study.**

Many HCPS staff are aware of clusters but a more refined alignment and reorganization to clusters is recommended. CTE teachers should speak in terms of their cluster and avoid referring to the prior, outdated CTE program areas that are often tied to a specific job versus career. For example, a teacher who prepares students to work in healthcare should refer to their programming as Health Science, not solely nursing. A teacher who prepares students to weld various materials prepares a student for Manufacturing, not just welding. This will expand occupational opportunities and expand the need for all students to participate in CTE programming. This concept also addresses a major concern in CTE as Perkins requires students to be aware of all aspects of an industry. CTE programming should start broad and lead to specialization as a student completes a Program of Study.
Utilizing career clusters helps students achieve a number of college and career readiness goals:

- Career clusters integrate technical skills with rigorous academic and employability skills.
- Career clusters help organize course pathways that prepare students to be lifelong learners in their chosen fields, rather than just preparing them for a specific job.
- Career clusters are inclusive and student-centered, which means they are designed to expose all students to a variety of career options and help all students leave high school prepared for post-secondary learning.

HCPS may wish to review templates used by other states to see if one aligns more with its desired outcomes. Texas has a best-practice template available for use at www.achievetexas.org.

A Program of Study integrates and aligns technical education and academic standards while providing opportunities to connect curriculum to real-world experiences. Each program of study’s strategic sequencing maximizes the opportunities for achievement and investment in pursuit of postsecondary and career success. The language and planning related to the selection and use of a Program of Study contributes to a college-going culture and provides relevancy of an education. Students should not select Programs of Study arbitrarily. By the time students enter the 9th grade, they should have been provided the opportunity to explore a variety of occupations, develop career awareness, and participate in required skills and interest inventories. They should also have a reinforced understanding that their academic lives are intended to prepare them for post-secondary learning and, ultimately, for a career that will allow them to continually advance and build upon their skills.

**Align CTE programming with student interests and labor market needs.**

HCPS should perform several steps in addressing the variance among CTE programming, student interest, and labor market needs, including:

- Identify the gap between perception and reality regarding campus’ current CTE programming and college and career readiness effort (does CTE support rigorous programming).
- Heighten individual and department accountability and responsibility (e.g., who is making decisions as to what courses are offered).
- Identify potential stakeholder partnerships for each cluster; advisory boards should exist for each cluster.
- Lay the foundation for enhanced student self-advocacy for college and career planning, whereby students select co-developed Programs of Study and take ownership for their learning.
- Re-think curriculum and instructional programming to support a more college and career-ready culture by considering more high-skill courses verses “hobby”-type classes.
Unify perceptions of priority areas and distribution of scarce resources based on data analysis, including student interest and labor market data.

Labor market data hold tremendous utility for students and families trying to make the best possible decisions about their individual Program of Study and their pursuit of post-secondary education. For example, educators, students, and families can use labor market data to determine which post-secondary program options are linked to career fields that pay well, hire large numbers of new workers, and appear to be growing. In fact, many postsecondary institutions are starting to track which of their programs offer high rates of return on tuition and time investment, and which programs lead to good jobs and salaries. Institutions are also beginning to put resources into developing programs and courses that align with market trends. Students and families should be encouraged to learn whether the programs and institutions under consideration incorporate labor market data into their decision making.

Select one information system for capturing student interests.

It is also recommended that HCPS select and use one system for conducting assessments of student interest and eliminate the other. District requirements should be defined and the free system should be evaluated in terms of which key requirements cannot be met, if any.

Below are some expected benefits for HCPS stakeholders as the district improves and fully implements Programs of Study:

1. High school students involved in Programs of Study and CTE are more engaged, perform better, and graduate at higher rates. The National Research Center for Career and Technical Education reports:
   - Eighty-one (81) percent of dropouts say relevant, real-world learning opportunities would have kept them in high school.
   - The average high school graduation rate for students concentrating in CTE programs is 93 percent, compared to an average national average freshman graduation rate of 80 percent (cohort of 9th grade students who do graduate).
   - More than 75 percent of secondary CTE concentrators pursued postsecondary education shortly after high school.

2. Although this analysis is for Secondary CTE programming, HCPS has a robust postsecondary program. Postsecondary CTE fosters postsecondary completion and prepares students and adults for in-demand careers. The National Research Center for Career and Technical Education reports:
   - Four (4) out of 5 secondary CTE graduates who pursued postsecondary education after high school had earned a credential or were still enrolled two years later.
According to research in Texas, Colorado, and Virginia, graduates with technical or applied science associate degrees out-earn bachelor’s degree holders by $2,000 to $11,000.

Twenty-seven (27) percent of people with less than an associate degree, including licenses and certificates, earn more than the average bachelor’s degree recipient.

3. The Florida economy and Hillsborough County will benefit from Programs of Study. Investing in CTE yields big returns for state economies. The National Research Center for Career and Technical Education reports:

- In Wisconsin, taxpayers receive $12.20 in benefits for every dollar invested in the technical college system.
- In Washington, for every dollar invested in secondary CTE programs, taxpayers receive a $9 return on investment.
- In Tennessee, CTE returns $2 for every $1 invested. At the secondary level, CTE program completers account for more than $13 million in annual tax revenues.

4. Local employers will benefit from Programs of Study. CTE addresses the needs of high-growth industries and helps close the skills gap. The United States Department of Labor reports:

- The skilled trades are the hardest jobs to fill in the United States, with recent data citing 1,019,000 jobs open in the trade, transportation and utilities sector and 315,000 jobs open in manufacturing.
- Health care occupations, many of which require an associate degree or less, make up 12 of the 20 fastest growing occupations, nationally.
- Science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) occupations such as environmental engineering technicians require an associate degree and will experience faster than average job growth.
- Middle-skill jobs, jobs that require education and training beyond high school but less than a bachelor's degree, are a significant part of the economy. Of the 55 million job openings created by 2020, 30 percent will require some college or a two-year associate degree.

Fiscal Impact

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 5-2: Implement a K-12 comprehensive college and career guidance curriculum.
Programs of Study and comprehensive guidance/counseling programming are connected and reinforce each other. As described above, Programs of Study frame school college and career readiness efforts, are for all students, create one educational system at the campus level (eliminating academic and CTE separation), and promote individualization of education for Florida students. Counselors who are aware of quality Programs of Study usually see them as a comprehensive advisement tool for students and parents.

In order for Programs of Study to be fully implemented, a K-12 career development curriculum is necessary. At HCPS there is not an approved, comprehensive career guidance curriculum. The district career development curriculum is primarily provided through agenda items in periodic meetings. The result is that the district is not maximizing the use of its guidance counselors.

According to the Florida Department of Education, Florida ranks 38th in the United States in counselor staffing relative to the student population, with a state average of 491 students per counselor. HCPS counselors report their case-loads much higher, most reporting approximately 600 students per counselor that directly serves students. The ratio of HCPS students to all counselors, excluding those serving ESE students, is 476:1. The American Association of School Counselors, as well as other counselor associations, recommends a ratio of 250:1.

The staffing guidelines assume that guidance counselors are performing appropriate duties for a counselor. Table 5.2 presents a list of appropriate and inappropriate activities for school counselors developed by the American School Counseling Association.
Table 5.2. School Counselor Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate Activities for School Counselors</th>
<th>Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>individual student academic program planning</td>
<td>coordinating paperwork and data entry of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests</td>
<td>coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing counseling to students as to appropriate school dress</td>
<td>sending students home who are not appropriately dressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaborating with teachers to present school counseling core curriculum lessons</td>
<td>teaching classes when teachers are absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpreting student records</td>
<td>maintaining student records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing teachers with suggestions for effective classroom management</td>
<td>supervising classrooms or common areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ensuring student records are maintained as per state and federal regulations</td>
<td>keeping clerical records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helping the school principal identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems</td>
<td>assisting with duties in the principal’s office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing individual and small-group counseling services to students</td>
<td>providing therapy or long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards</td>
<td>coordinating schoolwide individual education plans, student study teams and school attendance review boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>analyzing disaggregated data</td>
<td>serving as a data entry clerk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** This was the single most important concern to HCPS counselors as their duties with testing coordination is time consuming and dramatically takes away available time for direct student services during the school year when they are needed most.

Source: American School Counseling Association

The HCPS job description for a high school guidance counselor references the American School Counseling Association and includes the following duties:

- Provide information to parents regarding graduation options and acceleration mechanisms.
- Assist students in effective program planning.
- Assist students in the areas of academic advisement, career awareness, and social/growth per the national standards established by the American School Counseling Association.
- Consult with administrators, teachers, parents, and district support personnel in identifying and resolving student issues, needs and problems.
- Interpret and utilize school records.
- Facilitate the involvement of parents in the education of their students, including assisting in parent/teacher/counselor conferences.
• Assist students in developing self-understanding, self-acceptance, effective interpersonal skills, career exploration, and educational planning.

• Perform other duties as assigned.

There is no reference in the high school guidance counselor job description to a college and career guidance curriculum.

The counselor job description does not list any of the inappropriate activities mentioned in Table 5.2 by the American School Counseling Association. However, in practice, the responsibilities of the guidance counselor at HCPS are quite different and include several of the above – and additional – inappropriate activities (see Table 5.2). Student testing was cited by counselors in focus groups as the activity that consumes the most of their time relative to all other inappropriate activities.

Guidance and counseling services vary significantly across schools. However, each of the counselors interviewed during this project expressed concern regarding district task assignments that are deemed inappropriate for counselors based on industry standards. This is not uncommon in public education, but it adversely affects the ability of guidance counselors to achieve their mission. At HCPS, insufficient time is dedicated to the appropriate activities based on industry standards, and the time that is spent on appropriate activities is not properly guided. The latter finding is due primarily to the lack of a college and career guidance curriculum.

The 2006 Florida Department of Education guidelines identified four major elements of a quality curriculum and target time distributions for each by school type (elementary, middle, high). The four elements are academic advising, career development, responsive services, and system support. These are described briefly below.

1. **Academic Advising:** This component of the program focuses on academic development and applying skills needed for educational achievement. Counselors also apply the skills of transitioning between educational levels. Developing and monitoring personal education plans are essential to this process. A Program of Study is an outline of a personal education plan. Programs of Study reinforce college and career readiness initiatives and improve academic performance.

2. **Career Development:** This component includes coordination of career exploration and planning skills in the achievement of life and career goals. Employment readiness skills, locating information about the world of work, and postsecondary education requirements for various career objectives are items of concern for students. The most effective and efficient counselors utilize a comprehensive career guidance software system to manage work. Florida provides, free of charge, KUDER, for HCPS counselors.

3. **Responsive Services:** This component addresses the immediate needs of students whose personal and academic well-being are threatened by circumstance. Supporting vulnerable
students during hard times means addressing their safety, health, and happiness in the short term, but it also means helping them to focus on what lies ahead.

4. **System Support**: This component offers counselors the opportunity to extend college and career readiness messaging and information throughout the school, to parents, and to the larger community. Because counselors are involved in so many areas of school life, they are in a unique position to help the school align its college and career readiness priorities across multiple areas.

Some counselor professional associations do not recognize System Support because counselor duties should not directly tie to “duties running the school.” Guidance and counseling professionals believe school counselors should focus as much attention as possible to providing direct student services.

Figure 5.9 compares the 2006 Florida Department of Education Guidance and Counseling Guidelines to current practice in Hillsborough County Public Schools, as reported by HCPS Guidance/Counseling Supervisors during focus group sessions. At the elementary level, academic advising (direct student service) is sacrificed in lieu of system support (indirect) services. In middle school, both academic advising and career guidance were sacrificed in lieu of system support services. At the high school level, HCPS exceeded the state guidelines for academic advising, but fell considerably short (10 percent) of the state career guidance guidelines (35 percent).

Figure 5.9. Comparison of State Guidelines for Counselor Time Distribution to HCPS
Figure 5.9. Comparison of State Guidelines for Counselor Time Distribution to HCPS (continued)

Sources: 2006 Florida Department of Education Guidance and Counseling Guidelines; Gibson Consulting Group Focus Group Survey

The 2006 Florida Legislature passed section 1003.4156, Florida Statutes, requiring that all students entering 6th grade (school year 2006-07) enroll in a career and educational planning course in the 7th or 8th grade. Students complete career exploration through CHOICES (or comparable program) and develop
their four-year high school plan of study in the ePersonal Education Planner (ePEP) at FACTS.org. While duties may vary by school, this legislation supports the counselor’s role in career guidance and should be included when developing strategies for a variety of measure outcomes. This legislative mandate sets priority on students starting career development early and aligning to a Program of Study.

K-12 counseling programs have changed significantly in the last 20 years. School counseling services are becoming deliberately planned and executed, mapping and designing more closely to the priorities of the school and community while meeting the developmental needs of students. Rather than reacting to students who struggle (emotionally, behaviorally, or academically), a comprehensive guidance program consistently touches all students by helping them set and reach attainable goals, providing training to staff members, and focusing on proactive services designed to prevent setbacks before they occur. Because College and Career Readiness (CCR) is currently such a high priority in Florida, it is important to look at how CCR goals can be addressed in every area of the school, including the guidance and counseling program:

- These changes must occur within a school culture that values and promotes college and career readiness for all students.
- Students must arrive in middle and high school having had exposure to the concept of higher education and careers starting in elementary school.
- Students must feel safe and valued in their schools so they can focus on setting attainable goals and learning rather than protecting themselves emotionally.

Skilled counselors recognize that a comprehensive school guidance and counseling program expands all grade levels, as students at different stages of education have different programming needs. These needs depend on school-wide and individual cognitive and emotional maturity levels, educational and social benchmarks, demands placed upon students at different times of life, and circumstances specific to the school or district. Figure 5.10 presents this range of needs starting at the elementary level and extending to life and learning after the education career is complete. Figure 5.10 depicts a developmentally appropriate model for how educators at all levels can actively help students conceptualize school as a means to an important end and prepare them to become lifelong learners.
Figure 5.10. Range of Career Guidance and Counseling Needs by Educational Level

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Note that career awareness begins at the elementary level. As early as kindergarten, children begin to think about their identities, strengths, differences, and absorb messages from adults—verbal and non-verbal—regarding the kind of students they are and what is expected of them.

Early elementary school is also a time when students are developmentally ready to build awareness of different subjects and disciplines, of school-related milestones and benchmarks, and of different types of careers. Students this age may not grasp the details, but exposure to different types of training and work builds background knowledge to prepare them for later exploration of various career options, and ultimately concentrating on a particular field.

Middle school students are at an age where interest inventories can be helpful tools to promote self-awareness and to see how their aptitudes align with various workforce opportunities. They are also ready to begin regularly practicing academic goal setting. The influence of older students can play a significant role and may be very helpful for transition to high school.

Students often enter high school with a somewhat fixed idea of their skills and interests. This can be beneficial in some ways because it can allow them to focus, but it can also potentially limit them from new or unexplored opportunities or skill development. Consider giving students further opportunities to explore in high school while still maintaining the most rigorous possible course load to ensure their options remain as flexible as possible. They should also be held to increasing levels of independent performance and rigorous academic standards.
Once students reach the upper levels of high school, their post-secondary planning should have already begun. They are now ready to concentrate on specific career possibilities through activities like internships, apprenticeships, job “look-see” opportunities, and dual credit opportunities. HCPS has large participation in on-the-job-training. Ideally, a student in high school will benefit much more from this type of experience if it is tied to their specific career interest and supported by a state instructional curriculum, and directly ties to their Program of Study. Release from school to work may promote a basic work ethic; however, educators must make hard decisions as to what is best for their students. Cooperative education models tie instruction to work as identified by the Program of Study. For example, students engaged in Finance Programs of Study should work at banks, credit unions, or even finance departments for business and industry. Experiences at a movie theatre, for example, may not be in the best interest of the student who plans to pursue finance at the postsecondary level. Ideally, by the time they graduate, students should exhibit independence and perform at the college-ready level.

There are many excellent national state models for comprehensive guidance programming. Missouri is well known nationally for its work in the development of K-12 career development curriculum. HCPS should use this as a starting point in developing its own college and career guidance curriculum.42

Fiscal Impact

The college and career guidance curriculum can be developed using available in-house resources. However, the implementation of the curriculum and the realignment of counselor duties may require additional counseling positions and reassignment of certain counselor activities to other school clerical positions. This requires the implementation of recommendations in the Phase II report to streamline school clerical activities and relieve the demands on their time. This would allow existing counselors to spend more time on direct student counseling activities without adding staff. Once this is accomplished the district should evaluate: (1) the time distribution of counselors compared to guidelines and (2) the adequacy of counselor full-time equivalents to successfully implement and execute the college and career guidance curriculum.

Recommendation 5-3: Improve academic skill attainment using CTE.

Today’s learners will enter a different economy than their parents and many of their teachers experienced upon graduating. One way this difference is apparent is the correspondence between the rise of globalization and the increased formalization of many careers that were previously unregulated or required little formal education beyond high school. Prior to the 21st century, generations of U.S. workers came of age in a job market that recognized—and even embraced—informal apprenticeship and self-teaching as means to pursue and succeed in a job skill or trade.

Today, however, employers that once allowed workers to learn skills on the job now require employees to have a college education. Even trade jobs, like mechanics and landscapers, now rely on technology—

42 Missouri Guidance Programming: https://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/school-counseling
Chapter 5 – Career and Technical Education

or at the very least advanced technical knowledge—that require training, testing, and certification to employ. In most cases, these types of credentials can only be accessed through formal education that enables the skills to be calibrated, assessed, and recognized in a variety of markets, not only the local environment in which the worker was trained.

Based on the review team’s assessment, the HCPS CTE program continues to face challenges with regard to its image as a low-level vocational education program. This finding is based in part on classroom observations conducted during the review.

Figure 5.11 presents some of the key success factors of an effective CTE learning environment and their prevalence in CTE classrooms observed. The three factors are: learning objective located in classroom; activities and instructional time maximize student learning; and non-instructional duties being coordinated with instructional activity.

Figure 5.11. CTE Classroom Observations – Learning Environment

![Bar Chart for Learning objective located in the room](chart1)

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Learning objectives were posted in many classrooms; however, many did not apply to the instructional lesson of the day. Seventeen students from various classes did not know what they were learning when asked.
Over 50 percent of classrooms observed started late, ended early, and did not achieve an appropriate pacing for all students.

Most teachers utilized warm up time, or other time during the period to check roll. Only five teachers used the traditional method and called roll.

Student engagement was also evaluated during classroom observations. A wide variety of activities were observed and many students were engaged in the assignment and task. Figure 5.12 presents three levels of student engagement and the existence of each observed in the CTE classrooms.

Figure 5.12. CTE Classroom Observations – Student Engagement

Instructional approaches observed did not include higher order thinking; they consisted more of task completion.

With respect to trade terminology, most CTE teachers used occupational jargon and terminology when conversing with students, reinforcing the business and industry.

Many CTE teachers extended learning from prior instruction. Students appeared comfortable with tasks that required prior knowledge to complete.
Instructional strategies were evaluated during classroom observations. Figure 5.13 presents three levels of instructional strategies and the existence of each observed in the CTE classrooms.

Figure 5.13. CTE Classroom Observations – Instructional Strategies

alternative and effective questioning techniques were not frequently applied in CTE classes based on observations. Of all the items observed, this one indicator appeared to have more impact than others as many learning opportunities were not able to occur due to low level questions and lack of extension. The following observations were noted with respect to questioning techniques:

- Questions were “closed” questions and did not lead to further learning.
- Questions were outside of the learners’ awareness. Old examples or use of outdated information was observed.
- Answers to questions with multiple possibilities were not welcomed. On seven occasions, the teacher stated “we will get to that later.”
The majority of time was devoted to questions seeking low level information that could have been provided by the teacher. The vast majority of questions led to yes or no responses.

Simple, common sense answers were provided by teachers.

Questions should engage students. If a student was sleeping or silent they were allowed to continue the behavior.

Questions did not have a follow-up question.

Students who gave a shrug or indifferent to answer were allowed to continue to do so.

With respect to grouping, many CTE classrooms were organized in groups and students worked collaboratively. However, there was little evidence of strategic grouping of students for shorter periods of time. This generally encourages more interaction and development of soft skills.

Industry standards were evident in many HCPS CTE classrooms. Depending on the programming, students knew expectations were tied to industry standards. However, approximately 40 percent of classrooms observed were not conducive to high expectations. Another indicator is the course itself, as many students, teachers, and counselors viewed some CTE courses as “blow-offs.”

There were other indicators of low quality or low rigor programming. In one example, HCPS students were engaged in an entry-level business education course that is ultimately being used for “office aid” positions within the district. Many of these students do not complete the suggested business coherent sequence as they simply desired a “no preparation” type course. Though most current CTE standards are designed to hold all students to a more rigorous content in preparation for postsecondary education and beyond, the relatively low perception of HCPS CTE has limited the district in realizing national and state advances in CTE. This negative image of CTE continues to impact teacher expectations of students, as well as students’ and parents’ decisions about high school course selection. The lack of rigor is also likely contributing to the lower percentage of HCPS students participating in CTE programs (72 percent) relative to the national average (94 percent).

There are three implementation strategies the district should pursue to increase the quality and rigor of CTE programming and instruction, with the end result of the program having a stronger reputation with higher student expectations.

CTE Curriculum Enhancement/Aligned Standards
High-quality CTE programming ensures that coursework is simultaneously aligned to rigorous academic standards and postsecondary expectations and informed by and built to address the skills needed in specific programs of study. CTE programming should use applied, contextual learning to help students see the relevance of what they are learning and its connection to career opportunities and life goals. However, from observation, HCPS does not regularly require lesson plans, alignment of standards to instruction, or accountability in terms of what is being taught in the CTE classroom.
Aligned standards will likely lead to increased collaboration between CTE and academic educators at the school level; however, additional efforts are needed to ensure students receive aligned and integrated instruction. CTE teachers must be afforded opportunities to work in teams to develop curricula that integrate content in the context of careers. Research suggests that embedding learning in the context of a career or theme (the program of study) helps students understand how to apply their knowledge. Teachers reported a low level of research-based projects. When questioned about research projects teachers referred to low level activities that simply required student to find information from third parties. No description was provided as to major research followed by written or presented outcomes. No senior project, or other high level written projects, was observed other than activities associated with the Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) for competitive purposes.

**Professional Development**

Professional development from the Marzano Center is encouraged for CTE staff. Marzano Center Essentials for Achieving Rigor sets a firm foundation for the essential strategies with components designed to support and facilitate standards-based planning, clear criteria for success, essential classroom conditions for learning, data-reflection and action, and peer collaboration. The model helps teachers intentionally plan for and teach rigorous lessons, reflect on their progress, collaborate with peers engaged in the same work, and monitor their students for the desired results – all in an environment designed to nurture, guide, and engage.

**Communications/Marketing/Image Building**

Today, there is a lot of information available addressing improving the image of career and technical education. The review team recommends starting this long-term effort using the outline below:

I. **Give students something to brag about**
   a. Provide stimulating, innovative activities that students can appreciate, learn from, and share with their peers
   b. Get state-of-the-art equipment or at least provide students access to it
   c. Ensure all CTE programming is rigorous and engaging
   d. Highlight the marketability of CTE program completers

II. **Bring parents on board**
   a. Address misconceptions about the need for all students to seek traditional college degrees. Define the word “college” to be any further study past high school.
   b. Describe CTE options that might better meet the needs of their children

III. **Target marketing to those who have the greatest impact on student choices**
   a. Re-educate guidance counselors
   b. Look to student organizations for Influence (CTSO’s)
   c. Cultivate support of business/industry representatives
IV. Work with media on CTE program outreach and communication

**Fiscal Impact**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources, as there are multiple sources for HCPS to use that will avoid the need to start from scratch.

**Additional Resources**

Additional resources are available to help HCPS implement the CTE recommendations contained in this report, and create a new vision for HCPS CTE division that more aligns with the intent of Perkins and the United States Department of Education. There are many organizations committed to advancing a new vision of CTE that enhances opportunities for students to acquire academic skill attainment and competencies in rigorous CTE courses. The following organizations represent a few of those providing information and tools to assist HCPS strengthen their CTE programs of study:

- The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE): ACTE is a national education association dedicated to preparing youth and adults for careers through CTE programs at the secondary, postsecondary, and adult levels. The ACTE website includes a CTE Research Clearinghouse, state-by-state profiles of CTE, advocacy and policy guidance, as well as guidance for practice. Resources are available to help CTE educators pursue continuing education, improve instruction, and develop new programs, including through the site’s Lesson Plan Library: [www.acteonline.org](http://www.acteonline.org)

- Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs): CTSOs are student organizations that prepare emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in various fields. CTSOs provide unique activities that foster career-related skills and leadership development. They arrange educational and leadership activities and materials through 11 organizations across the United States. This site provides an overview of the organizations and links to each: [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cte/vso.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cte/vso.html)

- College and Career Academy Support Network (CCASN): CCASN is dedicated to the goal of improving high schools, particularly through career academies and other small learning communities. Career academies combine coursework that prepares students for both college and career. Partnerships with employers and higher education institutions give students opportunities to learn beyond the high school classroom. The site offers academy directories, useful resources such as toolboxes and articles, a searchable database of curriculum materials, and professional support services: [http://casn.berkeley.edu/](http://casn.berkeley.edu/)

- ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career: The mission of ConnectEd is to prepare students for college and careers through a high school improvement approach known as Linked Learning, focused on connecting academics with real-world experience in diverse fields, including engineering, arts and media, and biomedical and health sciences. The ConnectEd website has
research and policy resources, as well as information on implementing integrated curriculum units and multidisciplinary lessons designed to make meaningful connections for students across subject areas: [http://www.connectedcalifornia.org/](http://www.connectedcalifornia.org/)

- National Academy Foundation (NAF): NAF promotes a school reform strategy that moves large, comprehensive high schools to smaller learning communities and enriches the curriculum through a focus on career themes tied to college. Its educational model includes industry-focused curricula, work-based learning experiences, and business partner expertise. Its website offers numerous resources on the NAF curriculum, professional development, standards, and assessment: [http://naf.org/](http://naf.org/)

- National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc): This consortium represents the state leaders of secondary, postsecondary, and adult CTE across the nation. NASDCTEc provides leadership and support for the National Career Clusters Framework, focused on curriculum design and instruction. The website includes state CTE profiles with each state’s enrollment data, information on funding, and accountability indicators for secondary, postsecondary, and adult CTE. Issue briefs on the website lay out the core principles of a new vision for CTE articulated by CTE leaders, advocates, and partners: [http://www.careertech.org/](http://www.careertech.org/)

- National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC): NCAC is the recognized leader for collaborative support and sustainability of career academies, whose mission is to create and support a national network of existing and emerging career academies. It works to define and implement an evaluation process based on the national standards of practice that will assist career academies in their development and sustainability; provide technical assistance, training, and other support to emerging and existing academies, schools, and community partners; and develop networks of support for related career-specific programs and regional academy personnel and partners. The site provides information on the history and current status of career academies, a directory of academies, information on Career Clusters, and a link to the National Standards of Practice for Career Academies: [http://www.ncacinc.com/](http://www.ncacinc.com/)

- National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE): NRCCTE is the primary agent for generating scientifically based knowledge, dissemination, professional development, and technical assistance to improve CTE in the United States. It works to improve the integration of CTE with academic instruction; the integration of secondary and postsecondary CTE; the use of educational technology and distance learning; the transition of CTE participants to high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations; and the use of state-adjusted levels of performance to improve CTE programs and student achievement. Its website includes resources and rigorous research on core issues in CTE: [http://www.nrccte.org/](http://www.nrccte.org/)
References


Why should assessments, learning objectives, and instruction be aligned? Retrieved October 30, 2016, from Carnegie Mellon University,
https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/basics/alignment.html

Appendix A
# M/J Grade 7 Mathematics
## Semester 1
### Unit 1: Integers
**Global Concept Guide 1 of 3**

#### Standards in this Unit:
- **MAFS.7.NS.1.1** Apply and extend previous understandings of addition and subtraction to add and subtract rational numbers; represent addition and subtraction on a horizontal or vertical number line
  
a. Describe situations in which opposite quantities combine to make 0. For example, a hydrogen atom has 0 charge because its two constituents are oppositely charged.
  
b. Understand p + q as the number located a distance |q| from p, in the positive or negative direction depending on whether q is positive or negative. Show that a number and its opposite have a sum of 0 (are additive inverses). Interpret sums of rational numbers by describing real-world contexts.
  
c. Understand subtraction of rational numbers as adding the additive inverse, p − q = p + (−q). Show that the distance between two rational numbers on the number line is the absolute value of their difference, and apply this principle in real-world contexts.
  
d. Apply properties of operations as strategies to add and subtract rational numbers.
- **MAFS.7.NS.1.3** Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving the four operations with rational numbers.
- **MAFS.7.EE.2.3** Solve multi-step real-life and mathematical problems posed with positive and negative rational numbers in any form (whole numbers, fractions, and decimals), using tools strategically. Apply properties of operations to calculate with numbers in any form; convert between forms as appropriate; and assess the reasonableness of answers using mental computation and estimation strategies.

#### Standards of Mathematical Practice:
- **MAFS.K12.MP.1.1** Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- **MAFS.K12.MP.2.1** Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- **MAFS.K12.MP.5.1** Use appropriate tools strategically

### Instructional Resources

#### Primary Lesson Resource
- Florida Go Math Mathematics 2
  - Unit 1 Module 1
  - Lessons 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4

#### Additional Resources
- Springboard Mathematics Course 2
  - Unit 1 Activity 2: Lesson 2-1, 2-2
- Florida Go Math Mathematics 2
  - Differentiated Instruction
    - Lesson 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and Module 1
  
  - **Engage NY Integer Game**
  - **Engage NY Integer Addition on a Number Line**
  - **Engage NY Justifying Rules for Subtraction**
  - **Using Positive and Negative Numbers in Context**
  - **Using an Elevator to Evaluate Signed Number Expressions: Elevator Arithmetic**

#### Formative Assessments
- **Exploring Additive Inverse**
- **Adding Integers**
- **Finding the Difference**

#### STEM Connections
- National Library of Virtual Manipulatives
  - Color Chips Addition
- National Library of Virtual Manipulatives
  - Color Chips Subtraction
- ExploreLearning Gizmos
  - **Adding on the Number Line**
  - **Adding and Subtracting Integers**
  - **Adding and Subtracting Integers with Chips**

---

**Prior Years' Learning:**
- MAFS.6.NS.3.5
- MAFS.6.NS.3.6
- MAFS.6.NS.3.7
- MAFS.6.NS.3.8

**Future Year's Connections:**
This is a fluency expectation. Students are to master this skill at the end of this grade level.
### Content Connections

#### Conceptual Knowledge
Students will understand:
- distance is a positive value
- how to utilize horizontal and vertical number lines to add and subtract integers
- how to contextualize addition and subtraction of integers
- the sum of a number and its opposite is zero
- that subtracting a number is the same as adding its opposite

#### Fluency & Skills
The student will be able to:
- represent adding and subtracting integers using concrete models such as number lines and color counters
- use models and rules to add and subtract integers
- write expressions and solve multi-step problems involving adding and subtracting integers
- add and subtract integers fluently

---

#### Key vocabulary:
additive inverse, absolute value, difference, expression, integers, negative number, opposites, positive number, sum, whole number, zero pair

### Instructional Guidance

#### What are the students doing?
- Creating a human number line in the classroom using index cards or playing cards and have students line up in order without talking
- Using number lines, color counters, number cubes, coins, index cards or virtual manipulatives to visualize and model addition and subtraction of integers
- Looking for a pattern in integer operations
- Discovering effects of integer operations prior to investigation of integer rules
- Use decks of cards to play integer war (red = negative and black = positive)
- Collaborating with members of the group

#### What is the teacher doing?
- Providing multiple opportunities to represent addition and subtraction of integers
- Facilitating and modeling hands-on activities
- Providing real-world scenarios that develop conceptual understandings of adding and subtracting integers such as profits/loss, football yardage, etc.
- Facilitating discussion through the use of the higher order questions
- Emphasizing precise use of vocabulary
- Differentiating the instruction to meet the needs of all students
- Providing small group instruction
- Demonstrate problem solving strategies
### Standards in this Unit:

**MAFS.7.NS.1.2** Apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication and division and of fractions to multiply and divide rational numbers.

- Understand that multiplication is extended from fractions to rational numbers by requiring that operations continue to satisfy the properties of operations, particularly the distributive property, leading to products such as \((-1)(-1) = 1\) and the rules for multiplying signed numbers. Interpret products of rational numbers by describing real-world contexts.

- Understand that integers can be divided, provided that the divisor is not zero, and every quotient of integers (with non-zero divisor) is a rational number. If \(p\) and \(q\) are integers, then \(-\frac{p}{q} = -\frac{p}{q} = \frac{p}{-q}\). Interpret quotients of rational numbers by describing real-world contexts.

- Apply properties of operations as strategies to multiply and divide rational numbers.

- Convert a rational number to a decimal using long division; know that the decimal form of a rational number terminates in 0s or eventually repeats.

**MAFS.7.NS.1.3** Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving the four operations with rational numbers.

### Standards of Mathematical Practice:

- **MAFS.K12.MP.1.1** Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- **MAFS.K12.MP.2.1** Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- **MAFS.K12.MP.7.1** Look for and make use of structure

### Prior Years’ Learning:

- **MAFS.6.NS.3.5**
- **MAFS.6.NS.3.6**
- **MAFS.6.NS.3.7**
- **MAFS.6.NS.3.8**

### Future Year’s Connections:

This is a fluency expectation. Students are to master this skill at the end of this grade level.

---

**Instructional Resources**

### Primary Lesson Resource

- **Florida Go Math Mathematics 2**
  - Unit 1 Module 2
  - Lessons 2.1, 2.2

### Additional Resources

- **Springboard Mathematics Course 2**
  - Unit 1 Activity 3: Lesson 3-1, 3-2 and Activity 3 Practice
  - Florida Go Math Mathematics 2
  - Differentiated Instruction
  - Lesson 2.1, 2.2

### Formative Assessments

- **Negative Times**
- **Quotients of Integers**

### STEM Connections

- **National Library of Virtual Manipulatives**
  - Number Lines
- **National Library of Virtual Manipulatives**
  - Rectangle
  - Multiplication of Integers

---

**Content Connections**

### Conceptual Knowledge

Students will understand:

- why the product or quotient of a negative and a positive integer result in a negative integer
- why the pattern discovered with additive operations for negative numbers changes when applying multiplicative operations to negative numbers
- how to utilize horizontal and vertical number lines or other manipulatives to multiply and divide integers

**Key vocabulary:** Divide, dividend, divisor, multiply, operation, product, quotient

### Fluency & Skills

The student will be able to:

- use concrete models (number lines and counters) to represent integer multiplication
- use real-world scenarios to solve problems using multiplication and division of integers
- multiply integers fluently
- divide integers fluently
## Instructional Guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What are the students doing?</strong></th>
<th><strong>What is the teacher doing?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Using number lines, color counters, playing cards, index cards or virtual manipulatives to visualize and model multiplication and division of integers</td>
<td>- Providing multiple opportunities to represent multiplication of integers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Discovering effects of integer operations prior to investigation of integer rules</td>
<td>- Facilitating and modeling hands-on activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Looking for a pattern in integer operations</td>
<td>- Demonstrate problem solving strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use decks of cards to play integer war (red = negative and black = positive)</td>
<td>- Providing real-world scenarios that develop conceptual understandings of multiplying and dividing integers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Collaborating with members of the group</td>
<td>- Facilitating discussion through the use of the higher order questions</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- Emphasizing precise use of vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Differentiating the instruction to meet the needs of all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Providing small group instruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Standards in this Unit:

- **MAFS.7.NS.1.3** Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving the four operations with rational numbers.
- **MAFS.7.EE.2.3** Solve multi-step real-life and mathematical problems posed with positive and negative rational numbers in any form (whole numbers, fractions, and decimals), using tools strategically. Apply properties of operations to calculate with numbers in any form; convert between forms as appropriate; and assess the reasonableness of answers using mental computation and estimation strategies.

### Standards of Mathematical Practice:

- **MAFS.K12.MP.4.1** Model with mathematics

### Prior Years’ Learning:

- **MAFS.6.NS.3.5**
- **MAFS.6.NS.3.6**
- **MAFS.6.NS.3.7**
- **MAFS.6.NS.3.8**

### Future Year’s Connections:

This is a fluency expectation. Students are to master this skill at the end of this grade level.

### Instructional Guidance

#### Primary Lesson Resource

Florida Go Math Mathematics 2
Unit 1 Module 2
Lesson 2.3

#### Additional Resources

Florida Go Math Mathematics 2
Differentiated Instruction
Lesson 2.3 and Module 2

#### STEM Connections

- Providing multiple opportunities to represent operations with integers
- Providing real-world scenarios that develop conceptual understandings of operations with integers
- Demonstrate problem solving strategies
- Facilitating discussion through the use of the higher order questions
- Emphasizing precise use of vocabulary problem solving strategies
- Differentiating the instruction to meet the needs of all students, including using two-color counters, number lines, etc.

### Content Connections

#### Conceptual Knowledge

Students will understand:
- how to represent and solve real world problems mathematically using integers

**Key vocabulary:** absolute value, expressions, integers, order of operations

#### Fluency & Skills

The student will be able to:
- use a problem-solving plan to apply integer operations to real world scenarios
- use the order of operations to solve real-world scenarios that involve integers
- compare values of expressions using integers
- write and evaluate expressions to illustrate a given scenario

### Instructional Guidance

#### What are the students doing?

- Looking for a pattern in integer operations
- Collaborating with members of the group to create, plan, utilize and check problems involving real-world scenarios
- Using number lines, color counters, number cubes, coins, index cards or virtual manipulatives to visualize and model operation of integers to differentiate the instruction.

#### What is the teacher doing?

- Providing multiple opportunities to represent operations with integers
- Providing real-world scenarios that develop conceptual understandings of operations with integers
- Demonstrate problem solving strategies
- Facilitating discussion through the use of the higher order questions
- Emphasizing precise use of vocabulary problem solving strategies
- Differentiating the instruction to meet the needs of all students, including using two-color counters, number lines, etc.
## 1. Description

Date: | Subject:
---|---

## 2. Standards and Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## 3. Procedure

**Bellwork (5 minutes):**

**Review Previous Day’s Homework/Lesson (5 minutes):**

**Review Objective/Introduction/Hook (3 minutes):**

**Presentation (12 minutes): Inquiry or Guided Instruction**

**Check for Understanding:**

**Student Practice (20 minutes): Collaborative Learning or Independent Work**

**Check for Understanding:**

**Lesson Closure (5 minutes):**

## 4. Differentiated Instruction

**Accommodations for ELL/ESE:**

**Higher Order Thinking Questions:**

**Word Wall– What vocabulary will I reference?**

## 5. Materials/Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text:</th>
<th>Visuals/Manipulatives:</th>
<th>Technology:</th>
<th>Handouts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## 6. Teacher Reflection

**What worked well:**

**What would make this lesson even better:**
Appendix B
DATA-DRIVEN ANALYSIS MEETINGS:
Leading Effective 1-on-1 Meetings around Interim Assessment Results

PRE-CURSORS FOR EFFECTIVE ANALYSIS MEETINGS:

Before Giving Interim Assessment:
- **6 WEEKS PRIOR**: Teachers review assessment and plan towards the rigor of those assessments
- **A FEW WEEKS PRIOR**: Teacher predict performance on each assessment question:
  a) confident they'll get it right; b) not sure; c) no way they'll get it right
- **PD (timing flexible)**: Teachers receive model of how to do assessment analysis and complete action plan, and they see model of effective and ineffective analysis meetings

Immediately Following Interim Assessment Administration:
- **TEACHER ANALYSIS**: Teachers do analysis of results prior to meeting, trying to answer fundamental question: why did the students not learn it?
- **TEACHER ACTION PLAN**: Teachers complete action plan
- **LEADER PREPARATION**: Leader analyzes teacher results, analysis and action plan:
  - Determine end goal for teach standard: explicit action step(s) based on deep analysis
  - Prepare questions to get the teacher to that action step
- **CONTENT EXPERTISE**: If the teacher or leader lacks deep content knowledge:
  - If Leader is lacking: identify expert within/outside of school to call on for extra support
  - If Teacher is lacking: leader should be ready to coach them about effective techniques

CONVERSATION STARTERS & RE-DIRECTORS DURING ANALYSIS MEETINGS:

Starters:
- “Congratulations on the improvement on ____ from last time!”
- “So…what’s the data telling you?”

Re-Directors & Data-Focusing Comments:
- “Let’s look at question ___. What do you think the students are doing wrong here?”
- “What did the students need to be able to do the get that question right? How was this more than what they are able to do with you in class?”
- “What’s so interesting is that they did really well on question #__ but struggled question #__ on the same standard. Why do you think that is?”

Making it Actionable:
- “What should students do when they hit this struggle the next time?
- “Where will you do this [action step] in your upcoming lessons?
- [When new analysis/action is proposed during the meeting] “Let’s summarize the action steps.”
  [Write them into action plan or future lesson plans.]
- “Let’s go back to your action plan and add these new actions.”

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR LEADING ANALYSIS MEETINGS:

- Let the data do the talking
- Let the teacher do the talking (or push them to!)
- Always go back to the test to specific questions
- Don’t fight the battles on ideological lines (in the larger picture, you’ll lose)
- Know the data yourself to lead an analysis meeting effectively
- Make explicit, detailed action steps & ensure that they happen in the classroom
Appendix C
CUMULATIVE REVIEW OF PROFICIENT STANDARDS — Write the standards you will address with each of the following

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiral in HW</th>
<th>Spiral in Do Now</th>
<th>Do Mini-Lesson</th>
<th>Do Now with Mini-Lesson</th>
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SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION:
What standards warrant more time for small-group instruction and review?

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN HOW OR WHEN WILL YOU STRUCTURE SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION

- 
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARDS ANALYSIS</th>
<th>ANALYSIS OF WHY STUDENTS DID NOT LEARN IT</th>
<th>INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN—WHAT TECHNIQUES WILL YOU USE TO ADDRESS THESE STANDARDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHOLE CLASS INSTRUCTION:</strong></td>
<td>What standards warrant more time for whole-class instruction, re-teaching and review?</td>
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<tr>
<th>STUDENTS OF MAJOR CONCERN</th>
<th>WHAT THEY NEED MOST HELP WITH?</th>
<th>INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN—WHEN OR HOW WILL THEY GET TUTORED, SUPPORTED ADDRESSED</th>
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</table>
# 6 Week Instructional Plan for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1</th>
<th>WEEK 2</th>
<th>WEEK 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards for Review</td>
<td>Standards for Review</td>
<td>Standards for Review</td>
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<tr>
<th>WEEK 4</th>
<th>WEEK 5</th>
<th>WEEK 6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards for Review</td>
<td>Standards for Review</td>
<td>Standards for Review</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Standards</td>
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<td>New Standards</td>
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</table>
Appendix D
# Classroom Walkthrough Checklist

**Scoring:**  3 = Evident     2 = Somewhat Evident     1 = Not Evident     0 = Not Observed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>(36 possible)</th>
<th>Subtotal:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During the 90-minute reading block, the district’s reading materials are implemented with a high degree of expertise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The district’s identified supplemental and intervention materials are used with fidelity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Explicit instruction occurs during most of the observation (Model – Prompt – Practice)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective(s) for the lesson is/are clear and articulated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading materials are organized, accessible, and proficiently used effectively and efficiently</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-teaching occurs when necessary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modeling is provided by teacher, followed by guided practice with ample opportunities for students to practice skill(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct instruction of vocabulary – word identification and word meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehension skills are modeled and directly taught for literal, inferential, and critical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher sets purpose of reading through text structures (C/C, C/E, Descriptive, Q/A, P/S, C/S, Prop/Sup)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacing is appropriate for reading level with high expectations for all students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students are engaged:</th>
<th>(6 possible)</th>
<th>Subtotal:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher talk:</td>
<td>All students respond:</td>
<td>One student responds:</td>
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<tr>
<td>List observed strategies (i.e., unison responses, choral reading, partner reading, think-pair-share, cloze technique)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher behaviors:</th>
<th>(9 possible)</th>
<th>Subtotal:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher moves around the room (proximity), provides support for struggling students, checks for understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher uses a brisk pace, knows materials, uses clear instructional routines and procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher uses established classroom management procedures and routines – transitions are less than 2 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Total Points Possible = 51) **Total Points**