

**A Defined System Review
of Curriculum Design and Delivery
of the
Richmond County School System
Augusta, Georgia**



Students working in a small group with their teacher at Roy E Rollins Elementary School



**Curriculum Management Solutions, Inc.
5619 NW 86th Street, Suite 500
Johnston, IA 50131**

February 2018

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of Curriculum Design and Delivery
of the
Richmond County School System
Augusta, Georgia**

**Curriculum Management Solutions, Inc.
5619 NW 86th Street, Suite 500
Johnston, IA 50131**

Date Review Presented: February 2018

Members of the Richmond County School System Review Team:

Lead Reviewer
Dr. Randall Clegg

Reviewers

Dr. Mary R. Cannie
Melani Edwards
Dr. Penny Gray
Dr. Robert Iuzzolino
Brenda Steele
Ronnie Thompson
Olivia Elizondo Zepeda

Charles T. Carroll
Dr. Jim Ferrell
Larry Hunt
Dr. JoAnn Pastor
Jeani Stoddard
Dr. Jeffrey Tuneberg

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document constitutes the final report of a Defined System Review of Curriculum Design and Delivery of the Richmond County School System. The review was commissioned by the Superintendent of Schools within the scope of her leadership authority. The review was conducted during the time period of October 23-27, 2017. Document analysis was performed off site, as was the detailed analysis of findings and site visit data.

As a defined review of curriculum design and delivery, not all aspects of the school system's operations were examined. Not included in the scope of this review were district governance functions and district support functions associated with facilities maintenance and adequacy, food service, and transportation.

A System Review is designed to reveal the extent to which officials and professional staff of a school system have developed and implemented a sound, valid, and operational system of curriculum management. Such a system, set within the framework of adopted board policies, enables the school system to make maximum use of its human and financial resources in the education of its students. When such a system is fully operational, it assures the district taxpayers that their financial support is optimized under the conditions in which the school district functions.

Background

The Richmond County School System is located in historic Augusta, Georgia, the state's oldest city. Chartered in 1783, The Richmond County School System serves consolidated Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia, and the cities of Hephzibah and Blythe. Recognized as having the fifth oldest existing public high school in the United States, and the oldest existing public high school in the Southern United States, the Richmond County School System currently enrolls 30,858 students, attending 33 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, 8 high schools, 4 magnet schools, and 3 special schools.

Situated at the head of the navigable waters of the Savannah River, Augusta-Richmond County has an estimated population of roughly 201,000 and is the second-largest metropolitan area in the state of Georgia. Best known for hosting the Masters Golf Tournament, each spring this annual event attracts over 200,000 visitors from around the world to this historic city with its diverse culture, active arts community, and mild southern climate.

After decades of economic decline, the Augusta-Richmond area is undergoing an economic resurgence. Augusta is a major regional medical center, which annually contributes \$1.8 million to the area's economy. The area is home to Augusta University, the state's only public health sciences graduate university, and University Hospital, which is the second-oldest hospital in Georgia that provides a wide variety of primary care and specialty medical care. Besides a regional medical center, Augusta is also home to a variety of companies that maintain their headquarters or facilities in the area, including CareSouth, T-Mobile, Covidien, Solo Cup Company, Automatic Data Processing, International Paper, Teleperformance, Sitel, E-Z-Go, Elanco, Club Car, John Deere, Procter & Gamble, Kellogg's, and Delta Air Lines baggage call center.

The economic outlook for the Augusta-Richmond area is improving as the area is becoming a major center for cybersecurity in the United States. In 2016 it was announced that a new Cyber Command Headquarters would be located at Fort Gorton, potentially bringing 10,000 cybersecurity jobs to the area. To further solidify the area as a leader in national cybersecurity, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal in September 2017 announced the state of Georgia would invest \$50 million for a world-class cyber training facility that will be located at the Augusta

University's Riverfront Campus. The Georgia Cyber Innovation and Training Center will focus on developing the cyber workforce through education, public-private partnerships, and research.

The Richmond County School System is a diverse school system that has experienced many of the challenges associated with trying to increase student achievement while meeting the needs of a changing student demographic and changing state expectations. The federal and state investment in making the Augusta-Richmond area a national cybersecurity center will quickly increase the demands for a highly educated local workforce. The need for a highly educated workforce has focused increased attention on the performance disparities that exist within the Richmond County School System. The Richmond County School System has some of the highest performing schools in the area as well as some of the lowest performing schools in the state of Georgia. Confronted with a significant number of students that are performing below grade level, the Richmond County School System leadership is engaged in strategic efforts to improve the overall operational effectiveness of the school system.

Vision-Mission Strategic Direction

In September 2015, Superintendent Dr. Angela Pringle initiated a strategic planning process. The strategic planning process produced the following mission and vision statements, goal areas, and performance objectives, which were adopted by the board of education on October 20, 2015.

Vision: RCSS will create a world-class, globally competitive school system where all students will graduate and are college/career ready.

Mission: Building a world-class school system through education, collaboration, and innovation.

Goals and Performance Objectives: Exhibit 0.1 presents the strategic goals and performance objectives adopted by the board of education.

Exhibit 0.1 **System Strategic Goals and Performance Objectives** **Adopted by the Board of Education** **Richmond County School System** **October 2015**

Strategic Goal Areas	Performance Objectives
I. High Academic Achievement and Success for All	A. Increase graduation rate B. Increase student performance at or above grade level C. Increase college, career, and workforce readiness
II. Community Engagement	A. Establish internal and external community engagement initiatives B. Improve perceptions of RCSS C. Pursue and attract collaborative partnerships
III. Communications	A. Establish and implement systems of communication for all divisions and schools B. Identify varied resources for two-way communications C. Increase effective communications
IV. High performing culture and workforce	A. Hire and support a highly effective staff B. Develop and implement staff high standards and expectations C. Create succession planning
V. Operational Effectiveness	A. Establish and monitor policies and procedures for effectiveness B. Increase service responsiveness and timeliness C. Improve the safety and orderliness of environments D. Develop a collaborative and efficient budgeting process.

Governance Structure

The Richmond County School District is governed by a 10-member board of education. Members of the board are elected to four-year terms on a staggered basis, with elections held in even-numbered years. At the time of the review, the members of the board of education included:

Name	District	Term Expires
Marion Barnes	District 1	2020
Charlie Hannah	District 2	2018
Alex Howard	District 3	2018
Wayne Frazier	District 4	2020
Patsy Scott	District 5	2020
Jack Padgett	District 6	2018
Vacant*	District 7	2018
Jimmy Atkins	District 8	2020
Venus Cain	District 9	2018
Helen Minchew	District 10 (At Large)	2020
* Board member Frank Dolan resigned on October 3, 2017		

Superintendent

The superintendent is employed by the board of education under a written contract for a term not more than three years. The superintendent is responsible for administering the policies adopted by the board and providing the board with professional advice. The board of education appointed Dr. Angela Pringle as superintendent of the Richmond County School System on August 19, 2014. Dr. Pringle replaced Dr. Frank Roberson, who had served as the superintendent since 2010. Prior to being employed as Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Pringle served in various professional capacities including a math teacher, principal, and four years as a regional superintendent in the Dekalb County School District. Dr. Pringle's appointment as superintendent of the Richmond County School System is noteworthy in that she is the first female superintendent in the history of the school district. Following is a list of others who have served as superintendent of the Richmond County School System:

- Dr. Frank Roberson 2010 –2014
- Dr. Dana Bedden 2007 –2010
- Dr. Charles Larke 1995 –2007
- Dr. John Strelec 1983 –1995

Student Enrollment

There are 58 schools operating in the Richmond County School System, including 33 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, 8 high schools, and 7 magnet schools and special learning centers. A summary of student enrollment at each level and for all schools combined for the past five years is presented in [Exhibit 0.2](#):

Exhibit 0.2

October Grade Level School Enrollment Richmond County School System 2013-2017

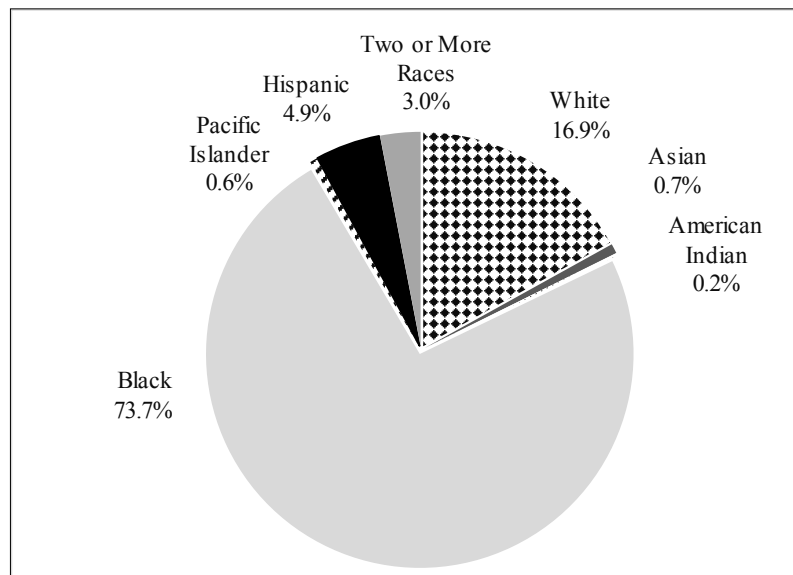
Grade Level	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Pre-Kindergarten	1,264	1,273	1,275	1,306	1,306
Elementary (K-5)	15,274	15,320	14,913	14,788	14,604
Middle School (6-8)	7,059	6,897	6,798	6,405	6,404
High School (9-12)	8,714	8,336	1,0998	8,660	8,544
Total	32,311	31,826	33,984	31,159	30,858
<i>Source: Georgia Department of Education and district officials</i>					

As can be seen in [Exhibit 0.2](#), total student enrollment in the Richmond County School System has declined each year since 2013, except for 2015 when student enrollment increased from 31,826 to 33,984, or 6.8%. The October student enrollment of 30,858 is 4.5% lower than the October 2013 student enrollment.

The Richmond County School System serves a racially diverse student population. A summary of the demographic composition of the district enrollment for the 2017-18 school is presented in [Exhibit 0.3](#).

Exhibit 0.3

Student Enrollment by Demographics Richmond County School System October 2017



Source: Information obtained from district officials

As can be noted in [Exhibit 0.3](#), students identifying themselves as Black comprise the largest racial demographic, representing 73.7% of the overall student population attending schools in the Richmond County School System.

The Richmond County School System participates in the Community Eligibility Provision district-wide, which allows all students to eat school meals at no costs. Due to the participation in the Community Eligibility Provision program, the district does not maintain enrollment data based on a student's socioeconomic status.

Employees

During the 2017-18 school year, 3,260.5 individuals were employed by the Richmond County School District. Exhibit 0.4 depicts the types of positions and number of personnel.

Exhibit 0.4

Personnel Information Richmond County School District 2017-18

Position	Number of Employees
District Administrator	25
Building Administrator	117
Classroom Teacher	1,845
Professionals Not Assigned to a Classroom	157
Paraprofessionals	389
Secretary/Clerical (Schools Only)	237
Transportation	249
Custodial (Schools Only)	241.5
Total	3,260.5
<i>Source: Information obtained from district officials</i>	

Financial Background

For the 2018 fiscal year, the board of education adopted a budget with anticipated receipts of funds from local, state, and federal sources totaling \$245,551,019. Exhibit 0.5 indicates the sources and amount of funds budgeted by the board.

Exhibit 0.5

Fund Sources and Amounts Richmond County School System Fiscal Year 2018

Funding Source	Budgeted Amount	Percent
Local	\$93,065,000	37.9
State	151,332,019	61.6
Federal	1,114,000	.5
Total	\$245,511,019	100%
<i>Source: Data extrapolated from Richmond County School District Adopted Budget</i>		

Exhibit 0.6 presents the 2018 fiscal year operational budget by function.

Exhibit 0.6
Operational Budget
Richmond County School District
Fiscal Year 2018

Function	Approved Budget	Percent
Instruction	\$160,590,884	65.41
Pupil Services	6,199,391	2.53
Improvement of Instruction	2,709,553	1.10
Educational Media Services	6,154,532	2.51
General Administration	3,079,766	1.25
School Administration	17,133,124	6.98
Support Services Business	1,782,824	0.73
Maintenance and Operations	31,719,903	12.92
Student Transportation	11,297,506	4.60
Support Services Central	4,716,757	1.92
Other Support Services	21,890	0.01
Debt Service	104,890	0.04
Total	\$245,511,020	100%
<i>Source: Data extrapolated from Richmond County School District Adopted Budget</i>		

Review Background and Scope of Work

A System Review is based on the Curriculum Audit™, a process that was developed by Dr. Fenwick W. English and first implemented in 1979 in the Columbus Public Schools, Ohio. The audit is based upon generally-accepted concepts pertaining to effective instruction and curricular design and delivery, some of which have been popularly referred to as the “effective schools research.”

A Curriculum Audit™ is an independent examination of four data sources: documents, interviews, site visits, and online surveys. These are gathered and triangulated, or corroborated, to reveal the extent to which a school district is meeting its goals and objectives, whether they are internally or externally developed or imposed. A public report is issued as the final phase of the auditing process.

The audit’s scope is centered on curriculum and instruction, and any aspect of operations of a school system that enhances or hinders its design and/or delivery. The audit is an intensive, focused, “postholed” look at how well a school system such as Richmond County School System has been able to set valid directions for pupil accomplishment and well-being, concentrate its resources to accomplish those directions, and improve its performance, however contextually defined or measured, over time.

The Curriculum Audit™ does not examine any aspect of school system operations unless it pertains to the design and delivery of curriculum. For example, auditors would not examine the cafeteria function, unless students were going hungry and, therefore, were not learning. It would not examine vehicle maintenance charts, unless buses continually broke down and children could not get to school to engage in the learning process. It would not be concerned with custodial matters, unless schools were observed to be unclean and unsafe for children to be taught.

The Curriculum Audit™ centers its focus on the main business of schools: teaching, curriculum, and learning. Its contingency focus is based upon data gathered during the audit that impinges negatively or positively on its primary focus. These data are reported along with the main findings of the audit.

In some cases, ancillary findings in a Curriculum Audit™ are so interconnected with the capability of a school system to attain its central objectives, that they become major, interactive forces, which, if not addressed, will severely compromise the ability of the school system to be successful with its students.

Curriculum Audits™ have been performed in over 500 school systems in more than 41 states, the District of Columbia, and several other countries, including Canada, Saudi Arabia, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Bermuda.

The methodology and assumptions of the Curriculum Audit™ have been reported in the national professional literature for more than two decades, and at a broad spectrum of national education association conventions and seminars, including the American Association of School Administrators (AASA); Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD); National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP); Association for the Advancement of International Education (AAIE); American Educational Research Association (AERA); National School Boards Association (NSBA); and the National Governors Association (NGA).

This review was conducted in accordance with a contract between Richmond County School System and Curriculum Management Solutions, inc. All members of the team were certified by Curriculum Management Solutions, inc.

The curriculum reviewers for this review were:

- Dr. Mary R. Cannie, Consultant
- Charles T. Carroll, Chief Academic Officer, Fort Worth Independent School District
- Dr. Randall Clegg, Superintendent, retired
- Melani Edwards, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment, Casa Grande Union High School District
- Dr. Jim Ferrell, Professor, Northeastern State University
- Dr. Penny Gray, Consultant
- Larry Hunt, Consultant
- Dr. Robert Iuzzolino, Consultant
- Dr. JoAnn Pastor, Consultant
- Brenda Steele, Consultant
- Jeani Stoddard, Special Programs Coordinator, San Vicente ISD
- Ronnie Thompson, Superintendent, Liberty-Eyalu Independent School District
- Dr. Jeffrey Tuneberg, Consultant
- Olivia Elizondo Zepeda, Consultant

Biographical information about the reviewers is found in [Appendix A](#).

System Purpose for Conducting the System Review

This system review of the Richmond County School System has been conducted upon the request of the Superintendent. Since her appointment as superintendent in 2014, Dr. Pringle has been focused on refining the schools system's focus on learning and obtaining significant increases in students achievement. Dr. Pringle explains her decision to request a system-wide review to assess how well the Richmond County School System is supporting the mission of teaching and learning for all students:

“The Richmond County School System is focused on improving student achievement and seeks to ensure that instructional practices and resources support teaching and learning at high levels. Over the last three years, Georgia has implemented a more rigorous assessment system, *Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS)*,

which indicate our need for improvement as well having a number of schools identified as low performing schools in the state. Our school district also faces many challenges often associated with low performing schools in a high poverty urban school district including the need for greater intervention and remedial instructional supports. Changes in the state curriculum over the past few years and changes in the state assessment system have created a need for development of curriculum materials to support teachers throughout the change, which has often resulted in a quick turnaround of curriculum development and design. Therefore, we request a comprehensive external review of our curriculum by Curriculum Management Solutions, both written and taught, in order to identify possible gaps in instructional resources, professional learning, or other areas of curriculum design and development needed to assist in developing a 3- to 5-year instructional improvement plan for the district. We believe a review by CMSi will provide us with a deeper knowledge of our Written, Tested as well as Taught Curriculum, but also provide feedback and recommendations to improve teaching and learning for greater student achievement.”

Approach of the Review

This System Review is based on the principles and approach of the CMSi Curriculum Audit™. The audit has established itself as a process of integrity and candor in assessing public school districts. It has been presented as evidence in state and federal litigation concerning matters of school finance, general resource managerial effectiveness, and school desegregation efforts in Arizona, Kansas, Kentucky, New Jersey, and South Carolina. The Audit served as an important data source in state-directed takeovers of school systems in New Jersey and Kentucky. The Curriculum Review has become recognized internationally as an important, viable, and valid tool for the improvement of educational institutions and for the improvement of curriculum design and delivery.

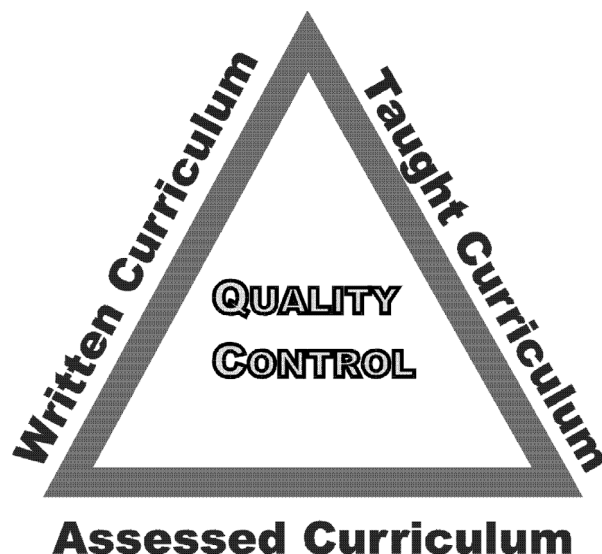
The Curriculum Audit™ represents a “systems” approach to educational improvement; that is, it considers the system as a whole rather than a collection of separate, discrete parts. The interrelationships of system components and their impact on overall quality of the organization in accomplishing its purposes are examined in order to “close the loop” in curriculum and instructional improvement. The methodology employed in the System Review is presented in the following section.

II. METHODOLOGY

The Model for the System Review

The System Review is based on the CMSi Curriculum Audit and its standards. The model for the System Review is shown in the schematic below. The model has been published widely in the national professional literature, including the best-selling book, *The Curriculum Management Audit: Improving School Quality* (1995, Frase, English, Poston).

A Schematic View of Curricular Quality Control



General quality control assumes that at least three elements must be present in any organizational and work-related situation for it to be functional and capable of being improved over time. These are: (1) a work standard, goal/objective, or operational mission; (2) work directed toward attaining the mission, standard, goal/objective; and (3) feedback (work measurement), which is related to or aligned with the standard, goal/objective, or mission.

When activities are repeated, there is a “learning curve,” i.e., more of the work objectives are achieved within the existing cost parameters. As a result, the organization, or a subunit of an organization, becomes more “productive” at its essential short- or long-range work tasks.

Within the context of an educational system and its governance and operational structure, curricular quality control requires: (1) a written curriculum in some clear and translatable form for application by teachers in classroom or related instructional settings; (2) a taught curriculum, which is shaped by and interactive with the written one; and (3) a tested curriculum, which includes the tasks, concepts, and skills of pupil learning and which is linked to both the taught and written curricula. This model is applicable in any kind of educational work structure typically found in mass public educational systems, and is suitable for any kind of assessment strategy, from norm-referenced standardized tests to more authentic approaches.

The Curriculum Audit™ assumes that an educational system, as one kind of human work organization, must be responsive to the context in which it functions and in which it receives support for its continuing existence. In the case of public educational systems, the support comes in the form of tax monies from three levels: local, state, and federal.

In return for such support, mass public educational systems are supposed to exhibit characteristics of rationality, i.e., being responsive to the public will as it is expressed in legally constituted bodies such as Congress, state legislatures, and locally elected/appointed boards of education.

In the case of emerging national public school reforms, more and more this responsiveness is assuming a distinctive school-based management focus, which includes parents, teachers, and, in some cases, students. The ability of schools to be responsive to public expectations, as legally expressed in law and policy, is crucial to their future survival as publicly-supported educational organizations. The Curriculum Audit™ is one method for ascertaining the extent to which a school system, or subunit thereof, has been responsive to expressed expectations and requirements in this context.

Standards for the Reviewers

While a System Review is not a financial review, it is governed by some of the same principles. These are:

Technical Expertise

CMSi-certified reviewers must have actual experience in conducting the affairs of a school system at all levels reviewed. They must understand the tacit and contextual clues of sound curriculum management.

The Richmond County School System Review Team included reviewers who have been school superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors, coordinators, principals, assistant principals, as well as elementary and secondary classroom teachers in public education systems in several states including: Arizona, California, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin.

The Principle of Independence

None of the System Review Team members had any vested interest in the findings or recommendations of the Richmond County School System System Review. None of the reviewers has or had any working relationship with the individuals who occupied top or middle management positions in the Richmond County School System, nor with any of the past or current members of the Richmond County School System Board of Education.

The Principle of Objectivity

Events and situations that comprise the database for the System Review are derived from documents, interviews, and site visits. Findings must be verifiable and grounded in the database, though confidential interview data may not indicate the identity of such sources. Findings must be factually triangulated with two or more sources of data, except when a document is unusually authoritative such as a court judgment, a labor contract signed and approved by all parties to the agreement, approved meeting minutes, which connote the accuracy of the content, or any other document whose verification is self-evident.

Triangulation of documents takes place when the document is requested by the reviewer and is subsequently furnished. Confirmation by a system representative that the document is, in fact, what was requested is a form of triangulation. A final form of triangulation occurs when the review is sent to the superintendent in draft form. If the superintendent or his/her designee(s) does not provide evidence that the review text is inaccurate, or documentation that indicates there are omissions or otherwise factual or content errors, the review is assumed to be triangulated. The superintendent's review is not only a second source of triangulation, but is considered summative triangulation of the entirety of the review.

The Principle of Consistency

All CMSi-certified system reviewers have used the same standards and basic methods since the initial review conducted by Dr. Fenwick English in 1979. Reviews are not normative in the sense that one school system is compared to another. School systems, as the units of analysis, are compared to a set of standards and positive/negative discrepancies cited.

The Principle of Materiality

CMSi-certified reviewers have broad implied and discretionary power to focus on and select those findings that they consider most important to describing how the curriculum management system is functioning in a school district, and how that system must improve, expand, delete, or reconfigure various functions to attain an optimum level of performance.

The Principle of Full Disclosure

Reviewers must reveal all relevant information to the users of the review, except in cases where such disclosure would compromise the identity of employees or patrons of the system. Confidentiality is respected in review interviews.

In reporting data derived from site interviews, reviewers may use some descriptive terms that lack a precise quantifiable definition. For example:

“Some school principals said that...”

“Many teachers expressed concern that...”

“There was widespread comment about...”

The basis for these terms is the number of persons in a group or class of persons who were interviewed, as opposed to the total potential number of persons in a category. This is a particularly salient point when not all persons within a category are interviewed. “Many teachers said that...,” represents only those interviewed by the reviewers, or who may have responded to a survey, and not “many” of the total group whose views were not sampled, and, therefore, could not be disclosed during an review.

In general these quantifications may be applied to the principle of full disclosure:

Descriptive Term	General Quantification Range
Some...or a few...	Less than a majority of the group interviewed and less than 30%
Many...	Less than a majority, more than 30% of a group or class of people interviewed
A majority...	More than 50%, less than 75%
Most...or widespread	75-89% of a group or class of persons interviewed
Nearly all...	90-99% of those interviewed in a specific class or group of persons
All or everyone...	100% of all persons interviewed within a similar group, job, or class

It should be noted for purposes of full disclosure that some groups within a school district are almost always interviewed in toto. The reason is that the review is focused on management and those people who have policy and managerial responsibilities for the overall performance of the system as a system. In all reviews an attempt is made to interview every member of the board of education and all top administrative officers, all principals, and the executive board of the teachers’ association or union. While teachers and parents are interviewed, they are considered in a status different from those who have system-wide responsibilities for a district’s operations. Students are rarely interviewed unless the system has made a specific request in this regard.

Interviewed Representatives of the Richmond County School System

Superintendent	Deputy Superintendent
Associate Superintendent	Assistant Superintendents
Directors	Coordinators
Central Office Administrators	Building Administrators
Program Specialists	Facilitators
District Teachers	District Parents
Teachers (voluntary, self-referred)	Parents (voluntary, self-referred)

Approximately 228 individuals were interviewed during the site visit phase of the review.

Data Sources of the System Review

A System Review uses a variety of data sources to determine if each of the three elements of curricular quality control is in place and connected one to the other. The review process also inquires as to whether pupil learning has improved as the result of effective application of curricular quality control.

The major sources of data for the Richmond County School System System Review were:

Documents

Documents included written board policies, administrative regulations, curriculum guides, memoranda, budgets, state reports, accreditation documents, and any other source of information that would reveal elements of the written, taught, and tested curricula and linkages among these elements.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted by reviewers to explain contextual variables that were operating in the school system at the time of the review. Such contextual variables may shed light on the actions of various persons or parties, reveal interrelationships, and explain existing progress, tension, harmony/disharmony within the school system. Quotations cited in the review from interviews are used as a source of triangulation and not as summative averages or means. Some persons, because of their position, knowledge, or credibility, may be quoted more than once in the review, but they are not counted more than once because their inclusion is not part of a quantitative/mathematical expression of interview data.

Site Visits

All building sites were toured by the CMSi review team. Site visits reveal the actual context in which curriculum is designed and delivered in a school system. Contextual references are important as they indicate discrepancies in documents or unusual working conditions. Reviewers attempted to observe briefly all classrooms, gymnasiums, labs, playgrounds, hallways, restrooms, offices, and maintenance areas to properly grasp accurate perceptions of conditions, activities, safety, instructional practices, and operational contexts.

Online Surveys

Online surveys were administered to stakeholder groups, such as principals, teachers, parents, and sometimes students. The surveys allow stakeholders to provide reviewers with valuable feedback regarding strengths and weaknesses in the system.

Standards for the System Review

The CMSi System Review used five standards against which to compare, verify, and comment upon the Richmond County School System's existing curricular management practices. These standards have been extrapolated from an extensive review of management principles and practices and have been applied in all previous System Reviews.

As a result, the standards reflect an ideal management system, but not an unattainable one. They describe working characteristics that any complex work organization should possess in being responsive and responsible to its clients.

A school system that is using its financial and human resources for the greatest benefit of its students is one that is able to establish clear objectives, examine alternatives, select and implement alternatives, measure results as they are applied against established objectives, and adjust its efforts so that it achieves a greater share of the objectives over time.

The five standards employed in the CMSi System Review in Richmond County School System were:

1. The school district demonstrates its control of resources, programs, and personnel.
2. The school district has established clear and valid objectives for students.
3. The school district demonstrates internal consistency and rational equity in its program development and implementation.
4. The school district uses the results from district-designed or -adopted assessments to adjust, improve, or terminate ineffective practices or programs.
5. The school district has improved productivity.

A finding within a System Review is simply a description of the existing state, negative or positive, between an observed and triangulated condition or situation at the time of the CMSi review and its comparison with one or more of the five review standards.

Findings in the negative represent discrepancies below the standard. Findings in the positive reflect meeting or exceeding the standard. As such, review findings are recorded on nominal and ordinal indices and not ratio or interval scales. As a general rule, reviews do not issue commendations, because it is expected that a school district should be meeting every standard as a way of normally doing its business. Commendations are not given for good practice. On occasion, exemplary practices may be cited.

Unlike accreditation methodologies, reviews do not have to reach a forced, summative judgment regarding the status of a school district or subunit being analyzed. Reviews simply report the discrepancies and formulate recommendations to ameliorate them.

III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A System Review is basically an “exception” report. That is, it does not give a summative, overall view of the suitability of a system. Rather, it holds the system up to scrutiny against the predetermined standards of quality, notes relevant findings about the system, and cites discrepancies from review standards. Recommendations are then provided accordingly to help the district improve its quality in the areas of noted deficiency.

The reviewers subjected the Richmond County School System to a comparison of predetermined standards and indicators of quality, and discrepancies were noted. These constitute the findings of the review. The reviewers then provided recommendations to help the district ameliorate the discrepancies noted in the report. The recommendations represent the reviewers’ “best judgement” about how to meet the discrepancies disclosed in the report. It is expected that the superintendent, or her staff, may demur with the recommendations. However, they form the starting point for a discussion of how to deal with the documented findings.

Located in historic Augusta, Georgia, the state’s oldest city, the Richmond County School System serves over 30,000 students, grades K-12, in 58 schools. Steeped in history, but not rooted in the past, the Augusta-Richmond County area is thriving and considered one of the top 100 places in which to work and live in the United States. Economic growth in the area seems assured as the Augusta-Richmond County area is becoming a major center for cybersecurity in the United States with the potential for thousands of new high skill cybersecurity jobs and significant investments in workforce development through education and public-private partnerships. Although there is economic vitality in the Augusta-Richmond County area, the vast majority of students enrolled in the Richmond County School System are considered economically disadvantaged. With high student poverty, the Richmond County School System is confronted with the challenges typically associated with economically disadvantaged student populations, including disparities in academic achievement, access to advantaged programs, expectations for student success, and the application of effective instructional strategies. While some students in the Richmond County School System are excelling academically, a majority of the students are lagging behind their peers on national and state measures of academic achievement. Persistent and significant achievement gaps have resulted in public criticism of the Richmond County School System by elected state leaders and have prompted some parents to seek what are perceived to be more effective and desirable educational opportunities elsewhere for their children.

Expectations and demands placed on public schools are constantly changing. As expectations change, as they are in the Augusta-Richmond County area, local school boards are ultimately responsible for effectively managing the affairs of the school system. When school boards have in place a comprehensive framework of governance policies that supports effective planning and decision making, the school system will benefit from the board’s forward thinking and proactive leadership. However, when there is not enough specificity of clarity regarding the roles of governance and management, and absence of organizational structures focused around the mission of teaching and learning, school systems run the risk of being unable to serve the needs of their students.

In order for school system administrators to meet increasing expectations and demands for improved student achievement, they need to consistently engage in short- and long-range planning, planning that focuses on how the work and practices of the organization need to change over time to achieve different results. Obtaining different organizational results, particularly in large complex organizations, requires comprehensive change management processes. It is through a comprehensive change management process that district leaders are able to carefully consider options of action, anticipate potential consequences for each course of action, and determine how to most effectively align organizational resources toward meeting clearly defined goals. Leadership in the Richmond County School System are acutely aware of the expectations that need to be met in order to rebuild confidence and credibility in the community and the need to improve overall student achievement. However, while district leaders have taken steps to plan for organizational change, a cohesive change management process is not in place to ensure that district initiatives are strategically aligned with district goals and decision-making parameters are clearly understood, communicated, and implemented.

The *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016* is the primary document for guiding change in the Richmond County School System. However, the strategic plan does not communicate a focused, compelling vision for unified action to increase student achievement and narrow persistent achievement gaps. While there is planning

at the departmental and school levels, current planning efforts need a clear and decisive set of strategies to systematically address disparities in student achievement. Planning for critical functions such as curriculum management and student and program assessment has not yet occurred, and the planning for professional learning, interventions, and technology is not comprehensive enough to inform decision making and has not been coordinated into a unified effort focused on increasing student achievement and closing achievement gaps. Communications is a critical element for any organization and critical for organizations undertaking significant changes in how they operate to achieve different results. Because no comprehensive communications strategy is in place, the organization is limited in its ability to leverage communication resources as part of an overall change management process. Communications planning in the Richmond County School System is often executed as an afterthought instead of as a proactive part of the district's strategic planning work.

The ability to promote high expectations for all students is a challenge for many school systems and teachers across the country. Accountability measures, as currently required at the state and federal level, increase the importance of having in place well-documented curriculum management and student assessment plans. Without comprehensive curriculum documents that precisely delineate desired learning outcomes, suggested instructional strategies, and appropriate evaluation methods that are implemented consistently district-wide, the learning experience of students may become fragmented and lack sufficient focus. Without a comprehensive curriculum management system in place, student achievement as measured by required assessments becomes less an outcome of the curriculum taught and more a factor of the student's background and prior experiences. The Richmond County School System does not have a cohesive, planned approach to the design, development, implementation, and monitoring of the district's curriculum. The scope of the written curriculum is inadequate across all levels of the school system and for almost all content areas. District curriculum documents are also not of sufficient quality to direct teaching and ensure rigorous educational programming for all students. Most of the existing curriculum documents analyzed do not have the precision and specificity needed to enhance teacher planning and curriculum delivery and are not tightly aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. The scope of the formal assessment system is not complete enough to guide decision making in the district concerning curriculum design, instruction, or initiatives designed to improve student achievement.

To meet the varied needs of all students, the teacher's role is to determine the learning sequence, pacing, and instructional strategies necessary to ensure that all students achieve mastery of the essential content standards. Sustained implementation of teaching strategies that have the potential of increasing student achievement requires ongoing professional learning for all staff who affect student learning. Training focused on instructional strategies and deepening teacher content knowledge makes it possible for teachers to move their students to deeper understanding of the content. Well-designed professional learning programs support adult learning by using a variety of training approaches, including job-embedded learning and professional coaching with constructive feedback. The design of the Richmond County School System's professional learning programs does not have sufficient focus or coordination to inform instructional practices district-wide. While there is a professional learning departmental plan in place, there is no process to ensure professional learning is driven by disaggregated student achievement data, student achievement goals, or an assessment of classroom instructional practices. No indication was found that the district's approach to professional learning has resulted in increasing the number of students achieving proficiency on the *Georgia Milestones Assessments*.

A comprehensive student and program assessment system is critical to informing district decision making. Utilizing a variety of formative and summative assessment approaches, a comprehensive assessment program provides district decision makers timely feedback specific to the progress students are making toward clearly defined learning outcomes. An assessment program that does not provide adequate coverage of the taught curriculum limits the ability of decision makers to know how well the curriculum is functioning to improve student learning. A student and program assessment plan is not in place in the Richmond County School System. The scope of assessments available for the ongoing diagnosis of student acquisition of the curriculum is inadequate. A systematic, planned approach to using data for decision making regarding the selection, implementation, monitoring, or termination of district programs is not in place. Specifically, the district does not have sufficient infrastructure to aggregate, analyze, or report leading or lagging system indicators. The lack

of a centralized data warehouse is limiting accessibility to district performance data, and limiting the depth and sophistication of analysis completed to inform district decision making.

Increasingly, school systems are investing in educational technologies and technology-based interventions in the hope that such investments will positively affect student achievement. Selecting instructional technology resources or interventions that facilitate curriculum delivery and student learning will be a challenge if school systems do not have protocols in place for evaluating these resources and guiding their implementation to ensure they are fully aligned with the district's adopted curriculum. In the Richmond County School System, a significant investment has already been made to equip classrooms with a variety of technology resources, and district leadership has announced plans to expand the district's investment in one-to-one computer technology. The technology plan that is in place is inadequate in several key areas to provide direction regarding the integration of technology as teaching and learning tools.

Changing economic priorities at the state and federal levels have significantly reduced the predictability of educational funding. Predictable funding at the state level has been replaced by year-to-year volatility. Increases in state school aid, if realized, are either insufficient to cover inflationary increases in operating costs or are earmarked for specific state-mandated initiatives, thus limiting the spending authority of local school boards. School systems that operate with an effective, multi-year, curriculum-driven budgeting process are better positioned to adapt to uncertainties in funding while maintaining a clear focus on their strategic mission and priorities. In the Richmond County School System, a traditional budget development process is in place that does not have clear linkages between the district's strategic priorities and budget allocations. Financial allocations have not been driven by clearly established program priorities, achievement needs, or cost-benefit analysis of educational programs and services.

The efficacy of the recommendations contained in this review rests on the development of a comprehensive and focused policy framework. Of all the requisite conditions necessary to put into place the components of a comprehensive curriculum management system, board policies are fundamental. When board policies are absent or unclear, it allows individuals to make decisions as they see fit, increasing the likelihood of inconsistency and organizational conflict. Board policies in the Richmond County School System are not complete enough in scope and content to serve as a framework for institutionalizing expectations, roles, responsibilities, and decision making. Board policies necessary for guiding all aspects of curriculum management and the educational programs of the school district are mostly absent. Few administrative regulations are in place to ensure the consistent implementation of board policies.

The recommendations offered by the review team to ameliorate the conditions outlined in the findings are based on practices known to have been effective in similar school systems and were developed in response to an analysis of the organization's intent and mission. All should help bring the school system closer to review standards and improve student achievement results over time. Effective change in the Richmond County School System in terms of decisions making, professional practices, and student achievement, however, will require more than simply implementing the recommendations outlined in the review report. In order to address persistent gaps in student achievement, the board, district leadership, and district staff will need to address approaches to decision making and the institutional practices that have limited the ability of all students to benefit from the district's educational programs and achieve at high levels. Implementation of the review recommendations included in this report will require systemic planning and will take months to several years to implement. Full implementation of the recommended actions by the board and professional staff will increase the likelihood that every child will experience high quality, personalized learning success in the Richmond County School System.

IV. FINDINGS

STANDARD 1: The School District Demonstrates Its Control of Resources, Programs, and Personnel.

Quality control is the fundamental element of a well-managed educational program. It is one of the major premises of local educational control within any state's educational system.

The critical premise involved is that, via the will of the electorate, a local board of education establishes local priorities within state laws and regulations. A school district's accountability rests with the school board and the public.

Through the development of an effective policy framework, a local school board provides the focus for management and accountability to be established for administrative and instructional staffs, as well as for its own responsibility. It also enables the district to make meaningful assessments and use student learning data as a critical factor in determining its success.

Although educational program control and accountability are often shared among different components of a school district, ultimately fundamental control of and responsibility for a district and its operations rests with the school board and top-level administrative staff.

What the Reviewers Expected to Find in the Richmond County School System:

A school system meeting CMSi System Review Standard One is able to demonstrate its control of resources, programs, and personnel. Common indicators are:

- A curriculum that is centrally defined and adopted by the board of education;
- A clear set of policies that establish an operational framework for management that permits accountability;
- A clear set of policies that reflect state requirements and local program goals and the necessity to use achievement data to improve school system operations;
- A functional administrative structure that facilitates the design and delivery of the district's curriculum;
- A direct, uninterrupted line of authority from school board/superintendent and other central office officials to principals and classroom teachers;
- Organizational development efforts that are focused to improve system effectiveness;
- Documentation of school board and central office planning for the attainment of goals, objectives, and mission over time; and
- A clear mechanism to define and direct change and innovation within the school system to permit maximization of its resources on priority goals, objectives, and mission.

Overview of What the Reviewers Found in the Richmond County School System:

This section is an overview of the findings that follow in the area of Standard One. Details follow within separate findings.

District leadership is engaged in the process of implementing a strategic plan for the school district focused on creating a world-class school system where all students will graduate college and career ready. While attempting to change the focus and direction of the school system, current planning efforts are not yet complete enough in either design or deployment to focus the district's resources and energies effectively toward improved student academic achievement. Numerous improvement initiatives are being implemented that are not clearly aligned with the strategic goals of the school system and collectively did not create a clear and unifying focus around district goals and priorities.

Reviewers found that board policies are not complete enough in content and specificity to guide all necessary aspects of curriculum management and the educational program and to establish quality control. Specifically, policies in the curriculum management areas of control, direction, consistency, feedback, and productivity were missing or did not have sufficient content to communicate expectations.

When examining the table of organization and job descriptions, reviewers found that the current table of organization does not meet review criteria for sound organizational management. Job descriptions reviewed did not have clear linkages to roles and responsibilities associated with the design and delivery of curriculum.

Reviewers found appraisal systems in place for teachers and building administrators, directed by statutory expectations. In examining a sample of teacher and administrator evaluations, reviewers found the evaluation feedback did not have a high enough degree of specificity to provide teachers and administrators with specific feedback concerning their professional practices. The current teacher evaluation system does not discriminate sufficiently among the performance ratings received by teachers. Building administrators reported a greater number of teachers as “marginal” than reviewers noted in formal teacher evaluation ratings.

Finding 1.1: A tightly aligned organizational decision-making process is needed to support the creation, communication, and implementation of system initiatives focused on closing pervasive gaps in student achievement.

Public schools, like the Richmond County School System, are confronted with the challenge of educating a diverse student population. Regardless of a child’s personal background and prior experience, there is an expectation, both at the national level and in the state of Georgia, that all students will master essential knowledge and skills considered important for college and careers. In Georgia, public schools and school districts are evaluated through state imposed assessments ,including the *Georgia Milestones Assessment System*.

Highly centralized state accountability systems, such as the type currently employed in Georgia, require a tightly coordinated district response in terms of focus, priorities, curriculum, and performance standard, and a localized response that encourages instructional differentiation in individual schools. The curriculum (the content of the classroom) must be tightly held by the system to ensure congruity, consistency, and continuity. Conversely, the means to attain such ends must be loosely held to encourage sufficient variation and differentiation necessary to meet the individual needs of all children.

The purpose of the *Georgia Milestones Assessment System* is to measure student achievement of the state-adopted content standards and inform efforts to improve teaching and learning. Results of the assessment program are utilized to identify students who are not achieving mastery of content, to provide teachers with feedback about instructional practice, and to assist school districts in assessing the quality of educational opportunities provided, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and establishing priorities in planning educational programs.

To establish a school system capable of functioning within the context of a state accountability system, organizational practices and operating structures that contribute to organizational fragmentation must be carefully and systematically eliminated by a clear and unwavering focus on student achievement. A systemic response to state-defined accountability systems requires school systems to have in place:

- A comprehensive policy framework that directs district leadership and instructional personnel to employ practices that have the highest potential to close the academic achievement gap.
- An organizational plan that reflects through its stated mission and goals an unwavering focus on student achievement.
- A strong curriculum management system that clearly establishes guidelines and procedures to manage the development, implementation, evaluation, monitoring, and revision of a centrally defined curriculum aligned with state frameworks and assessment systems, and which does not permit exceptions that may jeopardize the achievement of students based on race, gender, or socioeconomic status (the achievement gap).

- A comprehensive approach to curriculum delivery that expects and supports instructional delivery at high levels of cognition and encourages a wide umbrella of instructional differentiation, which encourages creative teacher responses to student learning needs.
- An expectation that student performance results are used to determine the effectiveness of district improvement efforts in order to demonstrate consistent gains in student achievement over time.
- An expectation that staff development is connected to the content of the adopted curriculum.
- Evaluation of all adopted programs against the explicit expectations of a board-adopted curriculum and strategic goals of the school system.
- A funding structure that reflects the priorities of the district's educational programs and program evaluation data.
- A comprehensive approach to change management and communications, not only to convey a compelling vision for the school system, including its goals and priorities, but also a compelling rationale for changes in professional practices.

In the Richmond County School System, reviewers found district leaders in the process of implementing a strategic plan for the school district focused on creating a world-class school system where all students will graduate college and career ready. While there are external pressures to improve student achievement and district leadership is focused on doing whatever is necessary to systemically address persistent gaps in student achievement, the organizational structures in place and the practices noted are not sufficiently engaged or aligned to achieve improved system performance.

School systems are complex organizations and require clear decision-making processes in order to achieve desired goals and maximize the use of available resources. The Richmond County School System's leadership has not established a consistent process through which critical organizational decisions are considered, made, communicated, or implemented. Not having a specific, planned approach in place to manage change at the district level is restricting the ability of district leaders to consider multiple interpretations of available information, potential consequences of any given decision, how to move from ideas to decision making to implementation, or how to align organizational resources and efforts to clearly defined goals and objectives. When alternative courses of action are considered, which may have significant implications for the organization, there is no clear delineation of how decisions will be implemented, resulting in surprises and confusion among those responsible for implementation and accountability. The reviewers did not find a standardized process for communicating decisions and implementation strategies to school level administrators, faculty, or constituents.

The system's strategic plan does not have sufficient tactical detail to inform how the system is strategically addressing persistent gaps in student achievement through improved instruction, focused allocation of human and financial resources, use of leading system indicators, or a prioritized set of actions that will align essential district functions to a desired vision. While reviewers found district, school, and department level improvement plans have been developed, collectively the plans do not effectively translate the system's strategic plan into clear, focused strategies that link all district school functions and initiatives (see [Finding 1.2](#)).

High standards and expectations for all students were not clearly evident across the Richmond County School System. The district's curriculum does not have sufficient quality to promote a highly focused and consistent education program. Successful school systems pay close attention to state-mandated standards for curriculum content, student achievement, and school performance. Inconsistencies in curriculum binders hinders sharing of experiences between classrooms and schools, makes it difficult for students transferring among schools, and fragments district professional development efforts, all of which interfere with improvement in student learning. Observed classroom instructional approaches and strategies indicated that individual campuses have not taken advantage of the flexibility afforded by site-based autonomy to sufficiently differentiate instruction in order to address disparities in student achievement (see [Finding 3.3](#)). The focus on implementing interventions has not resulted in improved achievement for students (see [Findings 4.4](#) and [5.2](#)).

No system is in place to provide data necessary to support and assess progress toward a narrative of improved instruction, improved student achievement, or narrowing of the student achievement gap (see [Finding 4.1](#)). While student progress is being monitored by periodic diagnostic assessments and state summative assessments, a system of formative assessments is just beginning to be implemented although there is no clear plan for how an ongoing cycle of formative assessments will be used to identify needs, implement an early warning system, or identify students who are off-track and adjust teaching. A well-designed, well-executed data warehouse system is not in place to support the systematic analysis of student and program achievement data. Successful school systems invest resources in developing their capacity to assess the performance of students, teachers, and schools and to utilize these assessments to inform decision making about needs and strategies for improvement and progress toward goals at the classroom, school, and district level. Commitment to data-informed decision making linked to district standards translates into support for local educators to develop the capacity to use data well (see [Findings 4.1](#) and [4.4](#)).

A school system with an unwavering focus on student achievement has to ensure the highest quality of instruction for all students. Classroom instruction is the delivery point of a school district's mission, and changes in classroom practice are critical in order to close existing gaps in student achievement. To improve student learning, educators need to have the ability to implement effective and appropriate strategies for ensuring student mastery. A cohesive approach to professional learning is not in place to support the refinement of professional teaching in the Richmond County School System (see [Finding 3.1](#)). The professional learning that is provided does not have sufficient focus, structure, monitoring, and accountability to ensure all teachers are receiving the knowledge and support they need to positively affect student learning. While monitoring of teaching by building administrators and central office level administrators is taking place, there is not a consistent focus on instruction.

The importance of a sound, comprehensive, and relevant policy framework cannot be overestimated in efforts to increase student success and close academic achievement gaps. Effective policies that provide direction for a curriculum management system must do more than mimic minimal state and legal requirements. The current policies of the Richmond County School System are not adequate in scope and content to guide essential aspects of curriculum management and the district's educational programs (see [Finding 1.2](#)). Effective policies, which will direct administrative and instructional personnel, have to be based on research-informed practices, and these usually are scaffolded on minimal state and legal requirements. From this perspective, it is easy to see how a school system can be in legal compliance with all state laws, but still not be able to maximize achievement for all of its students. Unless policies included practices that will actually lead to closing achievement gaps, merely following the law or a mission regarding such attainment does not provide enough direction and constancy to be successful.

The function of effective policy as it pertains to a systemic response provides clarity, a framework for curriculum management system, a framework for establishing consistency, a requirement to use feedback, and an expectation that results will become the focal point for subsequent change. Such expectations are essential, especially in situations where a state defined and driven accountability system exists. Centralized accountability requires a centralized system in regards to curriculum, and a localized response as it pertains to instruction. What this means is, a school system functioning within the type of state accountability system legislated by Georgia must clearly define its curriculum in order to create congruity, consistency, and continuity, but encourage wide instructional differentiation in the individual school units.

While organizational changes are a constant fact, many organizational changes are not achieving desired results, in part, due to poorly managed communications, which result in uncertainty, rumors, and resistance to change. Successful organizational change depends on the willingness of individuals within the organization to change their behaviors sufficiently to achieve different results. If organizational change depends on individuals changing, then communications about the change are critical. Communications with employees should be an integral part of any change effort. The information given employees about desired change should address the rationale for change and address concerns that those within the school community might have. Without effective employee communications, change is difficult to achieve, if not impossible.

The Richmond County School System does not have a comprehensive, planned approach to communications. A recent Communication Review, completed in March 2017, found that the school system does not have a strategic communications plan. The authors of the communications review comment on the lack of a strategic communications plan, stating, “Above and beyond anything else in this review, the lack of a strategic communications plan and a brand document are holding back the district and its leadership team from sharing the accomplishments of the school system, which impacts everything from community relations to employee morale to recruiting quality employees.”

Reviewers were provided a draft copy of a district communications plan. This draft communications plan does not fully address or incorporate the recommendations contained within the Communications Review report. Based on their review of the draft communication plan, reviewers noted the following:

- The draft communications plan does not explicitly address or link communication efforts to the school system’s strategic plan goals or initiatives.
- The draft communications plan does not address how various stakeholder groups within the county receive information about the Richmond County School System. For example, a communications plan that places emphasis on social media, without careful analysis, may miss the fact that some stakeholders may rely on information about the school system shared during social events such as youth sporting events or church gatherings upon which to form their opinions and perceptions of the school system. Also, the draft communications plan does not address the role of community influencers as part of a comprehensive communications strategy.
- The draft communications plan does not identify key messages that will form the foundation of the school system’s communications strategy.
- During interviews with school system staff, reviewers received many comments about the problems with communications within the school system, among departments, and between the central office and those directly responsible for implementing change in the system. The draft communications plan does not address internal communications as part of a comprehensive communications strategy. Specifically, the plan does not address how decisions and directives made by school system leaders will be effectively communicated from the central office to building level administrators and school system teachers.
- While the draft communications plan references two-way communications as a goal and strategy, the plan does not have a sufficient scope of direct communication strategies to ensure effective and direct communications with the diverse and widely dispersed stakeholder groups found within the Richmond County School System. “Let’s Talk,” which is a difficult to locate “Contact Us” on the school system’s website, is referenced several times as part of a two-way communications strategy. While “Let’s Talk” may be one tool for allowing stakeholders to communicate complements and/or complaints, it is not a strong strategy for engaging stakeholders to become involved in the school system’s efforts to achieve a vision for improved student performance.
- Effective organizational change includes involving individuals responsible for carrying out change plans in the development of such plans. The draft communication plan does not address strategies for facilitating communications from internal stakeholders about proposed system changes.
- During interviews with building level administrators, parents, and stakeholders who no longer have children attending school in the Richmond County School System, reviewers received many comments indicating there are multiple notification systems in use across the school system that are not coordinated or actively managed. While technology can be an effective tool for quickly communicating key information to parents, to be effective such systems need to be efficient and actively managed. The draft communication plan lists as a strategy implementing Peachjar, which is a commercial product through which parents are able to receive digital flyers and email blasts from their children’s schools. The draft communication plan does not have sufficient detail to inform how Peachjar would be implemented within the school system.

- Research, planning, and implementing a strategic communications plan require some financial investment on behalf of the school system. The draft communications plan contains no references to the financial supports that will be necessary to effectively implement the plan as drafted.
- The draft communications plan does not outline the roles and responsibilities associated with defining and implementing a strategic communications plan. It would be expected that the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, board members, central office staff, building administrators, teachers, and support staff would be clearly delineated as they relate to a strategic approach to communications.

Overall, reviewers found that the draft communications plan does not have sufficient specificity and content to drive a comprehensive communications strategy capable of clearly conveying the school system's vision for the future and its mission as an organization. The absence of a planned approach to communications, particularly communications around change initiatives in the school system, limits communication strategies to being reactive instead of proactively anticipating communication needs and challenges.

During interviews with district stakeholders, reviewers received many comments regarding communications within the district. Following is a sampling of the comments received:

- “We have poor communication. There’s a breakdown somewhere.” (Teacher)
- “Communications when rolling new things out teachers need to be told and trained in everything not figure it out on the fly.” (Teacher)
- “Communication is a major issue that needs to be addressed; various departments do not communicate. This lack of communication produces inconsistent delivery of expectations and desired outcomes, which results in the district appearing to be inadequate and ignorant.” (Building Administrator)
- “The communication piece is poor; sometimes it breaks down.” (Building Administrator)
- “The lack of communication creates animosity and frustration by lots of dedicated professionals.” (Building Administrator)
- “Time and Communication are barriers to how things should be rolled out.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Communication is a problem among departments. Too much of a silo focus. They live in their own world.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “The Board of Education is not very good at communicating with the community.” (Parent)
- “Before change communicating this with parents.” (Parent)

When organizations undertake initiatives to improve performance, they often require changes in policies and processes, job responsibilities, organizational structures, resource allocations, and professional practices. Change management is the process of continually renewing a school system's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the changing needs of its students. When well executed, change management ensures the following:

- A thoughtful and planned approach to change designed to minimize negative impact on students and stakeholders.
- A strategic communications plan to communicate the rationale and need for change, with the goal of increasing awareness and understanding of proposed changes across the school system.
- Change developed from a “total” organizational view that considers the effect proposed changes will have on district functions, departments, schools, and resources.
- Involvement of stakeholders who will be directly responsible for implementing proposed changes in the planning process within declared limits of unacceptable strategies, methods, or options.
- Change monitored against measurable benchmarks and modified as necessary to address unforeseen issues to ensure that intended results are attained.
- Clearly defined action steps, roles and responsibilities, and assigned resources.

Organizational change cannot be separated from strategic planning. Strategic plan initiatives, intended to increase the capacity of the school system to overcome barriers to student learning and shift the organizational focus from teaching to student learning, ultimately require those working within the system to change how they do their jobs. If those working within the school system are unsuccessful in adjusting their professional practices, desired changes no matter how well intentioned will most likely not be successful. Resistance to change, however, is a critical factor that influences the success of changes in a school system. The implementation of strategic plan initiatives that occur with minimal resistance does not necessarily mean the change was good or well managed. Resistance to planned initiatives could be a warning mechanism that aspects of the change may not have been well planned, or perhaps the strategic initiative is the wrong solution for a given problem. In a workplace marked by passivity, implementing change effectively can be a difficult task. A critical aspect of a well implemented change management process is identifying potential resistance during the planning process and using that resistance to examine more closely the problems that exist and consider more thoroughly the proposed changes.

Within the Richmond County School System, reviewers noted that system leadership was primed to make changes within the organization but did not have a comprehensive, planned approach to managing and implementing change. An initiative listed in the school system's strategic plan is to implement standards-based report cards in grades K-3. The purpose for implementing standards-based report cards, as expressed by district leadership and posted to the school system's website, is as follows:

“The purpose of the new reporting system is to provide parents, teachers and students with more accurate information about students’ progress toward meeting standards. Parents will be more aware of what their children should know and be able to do by the end of each grading period.”

Reviewers received many comments from district administrators, teachers, and parents regarding the implementation of the standards-based report initiative during on-site interviews and through online surveys. Following is a sampling of the comments received by the reviewers regarding implementation of standards-based report cards in the Richmond County School System:

- “This is the very first time we’ve done it [referring to using standards-based report cards]. There’s confusion, there’s questions, there’s uncertainty. Teachers had a one-day training on it. I just think we rolled it out a little too soon too fast.” (Building Administrator)
- “The teachers got a preview [of standards based report cards] during the summer, and we [administrators] got nothing. It kept changing. We had a brief [training] the first day back.” (Building Administrator)
- “There were even standards changed this week when report cards went out. When teachers went in, there were different standards there than what had been there.” (Building Administrator)
- “Standards based Report cards, couple of disconnects, it is a great idea, unfortunately our teachers did not have a good understanding and some of the information has changed and the full roll out did not happen until after we were in school.” (Building Administrator)
- “Rapidly changing to a new report card that had to be redone four times that neither parents or teachers understand. Instruction on how to do the new report card varied by who was teaching the class.” (Teacher)
- “Richmond County waits until the last second to tell you anything and to train you. Examples are the progress reports and report cards . They sent out e-mails giving assistance when the grades were already supposed to be done.” (Teacher)
- “More intense training provided beforehand prior to something new being implemented such as the new Standards based report card grading. Some of the standards to be graded in Infinite Campus in math do not match the curriculum guide.” (Teacher)
- “The county often rolls out new programs before the people who are to implement them are fully trained. For example, there was not adequate time to prepare for the implementation of standards based report card . This makes teachers look and feel incompetent, increases teacher frustration, and negatively impacts the public’s confidence in the teachers and school system.” (Teacher)

- “I wish that the board would have gotten parent feedback before they adopted the Standards Based Report Cards and grading system for 3rd grade. Here is why; there are too many standards shown on the report card at one time.” (Parent)
- “Those standard based reports are a mess.” (Parent)
- “The new grading scale is absurd. This system is a set up for failure.” (Parent)

Reviewers examined documents provided by district leaders related to the design and implementation of the strategic plan initiative for standards-based report cards. Based on their review of district documents, reviewers noted the following:

- Reviewers did not find, nor were they provided, any form of executive statement from district leaders that communicated a rationale for changing to a standards-based grading system, a description of current conditions, desired results, or a timeline for making implementation decisions.
- An implementation timeline was available that lists general action steps, starting with research into grading practices in February 2017, and culminating with implementation of standards-based grading in October 2017.
- Roles and responsibilities were listed in generic terms by department, such as Curriculum & Instruction, Area Superintendents, Information Technology, Professional Learning, Communications and Schools. No delineation was found describing specific roles and responsibilities for each department or who within each department was responsible for carrying out specific actions steps.
- There is indication a development team comprised of teachers and principals was established in March 2017. Reviewers were not provided any documentation that outlined the specific scope of responsibilities assigned to the development team. Reviewers found no documentation of whether the design team was given any parameters regarding what strategies, methods, or options they could not pursue in developing a standards-based report system.
- Reviewers were provided no documentation regarding what budgetary resources had been allocated in support of the development and implementation of a standards-based report card system.
- Reviewers were provided some documentation that would indicate teachers were provided a general overview to standards-based report cards during a part of a one-day summer professional learning session. Reviewers were provided copies of a series of five webinars that were developed to support teacher implementation of the standards-based report cards. The webinars were not dated, but the implementation timeline indicated the webinars would be sent out to teachers in August or September. The content of the webinars included general orientation to what are standards-based report cards, a rationale for changing from the prior report card system to a standards-based report cards, a quick overview on where to locate information on the Rubicon Atlas™, and how to set up report cards in Infinite Campus, the school system’s student information system.
- Reviewers did not find any documentation that would indicate district leadership had identified potential obstacles to implementing standards-based report cards or identified any benchmarks that would be used to monitor implementation.
- Reviewers found no documentation that a comprehensive communication plan had been developed as part of the initial planning for implementing standards-based report cards. Reviewers noted on some school websites letters to parents explaining standards-based report cards dated September 2017. No information regarding standards-based report cards were found under the “Parent” tab on the district’s website. Reviewers were provided a copy of a slide presentation and script that were developed for parent information meetings, but no information regarding how many meetings were held or many parents attended the informational meetings was found.

Overall, reviewers found district leadership's approach to implementing the strategic plan initiative for standards-based report cards did not include many of the change management strategies that are generally associated with the successful implementation of strategic changes in complex organizations such as a school district. The approach used by school leadership to implement standards-based report cards did not establish a clear rationale for implementing the desired change or state the desired outcomes. The approach used did not include a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities or specify the resources that would be necessary. No strategic approach to communications was noted that would convey a rationale, the strategies, and the desired outcome to internal and external stakeholders. The involvement of stakeholders who would be responsible for implementing standards-based reports cards was not clearly defined, nor was there any indication that obstacles to implementing a change in report systems were identified or addressed.

Summary

School systems such as the Richmond County School System are complex organizations. When school systems do not have sufficient focus, policies, organizational structures, planning, implementation strategies, and monitoring of improvement initiatives, it is unlikely that improvement initiatives will impact district classrooms and result in improved student achievement as measured by state assessments. Desires for change and investment in change initiatives will not significantly improve student achievement results unless there is a change in how professionals within the organization are engaged in their work. Reviewers found in the Richmond County School System the absence of a strategic approach to managing and communicating changes implemented as part of the district's strategic plan. The absence of a compelling vision and direction for the school district, coupled with inconsistent communications regarding changes, is impeding the district's ability to effectively address gaps in student achievement (see [Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7](#)).

Finding 1.2: Evidence of planning was found, but improvement plans, implementation strategies, action steps, and communication protocols are not fully developed and do not yet provide a clear focus to guide district initiatives, program direction, and system operations.

The needs of society and students are continually evolving. A characteristic of an effective school district is the ability to engage consistently in long- and short-range planning focused on the attainment of agreed-upon goals and priorities. Long-range planning provides a process whereby district personnel can anticipate emerging needs, develop a framework for systematic action toward attainment of organizational goals, and strategically focus activities that create the future. Planning, when given priority and engaged in consistently throughout the school system, establishes a mechanism through which results are delivered against strategic goals. Planning helps define the mission and values of the school organization. Greater organizational focus, improved student achievement, and greater efficiency and creativity are realized when strategic goals cascade into measurable elements of those strategies. Effective planning establishes a measure of organizational accountability that keeps everyone at all levels of the organization focused on district priorities. Effective planning allows for better use of limited resources and efficiency in the use of those resources. And, effective planning communicates expectations throughout the system, allowing district staff and students to know what is expected of them in their work. As school districts develop their goals, priorities, and implementation plans, so must individual schools and departments within the system engage in planning that aligns their actions in support of the larger system goals.

School district that are invested in improving teaching and learning focus strongly on district improvement goals, curriculum and resource adoption, support for the use of specific instructional strategies, deliberate selection of principals with curriculum knowledge, and systematic monitoring of the consistency between district goals and expectations and school goals and implementation. Successful school districts use a selection of strategies to support system-wide success in student learning, and the impact of the strategies depends on their comprehensive use in a coordinated way, not the elective enactment of some over others or in isolation. District-wide improvement and success for all student demographics require a clear focus on attaining high standards of student achievement with explicit goals and targets for student performance, such as achievement measured on state assessments, attendance, retention, and high school graduation rates. Academically successful school district also tend to emphasize instructional quality as one of the key elements to improved student learning.

The district aligns district and school operations, resources, and supports with a focus on student achievement and instructional quality.

Given disparities in measured student achievement in the Richmond County School System, reviewers expected a strategic, systemic response designed to improve student achievement over time. To determine how district leadership is strategically and systematically addressing disparities in student achievement, reviewers examined board policies, district- and campus-level improvement plans, and other related documents. Interviews were conducted with district administrators, teachers, and parents regarding the status of planning in the school system.

Reviewers found that planning does occur in the Richmond County School System. Current planning efforts are not adequate in design and deployment to focus the district's resources and energies effectively toward improved student academic achievement. Numerous improvement initiatives and actions were identified that were not clearly aligned with the strategic goals of the school system and collectively did not create a clear and unifying focus around district goals and priorities.

Reviewers examined board policies and other district documents to determine whether clear expectations have been established regarding short- and long-range planning. The following expectations regarding district planning were found in board policies:

- *Policy GAD: Professional Learning Opportunities* assigns to the superintendent responsibility for preparing and implementing a system-level strategic plan aligned with the priorities established annually by the board of education. The superintendent is also required to ensure each school in the district has a school improvement plan that is aligned to the system-level strategic plan. This policy requires professional learning to be included as a major component of system- and school-level plans.
- *Policy BH: Board Code of Ethics* establishes an expectation that each member of the board of education will "Participate in all planning activities to develop the vision and goals of the board and the school system."
- *Regulation DCC-R(1): Budget Preparation Procedures* states, "It is the policy of the Board of Education to provide guidance to the superintendent relative to the method, manner and substance of the initial planning of each proposed annual budget."

Reviewers found limited guidance in board policies regarding the development of system-wide, long-range, plans that are congruent and incorporate student achievement data. There is a policy expectation for system-level strategic and school improvement plans embedded in a professional learning policy, but collectively district policies do not provide specific direction for planning in the school system. No policy expectation was noted regarding a collective approach to system-wide and school-level planning, the use of system performance data to guide planning, the alignment of budget planning with system-level planning, or the monitoring of progress toward desired goals. No administrative guidelines were found that provided detailed directions to guide district staff in the development of system-, department-, and school-level plans; the implementation of plans; or the monitoring of results in terms of state and district performance indicators over time. No policy expectation was found requiring the development of written plans in the areas of curriculum, assessment, or facilities planning. An implied expectation for a professional learning plan was noted in *Policy GAD*.

In order to examine how the Richmond County School System board and leadership approach the development and implementation of planning, reviewers examined more than 180 district planning documents. Planning documents presented to the reviewers are included in [Exhibit 1.2.1](#).

Exhibit 1.2.1

**District Planning Documents Reviewed by Reviewers
Richmond County School System
October 2017**

District Document	Date	District Document	Date
Curriculum and Instructional Department Plan	2015-2019	ELA Department Improvement Plan	NA
Mathematics Department Improvement Plan	2015-2019	Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 District Report	March 2017
District Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017	Science Department District Improvement Plan	2015-2017
Social Studies Division Plan	2015-2019	Professional Learning District Improvement Plan 2017-2018	August 20, 2017
Accountability Department Plan Summary	NA	Accountability and Strategic Wavers Office Improvement Plan 2017-2018	August 22, 2017
CTAE Division Plan Revised	September 2017	Curriculum and Instruction District Improvement plan 2015-16	2015-16
Information Technology Department Plan 2017-18	August 30, 2017	Nutrition Services Plan Summaries 2017-2018	NA
Special Education Improvement Plan 2017-2018	September 8, 2017	2016-2017 Title I Division Plan Improvement Plan	September 2017
2017-2018 Title I Division Plan Improvement Plan	August 2017	Butler High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
George P. Butler High School School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017	Glenn Hills High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Jenkins-White Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Josey High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Laney High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Meadowbrook Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
W.S. Hornsby Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Academy of Richmond County High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Alternative Education Center at Lamar Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Barton Chapel Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Bayvale Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Blythe Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Copeland Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Craig-Houghton Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Cross Creek High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Deer Chase Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Diamond Lakes High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Dorothy Hains Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Glenn Hills High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Garrett Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017

Exhibit 1.2.1 (continued) District Planning Documents Reviewed by Reviewers Richmond County School System October 2017			
District Document	Date	District Document	Date
Glenn Hills Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Glenn Hills Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Goshen Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Gracewood Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Hephzibah School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Hephzibah High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Hephzibah Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Jamestown Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Johnson Magnet Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Lake Forest Hills Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Lamar – Milledge Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Langford Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Lighthouse Care Center of Augusta Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	McBean Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Meadowbrook Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Merry Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Monte Sano Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Morgan Road Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Murphey Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Performance Learning Center Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Pine Hill Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Richmond County Technical Career Magnet School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Rollins Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Sego Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Southside Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Spirit Creek Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Sue Reynolds Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Terrace Manor Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Tobacco Road Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Tutt Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
W.S. Hornsby Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Walker Traditional Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017

Exhibit 1.2.1 (continued) District Planning Documents Reviewed by Reviewers Richmond County School System October 2017			
District Document	Date	District Document	Date
Warren Road Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Westside High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Wheeless Road Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Wilkinson Gardens Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Willis Foreman Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017	Glenn Hills High School, School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017
Hornsby Middle School, School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017	Jenkins-White Elementary School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017
T.W. Josey School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017	Lucy C. Laney High School, School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017
Meadowbrook Elementary School, School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017	A. Brian Merry Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 24, 2017
Alternative School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 21, 2017	Academy of Richmond County 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
Barton Chapel Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017	Blythe Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
Craig-Houghton Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 17, 2017	Copeland Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 15, 2017
Cross Creek High School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 1, 2017	John S. Davidson Fine Arts High School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 18, 2017
Johns S. Davidson Fine Arts Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 18, 2017	Deer Chase Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 26, 2017
Diamond Lakes Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 2017	The Early College at Laney 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 15, 2017
Freedom Park K-8 Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 21, 2017	Freedom Park K-8 Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 21, 2017
Glenn Hills Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017	Glen Hills Middle 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 15, 2017
Goshen Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	October 2, 2017	Gracewood Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
Hains Elementary 2017-2018 School improvement Plan	October 6, 2017	Hephzibah Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 21, 2017
Hephzibah High School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017	Hephzibah Middle School, School Improvement Plan	August 13, 2017
W.S. Hornsby Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 1, 2017	Jamestown Elementary School, School Improvement Plan	August 21, 2017
John M. Tutt Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 23, 2017	Lamar Milledge Elementary School Improvement Plan	August 17, 2017
Langford Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 24, 2017	Lake Forest Hills Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 2017
McBean Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017	Morgan Road Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
Murphey Middle School, School Improvement Plan	June 29, 2017	Pine Hill Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 2017

Exhibit 1.2.1 (continued)
District Planning Documents Reviewed by Reviewers
Richmond County School System
October 2017

District Document	Date	District Document	Date
Performance Learning Center School Improvement Plan	August 16, 2017	Richmond County Technical Career Magnet School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
Sue Reynolds Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017	Rollins Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 14, 2017
Reaching Potential Through Manufacturing 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 15, 2017	Spirit Creek Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 2017
Southside Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 22, 2017	T. Harry Garrett Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	October 2, 2017
Terrace Manor Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017	Tobacco Road Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 19, 2017
CT Walker Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017	C.T. Walker Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
Willis Foreman Elementary School Improvement Plan	August 14, 2017	Westside High School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 25, 2017
Wilkinson Gardens Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 27, 2017	Warren Road Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
Windsor Spring Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017	A.R. Johnson Health Science and Engineering Magnet School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 17, 2017
Intermediate Literacy and Math Center 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 22, 2017	Department of Accountability Parent Engagement Plan Rubric	NA
Department of Accountability School Improvement Plan Rubric	NA	AES High School Data Needs Assessment	NA
ARC Needs Assessment	NA	Barton Chapel Needs Assessment	NA
Blythe Needs Assessment	NA	CCHS Needs Assessment	NA
CHE Data Needs Assessment	NA	Davidson High School Needs Assessment	NA
Davidson Middle School Needs Assessment	NA	DCE 2017-18 Elementary Data Needs Assessment	NA
Diamond Lakes Needs Assessment	NA	Freedom Park K-8 Elementary Needs Assessment	NA
Freedom Park K-8 Middle Needs Assessment	NA	GHES Needs Assessment 2017	NA
Goshen Needs Assessment 2017	NA	Gracewood Data Needs Assessment 17-18	NA
HES Data Needs Assessment 2017	NA	HHS Needs Assessment	NA
HMS Needs Assessment	NA	Hornsby Elementary Data Needs Assessment	NA
Jamestown Elementary Data Needs Assessment	NA	Lamar Milledge Needs Assessment	NA
Langford Middle School Data Needs Assessment	NA	LFH Elementary Data Needs Assessment	NA
McBean Needs Assessment	NA	Merry's Elementary Data Needs Assessment	NA
Morgan Road Needs Assessment	NA	Murphey Middle School Needs Assessment	NA
Pine Hill Needs Assessment	NA	PLC High School Data Needs Assessment	NA
RCTCM Data Needs Assessment 2017	NA	Rollins Data Needs Assessments	NA
RPM Data Needs Assessments	NA	SCMS Data Needs Assessment SY18	NA

Exhibit 1.2.1 (continued) District Planning Documents Reviewed by Reviewers Richmond County School System October 2017			
District Document	Date	District Document	Date
Southside NA 2017-18	NA	T. Harry Garrett Needs Assessment 2017-18	NA
Terrace Manor Needs Assessment	NA	Tobacco Road Needs Assessment	NA
Walker Needs Assessment	NA	WFES Data Needs Assessment	NA
Wilkinson Gardens Needs Assessment	September 18, 2017	WSE Data Needs Assessment	August 21, 2017
Accountability Manual	NA	2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Elementary Schools (Pilot Version)	NA
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory High Schools (Pilot Version)	NA	2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Middle Schools (Pilot Version)	NA
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Academy of Richmond County	NA	2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Barton Chapel Elementary School	NA
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Freedom Park 6-8	NA	2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Morgan Road Middle School	NA
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Roy E. Rollins Elementary School	NA	2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory T.W. Josey High School	NA
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Wilkinson Gardens Elementary School	NA		

Review Approach to Analyzing Planning Process

To determine the quality of the district's planning process, the reviewers analyzed the district's planning documents. Three levels of analysis were used by the reviewers. The first level of analysis dealt with the district planning process as a whole. This analysis looked at the planning function with the Richmond County School System and how it has been carried out at various levels within the school system. The second level of analysis look at what the Richmond County School System considers its key strategic planning document: *Richmond County School System Strategy Map*. The third level of analysis focused on the school and department improvement planning process and used a sample of available school- and department-improvement plans for analysis.

Reviewers found long- and short-range planning present at all levels of the school district. Current planning efforts are insufficient to improve student achievement over time. Board policies provide a limited expectation for planning and do not have sufficient content to clearly communicate expectations regarding coherent, congruent district planning (see [Finding 1.3](#)). There are no administrative regulations in place to provide guidance to district leaders regarding planning expectations. District and school-level improvement plans contain numerous activities, which collectively do not convey a clear, focused set of district goals or priorities. Current planning efforts do not have clear strategies for deployment and evaluation of plan effectiveness. A system to monitor school improvement plan development and implementation is in place but does not have sufficient development to ensure coherent and quality planning across the system.

Comprehensive plans are missing in the areas of curriculum management (see [Finding 2.1](#)), professional development (see [Finding 3.1](#)), student assessment and program evaluation (see [Finding 4.1](#)), and budgeting (see [Finding 5.1](#)).

The following details the reviewers' findings on the three levels of analysis.

I. Current planning efforts are not fully adequate to achieve planning purposes

To determine the quality of the planning function within the Richmond County School System, reviewers used eight characteristics of quality planning for design, deployment, and delivery. This level of analysis approached the planning functions across the district, at the central office level, across content or department areas, and at the school level. Exhibit 1.2.2 lists eight review characteristics of quality planning used by the reviewers to rate the Richmond County School System's planning process. An "X" placed in the "Met" column indicates that the characteristic was fully met. "Partial" placed in the "Met" column indicates that there are elements of the characteristic present but they have not been fully developed or implemented to be rated as "Met." An "X" placed in the "Not Met" column indicates that the characteristic was not comprehensively or even partially met. In order for reviewers to rate the quality of the district planning process as adequate, at least six of the eight characteristics of quality planning must be evident and fully met. A discussion of the reviewers' ratings follows the exhibit.

Exhibit 1.2.2

Reviewers' Rating of Characteristics of Quality Planning Design, Deployment, and Delivery Richmond County School System October 2017

There is evidence that...	Reviewers' Rating	
	Met	Not Met
1. Policy Expectations: The governing board has placed into policy the expectation that the superintendent and staff collectively discuss the future and that this thinking should take some tangible form without prescribing a particular template, allowing for flexibility as needed.		X
2. Vision/Direction: Leadership has implicit or explicit vision of the general direction in which the organization is going for improvement purposes. That vision emerges from having considered future changes in the organizational context.	Partial*	
3. Data-driven: Data influence the planning and system directions/initiatives.	Partial*	
4. Budget Timing: Budget planning for change is done in concert with other planning, with goals and actions from those plans driving the budget planning.		X
5. Day-to-Day Decisions: Leadership makes day-to-day decisions regarding the implicit or explicit direction of the system and facilitates movement toward the planned direction.	X	
6. Emergent/Fluid Planning: Leadership is able to adjust discrepancies between current status and desired status, facilitates movement toward the desired status, and is fluid in planning efforts (emergent in nature).		X
7. Deliberate Articulated Actions: Staff are involved in a purposeful way through such efforts as school/unit improvement planning, professional development councils, and district task forces that are congruent with the articulated direction of the system or system initiatives.		X
8. Aligned Professional Development: Professional development endeavors are aligned to system planning goals and initiatives.		X
Total	1	7
Percentage of Adequacy	12.5%	
*Partial ratings are tallied as not met.		
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As noted in Exhibit 1.2.2 district planning was rated fully met on one (12.5%) of the criteria, which does not meet the review standard for quality planning. The following discussion provides more information on what the reviewers found with respect to each of the characteristics.

Characteristic 1: Policy Expectations

This characteristic was rated not met. Reviewers noted within board policy an expectation for system-level strategic planning and school-level planning that is aligned with the system's strategic plan. Board policies were considered weak in communicating an expectation for a future focus in district planning efforts or that planning be coordinated across the system to attain desired goals. There are no expectations communicated through district policies or administrative regulations that address the involvement of professional staff, parents, business representatives, and community members in establishing and reviewing educational plans, goals, and performance objectives. No expectations are communicated through policies or administrative regulations regarding the frequency with which plans should be reviewed for effectiveness to ensure they are effectively structured to positively impact student achievement. No policy expectation was found requiring the development of written plans in the areas of curriculum, assessment, professional development, or school assessment.

Characteristic 2: Vision/Direction

This characteristic was rated partially met. The district's mission, vision, and goals were approved by the board of education on October 20, 2015. Based on an examination of district meeting agenda and meeting minutes, reviewers found no indication that the board of education was directly or fully engaged in developing the district's mission and vision. *Board Policy BH* indicates that members of the board are to "Participate in all planning activities to develop the vision and goals of the board and the school system." Based on meeting minutes made available to reviewers, two board members participated in a two-day meeting to work on the mission, vision and belief statements. The mission, vision, and belief statements were found posted on the district website and in schools across the district. The vision statement "RCSS will create a world-class, globally competitive school system where all students will graduate and are college/career ready" is similar to the mission statement "Building a world-class school system through education, collaboration and innovation." During interviews, district stakeholders frequently described the district's vision as being the superintendent's vision, with few speaking about the vision in terms of a shared vision for the district. At no time during interviews with stakeholders was there any reference to the district mission of building world-class schools.

Characteristic 3: Data-driven

This characteristic was rated as partially met. The district does not have a comprehensive central data warehouse in which to aggregate and store system and school performance data. Reviewers found evidence that performance data were being collected and used to inform department and school level planning. Reviewers found no policy expectation that requires the use of data for evaluating the effectiveness of the school district in improving learning for all students. A review of board meeting minutes indicates the board will periodically receive summary data reports such as a summary of the district's *College and Career Ready Performance Index*, but there is no indication that the board has engaged in any in-depth discussion regarding district performance data in light of the district's strategic map. Reviewers noted there was an expectation communicated by the superintendent that department- and school-level improvement plans be data driven.

Reviewers noted that most of the school improvement plans they examined included numeric goals for increasing the percentage of students achieving proficient or above on milestone assessments, and high school improvement plans included a goal for increasing the percentage of students graduating. School improvement plans also included a goal for improving the school's *College and Career Ready Performance Index*. While some use of disaggregated milestone data was noted, reviewers were not provided any evidence that district or school level data had been analyzed at a sufficient level of detail to permit an understanding of factors that may be related to existing performance gaps noted in the data.

Characteristic 4: Budget Timing

This characteristic was rated not met. Based on an examination of board meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and board policies, reviewers found no expectation or evidence that budget planning is intentionally coordinated with the district's strategic plan, goals, or priorities. Budget considerations are not embedded in the district's planning process. District and school improvement planning and budget planning are essentially two separate processes in the Richmond County School System. School-level budgets are not clearly linked to district

goals or improvement strategies. According to district leadership, when school improvement plans are being developed, budget allocations have already been determined.

Characteristic 5: Day-to-Day Decisions

This characteristic was fully met. Reviewers noted that district leadership is placing a high degree of emphasis on the development of department- and school-level improvement plans that are aligned with the district's strategic map. Administrators at the district and school level are highly cognizant of the need to improve school performance across the board on key indicators of school performance. Improvement plans indicate a range of actions that are to be implemented during the current school year to improve student performance at individual schools and across the school system. Site visits to schools and interviews with building and district level administrators further verified that there are efforts across the school system taking place to improve student performance. However, the data sources referenced most frequently during interviews and noted on school data walls are primarily summative assessment or diagnostic data obtained through the use of programs such as i-Ready®. Reviewers did not observe any consistent use of formative assessment data or data disaggregated at the level of specific skills or concepts.

Characteristic 6: Emergent/Fluid Planning

This characteristic was rated not met. Reviewers found no expectation communicated through board policies or administrative regulations requiring that district and school improvement planning be emergent and fluid. A review of board meeting minutes found no indication that the board of education has been actively engaged in annual goal setting or setting direction for the school district based on identified needs and identified areas for improvement. An examination of available prior year school improvement plans indicates that, while broad goals to improve student achievement as measured by state assessments remain similar, the stated action steps are notably different. Reviewers found no documentation that indicated why school improvement action plans have changed from one year to the next. Building level teams are required to meet during the summer to review school performance data and update school improvement plans. No documentation was provided reviewers that would inform how school improvement plans change or evolve in response to changing student needs at the individual school level.

Reviewers also examined district job descriptions to determine the extent to which planning functions were assigned as essential duties or responsibilities. In the job description for the Superintendent, reviewers found an expectation that the superintendent will assist the school board in developing, formulating, and revising guidance documents for school program planning and reviewing of educational programs. Assistant Superintendents, per their job descriptions, are responsible for supporting the planning, coordination, delivery, and monitoring of school improvement with the purpose of enhancing student achievement. Assistant superintendents are also responsible for collecting and utilizing data to inform instructional decisions and monitoring plans for academic interventions. The Deputy Superintendent is responsible for planning, organizing, implementing, directing, and maintaining the district's operational business programs and services and non-instructional and operations support activities, and serving as a resource to school personnel and other departments. Building Principals are responsible for analyzing and using school and student achievement data to develop and implement school improvement plans.

Characteristic 7: Deliberate Articulated Actions

This characteristic was rated not met. Articulation between various planning efforts and actions across district departments and schools was inadequate. Viewed as a collective whole, district, department and school level improvement plans do not convey a clear, focused response to noted gaps in student achievement. District strategic initiatives are not fully addressed within school improvement plans. While most school improvement plans identified goals aligned with one or more of the five strategic plan goals, the initiatives and action steps noted in school improvement plans were not consistently congruent with stated district initiatives and actions steps. The Richmond County Strategic Plan, under the goal area of "High Academic Achievement and Success for All" lists 8 initiatives and 18 action steps. Collectively, within 51 school improvement plans provided reviewers, reviewers noted 93 initiatives and 605 actions steps listed under the goal of "High Academic Achievement and Success for All." The initiatives and action steps listed in the 51 school improvement plans

are not consistently aligned with the district's strategic initiatives. One example of an alignment issue can be noted between school-level initiatives and action steps and the district-level strategic initiative "Structured RTI." Reviewers found reference to RTI (Response to Interventions) in only four school improvement plans. Reviewers found no information or documentation that would explain why so many school did not include RTI as part of their improvement initiatives.

During interviews, the superintendent and district leadership stated that all departments were to have an improvement plan that included an instructional focus. Reviewers were provided with nine department plans for examination. Of the nine department plans examined, only four included a goal, initiative, or action step that suggested some alignment to an instructional focus.

The office of Accountability and Strategic Waivers is responsible for monitoring school improvement plans. A rubric has been developed for guiding the review of school improvement plans. One of the areas included in the rubric is checking if school improvement initiatives are clearly aligned to a goal area and performance objective on the Richmond Strategic Map. Although requested, reviewers were not provided with any completed school improvement plan rubrics to see what type of feedback has been given to school leadership teams regarding the alignment of their school's improvement initiatives and actions with the district's strategic goals, initiatives, and actions.

Characteristic 8: Aligned Professional Development

This characteristic was rated not met. While many professional development opportunities are offered to staff, staff development planning is inadequate and does not clearly connect student outcomes to staff development needs either across the district or within schools. There is no comprehensive plan to guide the focused delivery of professional development in the district to support the district's strategic goals, initiatives, and action steps. The Professional Learning School Improvement Department's improvement plan does not fully address the action steps listed in the district's strategic plan. The department's improvement plan also does not address how it will support the multitude of professional training topics listed in the various school improvement plans. There is no indication that the delivery of professional development has been planned in conjunction with the development of school improvement plans.

Overall, reviewers found evidence of planning and plans at the district and school level in the Richmond County School System. Board policies were considered weak in directing the coordination of planning at all levels across the school system. The use of diagnostic and summative performance data to inform development of the school improvement plans was noted; however, there is no indication that there has been an in-depth analysis regarding district improvement priorities or strategies in the development of school improvement plans. The district strategic plan does not provide a clear district-wide focus for improving student achievement or addressing disparities in student achievement. School improvement plans are not fully aligned with the district strategic plan. The budget planning process is not formally linked to district improvement planning process.

Current planning efforts are not fully adequate and their implementation is not comprehensive and effective at bringing about desired change. The reviewers next looked at the quality of district-level plans.

II. The quality of district-level plans is insufficient to guide decisions and create needed change

If the reviewers find planning present in the system, they then proceed to determine if there are written plans, and, if so, examine these plans for certain characteristics. Reviewers found evidence of planning at the district and school levels in the Richmond County School System. The *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016*, as presented on the district's website, was used as the primary plan document for analysis of the district-wide plan.

Development of the *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016* was initiated in September 2015 with a meeting of a Strategic Planning Focus Group. This focus group, consisting of 53 parents, staff, and community members, met with representatives from the Georgia School Boards Association who facilitated the group's work. The Georgia School Boards Association is a voluntary association that provides training, programs, and services to the state's 180 locally elected boards of education. The vision, mission, goals, and performance objectives contained in the Richmond County Strategic Plan were unanimously approved by the board of education on October 20, 2015. Reviewers found no record indicating that the full strategic plan as displayed on the

district's website had been presented to the board of education. No documentation was provided to reviewers that explained how the initiatives and actions steps contained in the Richmond County Strategic Plan were identified or selected for inclusion.

Exhibit 1.2.3 lists the characteristics of a quality planning document and the reviewers' assessment of the overall adequacy of the Richmond County Strategic Plan. An "X" placed in the "Met" column indicates that the characteristic was met. "Partial" in the "Met" column indicates that there are elements of the characteristic present, but they have not been fully developed or implemented to be rated as "Met." An "X" placed in the "Not Met" column indicates that the characteristic was not comprehensively met. In order for reviewers to rate the quality of the district planning process as adequate, at least five of the seven characteristics of quality planning must be evident and rated as fully met. A discussion of the reviewers' ratings follows the exhibit.

Exhibit 1.2.3

Characteristics of District-wide Plan Quality (Design, Deployment, and Delivery) And Reviewers' Rating of the Richmond County Strategic Plan—2016 Richmond County School System October 2017

Characteristics	Reviewers' Rating	
	Met	Not Met
1. Reasonable and Clear: The plan is reasonable; it has a feasible number of goals and objectives for the resources (financial, time, people) available. Moreover, the goals and objectives are clear and measurable.	X	
2. Emergent/Fluid: The plan allows for emergent thinking, trends, and changes that impact the system both internally and externally.		X
3. Change Strategies: The plan incorporates and focuses on those action strategies/interventions that are built around effective change strategies (e.g., capacity building of appropriate staff).		X
4. Deployment Strategies: The plan clearly delineates strategies to be used to support deploying the steps and tasks outlined in the plan (e.g., orientation to the change, staff development on the proficiencies needed to bring about the change, communication regarding planned change).		X
5. Integration of Goals and Actions: All goals and actions in the plan are interrelated and congruent with one another.		X
6. Evaluation Plan and Implementation: There is a written plan to evaluate whether the objectives of the plan have been met (not to evaluate whether or not the activities have taken place). Evaluation components of plans are actions to be implemented; plans are evaluated for their effects or results, and they are then modified as needed. There is both frequent formative evaluation and annual summative evaluation, so that plans are revised as needed.		X
7. Monitoring: Systems are in place and are being implemented for assessing the status of activities, analyzing the results, and reporting the outcomes that take place as the plan is designed and implemented.		X
Total	1	6
Percentage of Adequacy	14.3%	
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As noted in Exhibit 1.2.3, the Richmond County School System's strategic plan fully met one of the seven review characteristics for quality district-wide plans; thus the *Richmond County Strategic Plan - 2016* did not meet the review standard for adequacy.

The following discussion provides more information on what the reviewers found with respect to each of the characteristics above.

Characteristic 1: Reasonableness

This characteristic was rated fully met. Intended to support attainment of a vision of creating a world-class school system where all students will graduate and are college/career ready, the *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016* is organized around five broad goals: (I) High Academic Achievement and Success for All, (II) Community Engagement, (III) Communication, (IV) High Performing Culture and Workforce, and (V) Operational Effectiveness. The *Strategic Plan* lists 16 performance objectives, 30 initiatives, and 61 action steps. Because there are no strategies for implementing specific action steps to guide how the performance objectives are to be met, a large part of the strategic plan is left open to individual interpretation regarding intent, design, deployment, and delivery. The *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016* is presented as a five-year plan, and in consideration of the time and resources available, reviewers deemed the scope of the plan goals, objectives, and actions reasonable.

Characteristic 2: Emergent/Fluid

This characteristic was rated not met. The focus of the *Richmond County Strategic Plan- 2016* is to create world-class schools where all students will graduate and are college and career ready. There is no information contained within the *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016* that clearly articulates how stated goals, performance objectives, initiatives, and action steps will move the school system toward accomplishing the stated vision. While a focus group was used to solicit input, development of the strategic plan has been driven primarily by district-level administrators. No documentation was made available to reviewers that would indicate the breadth and depth of any data analysis that was used to inform the selection of specific initiatives and actions steps for inclusion in the plan.

Some emergent practices are in place, exercised through the office of Accountability and Strategic Waivers, which involve an initial effort to align departmental and school improvement plans to the strategic plan. However, alignment between the strategic plan and departmental and school improvement plans has not been realized, as exemplified by the laundry list of initiatives and action steps found in district improvement plans. Collectively, the improvement plans suggest a “try anything” approach as district leaders attempt to close achievement gaps and compete with neighboring school systems. There is no plan in place that describes how the strategic plan will be refined, changed, or modified during its implementation as a direct result of changing conditions or outcomes within the school system.

Characteristic 3: Change Strategies

This characteristic was rated not met. The goals, performance objectives, initiatives, and action steps listed in the strategic plan are stated in broad, generic terms and do not invoke a clear sense of how the Richmond County School System is going to change its professional practices in order to address identified system needs—particularly in terms of reducing gaps in student academic achievement and increasing overall graduation rates. While each of the goals and objectives contained within the strategic plan may have merit as part of an overall improvement process, alone they do not have sufficient content and specificity in terms of desired outcomes or results to guide the allocation of district resources or the efforts of staff to achieve a defined vision for the future.

Reviewers found no evidence of system-wide discussions of what is impeding students learning or how to design instruction to overcome barriers to learning. During interviews with district stakeholders, external factors such as poverty, student mobility, and poor attendance were frequently cited as primary barriers to student learning. Few comments were received indicating there has been much consideration of internal factors that could be impeding growth in student achievement, such as quality of instruction, quality of curriculum design, quality of formative and summative assessments, use of feedback, or alignment of system resources toward clearly communicated goals.

Characteristic 4: Deployment Strategies

This characteristic was rated not met. Successful implementation of a comprehensive district strategic improvement plan involves communicating to staff with a clear, consistent, focused message about identified needs, key changes that need to take place, how changes are intended to address identified needs, what support will be provided in implementing changes, and how will changes be evaluated. This also requires keeping the district improvement plan front and center of all efforts throughout the school system. While district leadership, during interviews with reviewers, noted efforts to keep a focus on the district improvement plan during administrative staff meetings and summer leadership conferences, reviewers found no specific strategy in place for keeping staff focused on key district priorities. In examination of minutes from a variety of district meetings, reviewers noted few references to the strategic plan, its goals, initiatives, and planned actions.

Within the strategic plan, reviewers noted that there are no specific timelines for implementation of listed actions steps. Time references were stated in generic terms such as “2016 – ongoing,” “annually,” “summer,” or “fall 2017.” No specific deadlines for implementation or attainment of action steps were noted. The strategic plan document also did not identify specific individuals or positions that would be ultimately responsible for ensuring implementation of specific initiatives or action steps. If responsibilities were assigned for specific initiatives, they were assigned to groups such as Curriculum Department, Information Technology, Special Education, Area Superintendents, or Associate Superintendent. No references regarding resources needed to support implementation of specific initiatives or action steps were found, nor was a delineation of actual costs associated with fully implementing the listed initiatives or actions steps. There is no documented plan or process, noted in the strategic plan, which describes expectations for how school improvement plans would be directly linked to the strategic plan’s performance objectives, initiatives, or action steps. The office for Accountability and Strategic Waivers is charged with ensuring the alignment of school improvement plans with district strategic initiatives, but its role is not clearly articulated in the strategic plan.

Characteristic 5: Integration of Goals and Actions

This characteristic was rated not met. The *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016* contains 5 goals, 16 performance objectives, 30 initiatives, and 61 action steps. It is unclear how the initiatives and action steps, if fully executed, are intended to advance the attainment of the stated goals. Many of the initiatives and action steps do not have sufficient explanation and specificity to clearly communicate the congruence between the activity and the related performance objective and goal. As an example, for the performance objective “Increase graduation rate,” there is no explanation of what district leaders have determined to be factors contributing to students dropping out of school and failing to graduate from a Richmond County high school. The two listed initiatives, “Vertical Team Improvements” and “Structured RTI,” provide no definition of what each initiative is, and if fully implemented what it would look like, and how these two initiatives could potentially increase student graduation rates. The three listed action steps also do not have sufficient detail and definition to inform stakeholders how each when fully implemented would potentially increase high school graduation rates. One action step states, “Increase opportunities for feeder school collaboration to increase student outcomes leading to increase graduation rates.” There is no accompanying description of what effective school collaboration should look like and what student outcomes, linked to graduation rates, could be positively impacted through such collaboration. The action step “Provide system-wide PL on effective RTI/SST strategies utilizing a variety of data sources to improve student outcomes” does not have any explanation of what are effective RTI/SST strategies or how, if implemented, these would improve specific student outcomes that are linked to increased graduation rates. The third action step—“Implementation of effective intervention”—does not define what an effective intervention is or which interventions are positively linked to graduation results. Because there is no clear congruence between action steps, initiatives, and performance objectives and overarching district goals, a great deal of the strategic plan open to individual interpretation regarding intent, design, implementation, and evaluation, potentially diffusing the district’s intent to focus on changes that will ultimately result in different system performance.

Characteristic 6: Evaluation Plan and Implementation

This characteristic was rated not met. The *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016* does not contain a written plan for monitoring or evaluating the implementation of improvement strategies and activities or the attainment of the improvement plan goals and objectives. While most performance objectives had one or more performance measures, expressed as a numeric goal for the 2015-16 school year, it was not always apparent what measures or indicators the numeric goal represented. Assessment of gains in student performance is limited primarily to overall performance on the *Georgia Milestones*, with no listed inclusion of other formative and summative assessments to monitor progress in increasing student achievement. Where the collection of certain types of data were noted, references to the data sets were vague or generic, such as “curriculum platform,” “PL resources,” “mid-year and year-end screener,” “master schedule,” and “credit recover reports,” to list a few noted by reviewers. None of the plan activities included benchmark data to indicate a current or desired status against which implementation progress could be measured.

Characteristic 7: Monitoring

This characteristic was rated not met. No specific plan was evident for monitoring the status of strategic plan initiatives and action steps, analyzing results obtained, or reporting outcomes. Analysis of the impact of the strategic plan in improving system performance is not clearly required. No clear evidence was found, within board meeting minutes, that the board of education has received regular reports on the results being obtained as a result of implementation of the strategic plan initiatives and actions steps. Reviewers noted that the board has received some reports related to the strategic plan that focused on an area of activities but did not include any reporting on documented progress toward stated performance objectives and overarching goals. There is no stated expectation of when plan performance objectives are to be achieved, providing staff with no information regarding the urgency or priority of district improvement efforts.

Overall, reviewers found the quality of the *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016* insufficient to guide its implementation and ensure attainment of desired system performance in terms of student achievement. The strategic plan was found to be not adequate in articulating a deployment strategy and the integration of action steps with initiatives, performance objectives, and strategic goals. The strategic plan was inadequate in communicating how the stated action steps and initiatives would remediate identified needs within the school system, and processes were needed to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plan and the attainment of results.

III. The quality of school and department planning documents is limiting their potential to focus district efforts and resources on improving student achievement

School improvement plans provide direction for aligning school and district resources toward the attainment of improved student achievement. When school improvement planning is poorly designed, or there is no planning at all, desired goals may not be attained and resources may not be effectively used. For the planning process to have maximum impact, there needs to be a tight line of control that provides the necessary structure throughout district planning efforts and still allows for creativity and flexibility at the school level. When properly structured, systemic planning reduces the slack within the organization. Slack occurs when connections between district and schools are not clearly defined.

The approach used for analyzing department and school level plans is the same reviewers used to analyze the *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016*. This analysis traces the connectivity, monitoring, and evaluation of planning efforts from district documents to school improvement plans. To assess the quality of school-level planning, reviewers analyzed 59 improvement plans including 30 elementary school, 9 middle school, 12 high school, and 8 department improvement plans for 2017-18.

Exhibit 1.2.4 lists the characteristics of a quality planning document and the reviewers’ assessment of the overall adequacy of the Richmond County Strategic Plan. An “X” placed in the “Met” column indicates that the characteristic was met. “Partial” in the “Met” column indicates that there are elements of the characteristic present, but they have not been fully developed or implemented to be rated as “Met.” An “X” placed in the “Not Met” column indicates that the characteristic was not comprehensively met. In order for reviewers to rate the

quality of the district planning process as adequate, at least six of the eight characteristics of quality planning must be evident and rated adequate. A discussion of the reviewers' ratings follows the exhibit.

Exhibit 1.2.4

Characteristics of Department and School Improvement Plan Quality For Design, Deployment, and Delivery Richmond County School System October 2017

Characteristics	Reviewers' Rating	
	Met	Not Met
1. Congruence and Connectivity: Goals and actions are derived from, explicitly linked to, and congruent with the district plan's goals, objectives, and priorities.		X
2. Reasonable and Clear: The plan is reasonable; it has a feasible number of goals and objectives for the resources available (finances, time, people). The goals and objectives of the plan are clear and measurable.		X
3. Emergent/Fluid: The plan allows for emergent thinking, trends, and changes that impact the system both internally and externally.		X
4. Change Strategies: The plan incorporates and focuses on those action strategies/ interventions that are built around effective change strategies (e.g., capacity building of appropriate staff).		X
5. Deployment Strategies: The plan clearly delineates strategies to be used to support deploying the steps and tasks outlined in the plan (e.g., orientation to the change, staff development on the proficiencies needed to bring about the change, communication regarding planned change).		X
6. Integration of Goals and Actions: All goals and actions in the plan are interrelated and congruent with one another.		X
7. Evaluation Plan and Implementation: There is a written plan to evaluate whether the objectives of the plan have been met (not to evaluate whether or not the activities have taken place). Evaluation components of plans are actions to be implemented; plans are evaluated for their effects or results and modified as needed. There is both frequent formative evaluation and summative evaluation, so that plans are revised as needed.		X
8. Monitoring: Systems are in place and are being implemented for assessing the status of activities, analyzing the results, and reporting outcomes that take place as the plan is designed and implemented.	X	
Total	1	7
Percentage of Adequacy	12.5%	
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As noted in Exhibit 1.2.4, the department and school improvement plans fully met one of the eight planning characteristics. Plans analyzed did not meet the review standard of being rated adequate on at least six of the eight planning characteristics.

The following discussion provides more information on what the reviewers found with respect to each of the characteristics above.

Characteristic 1: Congruence and Connectivity

This characteristic was rated not met. Board policies establish an expectation that there is a connection between school improvement plans and the system's strategic plan. *Policy GAD* requires the superintendent to implement procedures for assuring that each school has a school improvement plan that is aligned to the strategic plan. This policy further requires that school improvement plans address comprehensive professional learning as

a major component. There is no policy expectation requiring the inclusion of student achievement targets in school improvement plans.

Based on interviews with district administrators and an examination of various district documents, reviewers determined that there is no clear expectation that school improvement plans be fully congruent with the strategic plan. During interviews some administrators commented that they believed the expectation was that all school improvement plans must address three of the five district strategic goals with at least one with an instructional focus. Other administrators thought the expectation was that school improvement plans must include two goals based on Strategic Goal I: High Academic Achievement and Success for All and one goal in support of one of the other four district strategic goals.

Reviewers found district documents do not communicate a consistent expectation regarding the degree of congruence school improvement plans must have to the strategic plan. The district's *Accountability Manual* does not include any statement regarding the congruence of school-level planning with the district's strategic plan. The *Accountability Manual* does include a statement that "Each school needs to plan on ways to ensure that parents have substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children." A *School Improvement Plan Rubric*, used by district leadership to provide feedback on school improvement plans, includes guiding questions and rating rubrics. The guiding questions and rating rubrics places an emphasis on obtaining internal consistency between an individual school's needs assessment, initiatives, and action steps. Only one guiding question asks if school-level initiatives are "...clearly aligned to a goal area and performance objective on the RCSS Strategy Map."

Reviewers found that expectations regarding the congruence expected between school improvement plans and the district's strategic plan have not been clearly communicated. To determine the degree of congruence that is present between school improvement plans and the district's strategic plan, reviewers examined the initiatives and actions steps listed in 51 school improvement plans and compared them with the initiatives listed in the *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016* under Goal I: High Academic Achievement and Success for All. Exhibit 1.2.5 presents a summary of the congruence reviewers noted between district initiatives and school improvement plan initiatives and action steps.

Exhibit 1.2.5

Reviewers' Assessment of the Congruence Between District Strategic Initiatives and School Improvement Plans For Strategic Goal I Richmond County School System October 2017

District Strategic Initiative	Campus Improvement Plan Congruence
Vertical Team Improvements	None of the school improvement plans reviewed included a reference to vertical teams or vertical team improvements.
Structured RTI	Reviewers found reference to RTI in four school improvement plans.
RCK12 Curriculum Development and Implementation	References to RCK12 curriculum was noted in three school improvement plans.
Utilizing Data to Drive Instruction	The use of data was noted in 29 (57%) of school improvement plans reviewed. The references to data use varied across school improvement plans. Frequent references to the use of data included data digs, use of data in planning, use of i-Ready® data, maintenance of data notebooks, selection of interventions based on data, and teacher training in data analysis.

Exhibit 1.2.5 (continued) Reviewers' Assessment of the Congruence Between District Strategic Initiatives and School Improvement Plans For Strategic Goal I Richmond County School System October 2017	
District Strategic Initiative	Campus Improvement Plan Congruence
Scheduling for Effective Instruction	References to scheduling was noted in 10 (19.6%) school improvement plans reviewed. References to scheduling found in improvement plans were split between scheduling collaborative planning time for teachers and scheduling time for additional academic support or interventions. The district's strategic plan action steps associated with this initiative referenced scheduling students for the most effective instructional opportunities, providing summer school opportunities, and providing wrap-around programs.
Standards-Based Report Cards in Grades K-3	One reference to standards-based report cards was noted in the 51 school improvement plans reviewed.
District-wide Advisement Program	One school improvement plan referenced an advisement program.
Increasing Post-Secondary Options	Reviewers noted only one school improvement plan that made some reference to an initiative that is vaguely related to increasing post-secondary options through the International Baccalaureate program.

School improvement efforts that are clearly congruent with district strategic goals and initiatives increase the likelihood the school system is focused on achieving desired goals. As can be noted from [Exhibit 1.2.5](#), school improvement plans initiatives and action steps were not fully congruent with district strategic initiatives intended to increase student achievement. Incongruence among district improvement efforts frequently results in a fragmented system of initiatives that may or may not be focused on accomplishing desired goals. School improvement efforts that are congruent with district strategic initiatives increases the likelihood of a unified system-wide focus on achieving desired goals. None of the district strategic initiatives intended to support Strategic Goal I: High Academic Achievement and Success for All was found deeply integrated into school improvement plan initiatives or activities.

District leaders indicated that all departments within the organization were required to have in place a department improvement plan that included an instructional focus. To determine the degree of congruence that is present between department improvement plans and the district's strategic plan, reviewers examined the initiatives and actions steps listed in eight school improvement plans and compared them with the initiatives listed in the *Richmond County Strategic Plan –2016* under Goal I: High Academic Achievement and Success for All. [Exhibit 1.2.6](#) presents a summary of the congruence reviewers noted between district initiatives and department improvement plan initiatives and action steps. An "X" indicates which district strategic initiatives were noted in the respective department improvement plans.

Exhibit 1.2.6

**Reviewers' Assessment of the Congruence Between
District Strategic Initiatives and Department Improvement Plans
For Strategic Goal I
Richmond County School System
October 2017**

District Strategic Initiatives	Department								Department Improvement Plans Congruence
	Professional Learning Division	Accountability and Strategic Waivers Office	CTAE Division	Curriculum and Instruction	Information Technology	Special Education	Title I Division	Communications	
Vertical Team Improvements				X					Initiative: Vertical Team Collaboration
Structured RTI				X					Initiative: Structured RTI
RCK12 Curriculum Development and Implementation				X					Initiative: RCK12 Curriculum Development and Implementation
Utilizing Data to Drive Instruction	X	X							Action Step: Pull TLE Summative Data Initiative: Uses a collaborative, data-driven planning process at the district and school levels for improving student learning.
Scheduling for Effective Instruction	X			X					Action Step: Ensure that collaborative planning is built into master schedule Initiative: Summer School
Standards-Based Report Cards in Grades K-3	X								Action Step: Provide ongoing professional learning on standards based report cards to employees in areas, clusters, school, grade level, and or content
District-wide advisement program									
Increasing Post-Secondary Options			X						Initiative: Improve academic achievement in CTAE & increase Post-Secondary options Action Step: Increase opportunities for MOWR, Dual Enrollment, Advanced Curriculum, Career Pathway Internships, Work based Learning opportunities...

Departments within a school organization that support the district's overall efforts to improve student achievement develop departmental plans that are clearly congruent with district strategic goals and initiatives. As can be noted from [Exhibit 1.2.6](#), the initiatives and action steps included in department improvement plans were not fully congruent with district strategic initiatives focused on increasing student achievement.

Incongruence among district and school improvement efforts frequently results in a fragmented system of initiatives that may not be focused on accomplishing desired goals. When all district, department, and school improvement efforts are congruent, it increases the likelihood that there will be a unified system-wide focus on achieving desired goals.

Characteristic 2: Reasonable and Clear

This characteristic was rated not met. School improvement plans examined by reviewers contained 93 initiatives and 605 actions steps listed under Strategic Goal I: High Academic Achievement and Success for All. All school improvement plans included action steps associated with professional learning, and most plans addressed one or more of the remaining four strategic goals found in the *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016*. Reviewers noted there was little consistency in the initiatives and action steps listed that would indicate a clear direction for priorities established for the Richmond County School System. The number of initiatives and action steps found within individual school improvement plans were generally reasonable in number; however, collectively, the wide variety of initiatives and action steps would be difficult to monitor and evaluate from a system-wide perspective. All school improvement plans examined listed the source of funding, which was most frequently listed as Title I; however, most plans did not include any budgetary breakdown indicating how resources would be used to support implementation of specific action steps or meet the goals of the initiative.

Characteristic 3: Emergent/Fluid

This characteristic was rated not met. None of the school improvement plans examined contained a needs assessment summary or information to articulate how campus goals, strategies, and activities are directly linked to specific school needs, priorities, or the improvement of student achievement. The *Accountability Manual* contains a timeline and a needs assessment framework that schools were expected to follow in developing their respective school improvement plans. As part of the needs assessment process, school leadership teams were expected to complete a "Root Cause Analysis" to aid teams in determining areas to address in the school improvement plans. Reviewers were not provided with any of the completed need assessments completed by school leadership teams as part of the process of developing their school improvement plans. Although district staff spoke of school improvement plans as "living documents," reviewers found no documentation that would indicate why school improvement plans have changed or have been modified over time. Reviewers also noted that none of the school improvement plans reviewed described the initiatives or action steps listed in terms of the current or desired status. The Office of Accountability and Strategic Waivers is responsible for monitoring the content and implementation of school improvement plans. Reviewers found no systemic process in place to ensure school-level improvement plans are evolving to meet the unique learning needs of students.

Characteristic 4: Change Strategies

This characteristic was rated not met. An effective school improvement plan focuses, in part, on building the capacity of professional staff to achieve different student achievement results because of their professional practices. Achieving different results often requires engaging in different professional practices. No district-wide plan is in place that articulates how the district would support changing of professional practices employed by adults in order to meet the needs of the students. As required by *Board Policy GAD*, school improvement plans address professional learning. The professional learning initiatives listed in school improvement plans include more than 50 discrete topics. Reviewers found no documentation indicating how professional learning activities would be directly related to the district's strategic goals or school-level achievement goals. None of the professional learning strategies indicated specific, desired measurable outcomes or results in terms of improved professional practice and improved student achievement. Evidence of the impact of professional learning frequently was stated in terms of artifacts such as lesson plans or sign-in sheets.

Reviewers noted that implementing “interventions” was a frequent initiative and/or action step listed in school improvement plans. An example of an intervention frequently cited in the plans reviewed was the use of iReady® lessons. Reviewers did not note a similar focus on initiatives or action steps that focused on strategies to enhance instructional practices such as increasing teacher content and pedagogical knowledge or their knowledge of their students, designing coherent instruction, creating classroom culture for learning, engaging students, using assessments in instruction, and reflecting on teaching.

Characteristic 5: Deployment Strategies

This characteristic was rated not met. Successful implementation of a comprehensive school improvement plan involves communicating to staff and the public the areas in need of improvement, school-level priorities, and how the improvement plan addresses identified areas of need. While current campus improvement plans are posted on individual school websites, the school improvement plans posted on the district website are from the 2014-15 school year, making it confusing for the public to either access or understand what are the current goals and improvement strategies of the school district. While there is a centralized process in place to review school improvement plans, the criteria are weak in ensuring school improvement plans are directly linked to the goals and initiatives contained in the *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016*. Current school improvement plans are presented as one-year plans with no stated indication of how initiatives are anticipated to progress from initial training and learning to initial implementation to adoption as standard practices.

Characteristic 6: Integration of Goals and Actions

This characteristic was rated not met. An analysis of school improvement plan initiatives and action steps revealed a large number of improvement efforts that were not consistently aligned with district performance objectives or initiatives. Current monitoring efforts do not have sufficient guidelines to ensure school-level improvement initiatives are aligned with district strategic initiatives and goals. Many of the initiatives and action steps found in school improvement plans could be considered traditional or standard work as opposed to strategic. Traditional or standard work are actions that replicate strategies or practices that have been or are currently being employed, such as literacy across the curriculum, engaging students in fluency activities, progress monitoring, small group instruction, parent-teacher conferences, drop everything and read, or collaborative planning. Initiatives that are strategic focus on creating the capacity to overcome common challenges better than previously, such as focusing on barriers to learning rather than interventions or shifting the focus from teaching to student learning.

Characteristic 7: Evaluation Plan

This characteristic was rated not met. School improvement plans do not have clear descriptions of how they would be evaluated. None of the school improvement plans expressly established an expectation that plan activities would be evaluated in terms of improved professional practices or student achievement. School improvement plans all include a listing of data that would be collected to document implementation or completion of specific action steps. References to data, however, were stated in generic terms such as student attendance, assessment scores, report cards, progress reports, i-Ready®, Achieve 3000, sign-in sheets, lesson plans, and student work, with no specific targets against which to monitor progress toward implementation or improved achievement over time.

Each of the school improvement plans listed performance measures expressed in terms of the percentage of students that are proficient or above on state assessments, the school’s College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), and, at the secondary level, the number of students participating in AP® courses, International Baccalaureate®, or Move on When Ready courses. Reviewers noted performance targets for the current school year were inconsistent in terms of expected growth. The target growth ranged from 2.5% to 10%. When translated into the number of students projected to improve their performance, in many cases it was one to two students. When the impact of strategic improvement efforts is projected to improve overall performance for only one or two students per school, per grade level, it does not communicate a collective urgency to improve across the school system, impeding the ability of the school system to reach state performance targets. None of the plans reference evaluation in terms of impact on the attainment of stated goals. None of the plans included benchmark data indicating either a current or desired status against which progress could be measured.

Characteristic 8: Monitoring

This characteristic was rated as fully met. School improvement plans are monitored through the Office of Accountability and Strategic Waivers. Although in the early phases of implementation, there is a planned approach in place for monitoring schools in conducting comprehensive needs assessments and implementing school improvement plans. The rubric used to guide assessment of school improvement plans addresses several of the review characteristics for quality planning, but the rubrics are at a topological level and do not have sufficient granular detail to inform the depth and quality to ensure school improvement plans have the potential to collectively move the system to desired goals. Reviewers were not provided with any examples of completed school improvement plan reviews to determine the type and specificity of feedback that has been communicated to school leadership teams. Reviewers were not provided with any specific details in how the information obtained through the consistent monitoring of school improvement plans would be used to adjust plan initiatives or actions steps during the course of the school year or used to inform future planning efforts. There are no stated expectations of when improvement plan goals are to be met, providing staff with no indication of the urgency or priority of school improvement efforts.

Overall, reviewers found the quality of school improvement plans was not adequate to guide their implementation and ensure attainment of improved school performance in terms of student learning and achievement. Collectively, school improvement plans were not adequate in terms of the reasonableness of the plans within the context of the limited alignment with the district's strategic plan. School improvement plans also were considered not adequate in means to deploy, evaluate, and monitor plan implementation.

During interviews, reviewers received a variety of comments related to improvement planning in the district. Following is a representative sample of comments received by reviewers regarding planning in the Richmond County School System.

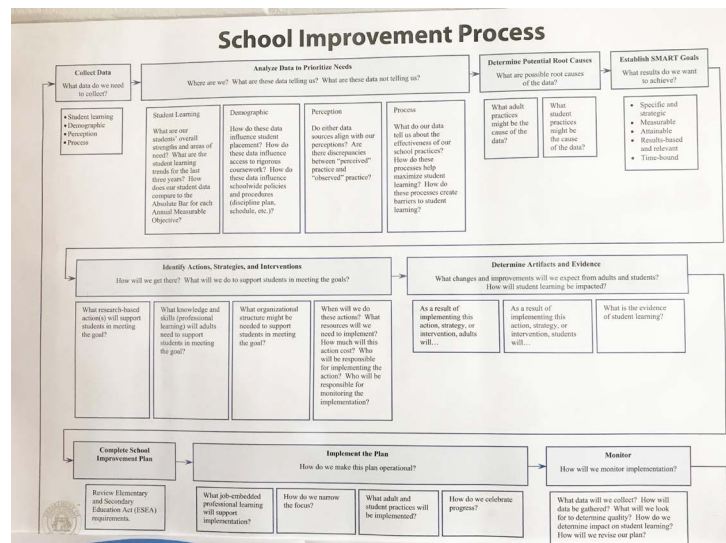
- “I believe we have a focus now that everybody is looking at. We have that strategic map that we all look at now.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “All of our planning stems from the Strategic Plan.” (Building Administrator)
- “The strategic plan is posted everywhere and you have to show where you are moving toward the plan.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “I’m not clear what the vision of the District is.” (Parent)
- “We’re getting principals to really look at their data and really think about it before making plans. We need to get it down to the classroom level.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “We need to be a little bit more selective about the number of initiatives we try...jumping off one train, before the other one stops.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “This school is doing this, another school is doing that. There is no consistency between the schools as to what they’re doing.” (Building Administrator)
- “I need someone to prioritize things, because right now it’s all a priority.” (Teacher)
- “There are too many new and good initiatives. Teachers are overwhelmed.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Too many initiatives and no follow-through; thus, proficiency is lacking.” (Building Administrator)
- “We probably need stretch goals to be where we should be.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “At our school, we don’t have a performance issue, so we don’t feel like the improvement plan matters, so we just sort of ignore it.” (Teacher)
- “Our staff is veteran and there’s no urgency. They don’t see need to change.” (Building Administrator)

Summary

Overall, the reviewers found that current approaches to planning in the Richmond County School System are not of sufficient quality to lead the school system toward the desired results of improved student achievement. Board policies have neither comprehensive expectations or clear direction to clearly guide district planning. Collectively, district-, department-, and school-level plans are not tightly aligned, nor do they communicate a clear, unifying focus for improving student achievement or addressing disparities in student achievement. District strategic and department- and school-level improvement plans need clear deployment strategies for using system performance data to monitor the effectiveness of district improvement efforts over time. The number of improvement initiatives and action steps in district and school improvement plans exceeds the capacity of the school system to implement well (see [Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8](#)).



School improvement goals posted at A. Brian Merry Elementary School



The school improvement process used by school administrators was on display at Pine Hill Middle School

Finding 1.3: Board policies have insufficient scope and content to provide enough direction for the effective management of curriculum and other district functions.

There are many laws that govern public schools, including constitutional laws enacted by state legislatures, interpretations of laws by the courts, and rules established by state and national education agencies. While these various sources of law establish the broad framework within which school districts must operate, local school boards adopt policies that govern all facets of school district operations, including curriculum and instruction, educational programs, resource adoptions, employment of staff, administration of public services, finances, and support services. In order for policies to provide an effective operational framework, they must be useful in communicating the values and expectations of the school board, ensure compliance with state and federal laws, direct practices that are appropriate to the school district, and guide administrators in making decisions that are consistent, uniform, and predictable. In order for policies to drive decision making, they must be specific, easily referenced, and the first-source documents to provide individual and system guidance. Conversely, when policies are absent, outdated, vague, or ignored there is no effective guidance for administrators or staff. The result may be that decisions are made at the discretion of individuals or special interests that may not be consistent with district values or expectations. In such instances, there may be a lack of coherence in systems, operations, and actions. Educational outcomes may be unpredictable and/or fragmented and may not reflect the intent of the school board.

Ensuring a high quality instruction for all students in the Richmond County School System requires a comprehensive curriculum policy framework that clearly communicates the expectations of the board. A well-written curriculum policy framework is critical in a school district's efforts to improve student achievement and close academic achievement gaps, particularly those that frequently exist among low-income students, minority students, students with disabilities, and students learning English language learners. The impact of a fragmented curriculum delivery system is disproportionately felt by these groups of students, frequently limiting post-secondary educational options, career choices, and potential lifetime income. It is through a comprehensive curriculum policy framework that the board translates expectations embedded in federal and state statutes into local implementation.

It is expected that a comprehensive policy framework be in place to ensure constancy of purpose, avoid curriculum fragmentation, and establish a clear expectation for the following:

- A centrally defined curriculum that is deeply aligned with state content standards and accountability systems.
- Variation in how teachers deliver instruction and engage students with the curriculum in order to optimize student mastery of the adopted curriculum regards of race, gender, disability, or socioeconomic status.
- Use of instructional resources to support delivery of the adopted written curriculum and not become a substitute or surrogate curriculum. A written curriculum should be developed prior to the adoption of an instructional resource.
- Use of student assessment data, gathered through the use of both formative and summative assessments, to guide modifications in the written curriculum and instructional approaches and to ensure consistent achievement by all students over time.
- Professional development opportunities that are differentiated based on the professional needs of teachers and designed to increase the capacity of teachers to effectively deliver the adopted curriculum.

The reviewers examined all policies, administrative regulations, and exhibits provided by the school district. They selected for further analysis those policies most directly related to curriculum management and organizational support and assessed them by comparing their content to 26 policy criteria that comprise the Curriculum Management Improvement Model (CMIM). This model serves as the basis for evaluating key documents in the review. Interviews were conducted with administrators, and staff to identify the extent to which board policies are used in the district to guide decisions about educational programs and the curriculum.

The reviewers found the Richmond County School System's policies to be incomplete in scope and insufficient in content and specificity to guide essential aspects of curriculum management and the district's educational programs. Most policies in the curriculum management areas of control, direction, consistency and equity, feedback, and productivity were either weak or absent. A limited scope of centrally defined administrative regulations hinders the ability of district leadership to ensure board policies are interpreted as intended and support consistent decision making across the district.

The Richmond County School System Board of Education is a policy-making body and serves as a legislative body in the development and evaluation of policies. Chartered in 1872, the board of education has the power to "make rules and regulations necessary for the conduct of its business and the government of its employees and the pupils of the schools." The board of education must comply with the Constitutional Provision and other laws of the State of Georgia, which require compliance by all school systems. The following provisions of the Official Code of Georgia were noted granting school boards the authority to manage the school district:

- O.C.G.A. § 20-2-59: "The county school superintendent and county board of education shall make rules to govern the county schools of their county."
- O.C.G.A. § 20-2-61: "The fundamental role of a local board of education shall be to establish policy for the local school system with the focus on student achievement."

The board of education, through its adopted policies, establishes its governance role in developing policies and directing the superintendent to develop necessary rules and regulations. The following policies reference the role of the board of education in establishing policies for the school system:

- *Board Policy ABB: Board Powers and Duties* states that the board of education shall have the power "To make rules and regulations necessary for the conduct of its business and the government of its employees and the pupils of the schools."
- *Board Policy BD: Policy Development* states, "The Board of Education, representing the people of the community, is the governing body that establishes policies to be implemented in the operation of the public schools."
- *Board Policy BBD: Board-School Superintendent Relations* states that the function of the board is to legislate and set policy.

The following policies reference the role of the superintendent in developing rules and regulations for the implementation of board-adopted policies:

- *Board Policy BD: Policy Development* states, "The Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to manage the affairs of the school system through the execution of Board policies. The Superintendent is authorized to establish such administrative processes as will be needed to ensure that board policies are reviewed periodically and that adequate deliberation by all interested parties precedes any recommendation by the Superintendent to the Board regarding a proposed policy or policy amendment."
- *Board Policy BBD: Board-School Superintendent Relations* establishes the board's expectation that the superintendent will execute and administer the policies passed by the board effectively.

The Richmond County School System Board of Education requires the superintendent to review board policies at least annually following the legislative session but prior to July of each year. The board attorney may assist in drafting board policies and shall review all proposed policies for legality, form, and substance. Adopted board policies are posted to a website hosted by the Georgia School Board Association, and linked to the Richmond County School System website.

Reviewers obtained for review and analysis copies of 125 board of education policies and 16 administrative regulations from the Richmond County School System's website. [Exhibit 1.3.1](#) lists 67 curriculum management policies and administrative regulations selected by reviewers for analysis.

Exhibit 1.3.1

Board of Education Policies and Administrative Regulations Reviewed by Reviewers Richmond County School System October 2017

Policy No.	Policy and Regulation Title	Date of Adoption/ Revision
AA	School District Legal Status	3/17/2009
AB	School Board Legal Status	1/1/1978
ABB	Board Powers and Duties	9/9/1999
ABD	School Superintendent Legal Status	3/1/1989
AD	School Attendance Areas	9/9/1999
AE	School Year	3/17/2009
BBA	Board Officers	9/11/2008
BBBB	New Member Orientation	7/21/2009
BBBC	Board Member Development Opportunities	10/14/1999
BBC	Board Committee	10/14/1999
BBD	Board-School Superintendent Relations	10/14/1999
BBF	Advisory Committees	9/1/1991
BBFA	Local School Councils	9/20/2016
BD	Policy Development	9/11/2008
BDD	Policy Dissemination	7/21/2009
BDF	Review of Administrative Rules	10/14/1999
BDG	Administration in Policy Absence	7/21/2009
BH	Board Code of Ethics	12/14/2010
CEA	Superintendent Qualifications	5/18/2010
CEE	Superintendent Compensation and Benefits	1/1/1989
CEG	Superintendent Professional Development Opportunities	1/1/1978
CL	Councils, Cabinets, and Committees	8/10/2006
DCC-R(1)	Budget Preparation Procedures	8/10/2000
DCD	Budget Preliminary Adoption Procedures	1/1/1991
DCH	Budget Periodic Budget Reconciliation	1/1/1991
DCK	Level of Budgetary Control	9/11/2008
DFC	Federal Funds	10/18/2016
DFF	Grants	9/1/2007
DFF-R(1)	Grants	9/1/2007
DIB	Financial Reports	9/23/2010
EDC	Transportation Safety	9/11/2008
EEE	Wellness Program	9/11/2008
FGAD	Architect Responsibilities in Facilities Projects	2/16/2010
GAAA	Equal Opportunity Employment	1/19/2016
GAC	Staff Involvement in Decision Making	1/1/1989
GAD	Professional Learning Opportunities	3/15/2016
GBC	Professional Personnel Recruitment	9/11/2008
GBRC	Professional Personnel Work Loads	9/11/2008

Exhibit 1.3.1 (continued) Board of Education Policies and Administrative Regulations Reviewed by Reviewers Richmond County School System October 2017		
Policy No.	Policy and Regulation Title	Date of Adoption/ Revision
IBB	Charter Schools	11/19/2013
IDA	Basic Program	8/10/1972
IDBA	Sex Education	9/11/2008
IDCH	Dual Enrollment – Move on When Ready	12/13/2016
IDCH-R(1)	Dual Enrollment Move on When Ready	12/13/2016
IDDD	Gifted Student Programs	7/21/2015
IED	Scheduling for Instruction	12/13/2016
IED-R(1)	Scheduling for Instruction	12/13/2016
IEDA	Unstructured Break Time	9/11/2008
IFBC	Media Programs	7/21/2015
IFBG	Internet Acceptable Use	2/21/2017
IFBG-R(1)	Internet Acceptable Use	7/10/2014
IFCB	Field Trips and Excursions	8/12/1999
HIA	Grading Systems	1/17/2017
HIA-R(1)	Grading Systems	1/17/2017
IHE	Promotion and Retention	11/18/2014
JAA	Equal Educational Opportunities	1/19/2016
JBC(1)	Homeless Students	10/16/2010
JBC(1)-R(1)	Homeless Students	10/16/2010
JBC(4)	Awarding Units and Transferring Credit	1/17/2017
JBC	School Admissions	7/18/2013
JCDA	Student Code of Conduct	9/11/2008
JGC	Student Health Services	9/11/2008
JGF(2)	Seclusion or Restraint of Students	11/15/2016
JGF(2)-R(1)	Seclusion or Restraint of Students	11/15/2016
JGF	Student Safety	9/11/2008
KG	Use of School Facilities	7/20/2010
KG-R(1)	Use of School Facilities	7/20/2010
LEBA	Parental Involvement in Education	9/11/2008

Reviewers analyzed the policies and administrative regulations listed in [Exhibit 1.3.1](#) for congruence with review standards using 26 criteria, each with three defining characteristics. The reviewers assessed the quality of the board policies and administrative regulations by comparing the content to review criteria for good curriculum management. The 26 criteria are organized into five categories—control, direction, consistency and equity, feedback, and productivity—that mirror the five standards of the review. Relevant policies were selected from those noted in [Exhibit 1.3.1](#) for further study and review.

The reviewers examined each relevant policy to determine if the review criteria were met. For each criterion, a score of 0 to 3 points was given based on the characteristics of the policy. If a policy or administrative regulation (or several considered together) met any of the defining characteristics, the policy or administrative regulation was given the corresponding score (1-3). If a policy or administrative regulation was considered too weak to meet the characteristics or if there was no policy or administrative regulation regarding the criterion, a rating of 0 was given. To be considered adequate, 70% of the total possible points for a standard (set of criteria) had to be given. Results of this analysis are contained in [Exhibits 1.3.2](#) through [1.3.7](#)

Exhibit 1.3.2 provides the reviewers' analysis of board policies for Standard One and the level of control provided by the policies related to the design and delivery of the written curriculum, long-range planning, and functional decision-making structures.

Exhibit 1.3.2

Reviewers' Analysis of Board Policies and Administrative Regulations On Review Standard One to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy Richmond County School System October 2017

Standard One—Provides for Control: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Review Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Reviewers' Rating
1.1 A taught and assessed curriculum that is aligned to the district written curriculum		
• Requires the taught and assessed curriculum to be aligned to the district’s written curriculum	IDA	1
• Addresses the alignment of the district’s written curriculum with state and national standards for all subject areas and grades (includes electives)		1
• Directs the district’s written curriculum documents to be more rigorous than state and national standards to facilitate deep alignment in all three dimensions with current and future high-stakes tests		0
1.2 Philosophical statements of the district instructional approach		
• Has a general philosophical statement of curriculum approach, such as standards-based, competency-based, outcome-based, etc.	IDA	1
• Directs adherence to mastery learning practices for all content areas and grades involved in local, state, and national accountability		0
• Directs adherence to mastery learning practices for all grade levels and content areas, including electives		0
1.3 Board adoption of the written curriculum		
• Requires the annual review of new or revised written curriculum prior to its adoption	IDA ABB	0
• Directs the annual adoption of new or revised written curriculum for all grade levels and content areas		1
• Directs the periodic review of all curriculum on a planned cycle over several years		0
1.4 Accountability for the design and delivery of the district curriculum through roles and responsibilities		
• Directs job descriptions to include accountability for the design and delivery of the aligned curriculum		0
• Links professional appraisal processes with specific accountability functions in the job descriptions of central office administrators, building administrators, and regular classroom teachers		0
• Directs professional appraisal processes to evaluate all staff in terms of gains in student achievement		0
1.5 Long-range, system-wide planning		
• As part of the district planning process, policy requires that the superintendent and staff think collectively about the future and that the discussion take some tangible form (This allows for flexibility without prescribing a particular template)	GAD BH	0
• Requires the development of a system-wide, long-range plan that is updated annually; incorporates system-wide student achievement targets; and is evaluated using both formative and summative measures		1
• Expects school improvement plans to be congruent with the district long-range plan, to incorporate system-wide student achievement targets, and to be evaluated using both formative and summative measures		1

Exhibit 1.3.2 (continued) Reviewers’ Analysis of Board Policies and Administrative Regulations On Review Standard One to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy Richmond County School System October 2017		
Standard One—Provides for Control: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Review Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Reviewers’ Rating
1.6 Functional decision-making structure		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expects an organizational chart that is annually reviewed, presented to the board, and approved by the superintendent	CL BBFA LEBA	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires that job descriptions for each person listed on the organizational chart be present and updated regularly to ensure that all review criteria, such as span of control, logical grouping of functions, etc., are met		0
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Directs and specifies the processes for the formation of decision-making bodies (e.g., cabinet, task forces, committees) in terms of their composition and decision-making responsibilities, to ensure consistency, non-duplication of tasks, and product requirements		0
Standard One Rating (number of points for the six criteria with a possibility of 18)		6
Percentage of Adequacy (points divided by the number of possible points—18)		33.3%
Note: One point was awarded for every characteristic met under each criterion for a maximum of three points. No points are awarded when policies do not meet any characteristics.		
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Exhibit 1.3.2 presents the reviewers' ratings of the district policies and regulations related to Standard One, which provides for control. Reviewers found that board policies had neither sufficient content, specificity, nor direction to fully meet this review criterion. At least 70% of the characteristics must be met for the policies to be considered adequate; the reviewers found that 6 out of 18 (33.3%) of the criteria were met.

The following presents information about the reviewers' ratings on Standard One:

Criterion 1.1: A taught and assessed curriculum that is aligned to the district written curriculum

Reviewers found one policy, *Policy IDA*, which addresses alignment of the district's curriculum. *Policy IDA* requires teachers to align their units of study, lesson plans, instruction, and assessment to the district published curriculum guides. Curriculum guides are to be aligned with Georgia Department of Education Standards and with criterion referenced, norm referenced and system development assessments. The effectiveness of the curriculum is to be determined in part by student performance on local, state, and national criterion referenced and norm referenced assessments. No policy expectation was found that would require the district's written curriculum to be more rigorous than state and national standards. Two points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 1.2: Philosophical statement of the district instructional approach

Policy IDA states, "It is policy of the Richmond County Board of Education to provide a comprehensive Richmond County K-12 curriculum, instruction and assessment program (RCK12) to serve the educational needs of the System's students. The Board shall utilize and implement a standards based approach to curriculum and instruction." No policy statement or administrative regulation was found that clearly defined "standards based" in terms of expectations for student mastery of the knowledge and skills that are deemed essential. One point was awarded for this criterion.

Criterion 1.3: Board adoption of the written curriculum

Policy ABB asserts the authority of the board of education "To establish upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of the schools the course of study for each class and grade in the school system." *Policy IDA* states, "The Board of Education shall approve new courses prior to their implementation." While board policy

establishes the authority of the board of education to approve new courses, no policy expectation for a planned system review process was found. One point was awarded this criterion.

Criterion 1.4: Accountability for the design and delivery of the district curriculum through roles and responsibilities

Within board policies examined, reviewers found no references to job descriptions or professional appraisal. No policy expectation was found linking gains in student achievement to the process for evaluating the professional work of staff. No points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 1.5: Long-range, system-wide planning

Policy GAD states, “The Superintendent shall cause to be prepared and implemented a system-level Strategic Plan that includes professional learning as a major component, developed according to priorities that are determined annually by the local Board of Education. The Superintendent and appropriate staff shall facilitate the development and implementation of procedures for assuring that each school within the school system has a School Improvement Plan (SIP) that addresses comprehensive professional learning as a major component and is aligned with the system Strategic Plan.” While references to system-level strategic plans and school-level improvement plans were noted in board policy, no policy expectation was found that such planning would include measurable student achievement targets. Two points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 1.6: Functional decision-making structure

Reviewers found no policy expectations regarding an organizational chart or job descriptions. *Policy CL* directs the establishment of a Transportation Council but makes no other reference to establishing standing, temporary, and/or ad hoc committees. Several policies reference school councils, but none directly addresses establishment of school councils or the role or function of school councils. No points were awarded this criterion.

Exhibit 1.3.3 provides the reviewers’ analysis of board policies for Standard Two and the direction provided by the policies related to the establishment of valid and measurable learning objectives for students through a written curriculum, aligned assessments, instruction resources, and program interventions.

Exhibit 1.3.3

**Reviewers’ Analysis of Board Policies and Administrative Regulations
On Review Standard Two to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy
Richmond County School System
October 2017**

Standard Two—Provides for Direction: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Review Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Reviewers' Rating
2.1 Written curriculum with aligned, criterion-referenced formative assessments for all subject areas at all grade levels		
• Requires enough specificity so that all teachers can consistently describe how students will demonstrate mastery of the intended objective	IDA	1
• Requires formative assessment instruments that align to specific curriculum objectives		1
• Directs that suggestions be provided to teachers for differentiating curriculum to meet students' needs as diagnosed by formative assessments		0
2.2 Periodic review/update of the curriculum and aligned resources and assessments		
• Requires the development of procedures to both formatively and summatively review the written curriculum for all grade levels and content areas	IDA	1
• Requires the annual review of test banks, benchmark assessments, and other assessment instruments for alignment with the district or state accountability system		0
• Evaluates assessment instruments for alignment to the district curriculum in all three dimensions: content, context, and cognitive type		0

Exhibit 1.3.3 (continued) Reviewers’ Analysis of Board Policies and Administrative Regulations On Review Standard Two to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy Richmond County School System October 2017		
Standard Two—Provides for Direction: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Review Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Reviewers’ Rating
2.3 Textbook/resource alignment to curriculum and assessment		
• Requires textbooks/resources to be regularly reviewed and the resource revision/ adoption cycle to align with the curriculum revision cycle	IFBC	0
• Directs review of all new instructional resource materials for content, context, and cognitive type alignment to the district curriculum and assessment		0
• Directs district staff to identify discrete areas where alignment is missing and provide teachers with supplementary materials to address gaps in alignment (missing content, inadequate contexts, etc.)		0
2.4 Content area emphasis		
• Directs the yearly identification of subject areas that require additional emphasis based on a review of assessment results		0
• Within subject areas, requires identification by administration of specific objectives, contexts, cognitive types, and instructional practices to receive budgetary support		0
• Requires focused professional development and coaching to support the instructional delivery of the identified priorities within the content areas		0
2.5 Program integration and alignment to the district’s written curriculum		
• Directs that all subject-related (e.g., reading, Title I) and school-wide (e.g., tutoring, DARE, AVID) programs be reviewed for alignment to the written and assessed curriculum		0
• Requires written procedures for both formative and summative evaluation of all new subject-related and school-wide programs before submission to the board for approval		0
• Directs administrative staff to prepare annual recommendations for subject-related and school-wide program revision, expansion, or termination based on student achievement		0
Standard Two Rating (number of points for the five criteria with a possibility of 15)		3
Percentage of Adequacy (points divided by the number of possible points—15)		20%
Note: One point was awarded for every characteristic met under each criterion for a maximum of three points. No points are awarded when policies do not meet any characteristics.		
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Exhibit 1.3.3 presents the reviewers' ratings of the district policies and administrative regulations related to Standard Two, which provides for direction. Reviewers found that board policies did not have either sufficient scope, content or specificity, and direction to meet this review criterion. At least 70% of the characteristics must be met for the policies to be considered adequate. The reviewers found that 3 of the 15 characteristics (20%) were met.

The following presents information about the reviewers' ratings on Standard Two:

Criterion 2.1: Written curriculum with aligned, criterion-referenced formative assessments for all subject areas at all grade levels

Policy IDA requires curriculum guides to serve as the framework from which teachers will develop their instruction. This policy requires, "The curriculum will be developed so that it provides an articulated set of student learning standards, including, but not limited to, clearly defined, measurable academic goals." *Policy IDA* requires the superintendent to "ensure that curriculum guides direct the standards, content and skills to be taught in each course." This policy requires the curriculum content to align with criterion referenced, norm referenced,

and system developed assessments. Reviewers found no expectations within board policies or administrative regulations regarding differentiation of instruction or that the written curriculum is to contain suggestions for approaches to instructional differentiation. Two points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 2.2: Periodic review/update of the curriculum and aligned resources and assessments

Policy IDA states, “Assessment of the effectiveness of the curriculum shall be determined, in part, by the performance of students on local, state and national criterion referenced and norm referenced assessments.” This policy was considered weak, however, because it did not have a requirement for the review of the curriculum for all grade levels and content areas. Reviewers found no policy expectation or administrative regulation requiring review of all assessments for alignment with state assessments or alignment to the written curriculum in terms of content, context, and cognitive type. One point was awarded this criterion.

Criterion 2.3: Textbook/resource alignment to curriculum and assessment

Reviewers found no board policies or administrative regulations that address the selection of textbooks and other instructional resources aligned with the curriculum revision cycle, or that require that all instructional resources be reviewed for content, context, and cognitive type aligned to the district curriculum and district assessments. No points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 2.4: Content area emphasis

No board policies were found that require professional development in support of curriculum delivery or require identifying subject areas that need additional emphasis and budgetary support. No points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 2.5: Program integration and alignment to the district’s written curriculum

Reviewers found no board policies or administrative regulations addressing program alignment, evaluation, revision, expansion, or termination. No policy expectation was found that programs such as special education programs, gifted programs, and compensatory programs be evaluated for effectiveness or that district programs be revised or modified based on effectiveness in terms of students achievement. No points were awarded this criterion.

Exhibit 1.3.4 provides the reviewers’ analysis of board policies for Standard Three and the direction provided by the policies related to curriculum articulation and coordination, professional development to deliver the approved curriculum, monitoring the delivery of the curriculum, and equitable student access to the curriculum, instructional resources, and the learning environment.

Exhibit 1.3.4

**Reviewers’ Analysis of Board Policies and Administrative Regulations
On Review Standard Three to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy
Richmond County School System
October 2017**

Standard Three—Provides for Consistency and Equity: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Review Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Reviewers’ Rating
3.1 Predictability of written curriculum from one grade and/or instructional level to another		
• Requires the vertical articulation and horizontal coordination of the curriculum within schools	IDA	1
• Requires vertical articulation across grade levels and horizontal coordination among schools at a given level for all content areas		0
• Directs the identification of prerequisite skills and their placement in the written curriculum at the appropriate grade/instructional level		0

Exhibit 1.3.4 (continued) Reviewers’ Analysis of Board Policies and Administrative Regulations On Review Standard Three to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy Richmond County School System October 2017		
Standard Three—Provides for Consistency and Equity: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Review Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Reviewers’ Rating
3.2 Training for staff in the delivery of the curriculum		
• Directs the development and implementation of a district professional development plan, focused on effective curriculum delivery, that is congruent with the district long-range plan and annual goal priorities	GAD IDA	0
• Requires a process whereby staff are coached over time in the implementation of professional development initiatives		0
• Directs the regular evaluation of the impact of professional development on student achievement, using both formative and summative measures		0
3.3 Delivery of the adopted district curriculum		
• Requires all staff to deliver the curriculum as approved by the board	IDA	1
• Requires building principals and all central office staff with curriculum responsibilities to review disaggregated assessment results and identify areas where curriculum delivery may be ineffective		0
• Requires an annual report for the board regarding the status of curriculum delivery		0
3.4 Monitoring the delivery of the district curriculum		
• Directs building principals to develop and implement a plan to monitor the delivery of the district curriculum on a weekly basis	IDA	1
• Directs central office curricular staff to assist the principal in monitoring the delivery of the district curriculum		0
• Requires periodic school and classroom data-gathering reports from administrators detailing the status of the delivery of the curriculum across the district, with recommendations for the creation of professional development activities or curricular revisions		0
3.5 Equitable student access to the curriculum, instructional resources, and learning environment		
• Requires equal student access to the curriculum, appropriate instructional materials for a variety of learning levels and modes, and appropriate facilities to support the learning environment necessary to deliver the district curriculum	GAAA IDA IDCH IDDD JAA	1
• Directs the development of procedures for fast-tracking students who lack sufficient prerequisite skills for courses such as AP, honors, etc., but need more challenging content		0
• Requires an annual review of equity data (such as access, racial isolation, rigor), the subsequent reporting to the board of those data, and the development of a plan for correcting equity issues		0
Standard Three Rating (number of points for the five criteria with a possibility of 15)		4
Percentage of Adequacy (points divided by the number of possible points—15)		26.7%
Note: One point was awarded for every characteristic met under each criterion for a maximum of three points. No points are awarded when policies do not meet any characteristics.		
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Exhibit 1.3.4 presents the reviewers' ratings of the district board policies and administrative procedures related to Standard Three, which provides for consistency and equity. Reviewers found that board policies do not have sufficient content, specificity, and direction to meet this review criterion. At least 70% of the characteristics must be met for the policies to be considered adequate. The reviewers found that 4 of 15 (26.7%) characteristics were met.

The following presents information about the Reviewers' ratings on Standard Three:

Criterion 3.1: Predictability of written curriculum from one grade and/or instructional level to another

Reviewers found within *Policy IDA* a requirement that the curriculum will provide an articulated set of student learning standards that promotes continuity and cumulative acquisition of skills and knowledge from grade to grade and from school to school. Reviewers, however, found no policy requirement for horizontal coordination of the curriculum among schools at a given grade level or an expectation that prerequisite skills will be identified and placed in the written curriculum at the appropriate level. One point was awarded for this criterion.

Criterion 3.2: Training for staff in the delivery of the curriculum

Policy GAD communicates the importance of establishing, coordinating, and maintaining professional learning programs that enhance the skills and knowledge of district personnel to improve student achievement. *Policy IDA* indicates the board of education encourages professional development as it relates to curriculum implementation. No policy expectation was found that would require the development and implementation of a professional development plan focused on curriculum delivery. No policy was found that specifically addressed how professional development needs would be identified and addressed at the school and district level or how professional development efforts would be evaluated for effectiveness in terms of student achievement. No points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 3.3: Delivery of the adopted curriculum

Reviewers found within *Policy IDA* an explicit expectation that all teachers are required to teach the curriculum. While there is a policy expectation that the superintendent will keep the board informed regarding curriculum efforts and student achievement in the school system, there is no policy expectation that the superintendent will report to the board at least annually regarding the status of curriculum delivery in the school system. Reviewers found no policies that required the use of disaggregated assessment results to identify areas for curriculum delivery that may be ineffective, although *Policy IDA* states curriculum effectiveness will be determined, in part, by student performance on local, state, and national criterion and norm referenced assessments. One point was awarded this criterion.

Criterion 3.4: Monitoring the delivery of the district curriculum

Policy IDA provides a general expectation that "The principal shall be responsible for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum based on the System's published curriculum guides." Board policies, however, do not explicitly require a plan for the systematic monitoring of curriculum delivery in the district, or the involvement of system level curricular staff in assisting principals in monitoring the delivery of the adopted curriculum. No policy expectation was found that requires the aggregating of school and classroom data detailing the status of curriculum delivery across the district. One point was awarded this criterion.

Criterion 3.5: Equitable student access to the curriculum, instructional resources, and learning environment

Several policies were found that establish an expectation that students are not to be denied access to the district's educational programs. *Policy GAAA* and *Policy JAA* both state the following: "It is the policy of the Richmond County Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, race, disability, religion or national origin in the educational programs and activities of or admissions to facilities operated by the Board or in the employment practices of the Richmond County Education Agency." *Policy IDA* states, "There will be only one core curriculum with equal access for all students regardless of program funding source." *Policy IDDD* states, "The System offers programs for K-12 gifted education to facilitate exceptional academic achievement. Programs for the gifted students assure that the education environment provides students the opportunity to extend competencies in the areas of cognitive skills, learning skills, research skills, communication skills, and metacognitive skills beyond the regular classroom."

While several policies require that students not be denied access to the educational programs of the school system, board policies were considered weak in establishing an expectation that students will have equal access to the appropriate materials and instructional differentiation necessary to support delivery of the district curriculum. Reviewers found no references requiring the review of equity data or differentiation of curriculum

for different learning levels and needs in the classroom or fast-tracking students who do not have sufficient skills for courses such as AP or honors courses. One point was awarded this criterion.

Exhibit 1.3.5 provides the reviewers' analysis of board policies for Standard Four and the direction provided by the policies for student and program assessment and the use of data to determine program and curriculum and efficiency.

Exhibit 1.3.5

Reviewers' Analysis of Board Policies and Administrative Regulations On Review Standard Four to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy Richmond County School System October 2017

Standard Four—Provides for Feedback: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Review Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulation	Reviewers' Rating
4.1 A student assessment process		
• Requires the development and implementation of a district student assessment process that goes beyond the state accountability assessment system and includes both formative and summative measures		0
• Requires the development and implementation of a district student assessment process that is differentiated to address variations in student achievement (both above and below grade level) and includes both formative and summative assessment measures		0
• Requires assessment instruments to be more rigorous in content, context, and cognitive type than external, high stakes assessments		0
4.2 A program assessment process		
• Directs the development and implementation of a district program evaluation process		0
• Requires each proposed program to have an evaluation process (The process includes both formative and summative evaluations) before that program is adopted and implemented		0
• Directs the program assessment process to link with district planning initiatives, including site improvement plans and the strategic/long-range plan		0
4.3 Use of data from assessments to determine program and curriculum effectiveness and efficiency		
• Requires the disaggregation of assessment data at the school, classroom, student subgroup, and student level to determine program and curriculum effectiveness and efficiency	IDA	0
• Requires classroom teachers to track and document individual student mastery in core content areas		0
• Requires the development of modifications to the curriculum and/or programs as needed in response to disaggregated assessment data to bring about effectiveness and efficiency		0
4.4 Reports to the board about program effectiveness		
• Requires yearly reports to the board regarding program effectiveness for all new programs for the first three years of operation	IDA	0
• Requires reports to the board every three years for long-term programs		0
• Requires summative reports to the board every five years for all content areas before any curriculum revisions or major materials acquisition, with the reports delivered prior to the curricular adoption cycle		0
Standard Four Rating (number of points for the four criteria with a possibility of 12)		0
Percentage of Adequacy (points divided by the number of possible points—12)		0%
Note: One point was awarded for every characteristic met under each criterion for a maximum of three points. No points are awarded when policies do not meet any characteristics.		
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Exhibit 1.3.5 presents the reviewers' ratings of the district board policies and administrative procedures related to Standard Four, which provides for feedback. Reviewers found that board policies did not have sufficient content, specificity, and direction to meet this review criterion. At least 70% of the characteristics must be met for the policies to be considered adequate. The reviewers found that none of the 12 characteristics were met.

The following presents information about the reviewers' ratings on Standard Four:

Criterion 4.1: A student assessment process

Reviewers found no policy references that require development and implementation of a student assessment process, a differentiated approach to student assessment, or assessment instruments that are more rigorous than external assessments. No points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 4.2: A program assessment process

Reviewers found no policies requiring implementation of a program assessment process that is linked to district planning initiatives, or includes the use of both formative and summative assessments, or is linked to district planning initiatives. No points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 4.3: Use of data from assessments to determine program and curricular effectiveness and efficiency

Reviewers found no policies requiring the use of disaggregated student assessment data to determine program and curriculum effectiveness or requiring modifications to the curriculum based on such data. No points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 4.4: Reports to the board about program effectiveness

Reviewers found no policies requiring annual reports regarding the effectiveness of all new programs or summative reports to the board prior to the start of any curriculum revision cycle. No points were awarded this criterion.

Exhibit 1.3.6 provides the reviewers' analysis of board policies for Standard Five and the direction provided by the policies for program-centered budgeting, resources allocation tied to curriculum priorities, environment support of curriculum delivery, data-driven decision making to increase student learning, change processes, and a support system focused on curriculum design and delivery.

Exhibit 1.3.6

**Reviewers' Analysis of Board Policies and Administrative Regulations
On Review Standard Five to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy
Richmond County School System
October 2017**

Standard Five—Provides for Productivity: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Review Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Reviewers' Rating
5.1 Program-centered budgeting		
• Directs development of a budget process that requires program evaluation, identification of specific measurable program goals before the budget process begins, and documented costs to ensure that expenditures are aligned within revenues and cost-benefit analysis is facilitated	DCC-R(1) DCD DCH DCK	0
• Requires adherence to a program-centered budgeting process that includes incremental budgeting based on different program types, delivery, and quality for all curriculum areas (The process provides evidence of tangible connections between allocations and anticipated program outcomes or accomplishments.)		0
• Directs full implementation of a program-centered budgeting process that includes incremental funding possibilities, a process for evaluating options, and the use of program evaluation data linked to budget allocations (This process enables program budget decisions to be based upon documented results and performance.)		0
5.2 Resource allocation tied to curriculum priorities		
• Requires a budget that allocates resources according to documented needs, assessment data, and established district curriculum and program goals and priorities	DCC-R(1) DCD DCH DCK	0
• Requires a budget that may be multi-year in nature, provides ongoing support for curriculum and program priorities, and connects costs with program expectations and data-based needs		0
• Directs a budget that provides resources needed to achieve system priorities over time and demonstrates the need for resources based on measurable results and/or performance of programs and activities		0
5.3 Environment to support curriculum delivery		
• Directs facilities that enable teachers to work in an environment that supports adequate delivery of the curriculum	DFN ABB	0
• Directs consideration of multi-year facilities planning efforts to adequately support the district curriculum and program priorities		0
• Directs facilities planning linked to future curriculum and instructional trends and to the teaching-learning environment incorporated in the documented system mission and vision statements		0
5.4 Support systems focused on curriculum design and delivery		
• Provides a clear connection between district support services and the achievement of the district curriculum design and delivery, and evidence of optimization within the system	EDC EEE	0
• Requires formative and summative evaluation practices for each support service to provide data for improving these services and documented evidence of improvement over time		0
• Requires periodic reports to the board with recommendations for continuing, revising, and/or developing new support services to enhance fulfillment of the mission, including needs-based data		0

Exhibit 1.3.6 (continued) Reviewers’ Analysis of Board Policies and Administrative Regulations On Review Standard Five to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy Richmond County School System October 2017		
Standard Five—Provides for Productivity: Directs the superintendent or designee to oversee the development of board policy to ensure:		
Review Criteria and Characteristics	Relevant Policies and Regulations	Reviewers’ Rating
5.5 Data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning		
• Directs the development of specific requirements for data analysis that lead to improved student learning for the core curriculum areas and electives		0
• Directs the development of specific requirements for data analysis that lead to improved student learning for all curriculum areas and grade levels (including electives)		0
• Directs the development of specific requirements for data analysis that lead to improved student learning for all operations of the district		0
5.6 Change processes for long-term institutionalization of district priority goals		
• Requires the identification of strategies, grounded in documented assessment of program success or efficacy, to be used by the district to ensure long-term institutionalization of change		0
• Directs the development of school improvement plans that address the use of specific change strategies at the building level to ensure the institutionalization of change and improved results or performance		0
• Directs that all district, department, and program plans incorporate procedures for change strategies to ensure the institutionalization of change for improvement and include procedures with formative and summative practices that provide data about change implementation and effectiveness		0
Standard Five Rating (number of points for the six criteria with a possibility of 18)		0
Percentage of Adequacy (points divided by the number of possible points—18)		0%
Note: One point was awarded for every characteristic met under each criterion for a maximum of three points. No points are awarded when policies do not meet any characteristics.		
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Exhibit 1.3.6 presents the reviewers' ratings of the district board policies and administrative procedures related to Standard Five, which provides for productivity. Reviewers' found that board policies had neither sufficient content, specificity, or direction to meet this review criterion. At least 70% of the characteristics must be met for the policies to be considered adequate. The reviewers' found that none of the 18 characteristics were met.

The following presents information about the reviewers' ratings on Standard Five:

Criterion 5.1: Program-centered budgeting

Reviewers found no policy requiring implementation of a program-centered approach to budgeting that requires alignment of organizational goals and priorities with budgetary expenditures and revenues. *Regulation DCC-R(1)* states, "It is the policy of the Board of Education to provide guidance to the superintendent relative to the method, manner and substance of the initial planning of each proposed annual budget." *Policy DCD* states, "The Board shall meet at least annually in a regular or special board meeting for the purpose of studying the annual operating budget." No points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 5.2: Resource allocation tied to curriculum priorities

Reviewers found no policy expectations that would require the development of a multi-year budget or that budget allocations be based, in part, on student assessment data or evidence of program effectiveness, with resources allocated to achieve district priorities. No points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 5.3: Environment to support curriculum delivery

In their examination of district policies, reviewers found no expectation that district facilities maintain a work environment that supports the delivery of curriculum. No policy expectation was found requiring the development of a multiyear facilities plan or facility planning linked to the district's anticipated future instructional needs. A reference to a facilities five-year plan that had been noted in *Policy DFN* was removed when the board approved a policy revision immediately prior to the review site visit. No clear definition was found within policy identifying what types of five year plans this policy would apply to. No points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 5.4: Support systems focused on curriculum design and delivery

Reviewers found no policy references connecting supporting services such as transportation, food services, nursing services, or technology services to student learning. No policy expectations were found that would require the evaluation of support services with a goal of improving services over time. No points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 5.5: Data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning

No policy statements were found that referenced the use of data analysis to improve student learning. No points were awarded this criterion.

Criterion 5.6: Change processes for long-term institutionalization of district priority goals

No policies were noted that referenced change or implementing change processes. No points were awarded this criterion.

Exhibit 1.3.7 shows the percentage of adequacy of board policies for each of the five standards and an overall percentage of adequacy for all five standards.

Exhibit 1.3.7

Summary Ratings of the Reviewer's Analysis of Board Policy And Administrative Procedures to Determine Quality and Degree of Adequacy Richmond County School System October 2017

Standard	Number of Criteria	Number of Possible Points	Points Given	Percentage of Points Relative to 70% Standard for Adequacy
One	6	18	6	33.3
Two	5	15	3	20.0
Three	5	15	4	26.7
Four	4	12	0	0
Five	6	18	0	0
Overall Rating for All Criteria	26	78	13	16.7%
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As can be noted in Exhibit 1.3.7, district policies and administrative procedures scored 13 out of a possible 78 points. Scores for each of the five categories are as follows: Control – 6 out of 18, Direction – 3 out of 15, Consistency and Equity – 4 out of 15, Feedback – 0 out of 12, and Productivity – 0 out of 18. To be considered adequate, an overall score of 57 points or 70%, is required. With an overall score of 13 points, or 16.7%, reviewers determined that the policies and administrative procedures of the Richmond County School System did not meet the review standard for effective governance and are considered inadequate.

Summary

The reviewers compared governing policies and administrative regulations to review criteria for quality in the areas of control, direction, consistency and equity, feedback, and productivity. It was determined that board policies and administrative regulations are not yet adequate in scope, content, and specificity to direct the superintendent and staff for effective management of curriculum and other district functions (see Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7).

Finding 1.4: The table of organization does not fully align with principles of organizational effectiveness needed for the general management of the school district. Job descriptions do not meet all review criteria for accurate and clear delineation of relationships in the district.

Administrative roles and responsibilities are important to an educational organization in the productive assignment and management of its tasks and functions. Without this grouping, there can be no economy of scale in administrative deployment. A functional, accurate, and timely delineation of administrative relationships is generally depicted in graphic form and called an Organizational Chart or Table of Organization.

An efficient and effective organization has an administrative structure that arranges personnel to ensure that processes are in place and personnel identified to manage curriculum. This structure establishes system operations and clear functioning across departments and among positions. Administrative operations, which are solely under the superintendent's authority, provide the mechanism for the board to translate its values, goals, policies, and intentions into action.

In an educational institution, positions are required in five key areas:

- Defining organizational focus, goals, and purposes (policy and planning);
- Designing the work with authorized outcomes and suggesting ways and means to accomplish organizational objectives (curriculum);
- Implementing the work within organizational specifications and guidelines (instruction);
- Measuring achievement of the work and providing feedback on results (assessment); and
- Managing functions to support the work (finance, human resources, support services).

Job descriptions are clearly written descriptions of duties and qualifications of persons employed by the school district. They provide employees with information regarding the background needed to successfully fulfill the responsibilities of the job and how positions are to function within the organization, including assignment of supervisory relationships and the critical components of the job. A clear set of job descriptions supports the district's internal and external communications by explaining who performs what duties within the organization. Adequately designed job descriptions should also align with the district's graphically depicted administrative relationships on the table of organization.

The reviewers examined relevant board policies and other supporting documents to identify the board's direction regarding job descriptions. Job descriptions were reviewed to determine the extent to which they are adequate in content to provide clear role direction for the organizational functions to support the design and delivery of curriculum. In addition, survey and interview data were used to gain perspective on the content of job descriptions and to understand their accuracy.

What the reviewers found were job descriptions that are not strong in communicating qualifications, linkages to chain of command, roles and responsibilities, and curriculum linkages. The organization chart presented to reviewers did not reflect sound general management of the school system when evaluated against review criteria. No board policies were found requiring the development of job descriptions or the development of an organizational chart.

In examining board policies, reviewers found no policy expectations requiring the superintendent to maintain an organizational chart depicting the organizational structure of the district with clear lines of authority established. No policy expectation was found requiring that job descriptions be maintained for each position listed on the

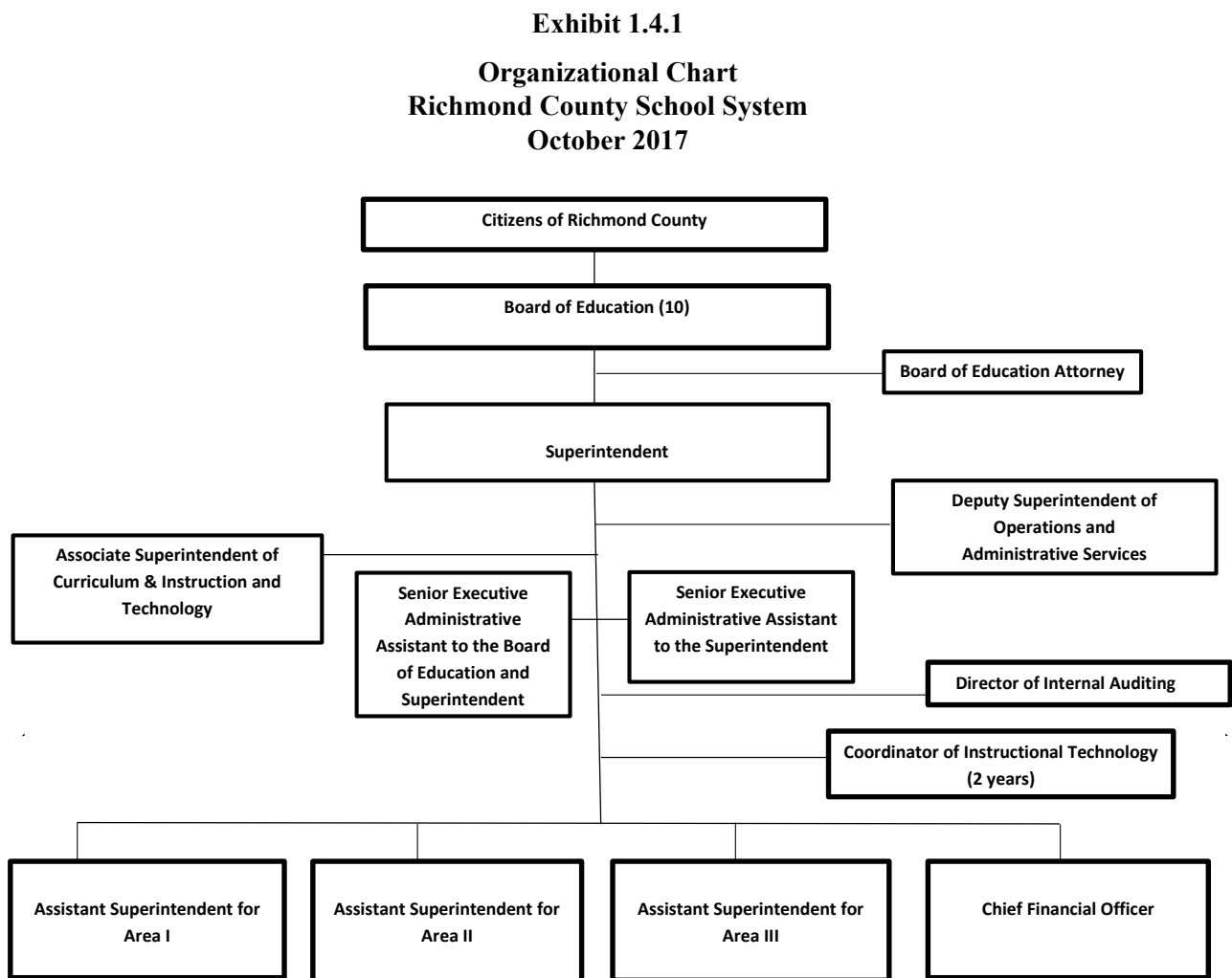
organizational chart, listing the content that must be included in written job descriptions, or requiring that job descriptions be periodically reviewed for all positions in the district.

Organizational Structure

In order to analyze the adequacy of the Richmond County School System's organizational chart, reviewers reviewed board policies, district provided compensation schedules, and job descriptions. In addition, they also analyzed survey data and conducted interviews with district administrators and staff.

During interviews with district administrators, the Richmond County School System's organizational chart was described as a work in progress, reportedly revised several times over the past three years, including revisions made just prior to the system review site visit. The analysis and findings by reviewers reflect the status of the organizational chart as presented to reviews at the time of the site visit.

Reviewers were presented with the organizational chart for the 2017-18 school year, as depicted on the district's website, displayed in [Exhibit 1.4.1](#). Reviewers were also presented with a more detailed organizational chart, which is displayed in [Appendix C](#).



Reviewers used the CMSi principles of sound organizational management to critique the Richmond County School System's organizational structured depicted in the documents reviewed. The principles used by the reviewers to examine the district's organizational structure are presented in [Exhibit 1.4.2](#). The review expectation is that all principles listed in the exhibit will be met.

Exhibit 1.4.2

Principles of Sound Organizational Management

Principle	Explanation
Span of Control	The range of superiors to subordinates should be 7-12 as a maximum number of persons who are supervised on a daily face-to-face-basis.
Chain of Command	A person should have only one superior to avoid being placed in a compromised decision-making situation.
Logical Grouping of Functions	The clustering of similar duties/tasks is employed in order to keep supervisory needs to a minimum (ensuring economy of scale).
Separation of Line and Staff Functions	Those administrators carrying out the primary mission of the district are not confused with those supporting it. Also, note that in reporting relationships, line administrators report only to other line administrators, never staff administrators. This keeps the line of accountability for the primary mission of the district uncomplicated.
Scalar Relationships	Roles of the same title and remuneration should be depicted graphically on the same general horizontal plane.
Full Inclusion	All persons working within the district carrying out its essential functions should be depicted on the table of organization.

The reviewers examined the organizational chart presented in [Exhibit 1.4.1](#) and [Appendix C](#), district job descriptions, and list of district personnel. In addition, the reviewers discussed the organizational structure during interviews with the superintendent and district staff. The reviewers found that the depiction of the organizational structures, as presented, did not meet CMSi criteria in all areas and is not adequate to provide for sound curriculum and instructional management. Specifically, the district's organizational chart did not meet CMSi criteria in the following areas:

- Span of control,
- Chain of command,
- Logical groups of functions,
- Separation of line and staff functions,
- Scalar relationships, and
- Full inclusion.

The following is the reviewers' assessment of the current Richmond County School System organizational chart (see [Exhibit 1.4.1](#) and [Appendix C](#)) based on the six criteria presented in [Exhibit 1.4.2](#).

Span of Control (Not Met)

Several positions appear to have a number of direct reports that exceed the range for this criterion. The range of subordinates reporting to the Superintendent, as depicted on the organizational chart, exceeds the range for this criterion. The organizational chart depicts the Deputy Superintendent, the Associate Superintendent, three Area Superintendents, and the Chief Financial Officer as direct reports. The board members are included in the Superintendent's span of control because of the impact they have on the time of the administrative leader, not because they are "supervised" by the superintendent. The range of subordinates reporting to the three Area Superintendents, 18, 29, and 20 principals, respectively, exceeds the range for this criterion. All other positions as depicted on the organizational chart did not exceed the span of control for effective day-to-day supervision.

Chain of Command (Not Met)

The chain of command as depicted on the organizational chart indicated no positions with multiple reporting lines. Reviewers noted several job descriptions that listed more than one direct report. Discrepancies were noted between the chain of command as depicted on the organizational chart and as described by district staff for

positions depicted under the Director of Transportation. Area Lieutenants, listed under the Assistant Director of School Safety and Security, are depicted without any reporting relationship.

Logical Grouping of Functions (Not Met)

A functional organizational structure arranges personnel by function and responsibility to ensure the effective and efficient design and delivery of the curriculum. The organizational structure needs to reflect the resources needed to operate the school system. The reviewers examined the organizational structure to determine the extent to which there were logical groupings of functions and noted the following:

- GLRS is depicted on the organizational chart under the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. East GLRS is a state agency, for which Richmond County serves as the fiscal agent, charged with assisting local school systems in meeting federal requirements and improving the academic performance of students with disabilities and other students who struggle to learn. With no accountability to the Richmond County School System Board of Education, GLRS should not be included on the organizational chart.
- The Director of Technology is depicted as a direct report to the Associate Superintendent of Curriculum & Instructional and Technology. The functions depicted under the Director of Technology are not instructional but rather operational and should be depicted as a staff function.

Separation of Line and Staff Functions (Not Met)

A “line function” is one that directly advances the core work of the school organization, that of delivering teaching and learning to students. A “staff function” is one that provides services and assistance to other parts of the organization, but is not directly involved in achieving the primary mission of the organization. On the organizational chart, reviewers expected to find a direct, uninterrupted line of authority extending from the board of education, through the superintendent and other central office officials, to school principals and classroom teachers. This separation is to be visually illustrated with the “line” relationship located at the center of the page. The line of authority depicted on the organizational chart for the Richmond County School System does not fully meet this review criterion. Teachers are not depicted in the central line of authority. The Director of Athletics is depicted as a staff function reporting to the Deputy Superintendent of Operations and Administrative Services rather than in a line function position.

Scalar Relationships (Not Met)

It is expected that the location of a position on the organizational chart would be consistent with the level of responsibility and compensation associated with each position from the superintendent downward. There is no consistency in how positions with varying degrees of responsibilities are depicted on the organizational chart, and job titles do not consistently reflect these differences. Reviewers were not presented with guidelines for defining the scope of responsibility associated with the various job titles depicted on the organizational chart.

Following are selected examples of some of the inconsistencies noted by the reviewers:

- The Senior Director of Maintenance & Facilities and the Senior Director of Transportation are depicted at the same level as the Directors of Athletics, Communications, Human Resources, School Nutrition, and School Safety and Security.
- The Human Resources Coordinator and Benefits and Workers Compensation Coordinator are depicted at the same level as the Assistant Director of Human Resources.
- The Coordinator of Instructional Technology and the Director of Internal Auditing are depicted at a higher level than the Assistant Superintendents and Chief Financial Officer.
- The System Data Coordinator is depicted at the same level as Community Engagement, Accountability Program, and District Improvement Specialists.
- The table of organization contains numerous examples of the violation of scalar relationships, both in the structure of reporting relationships and in the graphic arrangement of the table of organization.

Full Inclusion (Not Met)

An organizational chart depicts the relationship of one official, or one position, to others within the school district. Not all positions involved in the instructional program, such as assistant principals and teachers, are depicted on the organizational chart.

In summary, the reviewers found the organizational chart, as presented in [Exhibit 1.4.1](#), does not fully adhere to the review criteria for span of control, chain of command, logical grouping of functions, separation of line and staff functions, scalar relationships, and full inclusion.

Job Descriptions

To analyze job descriptions, reviewers examined policies, existing job descriptions, and other related documents. They also interviewed and surveyed staff regarding their job descriptions, responsibilities, and the supervision/reporting structure.

Reviewers were presented with a set of electronic files from the Department of Human Resources containing 977 job description documents. Reviewers found that many of the job description files presented appeared to be duplicates, with some files containing different versions of the same job description but frequently with no indication of which version was the most current. In addition to the electronic job description files provided, reviewers also identified, within board of education meeting minutes, numerous job descriptions that had been approved by the board of education over the past three years but were not included in the files provided by the Department of Human Resources. Given the disparate set of job descriptions presented, reviewers were able to identify 486 different job descriptions. Due to how the job description files were organized and the number of apparent duplicate job descriptions, reviewers were required to make judgements calls in selecting a set of unduplicated job descriptions.

From the set of 486 unduplicated job descriptions, reviewers selected 151 job descriptions for closer analysis. These were positions that may have direct or indirect responsibility for the delivery of curriculum. Due to the subjectivity involved in selecting a set of unduplicated job descriptions for review, the job descriptions selected for analyses should not be taken as definitive in detail, but rather as representative of the general status of the district's job descriptions at the time of the system review. The 151 job descriptions selected for analysis by reviewers are presented in [Exhibit 1.4.3](#).

Exhibit 1.4.3

Job Descriptions: Administrative, Instructional, and Instructional Support Richmond County School System October 2017

Job Description	Date Adopted/ Revised
21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor	2012
21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor (Summer)	2012
21st Century Community Learning Center District Project Coordinator	2009
21st Century Community Learning Center School Site Coordinator	2009
8.5 High School Broadfield Science Teacher	2017
8.5 High School English Teacher	2017
8.5 Middle Grades English Teacher	2017
8.5 Middle Grades Math Teacher	2017
Academic Supervisor for Performance Learning Center	2012
Accountability and IE ² Officer	2015
Accountability Program Specialist	2015
Adapted Music Teacher	2009

Exhibit 1.4.3 (continued) Job Descriptions: Administrative, Instructional, and Instructional Support Richmond County School System October 2017	
Job Description	Date Adopted/ Revised
Adapted Physical Education Teacher	2009
Administrative Intern	2015
After School Lead Teacher	2010
After School Teacher	2010
Afterschool Academic Program Instructor	2011
Assistant Principal	2009
Assistant Principal for Career, Technical, Agricultural Education	2009
Assistant Superintendent (Area I, II, and III)	2015
Assistant Superintendent of Instruction	2013
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services	2013
Assistive Technology Facilitator	2009
Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Technology	2015
Band Director	2009
Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Program Specialist	2009
Chief Financial Officer	2012
Chief Technology Officer	2008
Coordinator for Assessments and Research	2015
Coordinator for School Improvement/Professional Learning	2013
Coordinator of College and Career Readiness	2017
Coordinator of Counseling, Safe and Drug Free Schools	2015
Coordinator of Instructional Technology	2017
Coordinator of Special Education Services	2008
Coordinator of Student Information and Data Analyst	2009
Curriculum Coordinator	2015
Deputy Superintendent of Schools	2012
Director of Alternative Education	2009
Director of Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE)	2009
Director of Certified Trades	2017
Director of Curriculum	2009
Director of Human Resources	2017
Director of Internal Auditing	2008
Director of Non-Certified Trades	2017
Director of Operations	2017
Director of Professional Learning	2009
Director of School Nutrition Program	2009
Director of School Safety and Security (Chief)	2012
Director of Student Services	2017
Director of Transportation	2009
Early College English Teacher	2009
Early College History Teacher	2009
Early College Math Teacher	2009
Early College Science Teacher	2009
Early College Spanish Teacher	2009
Elective Program Specialist	2015

Exhibit 1.4.3 (continued) Job Descriptions: Administrative, Instructional, and Instructional Support Richmond County School System October 2017	
Job Description	Date Adopted/ Revised
Elementary School Principal	2009
Employee Evaluation Specialist	2009
English Language Arts Coordinator K-12	2009
ESOL Itinerant Teacher	2009
Fine Arts Coordinator	2009
Flexible Learning Program Coordinator	2014
Flexible Learning Program Manager	2014
Georgia Learning Resource System Program Specialist	2009
GNETS Paraprofessional	2008
GNETS Social Worker	2009
Graduation and Attendance Specialist	2015
Grant Program Specialist	2015
Head Football Coach	Undated
High School Principal	2009
Instructional Materials (Textbook) Manager	2010
Instructional Technology and State Reporting Specialist	2015
Instructional Technology Specialist	2008
JROTC Senior Navy Instructor	Undated
Lead Co-ordinator East Georgia Regional Learning Resource System (GLRS)	Undated
Lead School Social Worker	2009
Literacy and Math Center Media Teacher	2016
Literacy and/or Mathematics Teacher	2016
Literacy or Mathematics Paraprofessional	2016
Literacy/Mathematics Teacher	2016
Math and/or Literacy Title I Intervention Teacher	2015
Math Teacher on Special Assignment	Undated
Math, Science, or Literacy Academic Support Specialist	2015
Mathematics Coordinator	2009
Media Specialist	2009
Middle School Counselor	2009
Middle School Graduation Coach	2009
Middle School Principal	2009
Paraprofessional	2008
Paraprofessional (General Education)	2008
Paraprofessional (Pre-K)	2011
Paraprofessional (Special Education)	2008
Part-Time Lead Teacher (K-8) Boys and Girls Clubs of Augusta After School Programs	2009
Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Program Specialist	2017
Pre-K Lead Teacher	2011
Pre-K Lead Teacher Facilitator	Undated
Pre-K Program Manager	2013
Preschool Special Education Teacher	2009
Preschool Special Education Teacher-Evaluator	2009
Principal	2009

Exhibit 1.4.3 (continued) Job Descriptions: Administrative, Instructional, and Instructional Support Richmond County School System October 2017	
Job Description	Date Adopted/ Revised
Professional Learning Facilitator – English Language Arts (Elementary)	2015
Professional Learning Facilitator – Mathematics (Elementary)	2015
Professional Learning Facilitator – Social Studies K-12	2015
Professional Learning Facilitator for Leader Quality	2015
Professional Learning Facilitator for Teacher Quality	2015
Professional Learning Instructional Technology Specialist	2008
Professional Learning Specialist	Undated
Professional Learning Specialist - Social Studies	2011
Professional Learning Specialist – STEM	2015
Program Coordinator (Sand Hills GNETS Program)	2012
Program Manager [RT3]	Undated
Program Specialist (Special Education)	2009
Project Director Teaching American History Grant	2009
RCSS Project Plus Summer Program Teachers	2009
Reading or Math Intervention Teacher	2017
Response To Intervention (RTI) Program Specialist	2015
Sand Hills Program Director, Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Services (GNETS)	2009
School Psychologist	2009
School Social Worker	2009
Science, Health, Physical Education, and Family Dynamics Coordinator	2009
Senior Director of Facilities Services	2009
Senior Director of Transportation	2016
Social Studies Teacher on Special Assignment	2009
Social Studies/Foreign Language Coordinator	Undated
Special Education Autism Facilitator	2009
Special Education Paraprofessional	2009
Special Education Preschool Paraprofessional	2009
Speech Language Pathologist	2009
Substitute Teacher	2016
Summer School Principal	2010
Summer School Teacher	2009
Superintendent of Schools	2008
Teacher	2009
Teacher Contract Monitored School Tubman Middle School	2009
Teacher for Early Intervention Program	2009
Teacher for Special Education	2009
Teacher on Special Assignment – Core Content Areas	2009
Title I Department Coordinator	2017
Title I District School Improvement Specialist	2015
Title I Instructional Provider	2009
Title I Program Specialist	2009
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE)	2012
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Automotive Service Technology	2012
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Broadcast & Video Production	2012

Exhibit 1.4.3 (continued) Job Descriptions: Administrative, Instructional, and Instructional Support Richmond County School System October 2017	
Job Description	Date Adopted/ Revised
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Collision Repair	2012
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Culinary Arts	2012
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Electronic Technology	2012
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) - Information Technology	2012
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Manufacturing & Engineering Sciences	2012
Transition/Community-Based Instruction Facilitator	2009
Varsity Boys Head Basketball Coach	2009

To determine the quality of the Richmond County School System’s job descriptions, reviewers examined each job description for four critical elements:

- Qualifications;
- Links to Chain of Command;
- Functions, Duties, and Responsibilities; and
- Relationship to the Curriculum (where relevant).

Reviewers assigned a rating to each element using five indicators ranging from Missing to Exemplary. The rating indicators are presented in [Exhibit 1.4.4](#).

Reviewers found that the district’s job descriptions do not provide clear and accurate information about the deployment of human capital.

Exhibit 1.4.4

CMSi Rating Indicators for Job Descriptions

Rating	Explanation
Missing	No statement made.
Inadequate	A statement made, but is incomplete and missing sufficient detail.
Adequate	A more or less complete statement usually missing curricular linkages or sufficient detail regarding curricular linkages/alignment.
Strong	A clear and complete statement, including linkages to curriculum where appropriate or, if not appropriate, otherwise quite complete.
Exemplary	A clear, complete statement with inclusive linkages to curriculum indicated in exemplary scope and depth.
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Exhibit 1.4.5 presents the job descriptions examined by the reviewers and their assessment of the adequacy of each job description. For a job description to be considered strong, the four critical elements must be rated as adequate or higher.

Exhibit 1.4.5
Reviewers' Assessment of Selected Job Descriptions
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Job Title	Qual.	Chain of Command	Resp.	Curriculum Link
21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor (Summer)	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
21st Century Community Learning Center District Project Coordinator	Adequate	Inadequate	Strong	Adequate
21st Century Community Learning Center School Site Coordinator	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate
8.5 High School Broadfield Science Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
8.5 High School English Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
8.5 Middle Grades English Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
8.5 Middle Grades Math Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Academic Supervisor for Performance Learning Center	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate
Accountability and IE ² Officer	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Accountability Program Specialist	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Adapted Music Teacher	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Adapted Physical Education Teacher	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Administrative Intern	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate
After School Lead Teacher	Strong	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
After School Teacher	Strong	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Afterschool Academic Program Instructor	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Assistant Principal	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate
Assistant Principal for Career, Technical, Agricultural Education	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Assistant Superintendent (Area I, II, and III)	Adequate	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Assistant Superintendent of Instruction	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Assistive Technology Facilitator	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Technology	Adequate	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Band Director	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Program Specialist	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Chief Financial Officer	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate
Chief Technology Officer	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate
Coordinator for Assessments and Research	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Coordinator for School Improvement/Professional Learning	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Coordinator of College and Career Readiness	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Coordinator of Counseling, Safe and Drug Free Schools	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Coordinator of Instructional Technology	Inadequate	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Coordinator of Special Education Services	Adequate	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Coordinator of Student Information and Data Analyst	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Curriculum Coordinator	Adequate	Inadequate	Strong	Strong

Exhibit 1.4.5 (continued)
Reviewers' Assessment of Selected Job Descriptions
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Job Title	Qual.	Chain of Command	Resp.	Curriculum Link
Deputy Superintendent of Schools	Strong	Adequate	Inadequate	Missing
Director of Alternative Education	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Inadequate
Director of Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE)	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Missing
Director of Certified Trades	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Director of Curriculum	Adequate	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Director of Human Resources	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Missing
Director of Internal Auditing	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Director of Non-Certified Trades	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Director of Operations	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Director of Professional Learning	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Inadequate
Director of School Nutrition Program	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Missing
Director of School Safety and Security (Chief)	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Missing
Director of Student Services	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Director of Transportation	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Missing
Early College English Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Early College History Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Early College Math Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Early College Science Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Early College Spanish Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Elective Program Specialist	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Missing
Elementary School Principal	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Employee Evaluation Specialist	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Missing
English Language Arts Coordinator K-12	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Strong
ESOL Itinerant Teacher	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Fine Arts Coordinator	Adequate	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Flexible Learning Program Coordinator	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Flexible Learning Program Manager	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Georgia Learning Resource System Program Specialist	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Missing
GNETS Paraprofessional	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
GNETS Social Worker	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Graduation and Attendance Specialist	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Grant Program Specialist	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Missing
Head Football Coach	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate
High School Principal	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Instructional Materials (Textbook) Manager	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Instructional Technology and State Reporting Specialist	Adequate	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Instructional Technology Specialist	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
JROTC Senior Navy Instructor	Inadequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Lead Coordinator East Georgia Regional Learning Resource System (GLRS)	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Lead School Social Worker	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Literacy and Math Center Media Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Missing
Literacy and/or Mathematics Teacher	Strong	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Literacy or Mathematics Paraprofessional	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Literacy/Mathematics Teacher	Strong	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate

Exhibit 1.4.5 (continued)
Reviewers' Assessment of Selected Job Descriptions
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Job Title	Qual.	Chain of Command	Resp.	Curriculum Link
Math and/or Literacy Title I Intervention Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Math Teacher on Special Assignment	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Math, Science, or Literacy Academic Support Specialist	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Mathematics Coordinator	Inadequate	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Media Specialist	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Middle School Counselor	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Middle School Graduation Coach	Adequate	Adequate	Strong	Adequate
Middle School Principal	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Paraprofessional	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Paraprofessional (General Education)	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Paraprofessional (Pre-K)	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Paraprofessional (Special Education)	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Part-Time Lead Teacher (K-8) Boys and Girls Clubs of Augusta After School Programs	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Program Specialist	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Missing
Pre-K Lead Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Pre-K Lead Teacher Facilitator	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Pre-K Program Manager	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Missing
Preschool Special Education Teacher	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Preschool Special Education Teacher-Evaluator	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Principal	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Professional Learning Facilitator – English Language Arts (Elementary)	Strong	Inadequate	Adequate	Strong
Professional Learning Facilitator – Mathematics (Elementary)	Strong	Inadequate	Adequate	Strong
Professional Learning Facilitator – Social Studies K-12	Strong	Inadequate	Adequate	Strong
Professional Learning Facilitator for Leader Quality	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Missing
Professional Learning Facilitator for Teacher Quality	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Professional Learning Instructional Technology Specialist	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Strong
Professional Learning Specialist	Strong	Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Professional Learning Specialist - Social Studies	Strong	Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Professional Learning Specialist – STEM	Strong	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Program Coordinator (Sand Hills GNETS Program)	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Program Manager [RT3]	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Inadequate
Program Specialist (Special Education)	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Inadequate
Project Director Teaching American History Grant	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate
RCSS Project Plus Summer Program Teachers	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Reading or Math Intervention Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Response To Intervention (RTI) Program Specialist	Adequate	Inadequate	Strong	Adequate
Sand Hills Program Director, Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Services (GNETS)	Strong	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
School Psychologist	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
School Social Worker	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Science, Health, Physical Education, and Family Dynamics Coordinator	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate

Exhibit 1.4.5 (continued) Reviewers' Assessment of Selected Job Descriptions Richmond County School System October 2017				
Job Title	Qual.	Chain of Command	Resp.	Curriculum Link
Senior Director of Facilities Services	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Senior Director of Transportation	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Social Studies Teacher on Special Assignment	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Social Studies/Foreign Language Coordinator	Adequate	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Special Education Autism Facilitator	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Inadequate
Special Education Paraprofessional	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Special Education Preschool Paraprofessional	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Speech Language Pathologist	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Substitute Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Summer School Principal	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Missing
Summer School Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Superintendent of Schools	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Teacher	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Teacher Contract Monitored School Tubman Middle School	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Teacher for Early Intervention Program	Strong	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Teacher for Special Education	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Teacher on Special Assignment – Core Content Areas	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Title I Department Coordinator	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Title I District School Improvement Specialist	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Title I Instructional Provider	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Title I Program Specialist	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE)	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Automotive Service Technology	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Broadcast & Video Production	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Collision Repair	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Culinary Arts	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Electronic Technology	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) - Information Technology	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Manufacturing & Engineering Sciences	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Transition/Community-Based Instruction Facilitator	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Varsity Boys Head Basketball Coach	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Missing
Missing	0	0	0	16
Inadequate	13	72	29	16
Adequate	125	79	110	104
Strong	13	0	12	13
Exemplary	0	0	0	0

Of the 151 job descriptions selected for analysis by reviewers, reviewers rated 456 (75.5%) of the critical elements as adequate or higher. However, only 54 (35.8%) of all job descriptions examined were judged strong, receiving a rating of adequate or higher on all applicable critical elements. Only 16 (10.6%) of the job descriptions examined were found to be missing one of the four critical elements. Additional comments regarding reviewers' assessment of district job descriptions are offered below:

Qualifications

Job qualifications were rated highest among the four critical elements. In nearly all of the job descriptions (91.3%), the statement of qualifications was rated as adequate or above. Reviewers noted the following six job descriptions do not require background knowledge or experience that is central to the position:

- Coordinator of Counseling, Safe and Drug Free Schools
- Coordinator of Instructional Technology
- JROTC Senior Navy Instructor
- Mathematics Coordinator
- Science, Health, Physical Education, and Family Dynamics Coordinator
- Senior Director of Facilities Services

Reviewers noted the job descriptions for the 21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor and 21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor (Summer) do not require individuals to possess a teaching certificate. Four paraprofessional job descriptions—Paraprofessional, Paraprofessional (General Education), Paraprofessional (Pre-K), and Paraprofessional (Special Education)—require “Certification,” but the job descriptions do not specify the type of certificate that is required. In the job description for ESOL Itinerant Teacher, the certification requirement is appended to the job title rather than listed under the certifications heading.

In the job descriptions examined, the qualifications section included separate headings for background knowledge, educational requirements, and certifications. Reviewers rated the qualifications based on the information in the qualifications section of the document, regardless of which heading the information was under. However, the distinction between education and certification was not always presented consistently in the job descriptions reviewed. In some job descriptions the educational requirements were listed under the certification heading, and in others the certification requirements were listed under education heading. In other job descriptions, the educational requirements or the required certifications were listed under both headings, and in some cases, the information under one heading added requirements not included in the other.

In 13 of the job descriptions, the qualifications were rated as strong. This rating indicated the stated qualifications were specific and congruent with the required knowledge and experience for the position or there was a requirement for documented evidence of achievement in the tasks associated with the given position.

Chain of Command

Of the 151 job descriptions examined, reviewers rated the critical element for “chain of command” adequate in 79 (52.3%) of the job descriptions. The most frequent reason a job description was given an inadequate rating was for an obsolete reference to a supervisor. A reference to a supervisor was considered obsolete if there is no current job description for the listed supervisory or the position as depicted on the organizational chart reports to a supervisor different from the one listed in the job description. [Exhibit 1.4.6](#) lists 62 positions for which reviewers noted the direct report supervisor’s position is not covered by a job description or the direct report supervisor depicted on the organizational chart differs from that listed in the job description.

Exhibit 1.4.6

Job Descriptions with Obsolete Reference to Supervisor Richmond County School System October 2017

Job Title	Date
21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor	2012
21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor (Summer)	2012
21st Century Community Learning Center District Project Coordinator	2009
Accountability Program Specialist	2015

Exhibit 1.4.6 (continued) Job Descriptions with Obsolete Reference to Supervisor Richmond County School System October 2017	
Job Title	Date
Adapted Music Teacher	2009
Adapted Physical Education Teacher	2009
Afterschool Academic Program Instructor	2011
Assistive Technology Facilitator	2009
Coordinator for Assessments and Research	2015
Coordinator for School Improvement/Professional Learning	2013
Coordinator of Instructional Technology	2017
Coordinator of Student Information and Data Analyst	2009
Curriculum Coordinator	2015
Director of Alternative Education	2009
Director of Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE)	2009
Director of Curriculum	2009
Director of Internal Auditing	2008
Director of School Nutrition Program	2009
Director of School Safety and Security (Chief)	2012
Director of Transportation	2009
Elementary School Principal	2009
English Language Arts Coordinator K-12	2009
Fine Arts Coordinator	2009
Flexible Learning Program Manager	2014
Graduation and Attendance Specialist	2015
Grant Program Specialist	2015
High School Principal	2009
Instructional Materials (Textbook) Manager	2010
Instructional Technology Specialist	2008
Lead Coordinator East Georgia Regional Learning Resource System (GLRS)	Undated
Lead School Social Worker	2009
Mathematics Coordinator	2009
Middle School Principal	2009
Part-Time Lead Teacher (K-8) Boys and Girls Clubs of Augusta After School Programs	2009
Pre-K Program Manager	2013
Preschool Special Education Teacher	2009
Preschool Special Education Teacher-Evaluator	2009
Professional Learning Facilitator – English Language Arts (Elementary)	2015
Professional Learning Facilitator – Mathematics (Elementary)	2015
Professional Learning Facilitator – Social Studies K-12	2015
Professional Learning Facilitator for Leader Quality	2015
Professional Learning Facilitator for Teacher Quality	2015
Professional Learning Specialist	Undated
Professional Learning Specialist - Social Studies	2011
Program Manager [RT3]	Undated
Program Specialist (Special Education)	2009
Project Director Teaching American History Grant	2009
RCSS Project Plus Summer Program Teachers	2009

Exhibit 1.4.6 (continued) Job Descriptions with Obsolete Reference to Supervisor Richmond County School System October 2017	
Job Title	Date
Response To Intervention (RTI) Program Specialist	2015
Sand Hills Program Director, Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Services (GNETS)	2009
School Psychologist	2009
School Social Worker	2009
Science, Health, Physical Education, and Family Dynamics Coordinator	2009
Senior Director of Facilities Services	2009
Social Studies/Foreign Language Coordinator	Undated
Special Education Autism Facilitator	2009
Speech Language Pathologist	2009
Summer School Principal	2010
Teacher on Special Assignment – Core Content Areas	2009
Title I District School Improvement Specialist	2015
Title I Instructional Provider	2009
Transition/Community-Based Instruction Facilitator	2009

In nine job descriptions, reviewers rated the chain of command as inadequate for listing more than one direct report supervisor. The following job descriptions listed two direct report supervisors:

- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Professional Learning
- GNETS Paraprofessional
- GNETS Social Worker
- Math, Science, or Literacy Academic Support Specialist
- Media Specialist
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Program Specialist
- Pre-K Lead Teacher Facilitator
- Special Education Preschool Paraprofessional

The job description for ESOL Itinerant Teacher lists ‘Principal’ as the supervisor, which, for an itinerant teacher, is ambiguous. This differs from other itinerant staff, who are supervised by a central office employee and receive direction for their work in schools from principals.

Duties

Reviewers rated the listing of responsibilities in 122 (81%) of job descriptions examined as adequate or strong. Most of the job descriptions examined included a clear and specific set of job responsibilities that included duties related to the district’s educational mission.

In the following 14 job descriptions, reviewers rated the critical element of job responsibilities as inadequate because they included references to obsolete positions, departments, or programs:

- Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
- Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
- Coordinator for Assessments and Research
- Coordinator for School Improvement/Professional Learning

- Coordinator of Student Information and Data Analyst
- Deputy Superintendent of Schools
- Director of Internal Auditing
- English Language Arts Coordinator K-12
- Math Teacher on Special Assignment
- Professional Learning Facilitator for Leader Quality
- Professional Learning Facilitator for Teacher Quality
- Project Director Teaching American History Grant
- Science, Health, Physical Education, and Family Dynamics Coordinator
- Senior Director of Facilities Services

In the following 15 job descriptions, reviewers rated the critical element of job responsibilities as inadequate because the responsibilities listed were either unrelated to the position title or did not have specific responsibilities that would be expected for the given job title. In some cases, the insufficient specificity or incomplete congruence was due to the use of boilerplate text without modification.

- 21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor
- 21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor (Summer)
- Afterschool Academic Program Instructor
- Elective Program Specialist
- ESOL Itinerant Teacher
- Head Football Coach
- JROTC Senior Navy Instructor
- Lead Co-ordinator East Georgia Regional Learning Resource System (GLRS)
- Math and/or Literacy Title I Intervention Teacher
- Pre-K Lead Teacher
- Preschool Special Education Teacher-Evaluator
- Professional Learning Specialist
- Professional Learning Specialist - Social Studies
- Reading or Math Intervention Teacher
- Varsity Boys Head Basketball Coach

In the job descriptions that were rated strong for the list of responsibilities, reviewers noted a comprehensive set of duties that support the design, continuous improvement, and skillful delivery of curriculum at all phases from policy development to classroom implementation.

Link to Curriculum

Curricular linkages was rated as adequate or strong in 117 (77.5%) of the job descriptions rated by reviewers. Reviewers considered the nature of the position and examined all components of the job description for references to duties and responsibilities with a curricular and instructional focus. For positions that are directly involved in those tasks, reviewers looked for clear, specific, and complete indications of curricular functions in the job description. For positions that are not directly responsible for either the design and/or delivery of curriculum, reviewers looked for supportive reference to the instructional mission of the school organization.

Reviewers noted that the following 16 job descriptions included no references to curricular or instructional responsibilities or their role in supporting the organization's educational mission:

- Deputy Superintendent of Schools
- Director of Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE)
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of School Nutrition Program
- Director of School Safety and Security (Chief)
- Director of Transportation
- Elective Program Specialist
- Employee Evaluation Specialist
- Georgia Learning Resource System Program Specialist
- Grant Program Specialist
- Literacy and Math Center Media Teacher
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Program Specialist
- Pre-K Program Manager
- Professional Learning Facilitator for Leader Quality
- Summer School Principal
- Varsity Boys Head Basketball Coach

Sixteen job descriptions were rated as inadequate for curricular linkages by reviewers because there were insufficient references to the design and delivery of curriculum that could be reasonably associated with that position. The following job descriptions were rated as inadequate for curricular linkages:

- 21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor
- 21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor (Summer)
- 21st Century Community Learning Center School Site Coordinator
- Academic Supervisor for Performance Learning Center
- Administrative Intern
- Afterschool Academic Program Instructor
- Assistant Principal
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Technology Officer
- Coordinator for Assessments and Research
- Coordinator for School Improvement/Professional Learning
- Director of Alternative Education
- Director of Professional Learning
- Program Manager [RT3]
- Program Specialist (Special Education)
- Special Education Autism Facilitator

Summary

The organizational chart, as a graphic representation of district roles and relationships, does not meet review criteria and does not reflect principles of sound management of the school system. A majority of job descriptions examined were considered not adequate, with one or more critical elements rated as inadequate. Job descriptions were weakest in the ability to communicate clear supervisory relationships, with many references to a direct supervisor considered obsolete. The majority of job descriptions were considered adequate in the ability to communicate clearly responsibilities associated with the design and delivery of curriculum (see [Recommendations 3 and 4](#)).

Finding 1.5: Formal evaluations for teachers and principals are not fully utilized to develop instructional and leadership capacities, and are not effective in improving classroom teaching and learning.

The goal of any school system is to provide the best education possible for all students regardless of their background, prior experience, economic status, or ability. Delivering on this mission requires the strategic management of the human capital with the school organization. Specifically, the skills and professional capabilities of teachers and building administrators are critical to the success of schools in meeting the educational improvement needs of all students.

Formal evaluations play an integral part of any school system's operations whether they are for teachers or administrators. How well students learn the objectives of the written curriculum is directly related to the quality of instruction they receive in the classrooms of the school system. The purpose of formal evaluations is to document and communicate to teachers and building administrators regarding areas of professional strengths and areas for growth. An effective formal evaluation system also informs district leaders' employment decisions and planning professional learning supports. As part of this process, purposeful feedback creates a context in which teachers and building administrators can focus on past performance for the purpose of improving instructional practices and increasing the productivity of the school system.

To examine the effectiveness of the teacher and administrator evaluation process in achieving its stated purpose, reviewers examined the policies and procedures of the Richmond County School System, the instruments related to teacher and administrator evaluation, and a random sample of teacher and administrator formal evaluations completed for the 2016-17 school year. The evaluation process used by Richmond County School System follows the Georgia Department of Education requirements according to the Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) and the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES).

Reviewers found that the appraisal process and procedures used in the Richmond County School System do not provide teachers and administrators the feedback necessary to improve productivity. The formal appraisal process was found to be implemented primarily for compliance reasons rather than as a process used to improve leadership and classroom teaching and learning.

Reviewers examined the policies adopted by the board of education for expectations related to the implementation of a teacher and administrator appraisal system. No policy expectation was found linking gains in student achievement to the process for evaluating the professional work of teachers and building administrators.

Reviewers examined 151 job descriptions for positions associated with the design and delivery of curriculum. All job descriptions examined included an evaluation section with some form of a statement indicating that the performance of the specific job will be evaluated in accordance with provision of the school board policy on evaluation of personnel. Job descriptions linked to teachers included the term "annually" when referencing evaluation.

Reviewers examined job descriptions regarding evaluation. The following job descriptions noted expectations for the evaluation of administrators and teachers:

- *Superintendent of Schools* states the superintendent shall, "Supervise and evaluate direct reports," and "Oversee planning and evaluation of curriculum and instruction." The same job description states, "Performance of this job will be evaluated by the Richmond County Board of Education consistent with Board policy on Superintendent evaluation."

- *Assistant Superintendent (Area I, II, and III)* states the assistant superintendent shall, “Support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Systems for administrators and teachers.”
- *Summer School Principal* states the principal shall, “Provide leadership in the development, implementation and management of the summer school instructional program...Evaluate and write a summer school report on enrollment, courses, budget, etc.” The same job description states, “Performance of this job will be evaluated consistent with Richmond County School System evaluation policy.”
- *Elementary School Principal* states the principal shall, “Monitor curriculum implementation to ensure that the appropriate content and sequence are followed...Supervises and evaluate staff using evaluation procedures of the RCSS.” The same job description states, “Performance of this job will be evaluated in accordance with provisions of the School Board policy on evaluation of personnel.”

Administrator Appraisal

The Richmond County School System utilizes the Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) for evaluation of school administrators. The LKES is organized around eight performance standards associated with the major duties performed by a school administrator that serve as the basis for the evaluation. Exhibit 1.5.1 presents the eight LKES Domains and Performance Standards and the Appraisal Rubric that serves as the basis for evaluation of school administrators.

Exhibit 1.5.1

Leader Keys Effectiveness System Domains and Standards of Performance

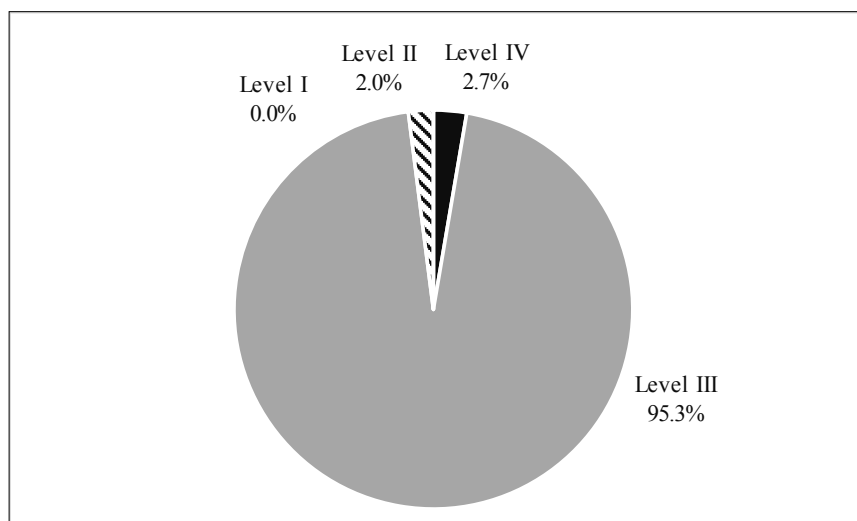
Domain	Performance Standard		
1. Instructional Leadership	The leader fosters the success of all students by facilitating the development, communication, implementation, and evaluation of a shared vision of teaching and learning that leads to school improvement.		
Level IV: The leader actively and continually employs innovative and effective leadership strategies that Maximize student learning and result in a shared vision of teaching and learning that reflects excellence. (Leaders rated Level IV continually seek ways to serve as role	Level III: The leader consistently fosters the success of all students by facilitating the development,communication, implementation, and evaluation of a shared vision of teaching and learning that leads to school improvement.	Level II: The leader inconsistently fosters the success of students by facilitating the development, communication, implementation, or evaluation of a shared vision of teaching and learning that leads to school improvement.	Level I: The leader does not foster the success of all students by facilitating the development, communication, implementation, or evaluation of a shared vision of teaching and learning that leads to school improvement.
2. School Climate	The leader promotes the success of all students by developing, advocating, and sustaining an academically rigorous, positive, and safe school climate for all stakeholders.		
Level IV: The leader continually seeks out new opportunities or substantially improves existing programs to create an environment where students and stakeholders thrive. (Leaders rated Level IV continually seek ways to serve as role models and collaborative leaders.)	Level III: The leader consistently promotes the success of all students by developing, advocating, and sustaining an academically rigorous, positive, and safe school climate for all stakeholders.	Level II: The leader inconsistently promotes the success of all students by developing, advocating, or sustaining an academically rigorous, positive, or safe school climate for all stakeholders.	Level I: The leader does not promote the success of all students by developing, advocating, or sustaining an academically rigorous, positive, or safe school climate for all stakeholders.

Exhibit 1.5.1 (continued) Leader Keys Effectiveness System Domains and Standards of Performance				
Domain	Performance Standard			
3. Planning and Assessment	The leader effectively gathers, analyzes, and uses a variety of data to inform planning and decision-making consistent with established guidelines, policies, and procedures.			
Level IV: The leader continually seeks out research on the effective use of assessment data and ensures school personnel are aware of relevant findings and are using data to improve instructional programs. Outcomes of planning and assessment can be linked to improved student performance.	Level III: The leader consistently gathers, analyzes, and uses a variety of data to inform planning and decision-making consistent with established guidelines, policies, and procedures.	Level II: The leader inconsistently gathers, analyzes, and uses a limited set of data to inform planning and decision making. Plans and decisions sometimes do not align with established guidelines, policies, and procedures.	Level I: The leader does not gather, analyze, or use data from varied sources to inform planning and decision-making. Plans and decisions do not conform to established guidelines, policies, and procedures.	
4. Organizational Management	The leader fosters the success of all students by supporting, managing, and overseeing the school’s organization, operation, and use of resources.			
Level IV: The leader continually exhibits a highly effective organizational management style by demonstrating proactive decision-making, coordinating efficient operations, and maximizing available resources.	Level III: The leader consistently fosters the success of all students by supporting, managing, and overseeing the school’s organization, operation, and use of resources.	Level II: The leader inconsistently supports, manages, or oversees the school’s organization, operation, or use of resources.	Level I: The leader insufficiently supports, manages, or oversees the school’s organization, operation, or use of resources.	
5. Human Resources Management	The leader fosters effective human resources management through the selection, induction, support, and retention of quality instructional and support personnel.			
Level IV: The leader continually demonstrates expertise in the process of selection, induction, support, and retention of instructional personnel resulting in a highly productive staff.	Level III: The leader consistently fosters effective human resources management through the selection, induction, support, and retention of quality instructional and support personnel.	Level II: The leader inconsistently selects, inducts, supports, or retains quality instructional and support personnel.	Level I: The leader insufficiently selects, inducts, supports, or retains quality instructional and support personnel.	
6. Teacher/Staff Evaluation	The leader consistently and fairly evaluates school personnel in accordance with state and district guidelines and provides them with timely and constructive feedback focused on improved student learning.			
Level IV: The leader continually provides teachers and staff with highly effective formative and summative feedback resulting in improved school personnel performance and higher student growth. The leader mentors other leaders in the evaluation process.	Level III: The leader consistently and fairly evaluates school personnel in accordance with state and district guidelines and provides them with timely and constructive feedback focused on improved student learning.	Level II: The leader fairly evaluates school personnel, but inconsistently follows state and district guidelines. Feedback is not consistent, timely, constructive, or focused on improved student learning	Level I: The leader does not fairly evaluate school personnel or does not follow state or district guidelines. Feedback is neither timely, constructive, or focused on improved student learning.	

Exhibit 1.5.1 (continued) Leader Keys Effectiveness System Domains and Standards of Performance			
Domain	Performance Standard		
7. Professionalism	The leader fosters the success of students by demonstrating professional standards and ethics, engaging in continuous professional development, and contributing to the profession.		
Level IV: The leader continually demonstrates professionalism beyond the school district through published works, formal presentation(s), and/or formal recognition(s) or award(s).	Level III: The leader consistently fosters the success of students by demonstrating professional standards and ethics, engaging in continuous professional development, and making contributions to the profession.	Level II: The leader inconsistently demonstrates professional standards, engages in continuous professional development, or makes contributions to the profession.	Level I: The leader shows disregard for professional standards and ethics, engaging in continuous professional development, or making contributions to the profession.
8. Communication and Community Relations	The leader fosters the success of all students by communicating and collaborating effectively with stakeholders.		
Level IV: The leader continually seeks and creates innovative and productive methods to proactively communicate and engage\ effectively with Stakeholders.	Level III: The leader consistently fosters the success of all students by communicating and Collaborating effectively with stakeholders.	Level II: The leader inconsistently communicates or Infrequently collaborates on issues of importance to stakeholders.	Level I: The leader demonstrates inadequate or detrimental communication or collaboration with stakeholders.
<i>Source: Georgia's Leader Keys Effectiveness System</i>			

School administrators' job performance is rated for each of the domains listed in [Exhibit 1.5.1](#) using a performance rubric for each domain. The performance rubric is used in assessing how well a performance standard is performed, moving from the lowest performance level (Level I) to the highest performance level (Level IV). Performance Level III is the expected level of performance, with Level IV indicating a performance that meets all the requirements for Level III and beyond. Summative performance ratings are to take into account all available data sources. Reviewers examined 149 LKES evaluations completed during the 2016-17 school year. The evaluations, with identifiable information such as names redacted, contained a summary performance level rating, a performance level rating for each of the eight performance standards, and all written comments. [Exhibit 1.5.2](#) displays the percentage of LKES summative evaluation ratings at each of the four performance levels, ranging from Level I as the lowest performance rating to Level IV as the highest performance rating.

Exhibit 1.5.2
Principal Summative Evaluation Ratings
Richmond County School System
2016-17



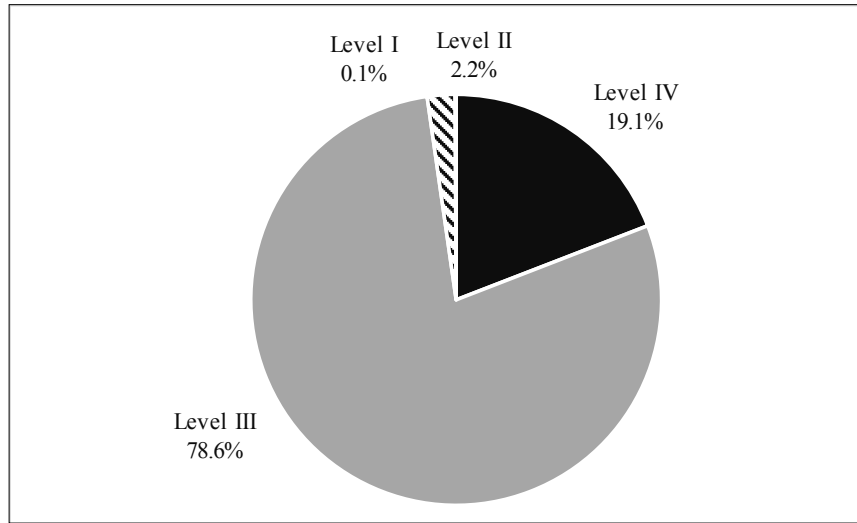
Key: Level I: Leader does not meet performance standards
Level II: Leader inconsistently meets performance standards
Level III: Leader consistently meets performance standards
Level IV: Leader continually exhibits expertise and effective management

As can be noted from Exhibit 1.5.2:

- Of the 149 administrator evaluations reviewed, 142 administrators (95.3%) received a summative performance rating of Level III, indicating they were meeting expected levels of performance.
- Four (2.7%) of the 149 performance evaluations reviewed received a summative rating of Level IV, indicating that were meeting and exceeding expected levels of performance.
- Three (2.0%) of the 149 performance evaluations reviewed received a performance rating of Level II, indicating there were performing below expected performance levels.
- None of the 149 performance evaluations reviewed received a summary performance rating of Level I—the lowest performance rating.

Reviewers also examined the performance level rating for each administrator across all eight performance standards. Collectively, there were 1,192 performance ratings across the 149 evaluations reviewed and the eight performance standards. Exhibit 1.5.3 displays the percentage of LKES performance level ratings for all eight performance standards combined.

Exhibit 1.5.3
Principal Summative Evaluation Standards Ratings
Richmond County School System
2016-17



Key: Level I: Leader does not meet performance standards
Level II: Leader inconsistently meets performance standards
Level III: Leader consistently meets performance standards
Level IV: Leader continually exhibits expertise and effective management

As can be noted from Exhibit 1.5.3:

- Collectively, across the 149 evaluations, 937 (78.6%) of the possible 1,192 performance ratings received a Level III rating.
- Collectively, across the 149 evaluations reviewed, 228 (19.1%) of the possible 1,192 performance ratings received a Level IV rating. Eighty-eight administrators received a Level IV rating on one or more performance standards.
- Collectively, 26 (2.2%) of the possible performance ratings received a Level II rating. Eighteen administrators received a Level II rating on one or more performance standards.
- Only one (.1%) out of the possible 1,192 performance rating received a Level I rating.

As part of their analysis of administrator performance evaluations, reviewers noted the average performance rating on each of the eight performance standards for all 149 evaluations. Exhibit 1.5.4 displays the average performance rating for each of the eight domains that serve as the basis for the LKES summative evaluations.

Exhibit 1.5.4

Principal Average Ratings for the LKES by Standard Richmond County School System 2016-17

Domain	Average Performance Rating
1. Instructional Leadership	3.23
2. School Climate	3.16
3. Planning and Assessment	3.16
4. Organizational Management	3.11
5. Human Resources Management	3.07
6. Teacher/Staff Evaluation	3.01
7. Professionalism	3.34
8. Communication and Community Relations	3.26

As can be noted from Exhibit 1.5.4, collectively, the average performance rating for each of the eight performance standards that comprise the LKES was a Level III rating. Collectively, the domain with the lowest rating, with an average rating of 3.01, was for Teacher/Staff Evaluation. This performance standard is based on the administrator's ability to fairly and consistently evaluate school personnel and provide timely and constructive feedback. Collectively, the highest rating, with an average rating of 3.34, was for the Professionalism performance standard. This performance standard refers to the ability of the school administrator to foster the success of students by demonstrating professional standards and ethics, engaging in continuous professional development, and contributing to the profession.

Reviewers examined the written feedback comments contained within the 149 administrative performance evaluations. Constructive feedback, defined as evaluative comments that provide the administrator with specific feedback about their job performance, is vital to promoting continuous improvement. Of the 1,192 performance ratings contained within the 149 performance evaluations examined, reviewers noted 27 ratings of Level II or Level I. A performance rating below Level III indicates that the individual is not meeting expected levels of performance. It would be expected that if an individual is not meeting expected performance levels that he or she would be provided specific feedback about his or her performance. The more specific the feedback provided, the more information individuals have to monitor and strengthen their professional practice and impact student achievement. Most of the written feedback provided to individuals not meeting performance did not have sufficient specificity to clearly inform individuals how they might improve their performance so that they might meet performance expectations in the future. The following is an example of written feedback found in performance evaluations for individuals receiving a performance rating of Level II or Level I that was not specific enough to provide guidance on how an individual's performance may be improved in areas found to be deficient.

- “Ensure that you share the TKES observations in a timely manner. Also ensure TKES and LKES are completed in the appropriate time frame.”
- “I am scoring level 2 here as we have spent a good bit of time focused on your TKES evaluation process this year. I am sure you will be much more attentive to this standard next year.”
- “The leader fairly evaluates school personnel, but inconsistently follows state and district guidelines. Feedback is not consistent, timely, or constructive.”

Examples of written feedback that were more specific are noted below:

- “Act proactively to detect and eliminate negative factors that might derail a positive school culture. Ensure that you have orderly transition in the halls between classes.”
- “A data room has been established to look at student achievement. Ensure that you monitor the effectiveness of instructional programs implemented at you [sic] school. You need to set priorities in the context of improving student achievement and promote high expectations for teaching and student learning.”
- “Ensure that you establish local school policies and procedures for conducting RtI meetings and registration. You [sic] staff needs to work with parents to enroll students in a timely manner.”

Providing effective written feedback also requires that it accurately reflects the performance rating assigned. While reviewing the written comments provided school administrators with Level II performance ratings (below expected levels of performance), reviewers noted written comments that appeared to contradict the performance rating. Following are a representative sample of what appear to be contradictory written comments for school administrators receiving a Level II rating on one or more performance standards.

- “You are doing great!”
- “I am scoring level 2 here due to the fact that we needed to send help out to complete your TKES. We are aware the AP was out on sick leave for several weeks this year.”
- “Mrs. XXX does a great job communicating with her teachers and gives feedback. Although circumstances beyond her control has [sic] prevented her from completing TKES evaluations prior to the due date, which has been followed by Richmond County.”

Contrary to the first examples of feedback, the last set appears contradictory and does not justify the rating received by the administrator.

Written feedback within a performance evaluation is the means through which the evaluator gives context to the performance rating assigned. To assign a performance rating without any written comment leaves it up to the administrator to assume what is the basis for the rating. Strong performance ratings of Level III and Level IV require constructive written feedback to reinforce work that is meeting expectations as much as performance ratings of Level II or Level I require constructive feedback to inform future improvements. Of the 149 LKES evaluations examined, reviewers found 27 evaluations that had written feedback provided on less than half of the performance domains and 14 evaluations that contained no written feedback on any domain.

Teacher Appraisal

The Richmond County School System utilizes Georgia's Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) for the evaluation of teachers. The TKES is intended to provide teachers with meaningful feedback about their work so they can increase academic achievement for all students. The TKES is organized around 5 domains and 10 performance standards associated with the major duties performed by teachers. Exhibit 1.5.5 presents the five TKES Domains, Performance Standards, and the Appraisal Rubric that serve as the basis for the evaluation of teachers in the Richmond County School System.

Exhibit 1.5.5

Teachers Keys Effectiveness System Domains and Standards of Performance

Domain: Planning			
1. Professional Knowledge The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, pedagogical knowledge, and the needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.			
Level IV: The teacher continually demonstrates extensive content and pedagogical knowledge, enriches the curriculum, and guides others in enriching the curriculum.	Level III: The teacher consistently demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, pedagogical knowledge, and the needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.	Level II: The teacher inconsistently demonstrates understanding of curriculum, subject content, pedagogical knowledge, and student needs, or lacks fluidity in using the knowledge in practice.	Level I: The teacher inadequately demonstrates understanding of curriculum, subject content, pedagogical knowledge and student needs, or does not use the knowledge in practice.
2. Instructional Planning The teacher plans using state and local school district curricula and standards, effective strategies, resources, and data to address the differentiated needs of all students.			
Level IV: The teacher continually seeks and uses multiple data and real world resources to plan differentiated instruction to meet the individual student needs and interests in order to promote student accountability and engagement.	Level III: The teacher consistently plans using state and local school district curricula and standards, effective strategies, resources, and data to address the differentiated needs of all students.	Level II: The teacher inconsistently uses state and local school district curricula and standards, or inconsistently uses effective strategies, resources, or data in planning to meet the needs of all students.	Level I: The teacher does not plan, or plans without adequately using state and local school district curricula and standards, or without using effective strategies, resources, or data to meet the needs of all students.
Domain: Instructional Delivery			
3. Instructional Strategies The teacher promotes student learning by using research-based instructional strategies relevant to the content to engage students in active learning and to facilitate the students' acquisition of key knowledge and skills.			
Level IV: The teacher continually facilitates students' engagement in metacognitive learning, higher-order thinking skills, and application of learning in current and relevant ways.	Level III: The teacher consistently promotes student learning by using research-based instructional strategies relevant to the content to engage students in active learning, and to facilitate the students' acquisition of key skills.	Level II: The teacher inconsistently uses research-based instructional strategies. The strategies used are sometimes not appropriate for the content area or for engaging students in active learning or for the acquisition of key skills.	Level I: The teacher does not use research-based instructional strategies, nor are the instructional strategies relevant to the content area. The strategies do not engage students in active learning or acquisition of key skills.

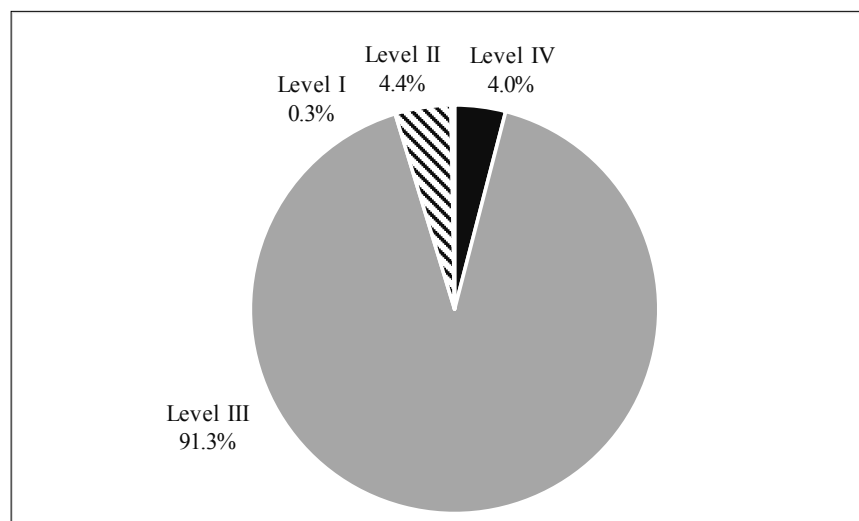
Exhibit 1.5.5 (continued) Teachers Keys Effectiveness System Domains and Standards of Performance			
Domain: Instructional Delivery			
4. Differentiated Instruction The teacher challenges and supports each student's learning by providing appropriate content and developing skills which address individual learning differences			
Level IV: The teacher continually facilitates each student's opportunities to learn by engaging him/her in critical and creative thinking and challenging activities tailored to address individual learning needs and interests.	Level III: The teacher consistently challenges and supports each student's learning by providing appropriate content and developing skills which address individual learning differences.	Level II: The teacher inconsistently challenges students by providing appropriate content or by developing skills which address individual learning differences.	Level I: The teacher does not challenge students by providing appropriate content or by developing skills which address individual learning differences.
Domain: Assessment of and for Learning			
5. Assessment Strategies The teacher systematically chooses a variety of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies and instruments that are valid and appropriate for the content and student population.			
Level IV: The teacher continually demonstrates expertise and leads others to determine and develop a variety of strategies and instruments that are valid and appropriate for the content and student population and guides students to monitor and reflect on their own academic progress.	Level III: The teacher systematically and consistently chooses a variety of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies and instruments that are valid and appropriate for the content and student population.	Level II: The teacher inconsistently chooses a variety of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies or the instruments are sometimes not appropriate for the content or student population.	Level I: The teacher chooses an inadequate variety of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies or the instruments are not appropriate for the content or student population.
6. Assessment Uses The teacher systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses relevant data to measure student progress, to inform instructional content and delivery methods, and to provide timely and constructive feedback to both student and parents.			
Level IV: The teacher continually demonstrates expertise in using data to measure student progress and leads others in the effective use of data to inform instructional decisions.	Level III: The teacher systematically and consistently gathers, analyzes, and uses relevant data to measure student progress, to inform instructional content and delivery methods, and to provide timely and constructive feedback to both students and parents.	Level II: The teacher inconsistently gathers, analyzes, or uses relevant data to measure student progress, inconsistently uses data to inform instructional content and delivery methods, or inconsistently provides timely or constructive feedback.	Level I: The teacher does not gather, analyze, or use relevant data to measure student progress, to inform instructional content and delivery methods, or to provide feedback in a constructive or timely manner.

Exhibit 1.5.5 (continued) Teachers Keys Effectiveness System Domains and Standards of Performance			
Domain: Learning Environment			
7. Positive Learning Environment The teacher provides a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and encourages respect for all.			
Level IV: The teacher continually engages students in a collaborative and self- directed learning environment where students are encouraged to take risks and ownership of their own learning behavior.	Level III: The teacher consistently provides a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and encourages respect for all.	Level II: The teacher inconsistently provides a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and encourages respect for all.	Level I: The teacher inadequately addresses student behavior, displays a negative attitude toward students, ignores safety standards, or does not otherwise provide an orderly environment that is conducive to learning or encourages respect for all.
8. Academically Challenging Environment The teacher creates a student-centered, academic environment in which teaching, and learning occur at high levels and students are self-directed learners.			
Level IV: The teacher continually creates an academic learning environment where students are encouraged to set challenging learning goals and tackle challenging materials.	Level III: The teacher consistently creates a student-centered, academic environment in which teaching and learning occur at high levels and students are self-directed learners.	Level II: The teacher inconsistently provides a student- centered, academic environment in which teaching and learning occur at high levels or where students are self- directed learners.	Level I: The teacher does not provide a student- centered, academic environment in which teaching and learning occur at high levels, or where students are self-directed learners.
Domain: Professionalism and Communication			
9. Professionalism The teacher exhibits a commitment to professional ethics and the school’s mission, participates in professional growth opportunities to support student learning, and contributes to the profession.			
Level IV: The teacher continually engages in a high level of professional growth and application of skills and contributes to the development of others and the well-being of the school and community.	Level III: The teacher consistently exhibits a commitment to professional ethics and the school’s mission, participates in professional growth opportunities to support student learning, and contributes to the profession.	Level II: The teacher inconsistently supports the school’s mission or seldom participates in professional growth opportunities.	Level I: The teacher shows a disregard toward professional ethics or the school’s mission or rarely takes advantage of professional growth opportunities.

Exhibit 1.5.5 (continued) Teachers Keys Effectiveness System Domains and Standards of Performance			
Domain: Professionalism and Communication			
10. Communication The teacher communicates effectively with students, parents or guardians, district and school personnel, and other stakeholders in ways that enhance student learning.			
Level IV: The teacher continually uses communication techniques in a variety of situations to proactively inform, network, and collaborate with stakeholders to enhance student learning.	Level III: The teacher communicates effectively and consistently with students, parents or guardians, district and school personnel, and other stakeholders in ways that enhance student learning.	Level II: The teacher inconsistently communicates with students, parents or guardians, district and school personnel or other stakeholders or communicates in ways that only partially enhance student learning.	Level I: The teacher inadequately communicates with students, parents or guardians, district and school personnel, or other stakeholders by poorly acknowledging concerns, responding to inquiries, or encouraging involvement.

The job performance of teachers is rated for each of the domains listed in [Exhibit 1.5.5](#) using a performance rubric for each domain. The performance rubric is used in assessing how well a performance standard is performed, moving from the lowest performance level (Level I) to the highest performance level (Level IV). Performance Level III is the expected level of performance, with Level IV indicating a performance that meets all the requirements for Level III and beyond. Reviewers examined 1,787 TKES evaluations completed during the 2016-17 school year. The evaluations had identifiable information such as names redacted, but contained all written comments for each of the 10 performance standards along with the individual domain ratings and an overall summative rating. [Exhibit 1.5.6](#) displays the percentage of TKES summative evaluation ratings at each of the four performance levels.

Exhibit 1.5.6
Teacher Summative Evaluation Ratings
Richmond County School System
2016-17



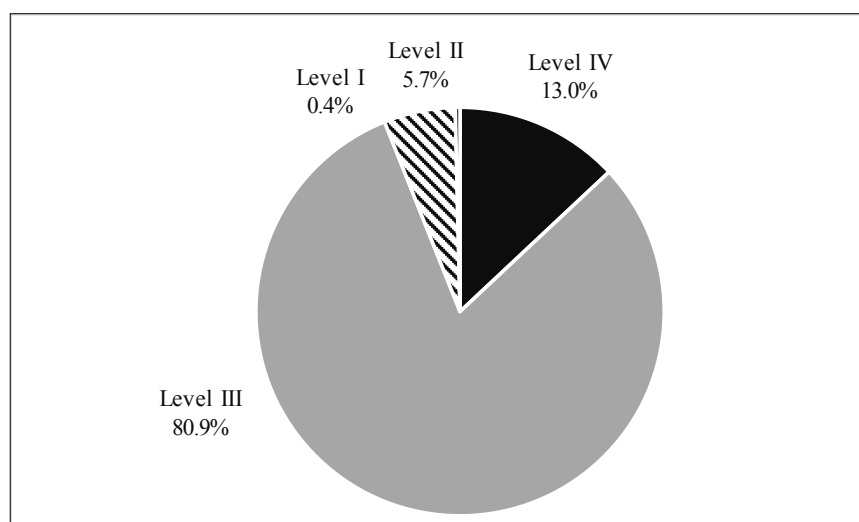
Key: Level I: The teacher does not meet any performance standards
Level II: The teacher inconsistently meets performance standards
Level III: The teacher consistently meets performance standards
Level IV: The teacher continually exhibits content and pedagogical knowledge and expertise

As can be noted from [Exhibit 1.5.6](#):

- Of the 1,787 teacher evaluations reviewed, 1,631 teachers (91.3%) received a summative performance rating of Level III, indicating they were meeting expected levels of performance.
- Seventy-two teachers (4%) received a summative performance rating of Level IV, indicating that they were meeting and exceeding expected levels of performance.
- Seventy-nine teachers (4.4%) received a summative performance rating of Level II, indicating they were performing below expected performance levels.
- Five teachers (0.3%) received a summative performance rating of Level I—the lowest performance rating.

Reviewers also examined the performance level rating for each teacher across all 10 performance standards. Collectively, there were 17,787 performance ratings across the 1,787 evaluations reviewed and the 10 performance standards. [Exhibit 1.5.7](#) displays the percentage of TKES performance level ratings for all 10 performance standards combined.

Exhibit 1.5.7
Teacher Summative Evaluation Standards Ratings
Richmond County School System
2016-17



Key: Level I: The teacher does not meet any performance standards
Level II: The teacher inconsistently meets performance standards
Level III: The teacher consistently meets performance standards
Level IV: The teacher continually exhibits content and pedagogical knowledge and expertise

As can be noted from [Exhibit 1.5.7](#):

- Collectively, across the 1,787 evaluations, 14,465 (80.9%) of the possible 17,870 performance ratings received a Level III rating.
- Collectively, across the 1,787 evaluations reviewed, 2,327 (13.0%) of the possible 17,870 performance ratings receive a Level IV rating. Seven hundred eighty-eight teachers received a Level IV rating on one or more performance standards.
- Collectively, 1,001 (5.7%) of the possible performance ratings received a Level II rating. Three hundred and ninety-one teachers received a Level II rating on one or more performance standards.
- Collectively, 67 (0.4%) out of the possible 17,870 performance rating received a Level I rating. Twenty-two teachers received a Level I rating on one or more performance standards.

As part of their analysis of administrator performance evaluations, reviewers noted the average performance rating on each of the 10 performance standards for all 1,787 evaluations. Exhibit 1.5.8 displays the average performance rating for each of the 10 domains that serve as the basis for the TKES summative evaluations.

Exhibit 1.5.8

Teacher Average Ratings for the TKES by Performance Standard Richmond County School System 2016-17

Standard	Average
1. Professional Knowledge	3.20
2. Instructional Planning	3.00
3. Instructional Strategies	3.08
4. Differentiated Instruction	2.96
5. Assessment Strategies	3.00
6. Assessment Uses	2.95
7. Positive Learning Environment	3.14
8. Academically Challenging Environment	2.98
9. Professionalism	3.24
10. Communication	3.10

As can be noted from Exhibit 1.5.8, collectively, the performance standard that received the lowest rating, with an average rating of 2.95, was for Assessment Use. This performance standard is based on the teacher's ability to systematically gather, analyze, and use data to measure student progress and to inform instructional delivery. Collectively, the highest rating, with an average rating of 3.24, was for the Professionalism performance standard. This performance standard is based on the teacher's ability to exhibit a commitment to professional ethics, the school's mission, and professional growth to support student learning.

Reviewers examined the written feedback comments contained within the 1,787 teacher performance evaluations. Constructive feedback, defined as evaluative comments that provide teachers with specific feedback about their job performance, is vital to promoting continuous improvement. Of the 17,870 performance ratings, contained within the 1,787 performance evaluations examined, reviewers noted 391 teachers received a Level II rating on one or more performance standards and 22 teachers received a Level I rating on one or more performance standards. A performance rating below Level III indicates that the individual is not meeting expected levels of performance. It would be expected that if individuals are not meeting expected performance levels, they would be provided specific feedback about their performance. The more specific the feedback provided, the more information individuals have to monitor and strengthen their professional practice and impact student achievement. Most of the written feedback provided individuals not meeting performance did not have enough sufficient specificity to clearly inform the individuals how they might improve their performance so that they may meet performance expectations in the future. The following is an example of written feedback found within performance evaluation for individuals receiving a performance rating of Level II or Level I that did not have enough sufficient specificity about how an individual's performance may be improved in areas found to be deficient.

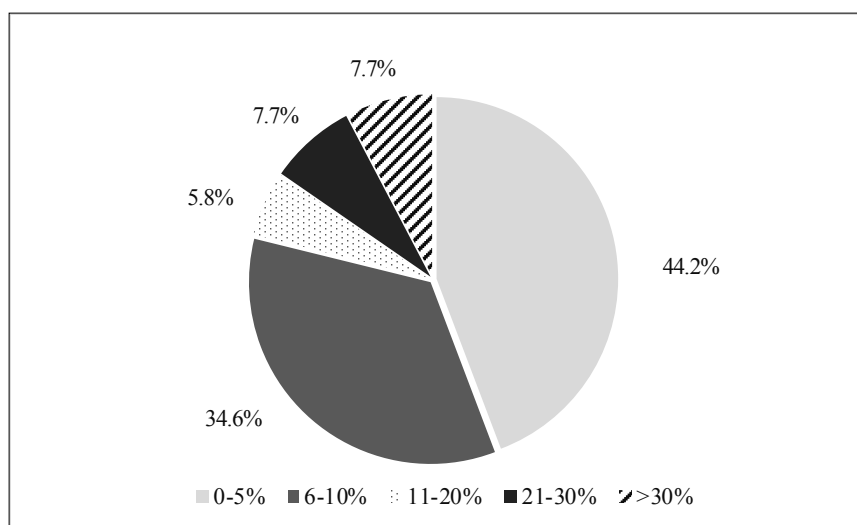
- "You never decoded the online assessments from the Data Director after being instructed on how to decode the information. This must be a consistent practice."
- "There has been inconsistency in your understanding of the curriculum and the needs of 4th grade students."
- "Your data notebook was not complete. This was a non-negotiable!"
- "Gradebook does not mirror lesson plans. Tier II interventions are not timely."

Examples of written feedback that were more specific are noted below:

- “Transitions are the biggest problem. Having students with everything they need in front of them will go a long way. This will give your students more time to focus on tasks than be disrupted by movement of fellow students.”
- “The weekly lesson plan feedback noted to incorporate differentiated instruction for students. During the last observation it was noted that you worked with groups of kids based on their areas of deficiencies. Within your lesson plans, you will need to plan for differentiation. You will also need to review data continually in order to create flexible groups to accommodate for student learning needs.”
- “There was no consistent evidence that you challenged or supported individual learning differences of your student. In looking at the research, continue to plan lesson [sic] that keep the following in mind: Instead of using uniform strategies for all students, effective teachers design instruction that motivates each student and they communicate content in such a way that students are able to comprehend based on their individual prior learning and ability.”
- “It is important to protect instruction from disruption and make the most out of every instructional moment. Need to review techniques to minimize loss of instructional time. Plan and prepare for bell to bell instruction to ensure students are engaged. Use specific strategies to preserve time and keep students fully engaged from the moment they walk into class to the moment they leave.”

Reviewers noted that over 95% of all teachers evaluated received an overall summative rating of Level III or Level IV (see [Exhibit 1.5.6](#)). A Level III rating is intended to reflect that the teacher has met the desired levels of performance and a Level IV rating indicates that teachers have met and exceeded expected levels in their overall job performance. During interviews with individual administrators, reviewers received many comments indicating that some principals are concerned about the number of marginal teachers in their schools. Through an anonymous online survey, building administrators were asked what percentage of their teachers they would consider marginal, or not effective in improving student learning. [Exhibit 1.5.9](#) summarizes the responses received from 52 building level administrators responding to an online survey as part of the system review.

Exhibit 1.5.9
Percentage of Marginal Teachers Reported by Administrators
Richmond County School System
October 2017



As can be noted from [Exhibit 1.5.9](#):

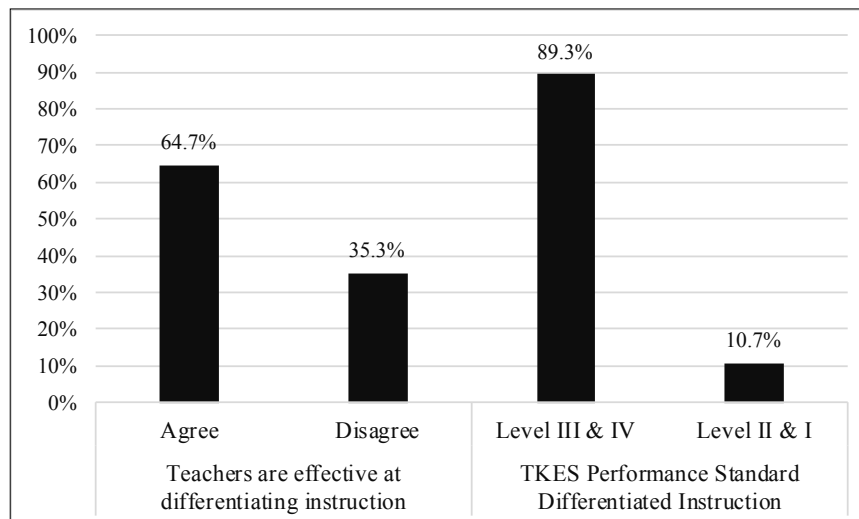
- Eight (15.4%) of the 52 building administrators responding to an online survey reported that 21% or more of their teachers are considered marginal.

- Three (5.8%) of building administrators reported that between 11% and 20% of their teachers are considered marginal.
- Eighteen (34.6%) of building administrators reported that between 6% and 10% of their teachers are considered marginal.
- Twenty-three (44.2%) of building administrators reported that 5% or less of their teachers are considered marginal.

Reviewers noted that a contradiction exists between the number of marginal teachers that may be working in the Richmond County School System as reported by building administrators compared to the summative evaluation ratings in which the vast majority of district teachers were rated as meeting or exceeding expected levels of performance.

Through an online survey, reviewers asked building administrators to rate the degree to which teachers are effective at differentiating instruction to meet individual students' needs. Reviewers compared the building administrators' response to this question to the performance level ratings on the TKES performance standard Differentiated Instruction, which rates the ability of teachers to support each student's learning by providing appropriate content and developing skills that address individual learning differences. [Exhibit 1.5.10](#) compares building administrators' survey responses and the performance evaluation ratings around the teacher skill differentiating instruction.

Exhibit 1.5.10
Comparison Building Administrators' Perception of
Teacher Skills for Differentiating Instruction
vs. Teacher Performance Ratings on the TKES
Richmond County School System
October 2017

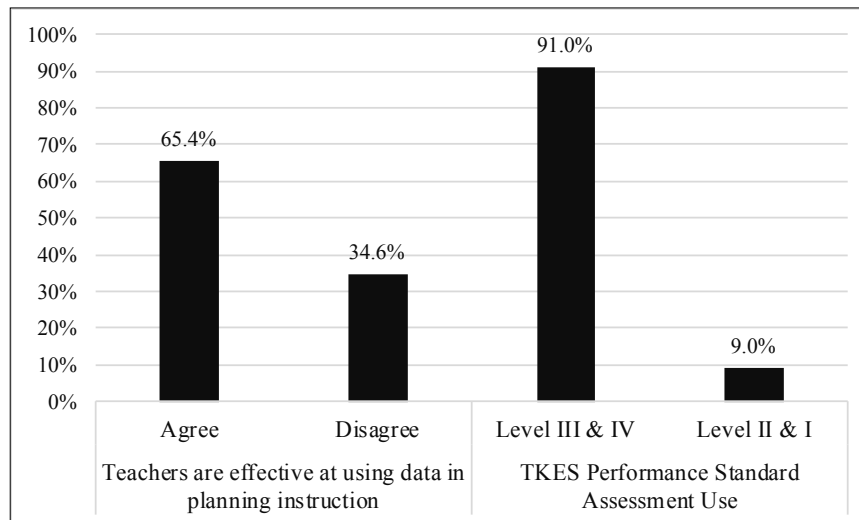


As can be noted from [Exhibit 1.5.10](#):

- When asked to rate the degree to which teachers are effective at differentiating instruction to meet students' needs, 64.7% of administrators surveyed agreed that their teachers are effective at differentiating instruction, while 35.3% of administrators disagreed that their teachers were effective at differentiating instruction.
- On the TKES performance standard Differentiated Instruction, 89.3% of teachers were rated as meeting or exceeding performance expectations, while 10.7% of teachers were rated as not meeting performance standards associated with differentiated instruction.

Through an online survey, reviewers also asked building administrators to rate the degree to which teachers are effective at consistently using student data in planning their daily instruction. Reviewers compared the perception of building administrators in response to this question to the performance level ratings on the TKES performance standard Assessment Uses, which rates teachers' ability to systematically gather, analyze, and use data to measure student progress and to inform instructional content and delivery. [Exhibit 1.5.11](#) compares building administrators' survey responses and the performance evaluation ratings around the teacher skill use of assessment data.

Exhibit 1.5.11
Comparison Building Administrators' Perception of
Teacher Skills for Use of Data
vs. Teacher Performance Ratings on the TKES
Richmond County School System
October 2017



As can be noted from [Exhibit 1.5.11](#):

- When asked to rate the degree to which teachers are effective at consistently using student data in planning their daily instruction, 65.4% of administrators surveyed agreed that their teachers are effective in using student data in their planning, while 34.6% of administrators disagreed that their teachers were effective in the use of data.
- On the TKES performance standard Assessment Use, 91.0% of teacher were rated as meeting or exceeding performance expectations, while 9.0% of teachers were rated as not meeting performance standards associated with the use of student data to inform instruction.

When implemented effectively and with fidelity and predictability, formal evaluations allow district leaders an opportunity to provide meaningful feedback to individual teachers about their job performance. When formal evaluations are not an accurate reflection of an individual's abilities and professional practices, it not only denies individual teachers critical feedback upon which to reflect and improve their professional practices, it also impedes the ability of district leaders to make critical decisions regarding staff decisions and planning for system improvements through professional learning.

Summary

Reviewers found comprehensive teacher and school administrator evaluation systems in place in the Richmond County School System. No policy expectations are in place requiring personnel evaluation or directing the use of personnel evaluations to inform personnel decisions or provide teachers and administrators constructive feedback regarding their job performance. Based on an analysis of 149 building administrator evaluations and 1,787 teacher evaluations, reviewers noted that the majority of administrators and teachers were rated as

meeting performance standards outlined in the Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) and the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). Although nearly all teachers were rated as meeting performance expectations, building administrators reported inconsistencies between formal performance ratings and the number of teachers they consider marginal working in their schools. Written feedback provided to administrators and teachers about their job performances often did not have sufficient content and specificity (see Recommendations 3, 4, and 7).

STANDARD 2: The School District Has Established Clear and Valid Objectives for Students.

A school system meeting this review standard has established a clear, valid, and measurable set of pupil standards for learning and has set the objectives into a workable framework for their attainment.

Unless objectives are clear and measurable, there cannot be a cohesive effort to improve pupil achievement in the dimensions in which measurement occurs. A lack of clarity and focus denies to a school system's educators the ability to concentrate scarce resources on priority targets. Instead, resources may be spread too thin and be ineffective in any direction. Objectives are, therefore, essential to attaining local quality control via the school board.

What the Reviewers Expected to Find in the Richmond County School System:

Common indicators the CMSi reviewers expected to find are:

- A clearly established, board-adopted system-wide set of goals and objectives for all programs and courses;
- Demonstration that the system is contextual and responsive to national, state, and other expectations as evidenced in local initiatives;
- Operations set within a framework that carries out the system's goals and objectives;
- Evidence of comprehensive, detailed, short- and long-range curriculum management planning;
- Knowledge, local validation, and use of current best practices and emerging curriculum trends;
- Written curriculum that addresses both current and future needs of students;
- Major programmatic initiatives designed to be cohesive;
- Provision of explicit direction for the superintendent and professional staff; and
- A framework that exists for systemic curricular change.

Overview of What the Reviewers Found in the Richmond County School System:

This section is an overview of the findings that follow in the area of Standard Two. Details follow within separate findings.

The reviewers found some evidence of curriculum management planning, processes, and responsibilities in Richmond County School System documents. However, collectively, these were not found to have sufficient direction regarding the design, delivery, monitoring, evaluation, and revision of the district curriculum.

Reviewers found that scope of the written curriculum was not complete enough at all school levels for core and non-core subject areas and courses offered in the Richmond County School System. The written curriculum documents were of insufficient quality to promote a highly focused, consistent educational program in which the written, taught, and tested curriculum is aligned. Most of the existing curriculum documents analyzed did not have the precision and specificity needed to enhance teacher planning and curriculum delivery.

A review of the alignment of sample language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies benchmark assessment items found that these benchmark assessment items were not fully aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Reviewers also found that the instructional strategies from adopted resources did not fully align with Georgia's academic standards. The learning targets found in the K-8 language arts and mathematics units of study are too numerous to ensure teachers can teach to mastery in the instructional time allotted.

Reviewers determined that the increase in enrollment for special education and gifted programs has resulted in a potential equity issue related to availability of services to meet the specialized learning needs of these student populations.

Finding 2.1: While there is evidence of curriculum planning, the district is in need of a comprehensive plan to direct a consistent and systematic process for designing, developing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and revising an aligned curriculum for improving student learning.

A comprehensive curriculum management plan that is comprehensive, clear, and specific provides the district with the direction regarding what actions are needed to improve student learning and address student achievement. Such a plan includes clarification and direction regarding the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of curriculum. A comprehensive curriculum management plan includes a systematic process to evaluate and renew curriculum so that student learning is current and students stay competitive with their peers across the state and nation.

A comprehensive curriculum management plan also gives direction to staff and ensures that curriculum practices across content areas, departments, and schools are cohesive, coordinated, and lead to consistency in how curriculum is designed, implemented, and evaluated. A curriculum that is horizontally coordinated, vertically articulated, aligned to assessment, and systematically evaluated to determine its effectiveness in improving student learning gives teachers reliable feedback on student learning so they can better plan individualized instruction. A curriculum management plan provides a structure for a system to communicate its expectations on elements that are tightly held across the district, and those where individual schools have authority to make decisions based on contextual variations; those are considered loosely held. Tightly held means that these decisions are made at the system level. Loosely held means that these decisions, although aligned to the tightly-held components, are made at the school level to assure student needs are met. In tightly held organizations, ends, mission, goals and priorities, student learning objectives, and student assessments are developed centrally, and the expectation is that they are followed throughout the district. Exhibit 2.1.1 provides curriculum management functions and components that should be tightly held and those should be loosely held.

Exhibit 2.1.1

Tightly Held vs. Loosely Held Curriculum Management Functions and Components

CMIM Decision-Making Matrix	
Ends (Curriculum and Aligned Assessments)	Means (Instruction and Program)
Tightly-held (Non-negotiable) <i>District Level</i>	Loosely-held (Aligned to the Tightly-held but Negotiable by Teacher/Faculty) <i>School/Classroom Level</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, Mission, Goals • Philosophy and Beliefs • Curriculum Objectives—Standards/Outcomes/Student Expectations/Objectives • Priority Standards/Outcomes/Student Expectations/Objectives • Assessments: criterion-referenced tests, benchmark assessments, diagnostic assessments, progress-monitoring tools • Program guidelines, expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiation of when (within the unit, grade level, or course) each student is taught certain objectives (while maintaining on-level instruction) • Processes, procedures, instructional strategies or approaches • Resources, materials, textbooks, etc. • Programs (e.g. ELL Program, Sp. Ed. Program, Intervention Programs) • Groupings • Staffing • Informal classroom assessments, school-wide assessments for progress monitoring.
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Exhibit 2.1.1 shows curriculum management functions and components for the district to consider when allowing building administrators and teachers to make independent decisions about how instruction is delivered and students are grouped, which strategies and resources are used in the delivery of instruction, and how staff is assigned. These decisions, however, must be aligned with the tightly-held functions and components of the

district's end goals, vision, mission, student learning objectives, and student assessments in content, context, and cognitive type. A comprehensive curriculum management plan defines this vision, clarifies the mission of the educational program, and specifies how the district will align the written, taught, and tested curriculum.

To determine whether the Richmond County School System has curriculum management planning in place, reviewers examined board policies, job descriptions, and district improvement and school improvement plans; reviewed curriculum-related documents and plans; and visited all schools and most core classrooms in the district. Interviews were conducted with district and building administrators and teachers.

The reviewers found limited direction regarding the design, delivery, communication, monitoring, and evaluation of the district's curriculum. Curriculum management functions, roles, and responsibilities were noted in board policies, job descriptions, and other district curriculum documents but collectively do not provide for a cohesive, articulated system. When compared to review criteria, existing documents do not have the specificity and clarity needed to focus all the district stakeholders on the processes, tasks, and initiatives needed to improve instruction and increase student learning and achievement. The district has not yet codified direction for curriculum management in a single document or plan.

Finding 1.3 summarizes the reviewers' analysis of board policies related to curriculum management and planning. The reviewers found a few board policies that directly address curriculum development and implementation in the Richmond County School System. These are referenced specifically in the discussion that follows Exhibit 2.1.3.

Reviewers found that board policies provide a general expectation for the development of a core curriculum that is standards-based, which teachers are required to use in planning their instruction. Board policies do not direct any comprehensive curriculum planning. No policy was found that communicated district expectations concerning instructional differentiation, so individual students needs would be met. There are no policy expectations that district curriculum be reviewed for alignment to assessments in the dimensions of content, context, and cognitive type. Policies were weak in requiring that district curriculum be reviewed at all grade levels and content areas. Reviewers found no policy requirement that instructional resources be aligned with the curriculum along all three dimensions.

To understand the district's current approach to curriculum management planning, reviewers examined a variety of district documents presented by district administration and listed in Exhibit 2.1.2. A comprehensive curriculum management plan was not presented to reviewers; therefore, a variety of documents were reviewed to determine their congruence with a quality curriculum management plan.

Exhibit 2.1.2

**Curriculum Planning Documents and Other Sources Reviewed by Reviewers
Richmond County School System
October 2017**

Document	Date
2018 RCSS Improvement Plan	2017
2018 RCSS Strategic Plan	2017
Board Policies	Various
Job Descriptions	Various
Curriculum Department website	2017
Rubicon Atlas Curriculum Platform	2017
RCSS Annual Report	2016
Pacing Calendars	Various
Master Scheduling Best Practices	2017
RCSS Resource Adoption Timeline	2016
RCK12 Middle and High School Mathematics Instructional Manual	Undated
RCK12 Elementary Instructional Manual	Undated
RCK12 Social Studies Middle and High School Instructional Expectations Manual	Undated
RCK12 English Language Arts Middle and High School Instructional Manual	Undated
RCK12 Science Middle and High School Instructional Expectations Manual	Undated

Reviewers found some elements of curriculum planning in board policies and job descriptions. However, no single document provides guidance and direction for managing the educational program and its curriculum. Based on their examination of district policies and documents, the reviewers assessed the district's approach to curriculum management planning against 15 characteristics of quality curriculum management plan or planning, since no plan exists. These characteristics are described in [Exhibit 2.1.3](#), accompanied by the reviewers' assessment of each. An "X" in the "Met" column indicates that the characteristic was fully met. "Partial" indicates that not all of the characteristic was met. An "X" in the "Not Met" column indicates that the characteristic was not at all met. In order for the district's approach to curriculum management planning to be considered adequate, the district's documents and planning approach should meet at least 11 of the 15 (70%) components.

Exhibit 2.1.3
Curriculum Management Plan Characteristics
And Reviewers' Assessment of District Approach
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Characteristics:	Reviewers' Rating	
	Met	Not Met
1. Describes the philosophical framework for the design of the curriculum, including such directives as standards-based, results-based, or competency-based; the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum; and the approaches used in delivering the curriculum.	X	
2. Identifies the timing, scope, and procedures for a periodic cycle of review of curriculum in all subject areas and at all grade levels.		X
3. Defines and directs the stages of curriculum development.		X
4. Specifies the roles and responsibilities of the board, central office staff members, and school-based staff members in the design and delivery of curriculum.	Partial*	
5. Presents the format and components of all curriculum, assessments, and instructional guide documents.		X
6. Directs how state and national standards will be considered in the curriculum. This includes whether or not to use a backloaded approach, in which the curriculum is derived from high-stakes tested learnings (topological and/or deep alignment), and/or a frontloaded approach, which derives the curriculum from national, state, or local learnings.	X	
7. Requires for every content area a focused set of precise student objectives/student expectations and standards that are reasonable in number so the student has adequate time to master the content.		X
8. Directs that curriculum documents not only specify the content of the student objectives/student expectations, but also include multiple contexts and cognitive types.		X
9. Specifies the overall beliefs and procedures governing the assessment of curriculum effectiveness. This includes curriculum-based diagnostic assessments and rubrics (as needed). Such assessments direct instructional decisions regarding student progress in mastering prerequisite concepts, skills, knowledge, and long-term mastery of the learning.	Partial*	
10. Directs curriculum to be designed so that it supports teachers' differentiation of instructional approaches and selection of student objectives at the right level of difficulty. This ensures that those students who need prerequisite concepts, knowledge, and skills are moved ahead at an accelerated pace, and that students who have already mastered the objectives are also moved ahead at a challenging pace.		X
11. Describes the procedures teachers and administrators will follow in using assessment data to strengthen written curriculum and instructional decision making.	Partial*	
12. Outlines procedures for conducting formative and summative evaluations of programs and their corresponding curriculum content.		X
13. Requires the design of a comprehensive staff development program linked to curriculum design and its delivery.		X
14. Presents procedures for monitoring the delivery of curriculum.		X
15. Establishes a communication plan for the process of curriculum design and delivery.		X
Total	2	13
Percentage of Adequacy	13%	
*Partial ratings are tallied as not met		
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As can be noted in [Exhibit 2.1.3](#), two (13%) of the review characteristics of comprehensive curriculum management planning were considered fully met. Three were partially met. However, insufficient characteristics are in place to direct the planning for the design, delivery, revision, and evaluation of curriculum management. The district's approach to curriculum management planning, overall, was considered inadequate because it did not specify an approach for a periodic cycle of curriculum review, specifying components of internal curriculum documents, articulating a process for ensuring a feasible curriculum, addressing an approach for differentiating instruction, outlining a process for monitoring curriculum delivery, and using data to assess the effectiveness of district programs. Specific findings related to each of the 15 characteristics are further described below.

Characteristic 1: Philosophical framework

This characteristic was rated as fully met. *Board Policy IDA* describes the requirements for a standards-based approach to both curriculum and instruction. Additionally, the district is to provide “a comprehensive Richmond County K-12 curriculum, instruction and assessment program to serve the educational needs of the System’s students.” As part of the standards-based, comprehensive educational program, the district is to provide “an integrated curriculum that promotes continuity and cumulative acquisition of skills and knowledge from grade to grade and school to school.” District documents articulate a philosophical framework for approach to curriculum design, specifying the roles and responsibilities associated with curriculum design and delivery within job descriptions, and directing alignment with national standards.

Characteristic 2: Periodic cycle of review

This characteristic was rated not met. No board policy or administrative regulation was found that required a periodic cycle of curriculum review in all areas and at all grade levels. While reviewers found references in various district curriculum documents that either called for or generally referenced curriculum review, none of these statements were specific enough to establish consistent processes for the regular review of curriculum. Reviewers found statements of intent related to curriculum design, review, and evaluation in several content area instructional manuals that describe a RCK12 Instructional Framework, which includes references to a plan, implement, monitor, and assess approach for curriculum delivery. The RCK12 Instructional Framework, however, is instructional in focus and does not specifically describe a cycle that addresses the written curriculum and its related resources, as well.

In conversations with district staff, reviewers learned that, despite a lack of written direction, curriculum revision does occur and can be initiated by any number of factors, including changes to Georgia Standards of Excellence, requests made by district officials, and/or requests made by teachers. During interviews with district staff, reviewers heard comments about the district's approach to the review of the written curriculum. Following is a representative sample of those comments:

- “Our curriculum review process starts with feedback from the teachers on what needs to be revised. Teacher perception, class observation, changes in Georgia standards are all included to collect information.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Random teachers come in to write units in the curriculum.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “We get teacher input on errors in pacing, [or if] assessment doesn’t match the standard, whatever. (Central Office Administrator)

District leaders stated that teachers were enlisted each summer to revise the district's curriculum based on assessment data and curriculum use. Reviewers were not presented with any district documents that described this process, associated procedures, or timelines that might direct the work of revising the district's curriculum.

Characteristic 3: Stages of curriculum development

This characteristic was rated not met. No documents were provided to reviewers that described or directed an approach to curriculum development, evaluation, review, or revision. As is reported in [Characteristic 4](#) below, the Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Technology is charged with the overall responsibility of developing, planning, and coordinating curriculum. However, no other document or job description specifies how those duties are delegated to other district staff or teachers. As a result, various

stages in the development and revision of curriculum development are not clearly delineated and may vary across departments and schools within the district.

During interviews with district administrators, reviewers received comments that suggested there are no consistent procedures related to curriculum development, evaluation, or review. One administrator commented on how the curriculum department is staffed:

- “Most of the stuff that has been added [to curriculum] is through the back door.”
- “When we look at the curriculum, who is writing it? Junk in—junk out!”

The district does not have a clearly defined approach for its curriculum development work, and reviewers found inconsistent processes for managing curriculum, which have resulted in inconsistent written curriculum (see [Finding 2.3](#)).

Characteristic 4: Roles and responsibilities

This characteristic was rated partially met. Comprehensive curriculum management planning requires that roles and responsibilities are clearly communicated and included in appropriate job descriptions and district plan documents. Reviewers examined job descriptions for references to curricular roles and responsibilities associated with curriculum management planning. Job descriptions that delineated roles and responsibilities related to curriculum development included:

- The superintendent’s role in the area of curriculum includes overseeing the planning and evaluation of curriculum.
- Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Technology has the specific responsibility for leading the development, planning, implementation, evaluation, and coordination of curriculum and assessment.
- Area Superintendents are responsible for monitoring the implementation of curriculum.
- The Director of Curriculum is responsible for coordinating a continuous program of curriculum development and improvement and directing the planning, implementation, and supervision of the K-12 curriculum.
- Curriculum Coordinators are responsible for planning and developing criteria for continuous improvement of the K-12 curriculum, and leading the development of curriculum guides.
- Principals are charged with the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the district curriculum within their buildings.
- Teachers are to establish learning objectives consistent with requirements of the RCSS curriculum framework. It should be noted that this directive is contrary to the audit standard that all learning objectives be developed by the district and be consistent for all students, to assure equity and equal access to curriculum.

Overall, although certain responsibilities related to curriculum were noted in job descriptions, there was neither specificity nor direction regarding processes for how these responsibilities were to be carried out. Therefore, the characteristic was partially met.

Characteristic 5: Format and components for curriculum guides

This characteristic was rated not met. Consistency in format and components of curriculum documents increases feasibility and assures greater equality of access across schools. When curriculum documents intended to guide instruction are easy to navigate and provide critical information staff can use in designing units of instruction, it increases the likelihood that they will be used. Curriculum leaders and teachers in the Richmond County School System are using Rubicon Atlas as the district’s repository for curriculum documents, including standards, pacing maps, curriculum guides, lesson plans, resources connections, and assessment samples. While the format for items stored in Rubicon Atlas is consistent, district leaders have not exercised

any internal controls for who may modify the content within Rubicon Atlas. During interviews with district leaders and teachers, reviewers received many comments illustrating the lack of internal controls for managing the content within the curriculum depository and the problems with consistency in expectations regarding the use of curriculum housed in the curriculum depository. No document was found specifying the non-negotiable aspects of curriculum and its components.

Characteristic 6: Curriculum approach – state and national standards

This characteristic is rated met. *Board Policy IDA* requires a standards-based approach to curriculum and states that curriculum guides are to include Georgia Department of Education standards. The district's adopted curriculum is based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence and is available for teachers to use in their instructional planning through the Rubicon Atlas platform.

Characteristic 7: Requires for every content area a focused set of precise student objectives, reasonable in number

This characteristic was rated as not met. Reviewers were presented with curriculum pacing calendars for many of the core content courses that suggest instructional pacing for listed student learning objectives. Available pacing calendars provide generalized guidance as to the length of time considered necessary to teach a particular unit, but no connection is made between the time necessary to teach a unit of instruction and the amount of time that may be required for students to master the learning objectives. Reviewers found no guiding documents that provided curriculum developments with guidance for focusing the curriculum and limiting the number of learning objectives to ensure feasibility and the ability of students to master the content of the district's curriculum within the instructional time available. Moreover, teachers are assigned the responsibility for developing objectives in their job description. This does not meet the audit requirement of tightly-held standards and objectives for all students, assuring equal access to content and the desired level of cognitive challenge in instruction. See [Finding 2.4](#) for a discussion of the feasibility of the district's curriculum scope.

Characteristic 8: Directs that curriculum documents not only specify the content of student objectives/student expectations, but also include multiple contexts and cognitive types

This characteristic was rated not met. No district documents were presented to reviewers that required district curriculum documents to specify objectives and learning experiences with multiple contexts and cognitive types. *Board Policy IDA* requires a comprehensive Richmond County K-12 curriculum, instruction, and assessment program to serve the educational needs of the system's students but makes no reference to context or cognition. *Board Policy IDDD* requires the district to extend student competencies in the areas of cognitive skills, learning skills, research skills, communication skills, and metacognitive skills beyond the regular classroom but makes no specific references supporting these competencies with the written curriculum, nor how this might be accomplished.

Characteristic 9: Specifies the overall beliefs and procedures governing the assessment of curriculum effectiveness

This characteristic was rated partially met. *Board Policy IDA* establishes an expectation that the district's curriculum will be aligned with assessments used in the school system and that the effectiveness of the curriculum shall be determined, in part, by the performance of students on local, state, and national criterion referenced and norm referenced assessments. The Rubicon Atlas curriculum depository includes links to district assessments that are to be used in monitoring student progress in the curriculum. While several job descriptions referenced the use of data in decision making, developing improvement plans, and improving instruction, they do not specifically reference the required use of student assessment data to assess the effectiveness of the adopted curriculum. Reviewers found no evidence of a planned approach to using assessment data to assess the effectiveness of the district's adopted curriculum.

Characteristic 10: Directs curriculum to be designed so that it supports teachers' differentiation of instruction approaches and selection of student objectives at the right level of difficulty

This characteristic was rated not met. Reviewers found no policy or document that clearly requires differentiation of instruction to address the unique needs of specific students. District curriculum documents do not establish a clear expectation for, or approach to differentiating instruction to meet the learning needs of students. The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System does include a performance standard for differentiated instruction, but this is the only document found that does so.

Characteristic 11: Describes the procedures teachers and administrators will follow in using assessment data to strengthen the written curriculum and instructional decision making

This characteristic was rated partially met. Reviewers found some expectations within board policies, job descriptions, and district documents for the use of data in curriculum and instructional decision making. *Board Policy IDA* establishes an expectation that instruction must focus on teaching what is assessed and assessing what is taught and references the use of assessment data to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum. However, reviewers did not find a specific, district-wide set of procedures or expectations for using assessment data to strength curriculum and instructional decision making.

Job descriptions referencing the use of assessment data included the following:

- The Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Technology is responsible for goal-setting processes that facilitate data-driven decision making.
- Curriculum Coordinators are to use assessment data, including state-mandated tests, benchmark assessments, and student portfolio data, to improve the instructional program.
- Math, Science, and Literacy Support Specialists are to utilize student data to inform instructional decisions.”

While reviewers found some references to use of assessment data in decision making in some job descriptions, the use of tests and assessment data to strengthen curriculum and instruction were not found within job descriptions for principals and teachers. The Teacher Keys Effective System does, however, include a performance standard that references the use of assessment data to measure student progress. No document specifies any procedures for how data are to be used specifically, particularly in planning instruction.

In practice, reviewers noted that district benchmark assessments are administered to students on a regular and ongoing basis; however, the resulting data are not consistently utilized to inform instructional or curricular decision making (see [Finding 4.1](#)).

Characteristic 12: Outlines procedures for conducting formative and summative evaluations of programs

This characteristic was rated not met. Reviewers noted a general expectation for using assessments to determine the effectiveness of the district's curriculum and to inform instructional decision making. No similar expectations were found that specify requirements for evaluating district programs. Reviewers found no policy expectation for a program assessment process that is linked to district planning. The Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Technology, by job description, is responsible for directing the design, implementation, and reporting of formal evaluations of school district programs; no detail for how this is to be done is noted in any document. There is no evidence that a systematic process was in place in the district for determining which programs are effective and should be continued and which programs should be discontinued if they do not achieve desired results (see [Findings 4.1](#) and [5.2](#)).

Characteristic 13: Requires the design of a comprehensive staff development program linked to curriculum design and delivery

This characteristic was rated not met. The district provides an array of professional development opportunities for staff; however, there is no comprehensive professional development plan in place to provide direction, coordination of training, and evaluation of effectiveness in terms of student achievement (see [Finding 3.1](#)). *Board Policy GAD* establishes the importance of implementing a professional learning program that enhances

the skills and knowledge of district personnel to improve student achievement. *Board Policy IDA* encourages but does not specifically require professional learning related to curriculum implementation.

Characteristic 14: Presents procedures for monitoring the delivery of curriculum

This characteristic was rated not met. Through *Board Policy IDA* and their job descriptions, building principals are charged with the responsibility for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum. During interviews with building administrators, principals indicated there are a variety of approaches used to monitor curriculum delivery, including classroom walk-throughs, attending grade level and department meetings, and looking for learning objectives posted in classrooms. There is no formal process, however, in place across the district for consistently monitoring curriculum delivery and using monitoring data to inform curriculum revisions or professional learning plans.

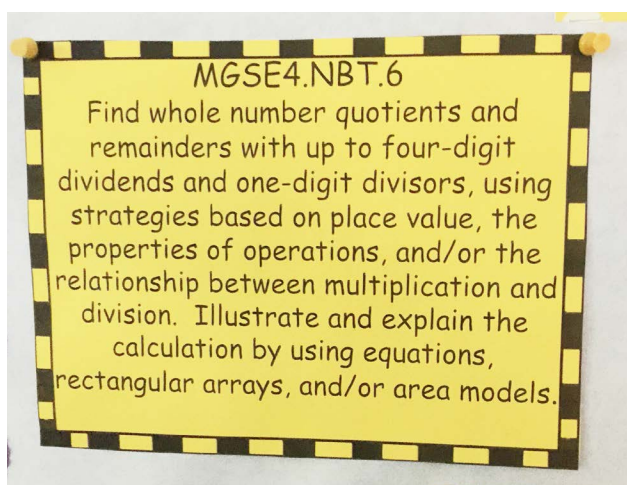
In practice, monitoring was observed to be inconsistent. Online survey responses from teachers indicate inconsistencies in how often classroom observations were occurring from campus to campus. Thirty-five percent of teachers indicated principals and assistant principals were observing classrooms on a daily to weekly basis; 42% were visited monthly; and 23% were visited less than two times a year to rarely.

Characteristic 15: Establishes a communication plan for the process of curriculum design and delivery

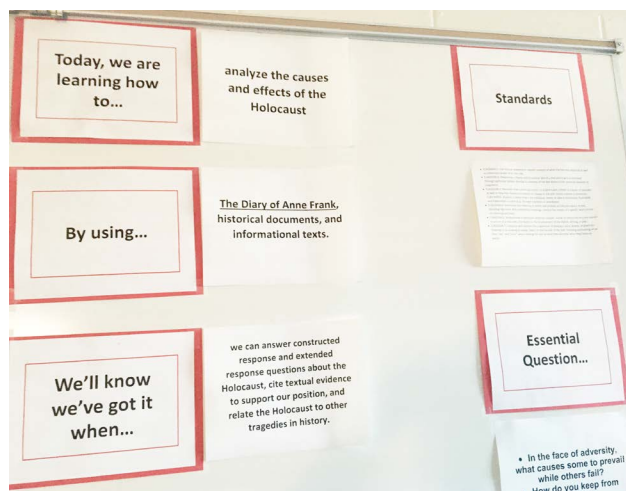
This characteristic was rated not met. Reviewers did not find a plan in place for communicating about the design and delivery across the district.

Summary

The reviewers found that although the Richmond County School System does have certain processes in place for managing curriculum, the current approach to curriculum management is not adequate when measured against the comprehensive characteristics of a quality curriculum management plan. Board policies, job descriptions, and district documents do address some management functions, but the direction provided does not have the specificity, content, and consistency needed to ensure deployment of a comprehensive curriculum management system in the Richmond County School System (see [Recommendations 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7](#)).



Fourth grade math standards are posted on the wall at Roy E Rollins Elementary School



Student friendly standards posted in a classroom at Murphey Middle School

Finding 2.2: The scope of the written curriculum is inadequate at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to provide consistency and direction for instruction across all subject areas and grades in the Richmond County School System.

Curriculum documents are the work plans that provide direction and consistency for teachers to plan classroom instruction. A complete written curriculum includes student objectives for all subject areas at all grade levels, and for all courses offered in a school district. This is considered the scope, or coverage, of the written curriculum. When curriculum documents are provided in all grades and all subject areas, equal access to the district curriculum is greatly increased across schools, courses, and grades. When curriculum documents are unavailable or missing components, consistency in teaching and learning decreases as teachers rely on other resources for planning and delivering instruction. These resources may or may not be aligned with the district curriculum. In addition, they may not support or ensure consistency, focus, and equity across grade levels, courses, and schools.

The scope of the written curriculum refers to the extent to which the taught curriculum has corresponding written curriculum documents. The scope is considered adequate if 100% of the four core content area courses (English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science) and 70% or more of all other courses offered in a school system have corresponding written curriculum documents. This finding only addresses scope and will describe to what extent written curriculum documents exist for each course offered by the school system. For analyses of the quality of the written curriculum, see [Findings 2.3](#) and [2.4](#).

The reviewers examined all documents provided to the review team by district personnel. These documents included the Georgia Department of Education 2017-2018 List of K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses, an Excel spreadsheet of all courses offered at each school for the current year, and curriculum documents accessible in the district's Rubicon Atlas online curriculum repository. All course lists were cross-referenced and inconsistencies, duplicate titles, and courses not currently offered were excluded from the exhibits, based on document review and confirmation from district administration.

Reviewers found that the overall scope of the written curriculum in the Richmond County School system covered less than 50% of courses and content areas offered and does not provide teachers with adequate direction for instructional planning. There was insufficient coverage in the four core areas—Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies—at all levels: elementary, middle school, and high school. The scope of the written curriculum for non-core courses was found inadequate at the middle and high school level and adequate at the elementary level.

Reviewers examined board policies and administrative regulations for direction regarding the scope of the written curriculum. The following board policies were reviewed:

- *Board Policy IDA* establishes that “It is policy of the Richmond County Board of Education to provide a comprehensive Richmond County K-12 curriculum, instruction and assessment program (RCK12) to serve the educational needs of the System’s students.”
- *Board Policy ABB: Board Powers and Duties* cites the authority of the board “To establish upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of the schools the course of study for each class and grade in the school system.”

Reviewers did not find language within board policies or administrative regulations that specifically required written curriculum documents for all courses offered and taught at all levels of the school system.

The reviewers looked for the presence of written curriculum documents for each content area and course at each grade level in the school district. The documents can be available in either hard copy or online platforms, such as the district's Rubicon Atlas system. In many instances, curriculum documents are a blend of state standards, benchmarks, pacing guidelines, and curriculum maps, such as those in the Richmond County School System portal, Rubicon Atlas. While any one of these documents may not represent a complete curriculum, reviewers considered all of the curriculum documents that teachers had available to them as written curriculum. It should be noted that reviewers do not consider commercially produced, purchased programs or textbooks as curriculum.

These are materials and resources available to teachers to support delivery of the curriculum, not supplant it. For this reason, reviewers did not consider these documents in determining the scope of the written curriculum.

Exhibit 2.2.1 presents a summary of the scope of the written curriculum at the elementary level for grades Kindergarten through grade 5. The Richmond County School System offers a Pre-K program that is state-funded. The Pre-K program is not mandated and is offered subject to the availability of funding. For the purposes of this review, the Pre-K program was not included in this finding. A complete listing of the scope of the curriculum in Kindergarten through grade 5 is available in Appendix E.

Exhibit 2.2.1

Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 5 Richmond County School System October 2017

Course Offering	K	1	2	3	4	5	Courses Offered	Curriculum Guides Presented
Core Courses								
English Language Arts	X	X	X	X	X	X	33	33
Mathematics	X	X	X	X	X	X	12	12
Social Studies	X	X	X	X	X	X	10	10
Science	X	X	X	X	X	X	10	10
STEM Exploratory	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	0
Totals							71	65
Percentage of Core Courses with Written Curriculum								92%
Non-Core Courses								
Health and Physical Education	X	X	X	X	X	X	15	15
Music, Dance, Theatre and Visual Arts	X	X	X	X	X	X	24	24
ESOL	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Gifted Resource		X	X	X	X	X	5	5
Foreign Language	X	X	X	X	X	X	9	6
Personal Social Skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	12	12
Totals							71	68
Percentage of Non-Core Courses with Written Curriculum								96%
Total Courses with Written Curriculum								133
Key: X= Course offered								
Data Source: RCSS curriculum documents found in Rubicon Atlas.								

As can be noted in Exhibit 2.2.1:

- The district offered 71 core courses and 71 non-core courses at the elementary level.
- Of 71 core courses offered, kindergarten through grade 5, 65 (92%) had written curriculum documents. While this is a commendable percentage, it does not meet the review criteria of 100% coverage for core courses.
- Of 71 non-core elementary school courses offered, 68 (96%) had written curriculum documents. This meets the review criteria of 70%.

Overall, the scope of the K-5 core written curriculum was inadequate and non-core written curriculum adequate to provide direction for instruction.

Exhibit 2.2.2 presents a summary of the scope of the written curriculum at the middle school level for grades 6 through 8 by course as presented in the district's Rubicon Atlas system compared to the list of course offerings made available to reviewers by district administrators. Appendix E contains the scope of all middle school courses confirmed by district administrators at the time of the review.

Exhibit 2.2.2

Summary of the Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 6 Through 8 Richmond County School System October 2017

Content Area	Course Offerings	Curriculum Guides Presented	Percentage of Guides Presented
Core Content Areas			
Language Arts	11	8	73
Mathematics	12	6	50
Science	6	4	67
Social Studies	11	4	36
Subtotal Core Subject Areas	40	22	55%
Non-Core Subject Areas			
CTAE	15	10	67
ESOL	3	1	33
Fine Arts	48	21	44
Foreign Language	3	3	100
Health and Physical Ed	6	6	100
Personal/Social Skills	6	0	0
Subtotal of Non-Core Subject Areas	81	41	51%
Total Scope of MS Written Curriculum	121	63	52%
<i>Data Source: RCSS curriculum documents found in Rubicon Atlas</i>			

As can be noted in Exhibit 2.2.2:

- The district offered 40 core courses and 81 non-core courses at the middle school level.
- Of the 40 core courses offered, grades 6 through 8, 22 (55%) had written curriculum documents. This does not meet the review criteria of 100% coverage for core courses.
- Middle school language arts had the highest percent of core courses, with written curriculum documents for 73% of courses offered.
- Middle school social studies had the lowest percent of core courses, with written curriculum documents for 36% of courses offered.
- Forty-five percent of the core courses where guides were not presented were designated as Gifted, Honors, Gifted Honors, or Connections Enrichment.
- Of the 81 non-core middle school courses offered, 41 (51%) had written curriculum documents. This does not meet the review criteria of at least 70% coverage for non-core courses.

Overall, the scope of the middle school curriculum, grades 6 through 8, for core and non-core courses was not sufficient to direct instruction.

Exhibit 2.2.3 summarizes the scope of the written curriculum at the high school level for grades 9 through 12 as presented in the district's Rubicon Atlas system compared to the list of high school course offerings made available to reviewers by district administrators. Appendix E contains the scope of all high school courses confirmed by district administrators at the time of the review.

Exhibit 2.2.3

Summary of the Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 9 Through 12 Richmond County School System October 2017

Content Area	Course Offerings	Curriculum Guides Presented	Percentage of Guides Presented
Core Content Areas			
Language Arts	54	10	19
Mathematics	29	14	48
Science	37	13	35
Social Studies	49	17	35
Subtotal Core Subject Areas	169	54	32%
Non-Core Subject Areas			
Career Technical Agricultural Education	100	56	56
English as Second Language	3	0	0
Fine Arts	75	17	23
Health/Physical Education	24	4	17
JROTC	20	3	15
Other	5	1	20
Special Education	12	8	67
Foreign Language	23	9	39
Subtotal of Non-Core Subject Areas	262	98	37
Total Scope of 9-12 Written Curriculum	431	152	35%
<i>Data Source: RCSS curriculum documents found in Rubicon Atlas</i>			

As can be noted in Exhibit 2.2.3:

- The district offered 169 core courses and 262 non-core courses at the high school level.
- Of the 169 core courses offered at the high school level, grades 9 through 12, 54 (32%) had written curriculum documents. This does not meet the review criteria of 100% coverage for core courses.
- High school mathematics had the highest percent of core courses, with written curriculum documents in the Rubicon system at 48%.
- High School English language arts had the lowest percent of core courses, with written curriculum documents in the Rubicon system at 19%.
- Of the 262 none-core courses offered at the high school level, 98 (37%) had written curriculum documents. This does not meet the review criteria of at least 70% coverage for non-core courses.
- The total scope of the high school curriculum for grades 9 through 12 for core and non-core subject areas with written curriculum documents in the Rubicon Atlas system was 35%.

Overall, the scope of the high school core and non-core written curriculum was not sufficient to direct instruction.

Exhibit 2.2.4 provides a summary of the scope of the written curriculum in the Richmond County School System from the data presented in Exhibits 2.2.1 through 2.2.3.

Exhibit 2.2.4

Scope of Written Curriculum Summary Richmond County School System October 2017

Grade Levels	Core Areas		Non-Core Areas		Total Areas	
	Total Core Offerings	Core Areas With a Written Curriculum	Total Non-Core Offerings	Non-Core Areas With a Written Curriculum	Total Course Offerings	Total Areas With a Written Curriculum
K-5	71	65	71	68	142	133
6-8	40	22	81	41	121	63
9-12	169	54	262	98	431	152
Total	280	141	414	207	694	348
	Core Areas = 50.3%		Non-Core Areas = 50.0%		Total Areas = 50.1%	
Data Source: RCSS curriculum documents found in Rubicon Atlas						

As can be noted from Exhibit 2.2.4:

- Reviewers identified a total of 694 courses offered in grades K-12 in the Richmond County School System. Curriculum documents were presented to the reviewers for 348 (50.1%) of core and none-core courses offered in the school system.
- Core areas course offerings had written curriculum for 141 of 280 courses, or 50.3%, which did not meet the 100% review standard for core content area courses.
- Curriculum documents were presented for 207 of 414, or 50.0%, of non-core courses, which did not meet the 70% review standard for non-core content areas courses.

Summary

Reviewers found the scope of the written curriculum to be insufficient to direct instruction in the Richmond County School System. The reviewers found no policies or regulations that require a written curriculum document for all courses offered in the school system. None of the core academic areas had the 100% coverage required for adequacy. Elementary non-core courses did meet the 70% requirement for adequacy; however, middle and high school non-core courses did not. Overall, there are not enough curriculum documents to adequately provide direction for curriculum delivery in the Richmond County School System (see Recommendations 1 and 5).

Finding 2.3: The overall quality of the curriculum documents in the Richmond County School District is insufficient to provide direction for teachers, to facilitate learning, and to promote alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. The district provides a consistent template across subjects and courses for the format and components of curriculum, but the availability and quality of these components varied across subject area and courses.

Effective instruction in a school system is directed by well-designed curriculum documents or courses of study that align the written, with the tested curriculum. Quality curriculum documents identify the specific and measurable objectives to be taught, align the objectives with the tested curriculum, identify the means for evaluation of achievement, specify necessary prerequisite skills, list instructional resources, and suggest instructional strategies for teaching. They support instruction so the efforts of teachers are guided in achieving the educational priorities of the school system. Quality curriculum documents make the curriculum operational by providing work plans for teachers. They provide connectivity vertically and horizontally within the school system. They serve as a district's blueprint for instruction, establishing priorities, purpose, and direction in teaching and learning. When curriculum documents are incomplete or nonexistent, instruction is likely to

be inconsistent and fragmented across guides, courses, classrooms, and schools as teachers make individual decisions about what to teach without guidance or consensus on priorities, strategies, materials, or evaluation. In some instances, students do not have equal access to a common curriculum.

To determine the quality of the written curriculum, the reviewers examined all curriculum documents presented to them on the Rubicon Atlas system. Reviewers also reviewed board policies and other district documents for expectations related to the design of curriculum. The reviewers interviewed district administrators, building principals, and teachers in regards to the quality and use of the district curriculum. Also, reviewers visited all schools in the district and most classrooms.

Overall, reviewers found the quality of the written curriculum documents used to guide instruction in the Richmond County School System was not sufficient to provide teachers with sufficient information to direct and plan the highest quality instruction. Most curriculum guides did not specify linkages to assessments, identify basic instructional resources, or specify instructional approaches or strategies. Curriculum documents were consistent in format but were not consistent and specific in the content required to effectively guide and facilitate curriculum implementation.

Board policies and administrative regulations were reviewed for direction as to the content, format, and expectations of curriculum guides. The following excerpts from board policies include references to the district's curriculum expectations (see [Finding 1.3](#)):

- *Board Policy IDA* states, "It is policy of the Richmond County Board of Education to provide a comprehensive Richmond County K-12 curriculum, instruction and assessment program (RCK12) to serve the educational needs of the System's students." Reviewers did not find any language in this policy that requires a written curriculum guide or specifies what components are to be included in written curriculum documents.
- *Board Policy IDA* cites the authority of the board "To establish upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of the schools the course of study for each class and grade in the school system." This policy establishes the superintendent as having the authority to recommend the curriculum, but does not establish the expectations for the design of the written curriculum.

Overall, board policies did not outline any expectations concerning the design and development of written curriculum guides. No policy direction was found requiring all curriculum guides to include clearly stated learning objectives, a statement of prerequisite skills or knowledge, suggested instructional strategies, or strategies to assess learning. Reviewers were not presented with any other formal district documents specifying the format and components of curriculum guides and instruction guide documents.

The *Richmond County School System's Strategic Plan (2016-2019)* includes as one of its strategic goals, High Academic Achievement, and Success for all. One of the performance objectives included in the strategic plan is to "Increase student performance at or above grade level." The first initiative, "Initiative a RCK12 Curriculum Development and Implementation," includes the following four action steps:

- Action Step 1: Provide all students access to a rigorous curriculum including instruction units and standards- aligned assessments.
- Action Step 2: Alignment of instructional materials and practices to the RCK12 curriculum standards.
- Action Step 3: Establishes non-negotiables for planning and teaching.
- Action Step 4: Monitors implementation of RCK12 curriculum.

RCSS's strategic plan calls for curriculum development and implementation aligned to the RCK12 curriculum standards. It does not establish specific guidelines for the formal design of curriculum, nor any criteria for rating the quality of the written curriculum.

To determine the quality of curriculum guides in the Richmond County School System, reviewers examined all documents presented as curriculum documents, along with course descriptions and state content standards. Exhibit 2.3.1 lists the documents examined by reviewers.

Exhibit 2.3.1

Curriculum Documents Reviewed for Minimal Basic Components For Curriculum Document Quality and Specificity by School Level Richmond County School System October 2017

Curriculum Documents Reviewed
Georgia Standards of Excellence - all subjects
Curriculum Overview - all subjects
Course Descriptions – all subjects
2017 Georgia Milestones - all grades
ACTFL 21st Century Skills Map: all Foreign Languages - Grades 9-12
ACTFL Inverted Pyramid - all Foreign Languages - Grades K-12
ACTFL: World Readiness Standards for Learning - Grades 9-12
Benchmark Literacy Leveled Readers Social Studies - all Grades
Benchmark Literacy Unit Leveled Readers - Elementary
CTAE - Business & Computer Science Standards - Grades 6-8
Discourse in Science - Grades 6-12
Eduplace Outline Map Social Studies - Grades 6-12
ELA Foundational Skills Assessment Check - Grades K-12
ELA Lessons - Grades K-12
ELA Pyramid of Intervention - Grades K-12
ELA Teacher Resources - Grades K-12
ELA Writing Anchor Papers - Grades 9-12
ELA Writing Pacing Guides - Grades 9-12
Fryer Vocabulary Documents Social Studies - Grades 6-12
GaGSE Social Studies - Grades 1-12
GaDOE Teacher Guidance Documents - Grades K-12
Georgia Fine Arts (GPS) - Grades K-12
Georgia Milestones EOC Study Guides, Core subjects - all grades
Georgia Modern Languages and Latin (GPS) Grades 6-12
Georgia Physical Education (GPS) Grades K-12
GM EOC Assessment Guides - all subjects
GMAS Resources and Information - all grades
Grade Level Units for all subjects K-12
Grade Performance Tasks ELA
Growth Mindset Lessons, Mathematics - Grades 6-12
Language Arts - Mini writing Tasks - Grades K-5
Listening and Speaking Checklist Language Arts - all grades
Literature Lesson Plans - Grades 9-12
Marzano's Six Steps Process to Teaching Vocabulary - Grades 6-12
Math Concept Lessons - Grades 6-12
Mathematics Framework Task Units - Grades 6-12
Mathematics High School FlipBook
Mathematics Resources - all grades
National Government Informal Progress check, Social Studies - Grades 6-12
OPTIC documents Language Arts - Grades 9-12

<p align="center">Exhibit 2.3.1 (continued) Curriculum Documents Reviewed for Minimal Basic Components For Curriculum Document Quality and Specificity by School Level Richmond County School System October 2017</p>
Curriculum Documents Reviewed
Pacing Guides for all subject - Grades K-12
Pre and Post Assessments: Selected Response, Core subjects - Grades 6-12
RCK12 Mathematics Pyramid of Intervention - all grades
Reading in Science - Grades 6-12
Science 101 Instructional Support - all grades
Science Argumentative Design Inquiry - Grades 6-12
Science Literacy documents - Grades 6-12
Science Notebook Center - Grades 6-12
Scope and Sequence (Horizontal and Vertical) for all courses and all grades
Social Studies Available Leveled Text - Grades 6-12
Social Studies Resources - all grades
Standards Alignment documents - all subjects
WIDA Can DO Elementary
Writing in Science CER Grades 6-12
<i>Source: RCSS Rubicon Atlas</i>

As can be noted from Exhibit 2.3.1, teachers have access to many curriculum documents for use in planning their lessons, all of which are available on Rubicon Atlas the district’s curriculum document repository. Reviewers found navigating through curriculum files located in Rubicon Atlas to be challenging. Reviewers often had to navigate through multiple layers of files only to find an empty file, or found a duplication of components within documents, and at times could not clearly determine which curriculum documents were the primary documents to be used by teachers in planning their instruction. It was unclear within the Rubicon Atlas system which curriculum documents were district-required and which were optional.

During interviews with district administrators and teachers, reviewers received many comments regarding the ease of accessing curriculum documents through the Rubicon Atlas system. Following is a representative sample of comments:

- “Rubicon requires a skilled practitioner to be able to sift through all that is in it.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Rubicon—intent is great, but it is very cumbersome—there are a lot of clicks...I can Google it and find what I need much faster.” (Building Administrator)
- “Rubicon needs to be revamped, the platform causes more angst than good. There are teachers writing their own plans and haven’t looked at Rubicon.” (Building Administrator)
- “To be perfectly honest, there are so many items listed that I may not even be fully aware of all that they have to offer.” (Teacher)
- “I like the monthly pacing calendars that were created this year. However, Rubicon is not user-friendly for both layout and accessibility.” (Teacher)
- “Rubicon is not complete.” (Teacher)
- “I think some people do not like the curriculum because some curriculum writers did not put the information in Rubicon the same as others. Some included pre-tests, power points, worksheets, and visuals to help everyone out.” (Teacher)
- “As a teacher new to the district, Rubicon is very confusing. I would say it is overwhelming with too much information.” (Teacher)

Central office administrators are aware that Rubicon Atlas is not user-friendly and are allowing individual building administrators to determine whether their teachers are required to use Rubicon Atlas to access their curriculum. This has resulted in a district curriculum that is optional and possibly impeding students' equal access to content.

To determine the quality of available curriculum documents in the Richmond County School System, reviewers examined all documents presented as curriculum documents by district personnel. These were examined and rated for minimal basic components for quality and specificity, using the criteria presented in Exhibit 2.3.2.

Exhibit 2.3.2

Curriculum Management Improvement Model Frame One Analysis: Minimal Basic Components for Curriculum Document Quality and Specificity

Point Value	Criteria
Criterion One: Clarity and Specificity of Objectives	
0	No goals/objectives present
1	Vague delineation of goals/learner outcomes
2	States tasks to be performed or skills to be learned
3	States for each objective the what, when (sequence within course/grade), how actual standard is performed, and amount of time to be spent learning
Criterion Two: Congruity of the Curriculum to the Assessment Process	
0	No assessment approach
1	Some approach of assessment stated
2	States skills, knowledge, and concepts that will be assessed
3	Keys each objective to district and/or state performance assessments
Criterion Three: Delineation of the Prerequisite Essential Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes	
0	No mention of required skill
1	States prior general experience needed
2	States prior general experience needed in specified grade level
3	States specific documented prerequisite or description of discrete skills/concepts required prior to this learning (may be a scope and sequence across grades/courses if Pre-K-12)
Criterion Four: Delineation of the Major Instructional Tools	
0	No mention of textbook or instructional tools/resources
1	Names the basic text/instructional resource(s)
2	Names the basic text/instructional resource(s) and supplementary materials to be used
3	States for each objective the “match” between the basic text/instructional resource(s) and the curriculum objective
Criterion Five: Clear Approaches for Classroom Use	
0	No approaches cited for classroom use
1	Overall, vague statement on approaching the subject
2	Provides general suggestions on approaches
3	Provides specific examples of how to approach key concepts/skills in the classroom
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Each written curriculum documents reviewed was rated from 0 to 3 points on each of the five criteria, with 3 representing the highest rating. The maximum composite score a curriculum guiding document could receive is 15 points. A curriculum guide is considered strong if it received a rating of 12 or higher.

Reviewers rated the curriculum documents housed in the Rubicon Atlas online system for 24 core courses (English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies) and 96 non-core kindergarten through grade 5. Elementary curriculum documents reviewed included Curriculum Overviews, Curriculum Maps, Course Descriptions, Pacing Guides, Lesson Plans, resources found under the “Reports” and “References” tabs, and links to resources and strategies. Within Rubicon Atlas, reviewers found non-editable and editable curriculum documents. Non-editable curriculum documents that are considered district curriculum are designated within Rubicon Atlas with a “D.” Once a teacher is assigned a grade level and courses for the school year, he or she receives an editable copy of the curriculum document, which is located in the individual teacher’s Rubicon Atlas file and designated with an “I.” Reviewers attempted to rate non-editable curriculum documents whenever possible. In the absence of a non-editable curriculum document, reviewers randomly selected an editable curriculum document. It should be noted that this quality analysis only evaluates the presence of the audit-required curriculum components.

Exhibit 2.3.3 presents the reviewers’ ratings of each elementary curriculum guide for core and non-core courses.

Exhibit 2.3.3

Reviewers Ratings of Elementary Curriculum Guides On CMSi Minimal Guide Components and Specificity Criteria Richmond County School System October 2017

Course Title	Obj	Asmt	PreReq	Res	Strat	Total Rating
Core Courses						
Language Arts/Grade K	2	2	3	1	3	11
Language Arts/Grade 1	2	2	3	1	3	11
Language Arts/Grade 2	2	2	3	1	3	11
Language Arts/Grade 3	2	2	3	1	3	11
Language Arts/Grade 4	2	2	3	1	3	11
Language Arts/Grade 5	2	2	3	1	3	11
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Language Arts	2.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	11.0
Mathematics/Grade K	2	2	3	3	3	13
Mathematics/Grade 1	2	2	3	3	3	13
Mathematics/Grade 2	2	2	3	3	3	13
Mathematics/Grade 3	2	2	3	3	3	13
Mathematics/Grade 4	2	2	3	3	3	13
Mathematics/Grade 5	2	2	3	3	3	13
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Mathematics	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	13.0
Science/Grade K	2	1	3	1	3	10
Science/Grade 1	2	1	3	1	3	10
Science/Grade 2	2	1	3	1	3	10
Science/Grade 3	2	1	3	1	3	10
Science/Grade 4	2	1	3	1	3	10
Science/Grade 5	2	1	3	1	3	10
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Science	2.0	1.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	10.0
Social Studies/Grade K	2	1	3	2	2	10
Social Studies/Grade 1	2	1	3	2	2	10
Social Studies/Grade 2	2	1	3	2	2	10
Social Studies/Grade 3	2	1	3	2	2	10
Social Studies/Grade 4	2	1	3	2	2	10
Social Studies/Grade 5	2	1	3	2	2	10
Mean Rating for each Criterion: Social Studies	2.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	10.0
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Elementary Core Courses	2.0	1.5	3	1.8	2.8	11.0

Exhibit 2.3.3 (continued)
Reviewers Ratings of Elementary Curriculum Guides
On CMSi Minimal Guide Components and Specificity Criteria
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Course Title	Obj	Asmt	PreReq	Res	Strat	Total Rating
Non-Core Courses						
Visual Arts/Grade K*	2	0	3	0	0	5
Visual Arts/Grade 1*	2	2	3	0	0	7
Visual Arts/Grade 2*	2	1	3	1	0	7
Visual Arts/Grade 3	2	1	3	0	0	6
Visual Arts/Grade 4	2	1	3	0	2	8
Visual Arts/Grade 5	2	1	3	0	2	8
Art/Grade 1*	2	0	3	0	0	5
Art/Grade 2*	2	0	3	0	0	5
Art/Grade 3*	2	0	3	0	0	5
Art/Grade 4*	2	0	3	0	0	5
Art/Grade 5*	2	0	3	0	0	5
Dance/Grade 1*	2	1	3	0	1	7
Dance/Grade 2*	2	1	3	0	1	7
Dance/Grade 3*	2	0	3	0	0	5
Drama/Grade K*	2	0	3	0	0	5
Drama/Grade 1*	2	0	3	0	0	5
Drama/Grade 2*	2	0	3	0	0	5
Drama/Grade 3	2	0	3	0	0	5
Drama/Grade 4	2	0	3	0	0	5
Drama/Grade 5	2	0	3	0	0	5
General Music/Grade K	2	1	3	1	2	9
General Music/Grade K - PYP*	2	1	3	0	0	6
General Music/Grade 1	2	1	3	1	2	9
General Music/Grade 1 - PYP*	2	1	3	0	1	7
General Music/Grade 2	2	1	3	1	2	9
General Music/Grade 2 - PYP*	2	1	3	0	0	6
General Music/Grade 3	2	1	3	1	2	9
General Music/Grade 3 - PYP*	2	1	3	0	0	6
General Music/Grade 4	2	1	3	1	2	9
General Music/Grade 4 - PYP*	2	1	3	0	0	6
General Music/Grade 5	2	1	3	1	2	9
General Music/Grade 5 - PYP*	2	1	3	0	0	6
Chorus/Pre-K*	2	0	3	0	0	5
Chorus/Grade K	2	0	3	0	0	5
Chorus/Grade 1	2	0	3	0	0	5
Chorus/Grade 3	2	0	3	0	0	5
Chorus/Grade 4	2	0	3	0	0	5
Chorus/Grade 5	2	0	3	0	0	5
Spanish/Kindergarten	2	2	3	0	2	9
IB Spanish/Kindergarten	2	2	3	0	2	9
IB Spanish/Kindergarten - PYP*	2	2	3	0	2	9
Spanish/Grade 1	2	2	3	0	2	9
IB Spanish/Grade 1	2	2	3	0	2	9

Exhibit 2.3.3 (continued)
Reviewers Ratings of Elementary Curriculum Guides
On CMSi Minimal Guide Components and Specificity Criteria
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Course Title	Obj	Asmt	PreReq	Res	Strat	Total Rating
Non-Core Courses						
IB Spanish/Grade 1 - PYP*	2	2	3	0	2	9
Spanish/Grade 2	2	2	3	2	2	11
IB Spanish/Grade 2	2	2	3	0	1	8
IB Spanish/Grade 2 - PYP*	2	2	3	0	2	9
Spanish/Grade 3	2	2	3	2	2	11
IB Spanish/Grade 3	2	2	3	0	2	9
IB Spanish/Grade 3 - PYP*	2	2	3	0	0	6
Spanish/Grade 4	2	2	3	2	0	8
IB Spanish/Grade 4	2	2	3	0	2	9
IB Spanish/Grade 4 - PYP*	2	2	3	0	0	7
Spanish/Grade 5	2	2	3	0	0	7
IB Spanish/Grade 5	2	2	3	0	2	9
IB Spanish/Grade 5 - PYP*	2	2	3	0	0	7
Gifted Resource Class/Grade 1	2	2	3	2	2	11
Gifted Resource Class/Grade 1 - PYP*	2	2	3	0	0	8
Gifted Resource Class/Grade 2	2	2	3	2	2	12
Gifted Resource Class/Grade 2 - PYP*	2	2	3	0	0	8
Gifted Resource Class/Grade 3	2	2	3	2	2	12
Gifted Resource Class/Grade 3 - PYP*	2	2	3	0	0	8
Gifted Resource Class/Grade 4	2	2	3	2	2	12
Gifted Resource Class/Grade 4 - PYP*	2	2	3	0	0	8
Gifted Resource Class/Grade 5	2	2	3	2	2	12
Gifted Resource Class/Grade 5 - PYP*	2	2	3	0	0	8
Computers/Grade 1*	2	1	3	1	3	10
Computers/Grade 2*	2	0	3	0	1	6
Computers/Grade 3*	2	0	3	0	1	6
Computer/Grade 4*	2	0	3	0	1	6
Computers/Grade 5*	2	0	3	0	1	6
Health/Physical Education/Grade K	2	0	3	1	2	8
Health/Physical Education/Grade 1	2	2	3	2	3	11
Health/Physical Education/Grade 1-PYP*	2	2	3	0	0	7
Health/Physical Education/Grade 2	2	2	3	2	3	11
Health/Physical Education/Grade 2-PYP*	2	2	3	0	0	7
Health/Physical Education/Grade 3	2	2	3	2	3	11
Health/Physical Education/Grade 3-PYP*	2	2	3	0	0	7
Health/Physical Education/Grade 4	2	2	3	2	3	11
Health/Physical Education/Grade 4-PYP*	2	2	3	0	0	7
Health/Physical Education/Grade 5	2	2	3	2	3	11
Health/Physical Education/Grade 5-PYP*	2	2	3	0	0	7
Units of Inquiry/Grade Pre-K*	1	1	3	1	1	7
Units of Inquiry/Grade K*	1	1	3	1	1	7
Units of Inquiry/Grade 1*	1	1	3	1	1	7
Units of Inquiry/Grade 1-PYP*	1	1	3	1	1	7

Exhibit 2.3.3 (continued)
Reviewers Ratings of Elementary Curriculum Guides
On CMSi Minimal Guide Components and Specificity Criteria
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Course Title	Obj	Asmt	PreReq	Res	Strat	Total Rating
Non-Core Courses						
Units of Inquiry/Grade 2*	1	1	3	1	1	7
Units of Inquiry/Grade 2-PYP*	1	1	3	1	1	7
Units of Inquiry/Grade 3*	1	1	3	1	1	7
Units of Inquiry/Grade 4*	1	1	3	1	1	7
Units of Inquiry/Grade 5*	1	1	3	1	1	7
Special Education*	2	0	0	0	1	3
Special Education-PYP*	0	0	0	0	0	0
ESOL*	2	0	3	0	0	5
Elem.BCS-Keyboarding*	2	1	3	0	3	9
Elementary School Leadership*	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Elementary Non-Core Courses	1.9	1.1	2.9	0.5	0.9	7.3
Total Mean Rating for Each Criterion: All Elementary Core and Non-Core Courses	1.9	1.2	2.9	0.7	1.3	8.0
Note: Adding all the scores for the criterion and dividing the sum by the total number of scores calculated the total mean for each criterion.						
* = District (D) curriculum was not available so a random sample of Individual (I) curriculum was analyzed						
Source: Grades K-5 curriculum documents found in Richmond County Schools Rubicon Atlas						

Reviewers noted curriculum documents housed in Rubicon Atlas use similar formatting structures within and across elementary subject areas. Reviewers found curriculum documents were most likely to contain or provide links to the minimal basic components considered for rating. However, reviewers also noted that many curriculum documents were incomplete. Exhibit 2.3.3 presents the following concerning the quality of curriculum documents for kindergarten through grade 5:

- Twenty-four core and 96 non-core elementary (K-5) curriculum guides were examined.
- The quality rating of the core curriculum guides ranged from a low of 10 to a high of 13. In order for a curriculum guide to be considered strong, it must receive a minimum score of 12.
- Curriculum guides for mathematics received the highest rating with a score of 13, considered strong.
- Curriculum guides for science and social studies were the lowest rated core guides, with a score of 10.
- Collectively, the mean rating for all core elementary curriculum guides was 11 points.
- The quality rating of the non-core curriculum guides ranged from a low of 0 to a high of 12.
- Curriculum guides for Gifted Resource Class/Grade 2, Gifted Resource Class/Grade 3, Gifted Resource Class/Grade 4, and Gifted Resource Class/Grade 5 received the highest rating for non-core courses with a score of 12, which is considered strong.
- Curriculum guides for non-core courses receiving a score of 0 included guides for Special Education-PYP and Elementary School Leadership.
- Collectively, the mean rating for all non-core curriculum guides was 7.3.
- The mean rating for all elementary curriculum guides is 8.0.

Comments related to the ratings for each criterion in [Exhibit 2.3.3](#) follow:

Criterion One: Clarity and Specificity of Objectives

To obtain a score of 3 for clarity and specificity of objectives, curriculum documents must state for each objective the sequence within the course or grade, the amount of time necessary to be spent learning, and how the objective is to be performed. Objectives must be in a refined and condensed form from the original standards, to help teachers with focusing on the most essential learnings and knowing what mastery of the learnings looks like. Core curriculum guides all received a score of 2 for this criterion. Although the curriculum documents identified the sequence in which standards are to be taught, the guides did not indicate the amount of time that would generally be needed to teach the standards to mastery. A majority (88.5%) of non-core curriculum guides also received a score of 2 points for this criterion because they also did not make reference to the time necessary to be spent learning the stated objectives.

Criterion Two: Congruity of the Curriculum to the Assessment Process

To obtain a score of 3 for congruity of the curriculum to the assessment process, each objective should be keyed to district formative assessments and any state performance assessments. Curriculum guides for language arts and mathematics received a score of 2 for including unit pre-post tests, which, however, are no longer required by the district as the district is transitioning to a new system of benchmark assessments. Curriculum guides for science and social studies all received a score of 1 for making some reference to assessments, but the guides were not linked to any specific assessment, nor did the guides identify what skills, knowledge, or concepts would be assessed. Twenty-eight (30%) of the non-core courses indicated no assessment approach and received a rating of 0. Gifted Resource class curriculum documents received a rating of 2.0 because there are pre- and post-tests listed and teachers have access to test keys aligned with the GSEs. However, the district does not require these tests. Health/Physical Education curriculum documents also received a score of 2.0 because the documents related to the Fitness Gram assessments list the skills, knowledge, and concepts that will be assessed.

Criterion Three: Delineation of the Prerequisite Essential Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes

To obtain a score of 3 for this criterion, curriculum documents must state specific documented prerequisites or a description of discrete skills/concepts required prior to this learning. This may be a scope and sequence across K-12 for the subject. Nearly all curriculum guides received a score of 3 points for this criterion. In Rubicon Atlas, teachers can view standards to be mastered in prior and future grades by clicking on the “reference” tab and then “standards” for most courses offered in the district. A K-12 scope and sequence of subject area skills gives teachers information about what students come to the grade level/course with, and what the expectations are for learning in the current grade level/course in preparing students for the next grade level/course. Teachers of elementary Spanish have access to a link in Rubicon Atlas to K-12 generic (not Spanish specifically) Standards for Modern Languages.

Criterion Four: Delineation of the Major Instructional Tools

To obtain a score of 3 for this criterion, curriculum documents state the match between the basic text/instructional resource(s) and each objective or cluster of objectives. Mathematics curriculum guides received a score of 3 for including a match between “Priority Standards” and page specific numbers in *Envision*, the district-adopted textbook. Social studies curriculum guides received a score of 2 for including some references to instructional resources and supplementary materials in the “5 E” (Engage, Explore, Explain, Extend/Elaborate, and Evaluate) lesson plans included in the Curriculum Overview. Language arts and science curriculum guides were scored a 1 for including some general references to instructional resources that were not linked to specific learning objectives. Most curriculum guides for non-core courses did not include information regarding resources to be used.

Criterion Five: Clear Approaches for Classroom Use

Obtaining a score of 3 for this criterion requires that the curriculum documents for a given course provide specific examples of how to approach the teaching of key concepts/skills in the classroom. Curriculum guides for language arts, mathematics, and science all received a score of 3 for including specific suggested instructional strategies for each unit of instruction. Social studies guides received a score of 2 for including general suggestions

on approaches but not detailing the strategies for specific skills or concepts. Some non-core curriculum guides, such as the grade 1 computer course, included scripted instructional strategies, but a majority of the non-core curriculum guides contained no references to suggested approaches to instruction.

Overall, reviewers found the elementary school curriculum guides did not contain enough information or include all necessary components to provide direction for teachers. Middle school curriculum guides were weak in providing linkages to district and state assessments, resources, and approaches for teaching the standards. This leaves teachers having to search for or develop their own materials, which may not be aligned to state standards or district expectations.

Reviewers rated the curriculum documents housed in the Rubicon Atlas online system for 23 core courses (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies), and 41 non-core for grades 6 through 8. As with the process for rating elementary curriculum guides, reviewers attempted to rate non-editable curriculum documents whenever possible. When non-editable curriculum documents were not available, reviewers randomly selected an editable curriculum document. Middle school curriculum documents reviewed included Curriculum Overviews, Curriculum Maps, Course Descriptions, Pacing Guides, Lesson Plans, resources found under the “Reports” and “References” tabs, and links to resources and strategies.

Exhibit 2.3.4 presents the reviewers’ ratings of each middle school, grades 6 through 8, curriculum guide for core and non-core courses.

Exhibit 2.3.4
Reviewers Ratings of Middle School Curriculum Guides
On CMSi Minimal Guide Components and Specificity Criteria
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Course Title	Obj	Asmt	PreReq	Res	Strat	Total Rating
Core Courses						
Language Arts						
Language Arts/Grade 6	2	2	3	2	3	12
Language Arts/Grade 7	2	2	3	2	3	12
Language Arts/Grade 8	2	2	3	2	3	12
Gifted Language Arts/Grade 7	2	2	3	2	3	12
Gifted Language Arts/Grade 8	2	2	3	2	3	12
Honors Language Arts/Grade 6	2	2	3	2	3	12
Honors Language Arts/Grade 7	2	2	3	2	3	12
Honors Language Arts/Grade 8	2	2	3	2	3	12
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Language Arts	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	12.0
Mathematics						
Mathematics/Grade 6	2	2	3	3	3	13
Mathematics/Grade 7	2	2	3	3	3	13
Mathematics/Grade 8	2	2	3	3	3	13
Gifted Honors Math/Grade 6	2	2	3	3	3	13
Gifted Honors Math/Grade 7	2	2	3	3	3	13
Gifted Honors Math/Grade 8	2	2	3	3	3	13
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Mathematics	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	13.0
Science						
Science/Grade 6	2	1	3	1	3	10
Science/Grade 7	2	1	3	1	3	10
Science/Grade 8	2	1	3	1	3	10
Honors Science/Grade 6	2	1	3	1	3	10
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Science	2.0	1.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	10.0

Exhibit 2.3.4 (continued)
Reviewers Ratings of Middle School Curriculum Guides
On CMSi Minimal Guide Components and Specificity Criteria
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Course Title	Obj	Asmt	PreReq	Res	Strat	Total Rating
Core Courses						
Social Science						
Social Studies/Grade 6	2	1	3	2	2	10
Social Studies/Grade 7	2	1	3	2	2	10
Georgia Studies/Grade 8	2	1	3	2	2	10
Gifted Georgia Studies/Grade 8	2	1	3	2	2	10
Gifted Honors Social Studies/Grade 6	2	1	3	2	2	10
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Social Studies	2	1	3	2	2	10
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Middle School Core Courses	2.0	1.6	3.0	2.1	2.8	11.5
Non-Core Courses						
Exp. Engineer Tech/Grade 6	2	1	3	1	2	9
Invention & Innovation/Grade 7	2	0	1	1	0	4
Technological Systems/Grade 8	2	0	1	0	0	3
Business & Computer Science/Grade 6	2	0	1	0	0	3
Career Awareness/Grade 6	2	0	1	1	1	5
Career Discovery/Grade 7	2	0	1	1	1	5
Career Management/Grade 8	2	0	1	1	1	5
Healthcare Science (Grade 6)	2	1	0	1	1	5
Healthcare Science (Grade 7)	1	1	2	0	0	4
Healthcare Science (Grade 8)	1	0	0	0	0	1
ESOL/Grade 6	2	1	0	0	2	5
Ballet I/MS	2	2	3	0	0	7
Beginning Men's Dance/MS	2	2	3	0	0	7
Theater Technology I	1	0	3	0	0	4
Visual Arts/Grade 6	2	2	3	0	2	9
Visual Arts/Grade 7	2	2	3	0	2	9
Visual Arts/Grade 8	2	2	3	0	2	9
Visual Arts/Comp I/MS	2	1	3	0	1	7
Music General/Grade 6	2	1	3	0	1	7
Music General/Grade 7	2	1	3	0	1	7
Music General/Grade 8	2	1	3	1	2	9
Beginning Band (Grade 6)	2	2	3	1	1	9
Beginning Band (Grade 7)	2	1	3	2	2	10
Beginning Band (Grade 8)	2	1	3	2	2	10
Intermediate Band Grade	2	1	3	2	2	10
Intermediate Band Grade 7	2	1	3	2	2	10
Advanced Band Grade 8	2	1	3	2	2	10
Beginning Orchestra (Grade 6)	2	1	3	0	1	7
Beginning Orchestra (Grade 7)	2	1	3	0	1	7
Beginning Chorus (Grade 6)	2	1	3	0	2	8
Beginning Chorus (Grade 7)	2	2	3	2	1	10
Beginning Chorus (Grade 8)	2	2	3	2	1	10
Spanish/Grade 6	2	2	3	3	2	12
Spanish/Grade 7	2	2	3	3	2	12

Exhibit 2.3.4 (continued) Reviewers Ratings of Middle School Curriculum Guides On CMSi Minimal Guide Components and Specificity Criteria Richmond County School System October 2017						
Course Title	Obj	Asmt	PreReq	Res	Strat	Total Rating
Non-Core Courses (continued)						
Spanish/Grade 8	2	2	3	3	2	12
Health/Grade 6	2	2	3	1	1	9
Health/Grade 7	2	2	3	1	2	10
Health/Grade 8	2	2	3	1	2	10
Physical Education/Grade 6	2	0	0	0	0	2
Physical Education/Grade 7	2	0	0	0	0	2
Physical Education/Grade 8	2	0	0	0	0	2
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Middle School Non-Core	1.9	1.1	2.2	0.8	1.1	7.2
Total Mean Rating for Each Criterion: All Middle School Core and Non-core Courses	2.0	1.3	2.5	1.3	1.7	8.8
Note: The total mean for each criterion was calculated by adding all ratings for the criterion and dividing the sum by the total number of scores.						
Source: Grades 6-8 curriculum documents found in Richmond County Schools Rubicon Atlas						

Reviewers noted that curriculum documents housed in Rubicon Atlas use similar formatting structures within and across middle school subject areas. Reviewers found curriculum documents were most likely to contain or provide links to the minimal basic components considered for rating. However, reviewers also noted that many curriculum documents were incomplete. Exhibit 2.3.4 presents the following concerning the quality of curriculum documents for grades 6 through 8:

- Twenty-three core and 41 non-core middle school, grades 6 through 8, curriculum guides were examined.
- The quality rating of the core curriculum guides ranged from a low of 10 to a high of 13. In order for a curriculum guide to be considered strong, it must receive a minimum score of 12.
- Curriculum guides for mathematics received the highest rating with a score of 13, and curriculum guides for language arts received a score of 12. These curriculum guides met review criteria for being considered strong.
- Curriculum guides for science and social studies were the lowest rated core guides, with a score of 10, which does not meet review criteria to be considered strong.
- Collectively, the mean rating for all core middle school curriculum guides was 11.5.
- The quality rating of non-core curriculum guides ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 12.
- Curriculum guides for Spanish grades 6, 7, and 8 received the highest rating for non-core courses with a score of 12, which is considered strong.
- The curriculum guide for Healthcare Science (grade 8) received the lowest rating for a non-core curriculum guide with a score of 1.
- Collectively, the mean rating for all non-core middle school curriculum guides was 7.2.
- The mean rating for all middle school curriculum guides was 8.8 points.

Comments related to the ratings for each criterion in Exhibit 2.3.4 follow:

Criterion One: Clarity and Specificity of Objectives

To obtain a score of 3 for this criterion, curriculum documents must state for each objective the sequence within the course or grade, the amount of time necessary to be spent learning, and how the objective is to be performed. Objectives must be in a refined and condensed form from the original standards, to help teachers with focusing on the most essential learnings and knowing what mastery of those learnings looks like. Core curriculum guides all received a score of 2 for this criterion. Although the curriculum documents identified the sequence in which standards are to be taught, the guides did not indicate the amount of time that would generally be needed to teach the standards to mastery. A majority (92.6%) of non-core curriculum guides also received a score of 2 for this criterion because they did not make references to the time necessary to be spent learning the stated objectives.

Criterion Two: Congruity of the Curriculum to the Assessment Process

To obtain a score of 3 for this criterion, each learning objective must be keyed to district and/or state performance assessments. Curriculum guides for language arts and mathematics received a score of 2 for including unit pre-post tests, which, however, are no longer required by the district as the district transitions to a new system of benchmark assessment. Although the skills to be assessed were evident, the guide includes a description of the test format, content measurement, item types, and sample items; they are to align specifically to Georgia Standards of Excellence. Curriculum guides for science and social studies all received a score of 1 for making some reference to assessments, but the guides were not linked to any specific assessment, nor did the guides identify what skills, knowledge, or concepts would be assessed. Reviewers were able to locate a single assessment, “Middle School Safety Test” in the science curriculum documents; however, reviewers were unable to locate a district assessment approach in any of the other science curriculum documents. None of the non-core curriculum guides received a score of 3 for this criterion. Twenty-seven percent of the non-core curriculum guides contained no references to assessments, 16% of the guide referenced some approach to assessment, while 14% made some reference to the skills, knowledge, and concepts that would be assessed.

Criterion Three: Delineation of the Prerequisite Essential Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes

To obtain a score of 3 for this criterion, curriculum documents must state specific documented prerequisites or a description of discrete skills/concepts required prior to this learning. This may be a scope and sequence across K-12 for the subject. In Rubicon Atlas, teachers can view standards to be mastered in prior and future grades by clicking on the “reference” tab and then “standards” for most courses offered in the district. A K-12 scope and sequence of subject area skills gives teachers information about what students come to the grade level/course with, and what the expectations are for learning in the current grade level/course in preparing students for the next grade level/course. All 23 core curriculum guides received a score of 3 for this criterion. Twenty-eight (68%) of the 41 non-core courses also received a score of 3 for this criterion.

Criterion Four: Delineation of the Major Instructional Tools

In order to obtain a score of 3 points for this criterion, curriculum documents must states for each objective the “match” between the basic text/instructional resource(s) and the curriculum objective. The mathematics Curriculum Overview documents and Pacing Guides for each middle school grade level include a match between “Priority Standards” and page numbers in *Go Math*, the district-adopted textbook. Therefore, each core mathematics course received a rating of 3.0. The basic language arts textbook, *Georgia Collections*, is referenced in the language arts curriculum, along with links to several other instructional resources, but the resources were not clearly linked to a specific learning objective. Reviewers found some references to instructional resources in the social studies curriculum guides, but there was no linkage to specific learning objectives. Reviewers found no mention of a district-adopted science textbook in the science curriculum guides, but did note references to supplementary resources in the Curriculum Overview. Twenty (49%) of the 41 non-core curricula reviewed made no mention of textbooks or instructional tools/resources. Spanish, grades 6 through 8, course curriculum documents named the basic text/instructional resource(s) and supplementary materials to be used.

Criterion Five: Clear Approaches for Classroom Use

In order to obtain a score of 3 for this criterion, curriculum documents must provide specific suggestions on how to approach teaching of key concepts and skills in the classroom. Curriculum guides for language arts, mathematics, and science all received a score of 3 for this criterion for including specific examples on how to approach key concepts and skills in the classroom, many of which are links to mini lessons or resources on the Georgia Department of Education website. Social studies curriculum guides received a score of 2 for including general instructional suggestion; however, they did not have sufficient specificity to receive a score of 3. None of the non-core curriculum guides received a score of 3 for this criterion, with 41% of the non-core providing some general suggestions while the remaining guides provided no suggestions for instructional approaches or contained only vague statements regarding instructional approaches.

Overall, reviewers found the middle school curriculum guides did not include sufficient information nor did they include all required components to provide direction for teachers. Middle school curriculum guides were considered weak in providing linkages to district and state assessments, resources, and approaches for teaching the standards, which leaves teachers to search for or develop their own materials, which may not be aligned to state standards or district expectations.

Reviewers rated the curriculum documents housed in the Rubicon Atlas online system for 54 core courses (English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies), and 98 non-core for grades 9 through 12. As with the process for rating elementary and middle school curriculum guides, reviewers attempted to rate non-editable curriculum documents whenever possible. If non-editable curriculum documents were not available, reviewers randomly selected an editable curriculum document. High school curriculum documents reviewed included Curriculum Overviews, Curriculum Maps, Course Descriptions, Pacing Guides, Lesson Plans, and resources found under the “Reports” and “References” tabs, and links to resources and strategies.

Exhibit 2.3.5 presents the reviewers’ ratings of each high school, grades 9 through 12, curriculum guide for core and non-core courses.

Exhibit 2.3.5

Reviewers Ratings of High School Curriculum Guides On CMSi Minimal Guide Components and Specificity Criteria Richmond County School System October 2017

Course Title	Obj	Asmt	PreReq	Res	Strat	Total Rating
Core Courses						
Language Arts						
Advanced Placement Language/Composition	2	2	3	2	2	11
American Literature/Composition	2	2	3	3	3	13
British Literature/Composition	2	2	3	2	3	12
Gifted Honors American Literature	2	2	3	3	3	13
Gifted Honors British Literature	2	2	3	2	3	12
Gifted Honors Literature (10)	2	2	3	3	3	13
Gifted Honors Literature (9)	2	2	3	3	3	13
IB English A Literature, Year Two	2	2	2	2	2	10
Literature (9)	2	3	3	3	3	13
Literature (9-10)	2	2	3	3	3	13
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Language Arts	2	2	2.9	2.6	2.8	12.3
Mathematics						
Advanced Mathematical Decision Making	2	2	3	3	2	13
Advanced Placement Statistics	2	2	2	2	3	11
Algebra 2	3	2	3	3	3	15
Algebra 1	3	2	3	3	3	15

Exhibit 2.3.5 (continued)
Reviewers Ratings of High School Curriculum Guides
On CMSi Minimal Guide Components and Specificity Criteria
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Course Title	Obj	Asmt	PreReq	Res	Strat	Total Rating
Core Courses						
Mathematics (continued)						
Algebra I Support	3	2	3	3	3	15
Foundations of Algebra	2	2	2	2	2	10
Geometry	3	2	3	3	3	15
Gifted AP Statistics	2	2	3	3	2	13
Gifted Honors Algebra I	3	2	3	3	3	15
Gifted Honors Algebra II	3	2	3	3	3	15
Gifted Honors Geometry	3	2	3	3	3	15
Gifted Honors Pre-Calculus	3	2	3	3	3	15
IB Mathematical Studies, Year Two	2	2	1	1	2	8
Pre-Calculus	3	2	3	3	3	15
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Mathematics	2.6	2	2.7	2.7	2.7	12.9
Science						
Advanced Placement Chemistry	2	2	2	2	2	10
Advanced Placement Environmental Science	2	2	2	2	2	10
Biology I (Grades 9-12)	3	2	2	1	2	10
Chemistry I	3	2	3	2	3	13
Environmental Science	3	2	3	2	2	11
Forensic Science	2	2	3	1	1	9
Human Anatomy/Physiology	2	2	3	1	2	10
IB Biology, Year Two	2	2	0	2	2	8
IB Physics, Year One	0	1	0	0	0	1
IB Physics, Year Two	0	1	0	0	0	1
Physical Science (Grades 9-12)	3	2	3	2	2	11
Physics I	3	2	3	2	2	11
Zoology	2	2	3	1	0	8
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Science	2.1	1.8	2.1	1.4	1.5	8.7
Social Studies						
Advanced Placement Government/Politics: United States (<i>may substitute for 45.05700</i>)	2	2	2	2	2	10
Advanced Placement Psychology	2	2	2	2	2	10
Advanced Placement United States History	2	2	2	2	2	10
Advanced Placement World History	2	2	2	2	2	10
American Government/Civics	2	1	3	1	3	10
Current Issues	2	2	3	2	3	12
IB History of the Americas Year One	2	2	1	1	2	8
IB 20th Century History Year 1	2	2	1	2	1	8
IB Personal and Professional Skills, Year One	2	1	1	1	2	7
IB Personal and Professional Skills, Year Two	2	1	1	1	2	7
IB Psychology , Year Two	2	2	1	2	2	9
IB Psychology, Year One	2	2	1	2	2	9
Psychology	2	2	3	2	2	11
Sociology	1	1	3	1	1	7

Exhibit 2.3.5 (continued)
Reviewers Ratings of High School Curriculum Guides
On CMSi Minimal Guide Components and Specificity Criteria
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Course Title	Obj	Asmt	PreReq	Res	Strat	Total Rating
Core Courses						
Social Studies (continued)						
United States History	2	2	3	2	2	11
World Geography	3	2	3	3	3	14
World History	3	2	3	2	3	13
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Social Studies	2.1	1.8	2.1	1.8	2.1	9.8
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: High School Core Courses	2.2	1.9	2.4	2.1	2.3	11.0
Non-Core Courses						
Career Technical Agricultural Education						
Advanced AC and DC Circuits	2	2	0	2	1	7
Advanced Cybersecurity	2	0	2	1	0	5
Advanced Fashion, Merchandising and Retailing	2	2	2	2	0	8
Advanced Sports and Entertainment Marketing	2	1	2	1	0	6
Audio and Video Technology and Film	2	1	2	1	2	8
Audio and Video Technology and Film III	1	0	2	0	1	4
Banking, Investing, and Insurance	2	1	0	1	1	5
Basic Agricultural Science	2	2	0	2	2	8
Basic Maintenance and Light Repair	2	2	2	2	2	8
Business and Computer Science WBLP	1	1	1	1	1	5
Business and Technology	2	2	2	1	1	8
Business Communications	2	1	2	1	2	8
Career Technical Instruction I	1	2	0	1	2	6
Computer Science Principles	2	2	0	2	2	8
Cosmetology Services II	2	2	2	2	2	10
Cosmetology Services III	2	2	2	2	2	10
Criminal Investigations & Forensics	2	2	2	0	0	4
Criminal Justice Essentials	2	2	2	2	2	10
Culinary Arts I (FCS-CAI)	2	1	2	1	0	6
Culinary Arts II (FCS-CAII)	1	0	2	0	0	3
Digital Design	2	1	2	2	1	8
Digital Electronics	1	1	0	1	1	4
Early Childhood Education I	2	2	2	2	2	8
Early Childhood Education II	2	2	2	2	2	10
Early Childhood Education III	2	2	2	2	2	8
Energy Systems Applications	2	2	0	1	2	7
Entrepreneurial Ventures	2	2	2	1	1	8
Entrepreneurship	2	1	2	1	2	8
Fashion, Merchandising and Retailing Essentials	2	2	2	2	1	9
Financial Literacy	2	2	0	2	2	8
Food for Life	2	1	2	1	1	7
Food Science	2	2	2	1	1	8
Food, Nutrition & Wellness	2	2	2	1	1	8
Foundations of Electronics	2	2	0	2	2	8
Foundations of Engineering and Technology	2	1	0	1	2	6

Exhibit 2.3.5 (continued)
Reviewers Ratings of High School Curriculum Guides
On CMSi Minimal Guide Components and Specificity Criteria
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Course Title	Obj	Asmt	PreReq	Res	Strat	Total Rating
Non-Core Courses						
Career Technical Agricultural Education (continued)						
General Horticulture and Plant Science	2	2	1	2	2	9
Information Technology Essentials	2	2	2	2	2	10
Introduction to Business and Technology	2	2	2	2	2	10
Introduction to Culinary Arts	2	2	2	2	3	11
Introduction to Cybersecurity	1	1	2	1	1	6
Introduction to Digital Technology	2	2	2	2	3	11
Introduction to Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security	2	2	2	2	2	10
Introduction to Personal Care Services	2	2	2	2	3	11
Introduction to Sports and Entertainment Marketing	2	2	0	2	2	8
Jobs for Georgia Graduates Work Ethics IV	1	1	0	0	1	3
Maintenance and Light Repair 2	2	2	2	2	2	10
Maintenance and Light Repair 3	2	2	2	2	2	10
Marketing and Entrepreneurship	1	1	2	1	0	5
Marketing Management	2	2	2	2	2	10
Marketing Principles	2	2	2	3	2	11
Networking Fundamentals	2	2	0	2	2	8
Patient Care Fundamentals	2	2	2	1	2	9
Patient Care Technician	2	2	2	1	1	8
Web Design	2	2	0	2	2	8
Wildlife Management	1	1	1	1	1	5
Work-based Learning	2	2	3	2	2	11
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: CTAE	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.5	7.8
Fine Arts						
Advanced Band I	2	2	2	1	2	9
Advanced Chorus I	2	2	2	1	2	9
Advanced Orchestra I	1	0	1	0	0	2
Advanced Placement Studio Art	2	2	2	2	2	10
Beginning Band I	2	2	2	2	2	10
Beginning Chorus I	2	2	2	2	2	10
Ethnic Music Studies I	2	1	0	1	1	5
Intermediate Band I	2	2	2	1	2	9
Intermediate Orchestra I	2	2	1	1	2	8
Music Appreciation I	2	2	0	1	1	6
Theater Technology I	0	2	0	0	0	2
Theatre Arts/Fundamentals II	1	1	0	0	1	3
Visual Arts/Ceramics/Pottery I	2	2	2	1	1	8
Visual Arts/Comprehensive I	2	2	2	2	2	10
Visual Arts/Drawing I	2	2	2	2	2	10
Visual Arts/Painting I	2	2	2	2	2	10
Visual Arts/Sculpture I	2	1	2	2	2	9
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Fine Arts	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.2	1.5	7.6

Exhibit 2.3.5 (continued) Reviewers Ratings of High School Curriculum Guides On CMSi Minimal Guide Components and Specificity Criteria Richmond County School System October 2017						
Course Title	Obj	Asmt	PreReq	Res	Strat	Total Rating
Non-Core Courses						
Health/Physical Education						
Health 9-12	2	2	0	2	2	8
Personal Fitness	2	2	0	2	2	8
Team Sports	2	2	0	2	2	8
Weight Training	1	1	0	0	0	2
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Health/Physical Education	1.8	1.8	0.0	1.5	1.5	6.5
Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps						
JROTC: Air Force III	2	2	1	1	1	7
JROTC: AF Aerospace Science Leadership I	2	2	2	2	2	10
JROTC: AF Aerospace Science Leadership IV	2	2	2	2	2	10
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: JROTC	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.7	1.7	9.0
Special Education						
Peer Facilitation I	2	2	0	2	2	8
Peer Facilitation II	2	2	0	2	2	8
Peer Facilitation III	2	2	0	2	2	8
Peer Facilitation IV	2	2	0	2	2	8
Study Skills I	2	2	0	2	2	8
Study Skills II	2	2	0	2	2	8
Study Skills III	2	2	0	2	2	8
Economics/Business/Free Enterprise	2	2	0	3	3	10
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Special Education	2.0	2.0	0.0	2.1	2.1	8.3
World Languages						
French I	2	2	2	2	2	10
French II	2	2	2	2	2	10
French III	2	2	2	2	2	10
French IV	2	2	2	2	2	10
IB Spanish A, Year One	2	2	1	1	2	8
IB Spanish A, Year Two	2	2	1	1	2	8
Spanish I	2	2	2	2	2	8
Spanish II	2	2	2	2	2	8
Spanish III	2	2	2	2	2	8
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: World Languages	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.8	2.0	8.9
Other Non-Core Courses						
Tools for College Success I	1	1	0	1	1	4
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: Ratings Other Non-Core	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	4.0
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: All High School Non-Core Courses	1.8	1.7	1.3	1.5	1.6	7.8
Mean Rating for Each Criterion: All High School Core and Non-Core Courses	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	9.0
Note: Adding all the scores for the criterion and dividing the sum by the total number of scores calculated the total mean for each criterion.						
Source: High School Curriculum documents located in the RCSS Rubicon system.						

Reviewers noted curriculum documents housed in Rubicon Atlas use similar formatting structures within and across high school subject areas, which is helpful to teachers. Reviewers found curriculum documents usually included links to the components that the Review considers minimal and that are considered in rating the curriculum's quality. However, reviewers also noted that many curriculum documents were incomplete. Exhibit 2.3.5 presents the following concerning the quality of curriculum documents for high school grades 9 through 12:

- Fifty-four core and 98 non-core high school curriculum guides were examined.
- The quality rating of the core curriculum guides ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 15. In order for a curriculum guide to be considered strong, it must receive a minimum score of 12.
- Eight curriculum guides for mathematics received a score of 15, which is the highest score possible. The curriculum guides receiving a score of 15 included: Algebra 1, Algebra 1 Support, Algebra 2, Geometry, Gifted Honors Algebra I, Gifted Honors Algebra II, Gifted Honors Geometry, Gifted Honors Pre-Calculus, and Pre-Calculus.
- Two curriculum guides for IB Physics, Year One and Year Two, were the lowest rated core guides, with a score of 1.
- Collectively, the mean rating for all core high school curriculum guides was 11.0.
- The quality rating of the non-core curriculum guides ranged from a low of 2 to a high of 11. None of the non-core curriculum guides were considered strong with a score of 12 or higher.
- Curriculum guides for non-core sources receiving a score of 2 included guides for Theater Technology I, Weight Training, and Advanced Orchestra I.
- Collectively, the mean rating for all non-core curriculum guides was 7.8.
- The mean rating for all high school curriculum guides is 9.0.

Comments related to the ratings for each criterion in Exhibit 2.3.5 follow:

Criterion One: Clarity and Specificity of Objectives

To obtain a score of 3 for this criterion, curriculum documents must state for each objective the sequence within the course or grade, the amount of time necessary to be spent learning, and how the objective is to be performed. Objectives must be in a refined and condensed form from the original standards, to help teachers with focusing on the most essential learnings and knowing what mastery of the learnings looks like. In the core subject areas, with the exception of AP and IB courses, all courses contained a list of the standards and "I Can" statements by unit. High school language arts curriculum included Georgia Standards of Excellence listed in the Curriculum Overview, Curriculum Map, and units of study for the school year. None of the high school language arts curriculum documents contained a specific time allotment for each standard; most standards were repeated in each unit in each course and shown in the calendars covering several weeks per unit.

With the exception of AP, IB, Gifted AP Statistics, Advanced Mathematical Decision Making, and Foundations of Algebra courses, the high school mathematics courses received 3.0 for clarity of objectives by listing the standards by daily instructional period(s) and "I Can" statements. Biology I, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Physical Science, and Physics curriculum documents contained either a pacing guide with standards by day or lesson plans with standards by day or week for a rating of 3.0. Forensic Science, Human Anatomy/Physiology, and Zoology received a rating of 2.0 for having a listing of standards and "I Can" statements without specifying the precise number of days of instruction for each standard. With exception of IB Biology Year Two that received a rating of 2.0, the IB Physics courses received a rating of zero for not showing the standards in the Units of Study.

With the exception of World Geography and World History that contained a calendar of standards by the day, high school social studies courses contained tasks to be performed or skills to be learned without specific time allocations, for a rating of 2.0, with the exception of Sociology, which had a rating of 1.0.

None of the non-core subject area curriculum documents in the Rubicon system received a rating of 3.0 for specificity of objectives. Most non-core area subject area curriculum documents listed the standards for each unit of instruction and “I Can” learning targets but did not indicate specific time allocations for a rating of 2.0.

Criterion Two: Congruity of the Curriculum to the Assessment Process

To obtain a score of 3 for this criterion, each learning objective must be keyed to district and/or state performance assessments. High school courses with specific “I Can” statements showing what students were expected to know and be able to do were rated a 2.0. Both core and non-core high school courses had assessment links in most courses; however, the reviewers were not able to open documents that were in Google Drive to examine their contents. Many core courses and some of the non-core courses contained links to pre/post tests for each unit, which were once required by the district and are still in use in some high schools. Few of these pre/post tests included the standards being assessed. Standards being assessed by the new district benchmark assessments were not yet identified in the district curriculum documents.

With the exception of the IB English course, all other language arts course documents contained learning targets showing the knowledge and skills that students were expected to demonstrate for a rating of 2.0. The IB course document did not contain any references to assessments by Georgia standards but did link to the IB English Literature guide showing assessment requirements.

High school mathematics courses received a rating of 2.0 for stating the skills, knowledge, and concepts to be assessed in the learning targets. Most high school mathematics course documents contained assessments with answer keys showing the specific standard being assessed by each item; however, because these assessments are not yet required by the district nor are the data collected, they could not be counted for a rating of 3.0.

With the exception of IB Physics Years One and Two, all of the science curriculum documents received a rating of 2.0 for stating the skills, knowledge, and concepts to be assessed in the learning targets. Lesson plans for IB Biology Year Two included assessments connected to the IB standards, but none of the IB science courses included the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

With the exception of American Government/Civics and both IB Personal and Professional Skills course documents, the balance of the social studies courses received a rating of 2.0 for containing learning targets showing the knowledge and skills that students were expected to demonstrate. The IB social studies course documents did not contain references to the Georgia Standards of Excellence or to state assessments.

None of the non-core high school course documents contained references to assessments based upon Georgia standards or to industry assessments for CTAE. Most non-core high school courses received a rating of 2.0 for learning targets showing what students were expected to know and be able to do.

Criterion Three: Delineation of the Prerequisite Essential Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes

To obtain a score of 3 for this criterion, curriculum documents must state the specific documented prerequisite or a description of discrete skills/concepts required prior to this learning. This may be a scope and sequence across K-12 for the subject. District administrators informed reviewers that the scope and sequence charts had been removed from the Rubicon Atlas system at the request of teachers.

With the exception of the IB English A Literature Year Two course, all language arts curriculum documents received a rating of 3.0 for the scope and sequence chart that could be created in the Rubicon Scope and Sequence section. Language arts course descriptions were present in most courses but did not state a sequence in which courses could be taken.

Course descriptions mentioned the sequence within the required mathematics courses but not for the electives or special courses. With the exception of AP Statistics, Foundations of Algebra, and IB Mathematical Studies Year Two that received a rating of 2.0 or 1.0, all other mathematics courses received a rating of 3.0 for the scope and sequence chart that could be created in the Rubicon Scope and Sequence section.

The IB science courses received a rating of zero for not containing any reference to prerequisite knowledge or an IB scope and sequence. With the exception of the AP science and Biology courses that were rated 2.0, all

other high school science courses received a rating of 3.0 for the scope and sequence chart that could be created in the Rubicon Scope and Sequence section.

Each of the six IB social studies courses were rated 1.0 for general statements about prior experience. The four AP social studies courses were rated 2.0 for prior experience in a specified grade level. The balance of the district high school social studies courses received a rating of 3.0 for the scope and sequence chart that could be created in the Rubicon Scope and Sequence section.

Non-core high school courses that were part of a sequence, such as Maintenance and Light Repair, Cosmetology, and French I-IV, received a rating of 2.0. Some of the CTAE and fine arts courses showed the prerequisites in the course descriptions or as a progression from beginning to intermediate to advanced levels for a rating of 2.0. The Work-based Learning curriculum showed specific detail of the documented prerequisites needed for the course, for a rating of 3.0. Some of the non-core high school courses, such as health/physical education, were rated 0 because no prerequisite courses or general experience were specified in the curriculum documents.

Criterion Four: Delineation of the Major Instructional Tools

In order to obtain a score of 3 for this criterion, curriculum documents must state for each objective the “match” between the basic text/instructional resource(s) and the curriculum objective. When lesson plans were present in core and non-core high school courses, the match of instructional resources to each standard was more evident, although not explicitly stated or by page number. Many of the high school core course documents referred to chapter numbers without naming the textbook. Some of the links to assessment documents contained assessments from textbook publisher materials but did not name the textbook. Most core high school courses contained links to supplementary materials and resources.

Criterion Five: Clear Approaches for Classroom Use

Obtaining a score of 3 for this criterion requires curriculum documents to provide specific examples of how to approach teaching of key concepts and skills in the classroom. The reviewers found that many high school course documents contained a generic list of instructional strategies repeated for each unit or a list of student tasks. Some lesson plans contained specific strategies within descriptions of the tasks, but few included ways to approach concepts. The reviewers noted that with the exception of a few course documents that contained differentiation strategies, most merely mentioned content, process, and product without providing specific suggestions.

Overall, reviewers found the high school curriculum guides were not all complete, and many did not have all the components critical in providing direction for teachers. High school curriculum guides were considered weak in providing linkages to district and state assessments, resources, and approaches for teaching the standards, leaving teachers to search for or develop their own materials, which may not be aligned to state standards or district expectations.

Exhibit 2.3.6 presents a summary of the mean curriculum guide ratings found in Exhibits 2.2.3 through 2.3.5.

Exhibit 2.3.6

Mean Ratings of Curriculum Guides by Type and Quality Criteria Richmond County School System October 2017

Curriculum Guides	Obj	Asmt	PreReq	Res.	Strats	Total Rating
Elementary Core Curriculum Guides	2.0	1.5	3.0	1.8	2.8	11.0
Elementary Non-Core Curriculum Guides	1.9	1.1	2.9	.5	.9	7.3
Middle School Core Curriculum Guides	2.0	1.6	3.0	2.1	2.8	11.5
Middle School Non-Core Curriculum Guides	1.9	1.1	2.2	.8	1.1	7.2
High School Core Curriculum Guides	2.2	1.9	2.4	2.1	2.3	11.0
High School Non-Core Curriculum Guides	1.8	1.7	1.3	1.5	1.6	7.8
Mean Curriculum Guide Rating	1.9	1.5	2.3	1.3	1.6	8.6

As can be noted from Exhibit 2.3.6:

- The total mean score for all Richmond County School System curriculum guides reviewed was 8.6.
- Curriculum guides with a quality score of 12 or higher are considered adequate to direct instruction. Of the 336 curriculum guides examined, reviewers identified 50 with a score of 12 or higher, meeting the review criteria for adequacy.
- Curriculum guides for core courses received the highest quality ratings, with total ratings for elementary and high school core curriculum guides receiving a rating of 11.0 and middle school core curriculum guides receiving a total mean rating of 11.5.
- None-core curriculum guides received the lowest mean score of 7.4.
- Criterion three, Delineation of Prerequisite Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes, received the highest total mean score of 2.3. Many of the curriculum guides examined included a scope and sequence chart or some other document that would inform teachers of the sequence in which skills are to be taught.
- Criterion four, Delineation of the Major Instructional Tools, received the lowest rating with a mean score of 1.3. Curriculum guides were found to be inconsistent in referencing instructional resources. Some curriculum guides listed resources but did not reference specific page numbers. Other curriculum guides referenced chapter numbers for a textbooks but did not identify the textbook. If resources were identified, they frequently were not linked to specific learning objectives.
- Criterion two, Congruence of the Curriculum to the Assessment Process, received a mean score of 1.5. Reviewers found some curriculum guides that included a description of the test format, content measurement, item types, and sample items aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Many guides, however, did not identify the skills that would be assessed, and if a reference was made to assessment, it did not have sufficient specificity to clearly inform instructional planning.
- Criterion five, Delineation of Approaches for Use in the Classroom, received a mean score of 1.6. Curriculum guides considered strong in for this criterion included specific examples on how to approach key concepts and skills in the classroom. Other curriculum guides included some general instructional suggestions but did not have sufficient specificity. Many non-core curriculum guides provided no suggestions for instructional approaches or contained only vague statements regarding instructional approaches.

In addition to the analysis of curriculum guides for adequacy, reviewers conducted interviews with teachers, district administrators, and building administrators. Comments were made to the reviewers related to the quality of district curriculum documents. A representative sample of comments heard by reviewers follows:

- “Each ELA unit is written to a novel and not to skills.” (District Administrator)
- “The district curriculum is NOT useful to me. It is cumbersome, not realistic, and not designed with current teacher/student daily work in mind.” (Teacher)
- “The science and social studies curriculum available online has precious few resources available. It is very difficult to adapt the curriculum for special needs students.” (Teacher)
- “There needs to be much more in district curriculum documents for differentiating instruction.” (Teacher)
- “Although I have been teaching for over 10 years in Richmond County, I use the curriculum as a guide to plan my lessons. However, I try to picture a new teacher fresh out of college trying to use the curriculum to guide and plan his or her lessons, and I do not feel as though it is ‘New Teacher’ friendly.” (Teacher)
- “Although some subjects are more comprehensive than others, I have to rate this [the quality of district curriculum documents to guide instruction] as poor because this is not consistent across all subjects.” (Teacher)

- “I have no curriculum in Rubicon. There are a lot of inconsistencies from one school to another.” (Teacher)
- “I have two very dynamic gifted teachers, there is no curriculum, they have their own curriculum that has worked for them, it is a problem. There’s no adopted curriculum.” (Building Administrator)
- “Teachers can spend hours searching information on Rubicon, and never have a complete lesson written.” (Building Administrator)

Summary

The reviewers found that the overall quality of the curriculum guides in the Richmond County School System was insufficient to provide consistent direction for teachers to facilitate learning and promote alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. Reviewers found several curriculum guides that were considered strong; however, the majority of curriculum guides were either incomplete or did not have sufficient content regarding prerequisite skills, linkages to assessments, delineation of instructional resources, and suggested strategies for approaching instruction to enhance teacher preparation and delivery and improve achievement for all students. Rubicon Atlas, the district’s curriculum document repository, was found difficult to navigate, which leads teachers to search for curricular materials outside of the district-approved curriculum, increasing the likelihood that the content of instruction and desired standards of performance will be inconsistent among teachers and across campuses (see [Recommendations 3, 5, 6, and 7](#)).

Finding 2.4: District benchmark assessments are not consistently aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Instructional resources are of insufficient quality to support effective delivery of the district curriculum and to support student learning. The number of standards and learning targets to be taught to mastery in K-8 language arts and mathematics is not feasible for the time allotted for instruction.

A comprehensive high quality curriculum designed to support student mastery of national and state standards should be internally consistent. Internal consistency in curriculum has strong linkages between the student learning objectives and the instructional components included in the curriculum. Internal consistency is achieved when there is tight and deep alignment among the learning objectives, suggested instructional strategies and resources, and the formative assessments used to monitor students’ mastery of the curriculum. While the Review expects minimum components for any curriculum if it is to be quality, these components must also align with one another for the guide to be a useful tool for teachers in planning their instruction. This internal alignment is referred to as internal consistency. Without effective instructional materials that deeply align to the intended objectives, high quality learning is unlikely. Effective and quality curriculum also employs a range of thinking skills, drawing upon many cognitive types and employing increasingly higher cognitive demand to provide a cognitively challenging curriculum for all students. Assessment items and tasks that assess students’ initial acquisition, ongoing understanding of, and mastery of the learning objectives are another critical element in guiding curriculum. When alignment of the written and tested curriculum is missing, the district cannot guarantee improved outcomes in student learning or consistent, equitable access to curriculum across classrooms and schools when that curriculum is delivered.

In order to determine the degree of curriculum alignment in the Richmond County School System, reviewers reviewed board policies to identify expectations; They reviewed all curriculum documents presented to them as curriculum guides, as well as the textbooks and instructional resources available for teachers to use in support of curriculum delivery, and interviewed administrators and teachers. While [Findings 2.2](#) and [2.3](#) analyzed the district curriculum for scope and quality of basic design, this finding examines the internal consistency of curriculum design among key elements to determine if the design is consistent across assessments, resources, and instructional strategies used to deliver the district curriculum in order to attain the desired district goals for student learning.

Overall, reviewers found that the alignment of sample language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies benchmark assessment items was inconsistent in content, context, and cognition to provide reliable feedback and direction for classroom instruction. Reviewers also found that the alignment of instructional resources, including suggested strategies and student activities, was inconsistent for the selected subject areas, grade

levels, and courses in the dimensions content, context, and cognition to support high quality learning and effective classroom instruction. The number of learning targets found in K-8 language arts and mathematics curriculum documents is excessive and inhibits student mastery of the standards within the allotted instructional time.

These analyses are presented under the following subheadings:

- I. Curriculum Congruence Methodology
- II. Congruence of the Richmond County School System Benchmark Assessments with the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE)
 - Language Arts Benchmark Assessments for grade 3, grade 5, grade 8, grade 9, and grade 10
 - Mathematics Benchmark Assessments for grade 3, grade 5, grade 8, Algebra I, and Geometry
 - Science Benchmark Assessments for grade 5, grade 8, Physical Science, and Biology
 - Social Studies Benchmark Assessments for grade 5, grade 8, U.S. History, and Economics
- III. Congruence of the Richmond County School System Adopted Textbooks with the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE)
 - Language Arts textbooks for grade 3, grade 5, grade 8, and grade 11
 - Mathematics textbooks for grade 3, grade 5, grade 8, Algebra I and Geometry
 - Science textbooks for grade 5, grade 8, Physical Science, and Biology
 - Social Studies textbooks for grade 5, grade 8, U.S. History, and Economics
- IV. Feasibility of Standards and Learning Targets for Language Arts and Mathematics
 - Language Arts feasibility of standards and learning targets grades K-8
 - Mathematics feasibility of standards and learning targets grades K-8

The reviewers examined board policies, job descriptions, curriculum documents, and district planning documents to determine district direction for components of the curriculum and any expectations regarding alignment of curriculum components, including resources, with the state standards.

Exhibit 2.4.1 displays the documents that the reviewers used to complete their comparisons for internal consistency of the Richmond County School System curriculum documents for language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies for selected grades and courses.

Exhibit 2.4.1

Documents Used to Assess the Internal Consistency Of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies Curriculum Documents Richmond County School System October 2017

Title/Format/Location	Date
RCSS Board Policies from district website	Various
RCSS Job Descriptions	Various
Strategic Plan for Achievement in Richmond County from district website under Superintendent/Resources	2016
Richmond County Learning Resource Adoption Timeline Social Studies and Science	Oct. 2016
RCSS Instructional Materials Procedure Manual	Revised October 2016

Exhibit 2.4.1 (continued)
Documents Used to Assess the Internal Consistency
Of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies Curriculum Documents
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Title/Format/Location	Date
District-adopted Textbooks – Teacher Editions for Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies for selected grades	Various
RCK12 Benchmark Assessment Blueprints for Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science for selected grades	2017-18
RCK12 Benchmark Assessment Blueprints for Social Studies for selected grades	2018-19
Curriculum documents in RCSS Rubicon Atlas website	2017-18
RCSS SPARC Curriculum and Instruction Rubric on district website	No date
Language arts textbooks: <i>Benchmark Literacy Common Core Edition</i> , Teacher’s Edition Grade 3, Grade 5, <i>Georgia Collections</i> Teacher’s Edition Grade 8, and Pearson <i>Common Core Literature Georgia</i> Teacher’s Edition Grade 9	Various
Mathematics textbooks: <i>envision MATH Common Core</i> Teachers’ Editions for grades 3 and 5, Scott Foresman Addison Wesley; <i>Go Math</i> Middle School Grade 8 Teacher Edition, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; <i>Algebra I</i> Teacher Edition, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; and <i>Geometry</i> Teacher Edition Houghton Mifflin Harcourt	Various
Science textbooks: <i>Georgia HSP Science</i> , Pearson <i>Environmental Science</i> , McGraw-Hill <i>Physical Science</i> , and Pearson <i>Biology</i>	Various
Houghton Mifflin: <i>Social Studies U.S. History Civil War to Today</i> (Georgia Edition); Clairmont Press: <i>Georgia Studies for Georgia Students</i> ; Pearson: <i>United State History</i> (digital); and Pearson: <i>Economics</i> (digital)	Various
Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)	2013
Note: Unless a website is the source, all documents were provided by district administrators in an electronic drop box or actual teacher editions of district-adopted textbooks provided when the reviewers were on-site.	

The reviewers found a clear expectation that the curriculum be standards-based:

- *Board Policy IDA: Curriculum Design and Development* requires that curriculum be developed to “an articulated set of student learning standards” including clearly defined academic goals, and that guides include the Georgia Department of Education Standards. All teachers are required to teach the curriculum.

However, board policies were not comprehensive enough to give district administrators guidance on the required components and internal consistency of district curriculum documents and all related resources.

The reviewers did find an expectation for internal consistency of the curriculum with respect to assessments. The RCSS SPARC Curriculum and Instruction Rubric contained ratings for common assessments aligned with the required standards to analyze and monitor student progress, inform instruction, and improve teacher practices. The highest level of attainment requires a “systematic process is in place to fully align all assessments with the required curriculum standards” for reviewing assessments regularly to ensure alignment.

The *RCSS Instructional Materials Procedure Manual* has detailed procedures for the selection of textbooks and instructional materials using a district-level committee, but this manual does not contain a requirement that instructional materials be aligned to the state standards as part of the selection process.

Overall, the reviewers found that there is little direction in district policy and plans for curriculum format and internal consistency, and no requirement of alignment beyond a generic directive that the curriculum be standards based.

I. Curriculum Congruence Methodology

The reviewers examine curriculum documents for internal congruence in an effort to determine how well the additional components of the curriculum align to the foundation of all curriculum: the student learning objectives, which are based on the state standards. According to the CMSi Curriculum Review criteria and expectations, curriculum that is high quality should include not only the student learning objectives, but also should include information on assessment and prerequisite learnings and suggest ways to approach the content in the classroom and resources that teachers can use to deliver the curriculum most effectively. These components comprised the basis for the quality analyses performed in [Finding 2.3](#). In this finding, the reviewers examine the degree to which these additional components align back to the state standards of the curriculum along the dimensions of content, context, and cognitive type.

This is called internal consistency, since if any one of the additional components does not adequately align back to the standards in all three dimensions, then the quality of the curriculum as a support for instruction and student learning is not adequate. The curriculum is expected to be a tool that teachers can trust to provide the highest quality suggestions, assessments, and resources for what they present and use with students in the classroom. If the contents of the curriculum documents are not minimally aligned to the standards, then students are less likely to be prepared for the assessments that determine their mastery of those standards. It is the foundational principle of alignment that what students encounter in the classroom (and which should be based on a sound written curriculum) is the content that they must master for success on high stakes tests. Moreover, how they practice and demonstrate this content is also designed to maximize cognitive engagement and prepare them for not only the contexts of assessments, but of real-life scenarios and contexts, as well. The standards express concepts, skills, and knowledge that students must know to be successful in real life, not just on a test. Therefore, the reviewers looked at sample benchmark assessments and sample adopted resources to assess their alignment with the state standards. Alignment was evaluated across all three dimensions: content, context, and cognitive type.

The first set of analyses examines the district-developed benchmark assessments for the four core areas, evaluation their alignment with the state standards in content, context, and cognitive type. The second set of analyses examines activities from district-adopted resources for the four core areas to determine the degree of alignment with the standards, and finally, the third set of analyses reveals the feasibility of the district curriculum, overall.

To interpret the level of cognition, the reviewers used the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) indicators for four levels of cognition: recall/reproduction, skill/concept, strategic thinking, and extended thinking.

Exhibit 2.4.2 displays definitions and clarification comments for the DOK cognitive types.

Exhibit 2.4.2

Description of Depth of Knowledge Levels of Complexity

Level of Complexity	Definition of Level	Evidence of Depth of Knowledge
Level 1: Recall/ Reproduction	Recall a fact, information, or procedure. Process information on a low level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain simple concepts or routine procedures • Recall elements and details • Recall a fact, term, or property • Conduct basic calculations • Order rational numbers • Identify a standard scientific representation for simple phenomenon • Label locations • Describe the features of a place or people • Identify figurative language in a reading passage
Level 2: Skill/Concept	Use information or conceptual knowledge, two or more steps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solve routine multiple-step problems • Describe non-trivial patterns • Interpret information from a simple graph • Formulate a routine problem, given data, and conditions • Sort objects • Show relationships • Apply a concept • Organize, represent, and interpret data • Use context clues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words • Describe the cause/effect of a particular event • Predict a logical outcome • Identify patterns in events or behavior
Level 3: Strategic Thinking	Requires reasoning, developing a plan or a sequence of steps, some complexity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solve non-routine problems • Interpret information from a complex graph • Explain phenomena in terms of concepts • Support ideas with details and examples • Develop a scientific model for a complex situation • Formulate conclusions from experimental data • Compile information from multiple sources to address a specific topic • Develop a logical argument • Identify and then justify a solution • Identify the author's purpose and explain how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection
Level 4: Extended Thinking	Requires an investigation, time to think and process multiple conditions of the problem. Most on-demand assessments will not include Level 4 activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and conduct an experiment that requires specifying a problem; report results/solutions • Synthesize ideas into new concepts • Critique experimental designs • Design a mathematical model to inform and solve a practical or abstract situation • Connect common themes across texts from different cultures • Synthesize information from multiple sources

Source: Webb, N.L., 2002, *Depth-of-Knowledge Levels for Four Content Areas*, University of Wisconsin Center for Educational Research.

As shown in Exhibit 2.4.2, each cognitive type from recall/recognition to extended learning requires greater curricular rigor. When a school district's curriculum is written at a lower level of cognitive rigor, compared to the state academic standards, it increases the likelihood that not all students may be prepared to demonstrate academic achievement at the levels desired on district and/or state assessments.

The following three sections present each set of analyses described above:

- II. Congruence of the Richmond County School System Benchmark Assessments with the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE);
- III. Congruence of the Richmond County School System Adopted Textbooks with the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE); and
- IV. Feasibility of Standards and Learning Targets for Language Arts and Mathematics.

Each section of analysis contains exhibits for congruency for language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies for selected grade levels and courses.

II. Congruence of the Richmond County School System Benchmark Assessments with the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE)

The reviewers used the Georgia Standards of Excellence, the RCK12 Benchmark Assessment Blueprints, and the benchmark assessments provided by district administrators to analyze the internal congruency of the benchmark assessment items to randomly selected Georgia Standards of Excellence. Exhibits 2.4.3 through 2.4.11 present the reviewers' analysis of the congruence of district assessment and teaching resources to the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content, context, and cognition.

Language Arts Benchmark Assessment Alignment

The reviewers analyzed the language arts benchmark assessment items, which are identified in the RCK12 Benchmark Blueprints as linked to the Georgia Standards of Excellence, for congruency at grades 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11. At the time of the review, one benchmark assessment was available for each of the five grade levels reviewed.

Exhibit 2.4.3 displays reviewers' analyses of sample language arts benchmark assessment items compared to the Georgia Standards for Excellence for grades 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11. Where possible, three assessment items from the benchmark assessment were selected for comparison against each Georgia Standards for Excellence selected for analysis.

Exhibit 2.4.3

Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items To Georgia Standards of Excellence Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11 Richmond County School System October 2017

GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 3		
ELAGSE3RI4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area	2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 3 - item 6 Read each question. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. If a question asks you to show or explain your work, you must do so to receive full credit. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen. [Student reads "Baa Baa Black Sheep". The text paragraphs are numbered] 6. Why are colorful fleeces no longer more valuable than white ones? A. Colorful fleeces are no longer as warm. B. White wool is now very rare. C. White wool can be dyed D. Colorful fleeces are now very common.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text. The item does not have the student determine meaning. It has the student respond to a question that asks "Why?" Because content is not adequately aligned, reviewers went no further with analysis of context and cognition, although the context of the assessment (multiple choice) does not match the context of the standard (open-ended).

Exhibit 2.4.3 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 3		
<p>ELAGSE3RI2 Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.</p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 3 - items 10 and 11 Read each question. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. If a question asks you to show or explain your work, you must do so to receive full credit. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen. [Student reads the selection “Melissa’s Message” which ends with chart below.]</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Reasons to Plant Trees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to cool our homes and cities • to clean the air • to help provide clean water • to hold soil in place • to provide homes for wildlife • to produce oxygen • to provide fruits and nuts • to provide beauty </div> <p>10. Which inference is best supported by the passage?</p> <p>A. Planting trees is good for the environment. B. Melissa Poe is good at giving speeches. C. Children can’t make a difference. D. Presidents don’t read billboards.</p> <p>11. Which are the most important key details that support the main idea of the passage? Select the two that apply.</p> <p>A. Melissa Poe has made speeches and has been on TV many times. B. A TV program shows what Earth will look like in 50 years. C. Melissa Poe realizes that she does not need the president to help her make a difference. D. Kids FACE stands for “Kids for a Clean Environment.” E. Melissa Poe shows kids they can do something important no matter how old they are.</p>	<p>Content for Item #10: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to determine the main idea and find the details that support the main idea. Item #10 has the student select the inference that is best supported by the passage. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition for this item.</p> <p>Content for Item #11: Aligned Both the GSE and the item require the student to decide what the main idea is and to determine details that support the main idea.</p> <p>Context for Item #11: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment item is multiple choice and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not demonstrate understanding the skill of drawing conclusions to identify the main idea or recall key ideas and explain how they support the main idea in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the right answer from the five possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognition for Item #11: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to use information to reason, but the test item only requires recall (Recall/Reproduction).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.3 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11
Richmond County School System
October 2017


GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 3		
ELAGSE3R13 Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect	2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 3 - item 7 Read each question. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. If a question asks you to show or explain your work, you must do so to receive full credit. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen. [Student will have read “Baa, Baa Black Sheep” and “The Story of Cotton”.] 7. Explain what cotton and wool have in common. Use details from both passages to support your response. <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 68px; width: 253px;"></div>	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts using language that pertains to time, sequence and cause/effect. The assessment item only asks the student to explain the relationship between cotton and wool in terms of what they have in common, using details from the passages. It does not require using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.
Grade 5		
ELAGSE5RL3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).	2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 5 - item 5 Read each question. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. If a question asks you to show or explain your work, you must do so to receive full credit. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen. [Student will read “The Tale of How Bear Lost His Tail”.] 5. Which paragraph is best supported by the illustration? A. paragraph 3 B. paragraph 4 C. paragraph 5 D. paragraph 6 <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story, drawing on specific details in the text. Instead, the student is to draw meaning from an illustration and match a paragraph that supports the student’s understanding (interpretation) of the illustration. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.

Exhibit 2.4.3 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
ELAGSE5RL5 Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.	2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 5 - item 10 Read each question. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. If a question asks you to show or explain your work, you must do so to receive full credit. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen. [Student will read “How the Rabbit Lost His Tail”.] 10. Why does Bear ask Fox about the fish he caught? A. He is hungry and wants food. B. He wants Fox to fish for him. C. He wants to learn how to fish. D. He is jealous of Fox’s skill.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to know how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem. The item asks the student to select an answer to a “why” question. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.
ELAGSE5RL3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).	2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 5 - item 14 Read each question. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. If a question asks you to show or explain your work, you must do so to receive full credit. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen. [Student will read the passage “Buried Treasure”.] 14. What is the meaning of the word puzzled as it is used in this sentence? “This puzzled the teacher, so she had Justin take her to the cave.” (paragraph 4) A. confused B. saddened C. angered D. focused	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, and draw on specific details in the text. The item does not require the student to compare or contrast; instead, the student is required to use context clues to determine word meaning in a sentence. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.

Exhibit 2.4.3 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
<p>ELAGSER15 Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept</p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 8 - item 3 Read each question carefully. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen. [Student will read the passage “Hawaiian Ranching”.] Read this sentence from paragraph 1. “Imagine a ranch where cattle eat pineapple and cowboys ride over black lava fields.” 3. What is the role of this sentence? A. to argue for the superiority of Hawaii’s ranches B. to argue for the superiority of the lifestyle of Hawaiian cowboys C. to establish the setting of Hawaiian lava fields D. to establish the uniqueness of Hawaii’s ranches</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The GSE and the assessment match in content in that both require the student to analyze a particular sentence to determine the role it has in developing and refining the key concept of Hawaiian ranching.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment item is multiple choice and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not conduct their analysis of the paragraph and demonstrate their understanding of the role the particular sentence has to the development of the key concept of the passage in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the correct answer from the four possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognitive: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires students to analyze information and demonstrate understanding by drawing a conclusion, but the test item only requires recall (Recall/Reproduction).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.3 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11
Richmond County School System
October 2017


GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
<p>ELAGSE8RI3 Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories)</p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 8 - item 12 Read each question carefully. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen.</p> <p>[Student will read the passage “Hawaiian Ranching”.]</p> <p>Read this sentence from paragraph 4.</p> <p>“Imagine how native Hawaiians felt when British Captain George Vancouver brought four cows and a bull to the Big Island in 1798.”</p> <p>12. Based on this sentence and the map next to paragraph 1, on which island were the first cattle dropped off?</p>  <p><i>Map Reprinted with permission from Highlights for Children, Inc.</i></p> <p>A. Kauai B. Lanai C. Oahu D. Hawaii</p>	<p>Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events.</p> <p>The assessment item only requires that the student read the text and match (recall) the language in the map.</p> <p>Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.</p>

Exhibit 2.4.3 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11
Richmond County School System
October 2017


GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
<p>ELAGSE8RI4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.</p> <p>ELAGSE8L4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies</p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 8 - item 15 Read each question carefully. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen.</p> <p>[Student will read the passage “Tokyo Rose”.]</p>  <p>15. The photograph at the beginning of the passage draws attention to the—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. image of Tokyo Rose. B. arrest of Iva Toguri C. popularity of Tokyo Rose. D. trial of Iva Toguri. 	<p>Content: Inadequately Aligned The content of the GSEs requires the student to determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and to use context to determine word meaning and phrases as well as to analyze the impact of word choices, including analogies or allusions to other texts on meaning and tone. The assessment item requires the student to determine the meaning of textual evidence on a photograph and draw a conclusion about events that have taken place. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.</p>
Grade 9		
<p>ELAGSE9-10RI1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 9 - item 3 Read each question carefully. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen.</p> <p>[Student will read “Animal Curiosities”.]</p> <p>3. Why is the echidna still classified as a mammal even though it lays eggs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. It resembles two other mammals, the hedgehog and the porcupine. B. It carries its babies in a pouch like macropod animals. C. Its eggs are leathery instead of hard-shelled. D. It is like a mammal in every other respect. 	<p>Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to identify strong textual evidence in support of analysis of what the text explicitly states as well as inferences drawn from the text. The assessment item requires the student to recall what the text explicitly states to explain a “why” question. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.</p>

Exhibit 2.4.3 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11
Richmond County School System
October 2017

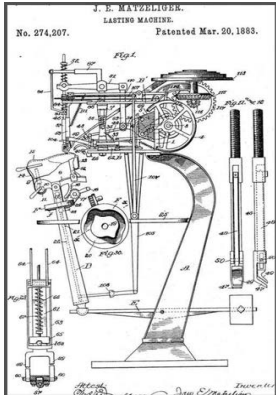
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 9		
<p>ELAGSE9-10RI5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).</p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 9 - item 17 Read each question carefully. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen.</p> <p>[Student will read "Jan Ernst Matzeliger: The Lasting Legacy of the Shoe-lasting Machine".]</p> <p>17. In paragraph 7, why does the author mention that a commemorative stamp was issued for Jan Ernst Matzeliger?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> to describe ways to celebrate people who have helped society to demonstrate the preferential treatment given to inventors of color to show that his contribution has not been forgotten completely to argue that stamps should be made for other forgotten inventors 	<p>Content: Aligned The content of the assessment item matches the content in the GSE, as both require the student to analyze the development of an author's ideas and to infer how those ideas are refined by particular portions of the text.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment item is multiple choice, and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply analysis or inference in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the correct answer from the four possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognitive: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires students to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but the test item only requires recall (Recall/Reproduction).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.3 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11
Richmond County School System
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GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 9		
ELAGSE9-10RI8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning	2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 9 - item 12 Read each question carefully. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen. [Student will read “Protecting the Aquifer”.] 12. What does the word susceptible mean as it is used in this sentence? “Drilling makes the aquifer more susceptible to contaminants that pollute the water and lead to potentially life-threatening illnesses.” (paragraph 1) A. vulnerable B. reactive C. appealing D. resistant	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to delineate and evaluate the argument and claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence relevant, in addition to identifying false statements and fallacious reasoning. The assessment item requires the student to define a word as used in context of a sentence. It does not require any evaluation of claims in the text, validity of reasoning, or identification of false statements. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.
Grade 11 American Literature		
ELAGSE 11-12RL9 Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century foundational works (of American Literature, British Literature, World Literature, or Multicultural Literature), including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics	2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 11 - item 2 Read each question carefully. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen. [Student will read the poems “The Oval Portrait” and “The Birthmark”.] 2. What is the greatest plot difference between Poe’s “The Oval Portrait” and Hawthorne’s “The Birthmark”? A. Poe sets his story in a European chateau, and Hawthorne sets his in an American home B. Poe describes very young characters, while Hawthorne’s characters are older. C. Poe focuses on mystery, while Hawthorne focuses on morality. D. Poe focuses on art, and Hawthorne focuses on science.	Content: Aligned The content of the assessment item matches the content in the GSE. Both the assessment item and the GSE require the student to demonstrate knowledge of, in this case, nineteenth-century American foundational literature, including how two texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics. Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment items is multiple choice, and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not demonstrate knowledge in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the right answer from the four possibilities given. Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires students to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but the test item only requires recall (Recall/Reproduction).

Exhibit 2.4.3 (continued) Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items To Georgia Standards of Excellence Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11 Richmond County School System October 2017		
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 11 American Literature		
ELAGSE 11-12RL5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact	2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 11 - item 9 Read each question carefully. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen. [Student will read the poem "The Birthmark".] 9. Why does the author end the story with paragraph 21? A. to show that Aylmer's concoction causes Georgiana's death B. to make it explicit that Georgiana's birthmark symbolizes human imperfection C. to establish a link between the failure of science and Georgiana's obsession with beauty D. to show that Aylmer is successful in removing the birthmark	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to analyze how an author's choice on how to structure parts of a text contributes to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact. The assessment item requires the student to draw conclusions about why the author chose to structure the text in a certain way but does not address the impact to the text aesthetic or overall structure. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.
ELAGSE 11-12RL1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.	2017-2018 RCK12 ELA Benchmark 1 Grade 11 - item 13 Read each question carefully. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Enter your response in the box provided on your screen. [Student will read the poems "The Oval Portrait" and "The Birthmark".] 13. Which two elements are important in both Poe's "The Oval Portrait" and Hawthorne's "The Birthmark"? A. the supernatural or otherworldly B. the humility of a woman C. the desire to accurately depict nature. D. the true love between a man and woman E. the flaws of earthly beauty F. the observer's obsession with beauty	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to cite text evidence in support of analysis of what the text says specifically as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. The assessment item only requires the student to demonstrate understanding of the texts by identifying two elements that are important in both texts. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.
<i>Source: RCSS RCK12 Benchmark Blueprints for language arts grades 3, 5, 8, 9 and 11</i>		

From Exhibit 2.4.3, the following observations can be made concerning the analysis of language arts benchmark assessment items:

Grades 3 and 5

- Of the seven language arts benchmark assessments analyzed for grades 3 and 5, only one (14%) was aligned in content but was not aligned in context or cognition.
- The six benchmark assessment items found to be not aligned in content were not analyzed for context or cognition.

Grades 8, 9, and Grade 11 American Literature

- Of the nine language arts benchmark assessments analyzed for grades 8, 9, and 11, three (33%) were aligned in content but none was aligned in context or cognition.
- The six benchmark assessment items found to be not aligned in content were not analyzed for context or cognition.

When reviewers analyzed the cognitive processes required of students when responding to the four language arts benchmark assessment items found to be aligned for content, they found the cognitive demand to be at the recall/recognition, or Level I on the Depth of Knowledge. The multiple-choice format of the assessments prevented adequate alignment with the intent and cognitive demand of the standards.

Inconsistencies were found in each of the Benchmark #1 Table of Specifications (TOS) at the grade levels analyzed. Some of the anomalies include inaccurate numbers of items being assessed and mislabeled question types. As 13 of the 16 randomly selected benchmark assessment items when analyzed were found to be not aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence, a reexamination of the Blueprint TOSs may be warranted to verify the accuracy of the item matches with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Exhibit 2.4.4 summarizes the analyses of language arts benchmark assessment items to GSE.

Exhibit 2.4.4

Summary of Analyses of Language Arts Benchmark Assessment Items To Georgia Standards of Excellence Richmond County School System October 2017

Grade Level/ Course	Total # Items Analyzed	Content Congruent		Context Congruent		Cognition Congruent	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Three	4	1	25	0	0	0	0
Five	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eight	3	1	33	0	0	0	0
Nine	3	1	33	0	0	0	0
Eleven	3	1	33	0	0	0	0
Total	16	4	25	0	0	0	0

Exhibit 2.4.4 indicates the following:

- Sixteen language arts benchmark assessment items were compared to the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content, context, and cognition congruence.
- Four (25%) language arts benchmark assessment items were congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content.
- None of the 16 language arts benchmark assessment items were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for context.
- None of the 16 language arts benchmark assessment items were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for cognition.

If the sample of language arts benchmark assessment items analyzed is representative of a majority of benchmark assessment items available, then the language arts assessment items are not adequate to provide feedback needed on student mastery of the standard. These sample items are too narrow and too cognitively simple to be able to see students' thinking and processing and respond to that evidence instructionally.

Mathematics Benchmark Assessment Alignment

Mathematics benchmark assessment items, listed as being linked to the Georgia Standards of Excellence in the Benchmark Blueprints, were analyzed for congruency at grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry. Items linked to three Georgia Standards of Excellence were selected randomly from the benchmark assessments for the selected grades and courses. In circumstances where more than one assessment item was listed for a given Georgia Standards of Excellence, reviewers included as many items as appropriate for analysis.

Exhibit 2.4.5 displays the results of the reviewers' analysis of the congruency of selected mathematics benchmark assessment items for grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry.

Exhibit 2.4.5

Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items To Georgia Standards of Excellence Mathematics, Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry Richmond County School System October 2017

GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 3		
MGSE3.OA.2 Interpret whole number quotients of whole numbers, e.g., interpret $56 \div 8$ as the number of objects in each share when 56 objects are partitioned equally into 8 shares (How many in each group?), or as a number of shares when 56 objects are partitioned into equal shares of 8 objects each (How many groups can you make?). <i>For example, describe a context in which a number of shares or a number of groups can be expressed as $56 \div 8$.</i>	2017-2018 RCK12 Mathematics Grade 3 Benchmark 1 - items 9 and 11 9. Select all of the following that can be represented by $16 \div 4$. A. the total amount of money Lyanna needs when she has \$4 and needs \$16 more B. the number of books Lyanna buys when she spends \$16 on books that cost \$4 each C. the amount of money Lyanna will have left when she has \$16 and gives \$4 to her friend D. the total amount of money Lyanna will have when she has \$16, and her friend gives her \$4 more E. the amount of money each friend gets when Lyanna has \$16 and splits the money equally among 4 friends 11. At soccer practice, there is a water cooler full of cold water. There is enough water to fill 48 paper cups. There are 8 girls at practice, and they share the water equally. How many paper cups of water can each girl have before the cooler is empty? A. 3 paper cups, because $3 \times 16 = 48$ B. 6 paper cups, because $48 \div 8 = 6$ C. 8 paper cups, because $48 \div 6 = 8$ D. 12 paper cups, because $12 \times 4 = 48$	Content of Items # 9 and 11: Aligned The assessment item matches the GSE in content. Context of Items # 9 and 11: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment items 9 and 11 is multiple choice, and the items do not meet the GSE in context since the student does not interpret in an open-ended context. The items require the student to select the correct answers from the five and four possibilities given, respectively. Cognition of Items #9 and 11: Inadequately Aligned The GSE and assessment items 9 and 11 both require the student to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but the assessment item only requires recall (Recall/Reproduction).

Exhibit 2.4.5 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Mathematics, Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry
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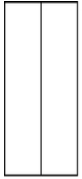
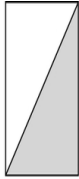

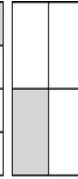
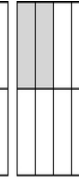

GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis										
Grade 3												
<p>MGSE3.OA.8 Solve two-step word problems using the four operations. Represent these problems using equations with a letter standing for the unknown quantity. Assess the reasonableness of answers using mental computation and estimation strategies including rounding.</p> <p>This standard is limited to problems posed with whole numbers and having whole-number answers; students should know how to perform operations in the conventional order where there are no parentheses to specify a particular order (Order of Operations).</p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 Mathematics Grade 3 Benchmark 2 – items 10 and 18</p> <table><tr><th>Ranches</th><th>Acres</th></tr><tr><td>Running-R Guest Ranch</td><td>232</td></tr><tr><td>Silver Spur Ranch</td><td>289</td></tr><tr><td>Twin Elm Guest Ranch</td><td>274</td></tr><tr><td>Roddy Tree Ranch</td><td>217</td></tr></table> <p>10. Which of the following is the best estimate of how much larger Silver Spur Ranch and Twin Elm Guest Ranch combined are than Running-R Guest Ranch and Roddy Tree Ranch combined?</p> <p>A. 100 acres B. 110 acres C. 450 acres D. 560 acres</p> <p>18. Each player needs 10 cards to play a card game. The cards are sold with 8 cards in each pack. Are 6 packs of cards enough for 5 people to play the game? Why or why not?</p> <div>Space for student response online.</div>	Ranches	Acres	Running-R Guest Ranch	232	Silver Spur Ranch	289	Twin Elm Guest Ranch	274	Roddy Tree Ranch	217	<p>Content: Inadequately Aligned This GSE requires student to represent problems using equations with a letter standing for the unknown quantity. Students only need to use addition, subtraction, estimation, and multiplication to derive the correct responses for items 10 and 18. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.</p>
Ranches	Acres											
Running-R Guest Ranch	232											
Silver Spur Ranch	289											
Twin Elm Guest Ranch	274											
Roddy Tree Ranch	217											
<p>MGSE3.G.2 Partition shapes into parts with equal areas. Express the area of each part as a unit fraction of the whole. <i>For example, partition a shape into 4 parts with equal area, and describe the area of each part as 1/4 of the area of the shape.</i></p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 Mathematics Grade 3 Benchmark 3 – item 5 [Note: figures reduced to fit space.]</p> <div><div><div>1</div></div><div><div>2</div></div><div><div>3</div></div><div><div>4</div></div><div><div>5</div></div><div><div>6</div></div></div> <p>5. Which rectangles have $\frac{1}{2}$ of the area shaded?</p> <p>A. 4 and 5 B. 3 and 4 C. 1 and 2 D. 2 and 6</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The assessment item matches the GSE in content.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment item is multiple choice, and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply partitioning skill in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the correct answer from the four possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires students to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but the assessment item only requires recall (Recall/ Reproduction).</p>										

Exhibit 2.4.5 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Mathematics, Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry
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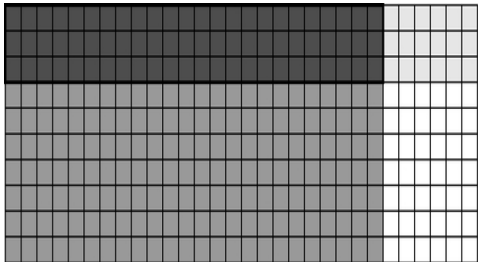
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
<p>MGSE5.NBT.7 Add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals to hundredths, using concrete models or drawings and strategies based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction; relate the strategy to a written method and explain the reasoning used.</p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 Mathematics Grade 5 Benchmark 2 – items 3 and 4</p> <p>3. It is 0.75 miles from Mario’s house to school. If Mario goes to school and back for five days, how many miles will he have traveled when he gets back home on the fifth day?</p> <p>A. 1.5 mi B. 3.75 mi C. 5 mi D. 7.5 mi</p> <p>The decimal model below depicts the area of an object. Each square represents 0.01 square units.</p>  <p>4. Which of the following could be represented by this decimal model?</p> <p>A. the area of a square table with sides that measure 2.4 meters B. the area of a rectangular table that measures 2.4 meters by 0.3 meters C. the area of a piece of paper that measures 2.4 inches by 0.7 inches D. the area of a note card that measures 1.4 inches by 0.3 inches</p>	<p>Content of Items 3 and 4: Inadequately Aligned This GSE includes using the four operations (item 3 and 4) to the hundredths (item 4), using concrete models based on place value (item 4), and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction (item 4). It also requires relating the strategy to a written method and explaining the reasoning used. Neither assessment item included explaining the reasoning. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.</p>

Exhibit 2.4.5 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
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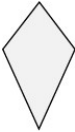
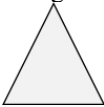
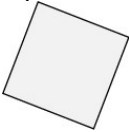
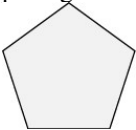
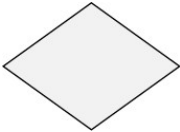

GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
<p>MGSE5.G.3 Understand that attributes belonging to a category of two-dimensional figures also belong to all subcategories of that category. <i>For example, all rectangles have four right angles and squares are rectangles, so all squares have four right angles.</i></p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 Mathematics Grade 5 Benchmark 3 – item 10 10. Select all the shapes that are also quadrilaterals.</p> <p>A. kite </p> <p>B. triangle </p> <p>C. Square </p> <p>D. pentagon </p> <p>E. rhombus </p> <p>F. rectangle </p>	<p>Content: Aligned The assessment item matches the GSE in content.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment item is multiple choice, and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply understanding attributes of two-dimensional figures in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the correct answers from the six possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires student to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but the assessment item only requires recall (Recall/Reproduction).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.5 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
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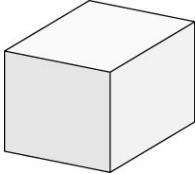
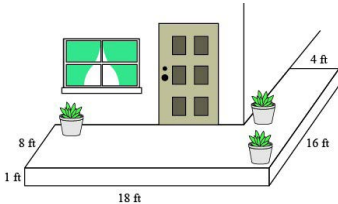
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
<p>MGSE5.MD.5 Relate volume to the operations of multiplication and addition and solve real world and mathematical problems involving volume.</p> <p>A. Find the volume of a right rectangular prism with whole-number side lengths by packing it with unit cubes, and show that the volume is the same as would be found by multiplying the edge lengths, equivalently by multiplying the height by the area of the base. Represent threefold whole-number products as volumes, e.g., to represent the associative property of multiplication.</p> <p>B. Apply the formulas $V = l \times w \times h$ and $V = b \times h$ for rectangular prisms to find volumes of right rectangular prisms with whole number edge lengths in the context of solving real world and mathematical problem.</p> <p>C. Recognize volume as additive. Find volumes of solid figures composed of two non-overlapping right rectangular prisms by adding the volumes of the non-overlapping parts, applying this technique to solve real world problems.</p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 Mathematics Grade 5 Benchmark 3 – items 16, 18, and 19 A rectangular prism is shown.</p>  <p>16. Select all of the following that are ways to find the volume of the rectangular prism, in cubic centimeters.</p> <p>A. Add the length, width, and height, all in centimeters.</p> <p>B. Multiply the length, width, and height, all in centimeters.</p> <p>C. Count how many 1-cubic-centimeter cubes will fit inside it.</p> <p>D. Multiply the areas of the three faces shown, each in square centimeters.</p> <p>E. Multiply the area of its base, in square centimeters, by its height, in centimeters.</p> <p>18. A pool is 100 yards long, 12 yards wide, and 6 feet deep. What is the volume of the pool?</p> <p>A. 2,400 cubic feet</p> <p>B. 7,200 cubic feet</p> <p>C. 21,600 cubic feet</p> <p>D. 64,800 cubic feet</p> <p>Trinity is planning a new concrete patio that wraps around the side of her house. The measurements of the new patio are shown below.</p>  <p>19. Select all the expressions that show the volume of concrete needed to make the patio, in cubic feet.</p> <p>A. $(18 \text{ ft} \times 8 \text{ ft}) + (4 \text{ ft} \times 8 \text{ ft})$</p> <p>B. $(8 \text{ ft} \times 14 \text{ ft}) + (4 \text{ ft} \times 16 \text{ ft})$</p> <p>C. $(8 \text{ ft} \times 18 \text{ ft} \times 1 \text{ ft}) + (4 \text{ ft} \times 8 \text{ ft} \times 1 \text{ ft})$</p> <p>D. $(8 \text{ ft} \times 14 \text{ ft} \times 1 \text{ ft}) + (4 \text{ ft} \times 8 \text{ ft} \times 1 \text{ ft})$</p> <p>E. $(8 \text{ ft} \times 14 \text{ ft} \times 1 \text{ ft}) + (4 \text{ ft} \times 16 \text{ ft} \times 1 \text{ ft})$</p> <p>F. $(16 \text{ ft} \times 4 \text{ ft} \times 1 \text{ ft}) + (18 \text{ ft} \times 8 \text{ ft} \times 1 \text{ ft})$</p>	<p>Content: Aligned Assessment item 16 matches part a, assessment item 18 matches part b, and assessment item 19 matches part c in content.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment items 16, 18, and 19 are multiple choice, and the items do not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply volume operations to solve real world problems in an open-ended context. The items require the student to select the correct answer from the four or five possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE and assessment items 16, 18, and 19 require the student to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but the assessment items only require recall (Recall/Reproduction).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.5 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
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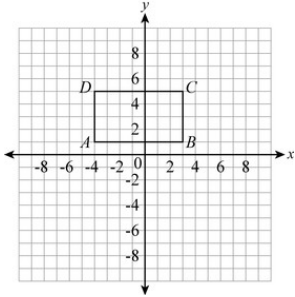
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
<p>MGSE8.G.1 Verify experimentally the congruence properties of rotations, reflections, and translations: lines are taken to lines and line segments to line segments of the same length; angles are taken to angles of the same measure; parallel lines are taken to parallel lines.</p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 Mathematics Grade 8 Benchmark 1 – item 1 On the set of axes below, Geoff drew rectangle $ABCD$. He will transform the rectangle by using the translation $(x, y) \rightarrow (x + 2, y + 1)$ and then will reflect the translated rectangle over the x-axis.</p>  <p>1. What will be the area of the rectangle after these transformations?</p> <p>A. less than 28 square units B. exactly 28 square units C. greater than 28 square units D. cannot be determined from the information given</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The assessment item matches the GSE in content.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment item is multiple choice, and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply verification of congruence properties in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the correct answer from the four possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires students to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but the assessment item only requires recall (Recall/Reproduction).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.5 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
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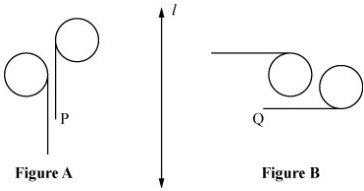
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
<p>MGSE8.G.2 Understand that a two-dimensional figure is congruent to another if the second can be obtained from the first by a sequence of rotations, reflections, and translations; given two congruent figures, describe a sequence that exhibits the congruence between them.</p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 Mathematics Grade 8 Benchmark 1 – items 2 and 19</p> <p>2. A rectangle is dilated by a scale factor of 1. Which of the following is true?</p> <p>A. The resulting figure will not be congruent to the original rectangle, because all dilations cause the coordinates to change.</p> <p>B. The resulting figure will be congruent to the original rectangle, because all dilations are congruent to the original figure.</p> <p>C. The resulting figure will be congruent to the original rectangle, because dilations with a scale factor of 1 have the same coordinates.</p> <p>D. The resulting figure will not be congruent to the original rectangle, because dilations with a scale factor of 1 cause the shape to change.</p> <p>19. Anna concluded that Figure A can be obtained from Figure B by first rotating it counterclockwise by 90° about the point Q and then reflecting it across line l.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Figure A Figure B</p> </div> <p>Show whether Anna's conclusion is correct or not. Explain whether Figure A and Figure B are congruent or not.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 50px; margin-top: 10px;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">Space for student response online.</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The assessment items 2 and 19 match the GSE in content.</p> <p>Context for Item #2: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for assessment items 2 and 19 is multiple choice, and the items do not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply understanding or describing congruency skills in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the correct answer from the four possibilities given.</p> <p>Context for Item #19: Aligned The mode of response is open-ended, allowing the student to demonstrate understanding of the effect of rotation and reflection on congruency of a two-dimensional figure.</p> <p>Cognition for Item #2: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires student to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but the assessment item only requires recall (Recall/Reproduction).</p> <p>Cognition for Item #19: Aligned The mode of response for assessment item 19 requires the student to replicate the rotation and reflection of the congruent diagrams and then to describe if they are congruent. The GSE and the assessment item both require the student to use a known procedure to solve the problem (Skill/Concept).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.5 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
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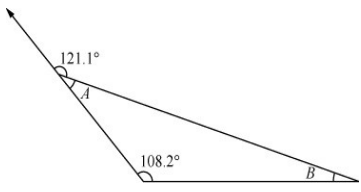
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
MGSE8.G.5 Use informal arguments to establish facts about the angle sum and exterior angle of triangles, about the angles created when parallel lines are cut by a transversal, and the angle-angle criterion for similarity of triangles. <i>For example, arrange three copies of the same triangle so that the three angles appear to form a line, and give an argument in terms of transversals why this is so.</i>	2017-2018 RCK12 Mathematics Grade 8 Benchmark 1 – item 6 A figure is shown.  <p>6. What is the measure of $\angle A$, in degrees?</p> <p>A. 12.9 B. 35.9 C. 58.9 D. 65.4</p>	Content of Item # 6: Inadequately Aligned This GSE requires the student to use facts about the angle sum and exterior angle of triangles (item 6), but none of the other parts of MGSE8.G.5. No other items for this standard appeared on the Eighth Grade Benchmark 1. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.

Exhibit 2.4.5 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
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GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Algebra I		
<p>MGSE9-12.A.REI.3 Solve linear equations and inequalities in one variable including equations with coefficients represented by letters. <i>For example, given $ax + 3 = 7$, solve for x.</i></p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 Algebra I Benchmark I – items 10 and 19 10. The graph of the linear equation $y = mx + b$ has an x-intercept of -4. What is the x-intercept of the graph of the linear equation $y = mx - b$? A. -8 B. -4 C. 4 D. 8 19. Albert claims that -6 is the greatest integer solution of the inequality $3x - 1 \leq 35 + 9x$. Solve the inequality to show if Albert is correct or not.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> Space for student response online </div>	<p>Content for Items 10 and 19: Aligned The assessment items match the GSE in content in that both require the student to know how to solve linear equations and inequalities in one variable, including equations with coefficients represented by letters.</p> <p>Context for Item #10: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment item is multiple choice, and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not solve a linear equation in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the correct answer for the x-intercept from the four possibilities given.</p> <p>Context for Item #19: Aligned The mode of response for assessment Item 19, although open-ended, is still a yes or no question where students show their work. The item does not expand or exceed the GSE in context, although it does meet it.</p> <p>Cognition for Item #10: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires students to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but the assessment item only requires recall of a procedure (Recall/Reproduction).</p> <p>Cognition for Item #19: Aligned The assessment item #19 does require the student to use a known procedure to solve the problem (Skill/Concept), which aligns with the GSE.</p>

Exhibit 2.4.5 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
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GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Algebra I		
MGSE9-12.N.RN.3 Explain why the sum or product of rational numbers is rational; why the sum of a rational number and an irrational number is irrational; and why the product of a nonzero rational number and an irrational number is irrational.	2017-2018 RCK12 Algebra I Benchmark 1 – item 18 18. Let r be a rational number and s be an irrational number. Prove that the sum $r + s$ is an irrational number. Show all your steps. <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; margin-top: 10px; text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Space for student response online</div>	Content: Aligned The assessment item matches the GSE in content. Context: Aligned The mode of open response for the assessment item allows the student to explain that the sum of a rational number and an irrational number is an irrational number through showing the steps of a proof. The item does not expand or exceed the GSE in content. Cognition: Aligned The GSE and the assessment item both require the student to use a known procedure to solve the problem (Skill/Concept).
MGSE9-12.A.CED.1 Create equations and inequalities in one variable and use them to solve problems. Include equations arising from linear, quadratic, simple rational, and exponential functions (integer inputs only).	2017-2018 RCK12 Algebra I Benchmark 1 – item 11 11. If the lengths, in inches, of two consecutive sides of a rhombus are represented by $3x - 6$ and $x + 14$, then the perimeter of the rhombus is — A. 10 in. B. 24 in. C. 72 in. D. 96 in.	Content: Inadequately Aligned This GSE requires the student to create equations and inequalities and use them to solve problems. Assessment Item # 11 provides students with the equation and asks them to find the perimeter. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.

Exhibit 2.4.5 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
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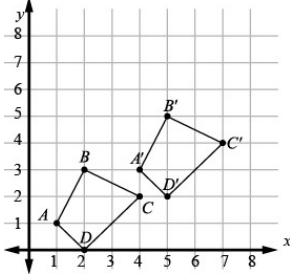
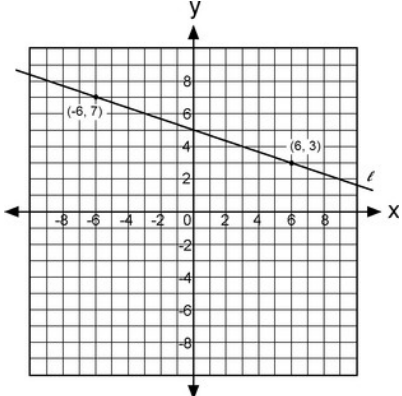
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Geometry		
<p>MGSE9-12.G.CO.2 Represent transformations in the plane using, e.g., transparencies and geometry software; describe transformations as functions that take points in the plane as inputs and give other points as outputs. Compare transformations that preserve distance and angle to those that do not (e.g., translation versus horizontal stretch).</p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 Geometry Benchmark 1 – item 16 Figures $ABCD$ and $A'B'C'D'$ are shown below.</p>  <p>16. Which of the following transformations will yield figure $A'B'C'D'$ when applied to figure $ABCD$?</p> <p>A. $(x, y) \rightarrow (x + 3, y + 2)$ B. $(x, y) \rightarrow (x + 2, y + 3)$ C. $(x, y) \rightarrow (2x, 3y)$ D. $(x, y) \rightarrow (3x, 2y)$</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The assessment item matches the GSE in content.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment item is multiple choice and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not describe or compare transformations in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the correct answer from the four possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires student to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but the assessment item only requires recall of information or a procedure (Recall/Reproduction).</p>
<p>MGSE9-12.G.GPE.4 Use coordinates to prove simple geometric theorems algebraically. <i>For example, prove or disprove that a figure defined by four given points in the coordinate plane is a rectangle; prove or disprove that the point $(1, \sqrt{3})$ lies on the circle centered at the origin and containing the point $(0, 2)$.</i></p> <p>(Focus on quadrilaterals, right triangles, and circles.)</p>	<p>2017-2018 RCK12 Geometry Benchmark 3 – item 7 The graph of line l is shown below.</p>  <p>7. Which of the following is an equation for a line that is perpendicular to line l in the graph?</p> <p>A. $y = -3x$ B. $y = 3x - 5$ C. $y = \frac{1}{3}x$ D. $y = x + 3$</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The assessment item matches the GSE in content.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment item is multiple choice, and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not prove simple geometric theorems algebraically in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the correct answer from the four possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires student to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but the assessment item only requires recall of information or a procedure (Recall/Reproduction).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.5 (continued) Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items To Georgia Standards of Excellence Mathematics, Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry Richmond County School System October 2017		
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Geometry		
MGSE9-12.G.SRT.3 Use the properties of similarity transformations to establish the AA criterion for two triangles to be similar.	2017-2018 RCK12 Geometry Benchmark 2 – item 12 12. The altitude to the hypotenuse of a right triangle divides the triangle into two triangles. Which of the following must be true of the two smaller triangles? A. They are congruent. B. They are similar. C. They are both isosceles. D. They have equal area.	Content: Aligned The assessment item matches the GSE in content. Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment item is multiple choice, and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply properties of similarity transformations in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the correct answer from the four possibilities given. Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires student to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but the assessment item only requires recall of information or a procedure (Recall/Reproduction).
<i>Source: Georgia Standards of Excellence mathematics document on the state website and district Mathematics Benchmark Assessment Blueprints 1-3 provided by district administrators.</i>		

The following observations can be made from Exhibit 2.4.5 regarding the analysis of 22 mathematics benchmark assessment items:

Grades 3, 5, and 8

- Of the five third grade mathematics assessment items analyzed, three were aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content but were not aligned for either context or cognition.
- Of the six fifth grade mathematics assessment items analyzed, four were aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content but were not aligned for context or cognition.
- Of the four eighth grade mathematics assessment items analyzed, three were found to be aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content. Only one of the four assessment items was also aligned for context and cognition. Although one benchmark assessment item was found aligned for content, context, and cognition, it was not deeply aligned in that the range of the content, the types of cognition, and multiple assessment contexts were not present in the assessment benchmark items.

High School Algebra I and Geometry

- Four Algebra I benchmark assessment items were analyzed for congruency with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Three of the four assessment items were aligned for content and two of the three were also aligned for context and cognition. The two benchmark assessment item found to be aligned for

content, context, and cognition, were not deeply aligned in that the range of the content, the types of cognition, and multiple assessment contexts were not available in the assessment benchmark items.

- All three of the Geometry benchmark assessment items analyzed were aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content, but none were aligned for context or cognition. Reviewers noted that the mode of response for the Geometry benchmark assessment items was multiple choice, while the mode of response to meet the Georgia Standards of Excellence is open-ended responses.

Exhibit 2.4.6 summarizes the analyses of mathematics benchmark assessment items to GSEs.

Exhibit 2.4.6

Summary of Analyses of Mathematics Benchmark Assessment Items To Georgia Standards of Excellence Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry Richmond County School System October 2017

Grade Level/ Course	# Items Analyzed	Content Congruent		Context Congruent		Cognition Congruent	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Grade Three	5	3	60	0	0	0	0
Grade Five	6	4	66	0	0	0	0
Grade Eight	4	3	75	1	33	1	33
Algebra I	4	3	75	2	67	2	67
Geometry	3	3	100	0	0	0	0
Total	22	16	73	3	14	3	14

Exhibit 2.4.6 indicates the following:

- Twenty-two mathematics benchmark assessment items were compared to the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content, context, and cognition congruence.
- Sixteen (73%) of the 22 mathematics benchmark assessment items were congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content.
- Three (14%) of the 22 mathematics benchmark assessment items were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for context.
- Three (14%) of the 22 mathematics benchmark assessment items were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for cognition.

If the sample of mathematics benchmark assessment items analyzed is representative of a majority of benchmark assessment items available, then the mathematics assessment items are insufficiently aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence to provide feedback needed for instructional decision making. Including these open-ended items increased both the cognitive complexity of the district assessments, as well as their alignment to the state standards.

Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Alignment

The reviewers analyzed draft science benchmark assessment items, which were reported as linked to the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Benchmark assessments items for Environmental Science were not completed at the time of this review and were not included in this analysis.

Draft science benchmark assessment items linked to three Georgia Standards of Excellence were selected randomly for grades 5, 8, and the courses Physical Science and Biology. In circumstances where more than one assessment item was listed for a given Georgia Standards of Excellence, reviewers included as many items as appropriate for analysis. Reviewers noted that for some science assessment items listed in the Benchmark Blueprints, the former Georgia Performance Standards were listed along with the Georgia Standards of

Excellence. District personnel stated that the *Performance Matters* system listed both old and new standards in the benchmark blueprints. District personnel requested that the reviewers use the Georgia Standards of Excellence for this analysis of internal consistency.

Exhibit 2.4.7 displays the results of the reviewers' analysis of the congruency of selected draft science benchmark assessment items for grades 5 and 8, Physical Science, and Biology.

Exhibit 2.4.7

Internal Consistency of Sample Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Items To Georgia Standards of Excellence Grades 5, 8, Physical Science, and Biology Richmond County School System October 2017

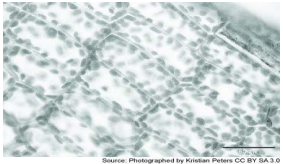
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
GA.S53.a Gather evidence by utilizing technology tools to support a claim that plants and animals are comprised of cells too small to be seen without magnification.	2018-2019 RCK12 Grade 5 Science Benchmark 1- items 2, 3, and 15 2. Devon's teacher asks her to describe a leaf to the class using a magnifying glass. What details will Devon most likely be able to describe? A. the color, shape, and texture of the leaf B. the color, shape, texture, and cells of the leaf C. the color, shape, texture, cells, and cell structures of the leaf D. the color, shape, texture, cells, cell structures, and atoms of the leaf The picture below shows a plant leaf viewed under a simple compound microscope. 3. Based on this picture, which statement best explains what a microscope allows scientists to do that they cannot do with their eyes alone?  <small>Source: Photographed by Kristian Peters CC BY SA 3.0</small> A. It allows them to see the movement of materials in a large organism. B. It allows them to see the smaller objects that make up living things. C. It allows them to see what plants and animals need to survive. D. It allows them to see the chemical reactions in plant leaves. 15. Two students examine an animal cell through a microscope. One student observes and describes a variety of small and large organelles. The second student observes and describes only the largest organelles. Identify and describe a reason why the students made different observations. <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 290px;"></div>	Content: Aligned The GSE and the assessment items match in content in that all focus on the claim that cells of plants and animals are too small to be seen without magnification. Context of Items #2 and #3: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for these assessment items is multiple choice, and the items do not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply the skill in an open-ended context. The items require the student to select the right answers from the four possibilities given. Context of Item #15: Aligned Item #15 requires the student to identify and describe in writing a reason why the students made different observations. Cognition of Items #2 and #3: Inadequately Aligned The GSE content is broad in expecting the student to make meaning from gathering evidence and use information or conceptual knowledge to support a claim. Items #2 and #3 item require the student to select responses using recall, processing information on a lower level (Recall/Reproduction). Cognition of Item #15: Aligned Item #15 matches the GSE cognitively in that it has the student use information or conceptual knowledge to identify and describe a reason why the students made different observations (Skill/Concept).

Exhibit 2.4.7 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Grades 5, 8, Physical Science, and Biology
Richmond County School System
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GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
<p>GA.S5L2.a Ask questions to compare and contrast instincts and learned behaviors.</p>	<p>2018-2019 RCK12 5th Grade Science Benchmark 2 – items 11 and 12</p>  <p>The picture shows monarch butterflies.</p> <p>11. Eastern monarch butterflies can migrate from southern Canada all the way to Mexico in the wintertime. Migration is an example of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. an inherited behavior, because butterflies must learn how to travel. B. a learned behavior, because butterflies must know where to travel. C. an inherited behavior, because butterflies are born knowing where to migrate. D. a learned behavior, because butterflies learn from their parents how to migrate. <p>12. Sand cats live in a very hot environment. They spend much of their days in holes, called burrows that they dig in the sand. Select three ways that this learned behavior helps sand cats survive in their environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. helping them to stay cool and out of the Sun B. allowing them to find water when water is low C. allowing them to rest and save energy D. allowing them a place to store and hide their food E. helping them to retain heat during the day F. helping them to avoid predators at night 	<p>Content of Item #11: Aligned The GSE and item #11 match in content in that both require the student to know the difference between instinct and learned behaviors.</p> <p>Content of Item #12: Inadequately Aligned The content of item #12 is different from the GSE in that it requires the student to know ways that a learned behavior helps an animal to survive. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition for this item.</p> <p>Context of Item #11: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for this assessment item is multiple choice, and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply the skill in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the right answers from the four possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognition of Item #11: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to use information or conceptual knowledge to compare and contrast inherited and learned behavior. Item #11 requires the student to select responses using recall, processing information on a lower level (Recall/Reproduction).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.7 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Grades 5, 8, Physical Science, and Biology
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GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
GA.S5P3.b Plan and carry out an investigation to observe the interaction between a magnetic field and a magnetic object. (Clarification statement: The interaction should include placing materials of various types (wood, paper, glass, metal, and rocks) and thickness between the magnet and the magnetic object.)	2018-2019 RCK12 5th Grade Science Benchmark 4 – item 12 Bryce and Duqwan [sic] put different objects between a strong magnet and iron filings. They press the magnet against the object and record what they see.  12. Which table most likely shows their findings? A. Object sheet of plastic piece of wood square of steel piece of paper Action of the Iron Filings filings stick to the sheet filings do not move filings do not move filings stick to the paper B. Object sheet of plastic piece of wood square of steel piece of paper Action of the Iron Filings Fillings do not move filings tick to the block filings stick to the steel filings do not move C. Object sheet of plastic piece of wood square of steel piece of paper Action of the Iron Filings filings stick to the sheet filings stick to the wood filings do not move filings stick to the paper D. Object sheet of plastic piece of wood square of steel piece of paper Action of the Iron Filings filings do not move filings stick to the block filings do not move filings stick to the paper	Content: Aligned The GSE and assessment item match in content in that both include content about the interaction between a magnetic field and a magnetic object. Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for this assessment item is multiple choice, and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the item does not have the student plan and carry out an investigation in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the right answers from the four possibilities given. Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to use strategic thinking to predict what will happen depending on what element is placed between the magnet and the magnetic object. The assessment item, in part because it is in a multiple choice context, requires the student to use information and conceptual knowledge to select the correct response (Skill/Concept).

Exhibit 2.4.7 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Grades 5, 8, Physical Science, and Biology
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GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
<p>GA. S8P2.a Analyze and interpret data to create graphical displays that illustrate the relationships of kinetic energy to mass and speed, and potential energy to mass and height of an object.</p>	<p>2018-2019 RCK12 2018-2019 Grade 8 Science Benchmark 1 – items 13 and 15</p> <p>13. Which of the following is indicated by the speed of an object?</p>  <p>A. direction of the object B. energy of the object C. phase of the object D. volume of the object</p> <p>15. How can the potential energy of an Olympic ski jumper be increased?</p> <p>A. by increasing the height of the hill the jumper is skiing down B. by decreasing the height of the hill the jumper is skiing down C. by increasing the length of the skis that the jumper is using D. by decreasing the length of the skis that the jumper is using</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The GSE and the assessment items match in content in that the student must understand relationships of kinetic energy to mass and speed, and potential energy to mass and height of an object.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to demonstrate his/her learnings derived from analysis and interpreting data by creating a graphical display to illustrate relationships. The assessment items are multiple choice and do not require the student to create graphical displays. Instead, they require the student to select the correct answers from the four possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to use strategic thinking to analyze and interpret data to create graphical displays. The items require the student to use knowledge and conceptual understanding of the relationships of kinetic energy and potential energy to mass, speed, and height of an object (Skill/Concept).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.7 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Grades 5, 8, Physical Science, and Biology
Richmond County School System
October 2017













GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis																																																
Grade 8																																																		
<p>GA.S8P1.c</p> <p>Plan and carry out investigations to compare and contrast chemical (i.e., reactivity, combustibility) and physical (i.e., density, melting point, boiling point) properties of matter.</p>	<p>2018-2019 RCK12</p> <p>Grade 8 Science Benchmark 2 – items 13 and 15</p> <p>Directions: The tables show the appearances, masses, and volumes of four unknown substances and the densities of four known substances. Use the tables to answer any questions that follow.</p> <table><caption>Known Substances</caption><tr><th>Substance</th><th>Density (g/mL)</th></tr><tr><td>Water</td><td>1.00</td></tr><tr><td>Glycerol</td><td>1.26</td></tr><tr><td>Ethyl alcohol</td><td>0.79</td></tr><tr><td>Vegetable oil</td><td>0.91</td></tr></table> <table><caption>Unknown Substances</caption><tr><th>Substance</th><th>Appearance</th><th>Mass (g)</th><th>Volume (mL)</th></tr><tr><td>Q</td><td> Gray</td><td>46.07</td><td>58.39</td></tr><tr><td>R</td><td> White</td><td>18.02</td><td>18.02</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td> Black</td><td>92.09</td><td>73.09</td></tr><tr><td>T</td><td> Spotted</td><td>19.07</td><td>20.96</td></tr></table> <p>13. Using the tables, what is unknown substance R?</p> <p>A. water</p> <p>B. ethyl alcohol</p> <p>C. vegetable oil</p> <p>D. glycerol</p> <p>The table shows the mass and volume for five unknown samples. Each sample was placed in a container with vegetable oil with a density of 0.9 g/cm³.</p> <table><tr><th></th><th>Sample Mass (g)</th><th>Volume (cm³)</th></tr><tr><td>v</td><td>5.1</td><td>5.3</td></tr><tr><td>w</td><td>1.7</td><td>2.2</td></tr><tr><td>x</td><td>3.5</td><td>4.1</td></tr><tr><td>y</td><td>2.9</td><td>2.6</td></tr><tr><td>z</td><td>4.3</td><td>5.2</td></tr></table> <p>15. Select all of the samples that floated on the oil.</p> <p>A. V</p> <p>B. W</p> <p>C. X</p> <p>D. Y</p> <p>E. Z</p>	Substance	Density (g/mL)	Water	1.00	Glycerol	1.26	Ethyl alcohol	0.79	Vegetable oil	0.91	Substance	Appearance	Mass (g)	Volume (mL)	Q	 Gray	46.07	58.39	R	 White	18.02	18.02	S	 Black	92.09	73.09	T	 Spotted	19.07	20.96		Sample Mass (g)	Volume (cm ³)	v	5.1	5.3	w	1.7	2.2	x	3.5	4.1	y	2.9	2.6	z	4.3	5.2	<p>Content: Inadequately Aligned</p> <p>The GSE, the assessment items shown here, and other items in Benchmark 2 linked to this GSE do not completely match in content in that none of the assessment items in this assessment require the student to compare and contrast chemical and physical properties of matter. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition for this item.</p>
Substance	Density (g/mL)																																																	
Water	1.00																																																	
Glycerol	1.26																																																	
Ethyl alcohol	0.79																																																	
Vegetable oil	0.91																																																	
Substance	Appearance	Mass (g)	Volume (mL)																																															
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Exhibit 2.4.7 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Items
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GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
GA.S8P4.g Develop and use models to demonstrate the effects that lenses have on light (i.e., formation an image) and their possible technological applications.	<p>2018-2019 RCK12 Grade 8 Science Benchmark 3 – items 23, 24, and 25</p> <p>23. Which of the following diagrams best represents the path of light rays passing through a glass prism?</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;">A.</div>  </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;">B.</div>  </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;">C.</div>  </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;">D.</div>  </div> <p>24. Aila draws a model of a double convex lens. She draws horizontal lines to show light traveling through the lens from the left. What happens to the light after it moves through the lens?</p> <p>A. It diffracts and moves upward. B. It diverges without intersecting. C. It refracts and converges to a point. D. It continues to move in the same direction.</p> <p>25. Which statement best describes how light and lenses work together?</p> <p>A. Lenses change the direction of light rays by bending them. B. Lenses break up white light into the spectrum. C. Lenses cause light rays to spread apart. D. Lenses cause objects to appear larger.</p>	<p>Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to consider possible technological applications. All three assessment items have the student understanding the effects that lenses or prisms have on light but do not ask about possible technological applications. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.</p>

Exhibit 2.4.7 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Grades 5, 8, Physical Science, and Biology
Richmond County School System
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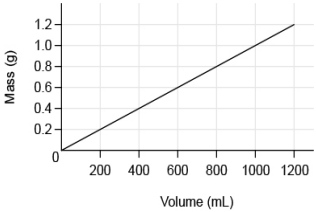
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Physical Science		
GA.9-12.SPS5.b Plan and carry out investigations to identify the relationships among temperature, pressure, volume, and density of gases in closed systems. (Clarity statement: Using specific Gas laws to perform calculations is beyond the scope of this standard; emphasis should focus on the conceptual understanding of the behavior of gases rather than calculations.)	2018-2019 RCK12 Physical Science Benchmark I – items 1.27 and 1.28 1.27 - A container of gas is kept at constant pressure. Which best explains what will happen to the volume if the temperature of the gas is increased? A. The volume will increase as the temperature increases. B. The volume will decrease as the temperature increases. C. The volume will increase twice as quickly as the temperature. D. The volume will remain the same as the temperature increases. 1.28 - The graph shows the relationship between mass and volume.  What is the density of an object that has a volume of 600 milliliters (mL)? A. 0.001 g/mL B. 0.01 g/mL C. 0.1 g/mL D. 1.0 g/mL	Content: Aligned The GSE and both assessment items match in content in that relationships among temperature, pressure, volume, and density of gases in closed systems are the focus. Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for these assessment items is multiple choice, and the items do not meet the GSE in context since the student does not plan and carry out investigations in an open-ended context. The items require the student to select the right answers from the four possibilities given. Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to plan, investigate, and use conceptual understanding in focusing on the behavior of gases. Responding to both assessment items relies on the student using information or conceptual understanding (Skill/Concept).

Exhibit 2.4.7 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Grades 5, 8, Physical Science, and Biology
Richmond County School System
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GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Physical Science		
<p>GA.9-12.SPS8.d Use mathematics and computational thinking to identify the relationships between work, mechanical advantage, and simple machines.</p>	<p>2018-2019 RCK12 Physical Science Benchmark 3 – items 1.25 and 1.44 1.25 - The picture shows a wheel and axle.</p>  <p>What is the mechanical advantage if the radius of the wheel is 49 cm and the radius of the axle is 7 cm?</p> <p>A. 3 B. 7 C. 16 D. 21</p> <p>1.44 - Charlie lifts a box with a force of 500 N and sets it on a table top 1.2 m above its starting position. Lauren pushes an identical box up a 5 m ramp from the floor to the top of the same table. Which person did more work?</p> <p>A. Charlie did more work. B. Lauren did more work. C. Both Charlie and Lauren did the same amount of work. D. The size of each individual must be known to determine who did more work.</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The GSE and both assessment items match in content requiring the student to identify the relationships between work, mechanical advantage, and simple machines.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to use mathematics and computational thinking to identify relationships. The mode of response for these assessment items is multiple choice, and the items do not meet the GSE in context. The items require the student to select the right answers from the four possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to use knowledge and generate conceptual understanding of the relationships between work, mechanical advantage, and simple machines. Both assessment items require the student to recall information and procedures (Recall/Reproduction).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.7 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Grades 5, 8, Physical Science, and Biology
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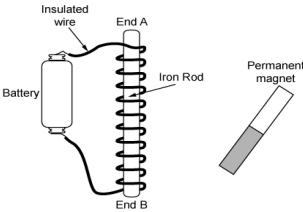
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Physical Science		
<p>GA.9-12.SPS10.c Plan and carry out investigations to determine the relationship between magnetism and the movement of electrical charge.</p> <p>(Clarification statement: Investigations could include electromagnets, simple motors, and generators.)</p>	<p>2018-2019 RCK12 Physical Science Benchmark 4 – items 1.38 and 1.39 1.38 - Which best explains why a current-carrying wire would deflect a magnet? A. Magnets align to the north and south poles of Earth's gravitational field when near a current-carrying wire. B. Magnets align to the north and south poles of Earth's magnetic field when near a current-carrying wire. C. A current-carrying wire produces a gravitational field that can attract or repel a magnet. D. A current-carrying wire produces a magnetic field that can attract or repel a magnet.</p> <p>1.39 - A student wrapped 30 cm of an insulated wire around the middle of an iron rod, leaving ends A and B exposed. She connected the non-insulated ends of the wire to a battery. She brought a permanent magnet near end B of the iron rod, and it was repelled. The picture shows the student's experiment.</p>  <p>Which best explains why the permanent magnet was repelled? A. The wire became magnetized when an electric current flowed through it, and end B of the iron rod must have shared the same pole with the permanent magnet. B. The iron rod became magnetized when it was wrapped by the wire, and end B of the iron rod must have had a pole opposite that of the permanent magnet. C. The iron rod became magnetized when it was wrapped by the wire, and end B of the iron rod must have shared the same pole as the permanent magnet. D. The wire became magnetized when an electric current flowed through it, and end B must have had a pole opposite that of the permanent magnet.</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The GSE and the assessment items match in content in that they require the student to determine the relationship between magnetism and the movement of electrical charge.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for these assessment items is multiple choice, and the items do not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply the skill in an open-ended context. The items require the student to select the right answers from the four possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to use information or conceptual knowledge to determine relationships. The assessment items rely on recall of information or procedures to select the correct response to the question (Recall/Reproduction).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.7 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Grades 5, 8, Physical Science, and Biology
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GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Biology		
GA.9-12.SB1.e Ask questions to investigate and provide explanations about the roles of photosynthesis and respiration in the cycling of matter and flow of energy within the cell (e.g., single-celled alga). (Clarification statement: Instruction should focus on understanding the inputs, outputs, and functions of photosynthesis and respiration and the functions of the major sub-processes of each including glycolysis, Krebs cycle, electron transport chain, light reactions, and Calvin cycle.)	2018-2019 RCK12 Biology Benchmark 1- items 9, 10, and 12 9. Which statements about what happens in glycolysis are true? Select all that apply. A. H ₂ O is formed. B. ADP is formed. C. ATP is formed. D. Glucose is formed. E. H ₂ O is broken down. F. Glucose is broken down. 10. Which of the following molecules is the most energy-rich molecule produced by photosynthesis? A. sugar, which requires light, water, and carbon dioxide to form B. fat, which requires oxygen, water, and electricity to form C. protein, which requires radiant energy to form D. starch, which requires thermal energy to form 12. Compared to aerobic respiration, anaerobic respiration A. does not require oxygen and produces oxygen and glucose as forms of stored energy that are utilized by the cell. B. produces 38 ATP molecules per reaction and generates 70% more energy. C. requires oxygen and can produce products such as lactic acid or alcohol. D. does not produce as much ATP and comes into action as an energy backup for aerobic organisms.	Content: Aligned The GSE and the assessment items match in content in that the focus is knowledge of the roles of photosynthesis and respiration in the cycling of matter and flow of energy within the cell. Context: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires students to ask questions to investigate and provide explanations. The mode of response for these assessment items is multiple choice, and the items do not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply the skill in an open-ended context. The items require the student to select the right answers from the four possibilities given. Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to use knowledge and conceptual understanding to investigate and provide explanations about the roles of photosynthesis and respiration in relation to the cycling of water and flow of energy. The student must recall information and processes to select the correct responses to the assessment items (Recall/Reproduction).

Exhibit 2.4.7 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Grades 5, 8, Physical Science, and Biology
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Biology		
<p>GA.9-12.SB2.b Construct an argument based on evidence to support the claim that inheritable genetic variations may result from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new genetic combinations through meiosis (crossing over, nondisjunction); • non-lethal errors occurring during replication (insertions, deletions, substitutions); and/or • heritable mutations caused by environmental factors (radiation, chemicals, and viruses). 	<p>2018-2019 RCK12 Biology Benchmark 2 – items 19 and 20 19. Experimental data shows that an increase in radiation exposure causes an increase in offspring with genetic abnormalities. Explain what causes these genetic abnormalities.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> Space for student response </div> <p>20. Which best describes a genetic mutation to a sequence of DNA that changes the way the sequence is read?</p> <p>A. silent B. intron C. frameshift D. elongation</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The GSE and both items require the student to support a claim of inheritable genetic variations resulting from a given cause.</p> <p>Context of #19: Aligned Item #19 matches the GSE in context in that it requires the student to construct an argument for causes of genetic variations.</p> <p>Context of #20: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for this assessment item is multiple choice, and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply the skill in an open-ended context. The item requires the student to select the right answers from the four possibilities given.</p> <p>Cognition of Item #19: Aligned The GSE and this item are matched in cognition in that both require the student to use information or conceptual knowledge to construct an argument for making a claim about inheritable genetic variations (Skill/Concept).</p> <p>Cognition of Item #20: Inadequately Aligned This item requires the student to recall information about genetic mutations but does not require the student to construct an argument (Recall/Reproduction).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.7 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Grades 5, 8, Physical Science, and Biology
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Biology		
GA.9-12.SB4.c Construct an argument supported by empirical evidence to compare and contrast the characteristics of viruses and organisms.	2018-2019 RCK12 Biology Benchmark 3 – items 9, 10, and 11 9. Which of the following is NOT a similarity between viruses and living organisms? A. the ability to respond to the environment B. the ability to survive crystallization C. the ability to evolve D. the ability to grow 10. Which best describes why a virus is not a living organism? A. Viruses contain only DNA. B. Viruses contain only RNA. C. Viruses are not cells and can only reproduce inside a host cell. D. Viruses do not contain any genetic material and cannot evolve. 11. According to cell theory, viruses are not living organisms. What component of cell theory differentiates viruses from living organisms? A. Viruses do not grow and reproduce. B. Viruses are not composed of one or more cells. C. Viruses respond and adapt to their environment. D. Viruses are the basic unit of structure and function in living things.	Content: Aligned The GSE and both assessment items are a match in that they focus on knowing characteristics of viruses and organisms. Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for these assessment items is multiple choice, and the items do not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply the skill in an open-ended context. The items require the student to select the right answers from the four possibilities given. Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to use strategic thinking to construct an argument supported by evidence to compare and contrast characteristics of viruses and organisms. The assessment items require the student to use knowledge and conceptual information (Skill/Concept).

Source: Science curriculum documents found in RCSS Rubicon Atlas; Benchmark Assessments with Benchmark Blueprints provided

The following observations can be made from Exhibit 2.4.7 regarding the analysis of 27 draft science benchmark assessment items:

Grades 5 and 8

- Six fifth grade assessment items were analyzed for congruency with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Five of the six assessment items were adequately aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content. Only one of the five assessment items found aligned for content was also aligned for context and cognition. Although one benchmark assessment item was found aligned for content, context, and cognition, it was not deeply aligned in that the range of the content, the types of cognition, and multiple assessment contexts were not present in the assessment benchmark items.
- Seven eighth grade assessment items were analyzed for congruency with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Two items were aligned for content, but neither was aligned for context or cognition.
- The mode of response required for the fifth and eighth grade assessment items is multiple choice, with the student selecting the correct response from four possibilities. In comparison, the Georgia Standards of Excellence require students to think and operate in open-ended real-life situations and contexts. Multiple choice also prevents students from showing their thinking and actual mastery of the standard.

High School Physical Science and Biology

- Six Physical Science assessment items were analyzed for congruency with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. All six were aligned for content but were not aligned for context or cognition.
- All eight Biology benchmark assessment items analyzed for congruency with the Georgia Standards of Excellence were aligned for content, but only one assessment item was found aligned also in context and cognition. The one benchmark assessment item found aligned for content, context, and cognition was not deeply aligned in that the range of the content, the types of cognition, and multiple assessment contexts were not present in the assessment benchmark items.
- The mode of response for most Physical Science and Biology assessment items is multiple choice, which is not aligned with the open-ended responses required in the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- In analyzing high school Physical Science and Biology benchmark assessment items for Depth of Knowledge, reviewers found eight items (57%) that require Level I Recall/Reproduction and six items (43%) requiring Level II Skill/Concept. No high school science assessment items reviewed required Level III Strategic Thinking or Level IV Extended Thinking as described in the Depth of Knowledge framework.

Exhibit 2.4.8 summarizes the analyses of alignment of science benchmark assessment items to GSEs.

Exhibit 2.4.8

Summary of Analyses of Draft Science Benchmark Assessment Items To Georgia Standards of Excellence Grades 5, 8, Physical Science, and Biology Richmond County School System Fall 2017

Grade Level/ Course	# Items Analyzed	Content Congruent		Context Congruent		Cognition Congruent	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Grade 5	6	5	83	1	17	1	17
Grade 8	7	2	29	0	0	0	0
Physical Science	6	6	100	0	0	0	0
Biology	8	8	100	1	13	1	13
Total	27	21	78	2	7	2	7

Exhibit 2.4.8 indicates the following:

- Twenty-seven draft science benchmark assessment items were compared to the Georgia Standards of excellence for content, context, and cognition congruence.
- Twenty-one (78%) of the 27 draft science assessment items analyzed were congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content.
- Two (7%) of the 27 draft science assessment items were found to be congruent for context with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- Two (7%) of the 27 draft science assessment items were found to be congruent for cognition with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- Two draft assessment items analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content, context, and cognition.

If the sample of draft science benchmark assessment items analyzed is representative of science benchmark assessment items available, the assessment items were insufficiently aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence to provide feedback needed for instructional decision making.

Draft Social Studies Benchmark Alignment

The reviewers analyzed draft social studies benchmark assessment items, which were identified as linked to the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Draft social studies benchmark assessment items linked to three Georgia Standards of Excellence were selected randomly for grades 5, 8, and the courses U.S. History and Economics. In circumstances where more than one assessment item was listed for a given Georgia Standards of Excellence, reviewers included as many items as appropriate for analysis. The Economics course has only one End of Course exam. As a result, all three Economics assessment items were selected from this one exam.

Exhibit 2.4.9 displays the results of the reviewers' analysis of the congruency of selected draft social studies benchmark assessments items for grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics.

Exhibit 2.4.9

Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items To Georgia Standards of Excellence Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics Richmond County School System October 2017

GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
SS5E1c Describe how specialization improves standards of living (such as how specific economies in the north and south developed at the beginning of the 20 th century).	2018-2019 RCK12 Fifth Grade Social Studies Benchmark 2 – item 1 Read the text. Then answer the question that follows. 1. In October of 1908, Henry Ford's company completed production on the Model T. The car was more affordable than any on the market. Ford's use of a moving assembly line enabled him to produce thousands of cars every week. With more automobiles available and prices lower than ever before, many Americans bought their first cars. How did the developments described in the text change life in the United States? 1. by causing many Americans to lose their jobs due to lower profits on cheaper cars 2. by causing people to live farther from their place of employment and travel to work 3. by causing people to live in major metropolitan centers and women to join the workforce 4. by causing many Americans to migrate from the industrial North to rural areas of the South	Content: Aligned The assessment item is aligned with the grade level standard and therefore is topologically aligned. Context: Inadequately Aligned The standard requires the student to describe the impact of the specialization. The benchmark item only requires the student to select from a list; no description is required. Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The standard requires the student to "describe," while the benchmark item only asks the student to "identify" the best choice given four options (Recall/Recognition).

Exhibit 2.4.9 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
SS5H6: The student will d. Identify Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill, Hirohito, Truman, Mussolini, and Hitler.	2018-2019 RCK12 Fifth Grade Social Studies Benchmark 3 – item 4 4. Who were the leaders of the three major Axis Powers during World War II? A. Adolf Hitler, Joseph Goebbels, and Hermann Göring B. Benito Mussolini, Adolf Hitler, and Hirohito C. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin D. Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Harry S. Truman	Content: Aligned The standard and the assessment item match in content. Additionally, the student must discriminate between leaders of both the Allied Nations and lesser figures of the Axis Nations. Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for this assessment item is multiple choice, and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the item requires the student to select the right answers from the four possibilities given. Cognition: Aligned Students are asked to “identify” in both the standard and the benchmark assessment items (Recall/Recognition).
SS5H9: The student will trace important developments in America since 1975. A. Describe U.S. involvement in world events; include efforts to bring peace to the Middle East, the collapse of the Soviet Union, Persian Gulf, and the War on Terrorism in response to September 22, 2001.	2018-2019 RCK12 Fifth Grade Social Studies Benchmark 4 – item 15 15. Which THREE statements about the attacks of September 11, 2001, and their impact on the United States, are correct? A. The attacks were carried out by members of al-Qaeda based in Afghanistan. B. The attacks led to a reorganization of cabinet-level government agencies. C. The attacks occurred during the presidency of Barack Obama. D. George W. Bush was president when the attacks occurred. E. Saddam Hussein was responsible for planning and funding the attacks. F. The United States captured the man who planned the attacks in Afghanistan.	Content: Aligned The standards and benchmark item both require students to have a basic understanding of events surrounding the events and subsequent actions from September 11, 2001. Context: Inadequately Aligned The standard requires the student to describe events surrounding September 11, 2001. However, the assessment item is multiple choice and asks student to select from a given list with no description required. Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The standard asks the student to trace and describe, while the benchmark item asks students to identify (Recall/Recognition).

Exhibit 2.4.9 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

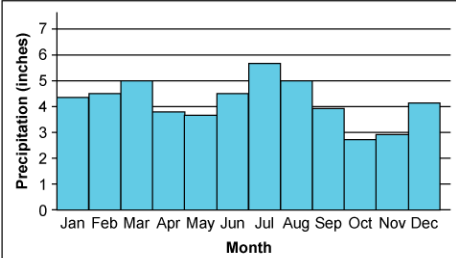
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis																										
Grade 8																												
SS8G1: The student will A. Evaluate the impact of climate on Georgia development	2018-2019 RCK12 Eighth Grade Social Studies Benchmark 1 – item 2 Look at the chart of the average monthly precipitation in Georgia. Then answer the question that follows. <div><p>Georgia Average Precipitation By Month</p><table><caption>Georgia Average Precipitation By Month (inches)</caption><thead><tr><th>Month</th><th>Precipitation (inches)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Jan</td><td>4.5</td></tr><tr><td>Feb</td><td>4.5</td></tr><tr><td>Mar</td><td>5.0</td></tr><tr><td>Apr</td><td>4.0</td></tr><tr><td>May</td><td>3.5</td></tr><tr><td>Jun</td><td>4.5</td></tr><tr><td>Jul</td><td>5.5</td></tr><tr><td>Aug</td><td>5.0</td></tr><tr><td>Sep</td><td>4.0</td></tr><tr><td>Oct</td><td>2.5</td></tr><tr><td>Nov</td><td>2.5</td></tr><tr><td>Dec</td><td>4.0</td></tr></tbody></table><p>Data Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration</p></div> Which conclusion about the development of Georgia’s agricultural economy can be drawn from this data? A. Ample precipitation during most of the growing season makes the state ideal for agriculture. B. Farmers must rely on irrigation from wells and reservoirs to supply water for most of the year. C. The low amount of precipitation in October and November means agricultural production is limited. D. Relatively heavy precipitation in the winter months creates flooding in the fields when the snow melts.	Month	Precipitation (inches)	Jan	4.5	Feb	4.5	Mar	5.0	Apr	4.0	May	3.5	Jun	4.5	Jul	5.5	Aug	5.0	Sep	4.0	Oct	2.5	Nov	2.5	Dec	4.0	Content: Aligned The standard and assessment item match in content in that they both require the student to evaluate the impact of climate on Georgia development. Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for this assessment item is multiple choice, and the item does not meet the GSE in context since the item requires the student to select the correct answer from the four possibilities given. Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The standard requires the student to demonstrate understanding and draw his/her own conclusion, while the assessment item has the student select the response that is the best conclusion based on the data given (Skill/Concept).
Month	Precipitation (inches)																											
Jan	4.5																											
Feb	4.5																											
Mar	5.0																											
Apr	4.0																											
May	3.5																											
Jun	4.5																											
Jul	5.5																											
Aug	5.0																											
Sep	4.0																											
Oct	2.5																											
Nov	2.5																											
Dec	4.0																											
SS8H8: The student will analyze the important events that occurred after World War I and their impact on Georgia. A. Describe the impact of the boll weevil and drought on Georgia.	2018-2019 RCK12 Eighth Grade Social Studies Benchmark 2 – item 19 19. Though the boll weevil infestation of the early 1900s had a number of damaging effects on the state of Georgia, it played an important role in A. the birth of the environmental conservation movement. B. the opening of rural lands throughout the state for settlement. C. the growth of cities such as Atlanta due to an influx of sharecroppers and tenant farmers. D. the deregulation of major industries as a means by which to encourage rapid industrialization.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The standard and the assessment item match in content for the effects of the boll weevil, but not drought. No other assessment items on this examination assessed for the effects of drought. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.																										

Exhibit 2.4.9 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
SS8H12: The student will d. Evaluate the effect of the 1996 Olympic Games on Georgia. e. Evaluate the importance of new immigrant communities to the growth and economy of Georgia.	2018-2019 RCK12 Eighth Grade Social Studies Benchmark 3 – item 13 13. In the lead-up to the 1996 Summer Olympics, immigrants in the city of Atlanta played a significant role in providing the A. investment needed to revitalize the city’s downtown area. B. labor necessary for massive improvements to the city’s infrastructure. C. investment needed to complete new housing projects throughout the city. D. labor necessary to allow farms to keep up with the demands of city restaurants.	Content: Inadequately Aligned While the content of SS8H12e , the effect of the 1996 Olympic Games on Georgia, is incorporated into the assessment item, the content of SS8H12d focuses on the importance of new immigrant communities to the growth and economy of Georgia. Because content of the assessment is inadequately aligned with one of the sections of the standard, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.
U.S. History		
SSUSH4: Explain the reason for and significance of the French alliance and foreign assistance and the roles of Benjamin Franklin and Marquis de Lafayette.	2018-2019 RCK12 U.S. History Benchmark 1 – item 14 14. Why did France support the United States during the Revolutionary War? Select all that apply. A. France wanted to expand the slave trade into the Americas. B. France desired a profitable trade relationship between the two nations. C. France was unhappy about the territory it lost to Great Britain during the French and Indian War. D. France was interested in establishing an independent French state in the American West. E. France was concerned about the growing power of Great Britain.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The standard requires the student to explain BOTH the reason for the alliance and the roles of two key players. The question only asks for the reason for the alliance. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.
SSUSH9: e. Describe the significance of the Emancipation Proclamation	2018-2019 RCK12 U.S. History Benchmark 2 – item 16 16. In what way was the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation an attempt to hurt the war effort of the Confederacy? A. By offering amnesty to Confederate deserters, the Confederate Army would rapidly decrease in size. B. By encouraging slaves to flee North, the Confederacy would lose a key source of labor for the war effort. C. By freeing all slaves held in the United States, the Union hoped to attract more soldiers to its cause. D. By establishing abolition as a goal of the Union, the Union was able to gain the support of Great Britain.	Content: Aligned The standard and assessment item are aligned. Context: Inadequately Aligned The assessment item does not require the student to provide a description as stated in the standard, only to select from a multiple-choice option. Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The standard requires a description, while the assessment item has the student select an answer from a provided list of options (Recall/Recognition).

Exhibit 2.4.9 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics
Richmond County School System
October 2017


GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
U.S. History		
<p>SSUSH19: d. Describe the war mobilization, as indicated by rationing, war time conversion, and the role of women in war industries.</p>	<p>2018-2019 RCK12 U.S. History Benchmark 3 – items 29 and 30 29. Look at the poster created by the War Production Board in 1942. Then answer the question that follows.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><small>Source: Public Domain</small></p> <p>What was the U.S. government's ultimate aim with regard to this poster?</p> <p>A. to motivate women to join the military B. to motivate women to work in manufacturing C. to convince Americans that the draft was necessary D. to convince Americans to support joining World War II</p> <p>30. Read the text from Executive Order 8802, issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941. Then answer the question that follows.</p> <p>Whereas it is the policy of the United States to encourage full participation in the national defense program by all citizens of the United States, regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin, in the firm belief that the democratic way of life within the Nation can be defended successfully only with the help and support of all groups within its borders...</p> <p>What motivated President Roosevelt to issue this executive order?</p> <p>A. the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor B. the passage of the Selective Service Act C. the march on Washington proposed by A. Philip Randolph D. the stock market crash at the start of the Great Depression</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The assessment items #29 and #30, taken together, match the expectation of the standard. Therefore, these assessment items are topologically aligned.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the assessment items is multiple choice and does not meet the standard expectation that is to describe.</p> <p>Cognition: Inadequately Aligned Both assessment items require the student to identify (Recall/Recognition), while the standard asks students to describe or infer (Skill/Concept).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.9 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Economics		
SSEMA3: The student will explain how the government uses fiscal policy to promote price stability, full employment, and economic growth. A. Define fiscal policy B. Explain the governments taxing and spending decisions.	2017-2018 Mock Economics EOC – item 7 7. In the late 1970s, inflation rates in the United States rose dramatically, peaking at over 13%. In response, the Federal Reserve raised interest rates to nearly 20%. What type of policy was this action? A. expansionary fiscal policy B. contractionary fiscal policy C. expansionary monetary policy D. contractionary monetary policy	Content: Inadequately Aligned The assessment item asks the student what type of policy an action is. The standard has three parts, none of which are aligned with the assessment item. One part asks the student to explain how the government uses fiscal policy to promote things. One part asks the student to define fiscal policy, and the last part has the student explain government taxing and spending. Because content of the assessment is inadequately aligned with all of the parts of the standard, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.
SSEPF4: The student will evaluate the costs and benefits of using credit. a. List factors that affect credit worthiness. c. Explain the difference between simple and compound interest rates.	2017-2018 Mock Economics EOC – item 14 14. Kuria is a longtime customer of Middlebury Bank and has a savings account with the bank. She recently took out a car loan from the same bank. Which of the following is MOST LIKELY true? A. The interest rate on the car loan over the entire term of the loan is lower than the interest rate on her savings account. B. The interest rate on the car loan over the entire term of the loan is higher than the interest rate on her savings account. C. The bank decreased the interest rate on her car loan because she has a savings account with the bank. D. The bank increased the interest rate on her savings account because she took out a car loan from the bank.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The standard has three parts. They ask the student about costs and benefits of using credit, factors that affect credit worthiness, and the difference between simple and compound interest rates. The assessment item does not ask the student directly about the difference between simple and compound interest rates. Because the content of the assessment is inadequately aligned with all of the parts of the standard, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.

Exhibit 2.4.9 (continued) Internal Consistency of Sample District Benchmark Assessment Items To Georgia Standards of Excellence Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics Richmond County School System October 2017		
GSE	Benchmark Assessment	Alignment Analysis
Economics		
SSEF1: The student will explain why limited productive resources and unlimited wants result in scarcity... and define scarcity as a basic condition that exists when unlimited wants exceed productive resources.	2017-2018 Mock Economics EOC – item 40 40. Which of the following statements about the impact of scarcity in every economic system is correct? A. It imposes limitations not only on households, businesses, and governments, but also on whole nations. B. It imposes limitations primarily on local and state governments as opposed to the national government, which is typically unaffected. C. Households rarely experience the effects of scarcity, which primarily affects business and government affairs. D. Businesses benefit from scarcity, which allows them to expand the reach of their operations, while scarcity causes households to suffer.	Content: Aligned The assessment asks students to not only understand scarcity but also its impact on economic systems. Context: Inadequately Aligned The standard requires students to explain and define, while the assessment only asks students to identify the correct response from four possibilities. Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The standard requires that students explain why. Students are asked to recall information about scarcity (Recall/Recognition).
<i>Source: Social studies curriculum documents found in RCSS Rubicon Atlas; Benchmark Assessments with Benchmark Blueprints provided</i>		

The following observations can be made from Exhibit 2.4.9 regarding analyses of 13 draft social studies benchmark assessment items:

- All three of the fifth grade social studies assessment items analyzed were aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content. One assessment item was also found to be aligned for cognition but not for context.
- Of the three eighth grade social studies assessment items analyzed, one was aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content but was not aligned for context or cognition.
- Three of four U.S. History assessment items analyzed were aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content, but none were aligned for context or cognition.
- Only one of the three Economics assessment items analyzed was aligned for content, but it was not aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for context or cognition.
- None of the social studies assessment items analyzed were found to be aligned in all three dimensions of content, context, and cognition with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Exhibit 2.4.10 summarizes the analyses of social studies benchmark assessment items' alignment to the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Exhibit 2.4.10
Congruency of Social Studies Assessment Items
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U. S. History, and Economics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade Level/ Course	# Items Analyzed	Content Congruent		Context Congruent		Cognition Congruent	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Grade 5	3	3	100	0	0	1	33
Grade 8	3	1	33	0	0	0	0
U.S. History	4	3	75	0	0	0	0
Economics	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	13	8	62	0	0	1	8

Exhibit 2.4.10 indicates the following:

- Thirteen draft social studies assessment items were compared to the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content, context, and cognition congruence.
- Eight (62%) of the draft social studies assessment items were congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content.
- None of the draft social studies assessment items were congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for context.
- One (8%) of the draft social studies assessment items analyzed was found to be aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for cognition.

If the social studies benchmark assessment items analyzed are representative of the social studies benchmark assessment items available, the assessment items are insufficiently aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence to provide feedback needed for instructional decision making.

Exhibit 2.4.11 summarizes reviewers' analyses of 78 benchmark assessment items for alignment in content, context, and cognition with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Exhibit 2.4.11
Summary of Analyses of Benchmark Assessment Items for Alignment
To the Georgia Standards of Excellence
Richmond County School System
Fall 2017

Subject/Course	Total # Items Analyzed	Content Congruent		Context Congruent		Cognition Congruent	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Language Arts	16	4	25	0	0	0	0
Mathematics	22	14	64	3	14	3	14
Science	27	21	78	2	7	2	7
Social Studies	13	8	62	0	0	1	8
Totals	78	47	60	5	6	6	8

As can be noted in [Exhibit 2.4.11](#):

- Reviewers analyzed 78 district benchmark assessment items for alignment with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- Sixty percent of the assessment items analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content.
- Five (6%) of the assessment items analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for context.
- Six (8%) of the assessment items analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for cognition.
- Of the 78 assessment items analyzed, only five (6%) were found to be topologically aligned for content, context, and cognition with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. The five assessment items found aligned on all three dimensions of content, context, and cognition were not found to be deeply aligned due to the lack of assessment items that extended the range of content, cognition, or assessment contexts.

Overall, reviewers found a majority (94%) of the benchmark assessment items analyzed were not fully aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence and did not provide a one-to-one match of the content, context, and cognition requirement with each learning standard. The multiple-choice nature of the majority of the assessment items prevented adequate alignment to the standards.

III. Congruence of the Richmond County School System Adopted Textbooks with the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE)

The reviewers used the Georgia Standards of Excellence and teachers' editions of district-adopted textbooks provided by district administrators to analyze the congruence of suggested teacher strategies and student activities found in the commercially produced resources against the randomly selected Georgia Standards of Excellence. [Exhibits 2.4.12](#) through [2.4.20](#) present the reviewers' analyses of the congruence of district adopted textbooks to the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content, context, and cognition.

Language Arts Instructional Resources Alignment

Reviewers examined the alignment of language arts instructional activities and resources in teachers' editions of district adopted textbooks identified as linked to the Georgia Standards of Excellence, state Common Core, or Georgia Performance Standards at grades 3, 5, 8, and 9. Reviewers selected, at random, three instructional activities or strategies from the teacher's edition of the district-adopted textbook for the given course, linked to the Georgia Standards of Excellence, to analyze. An analysis of the congruence of the resources for the course American Literature is not included in this report as at the time of the review a copy of the teachers' edition of American Literature was not made available.

[Exhibit 2.4.12](#) displays the reviewers' analyses of a sample of language arts instructional strategies and resource activities compared to the Georgia Standards for Excellence for grades 3, 5, 8, and 9.

Exhibit 2.4.12

Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities To Georgia Standards of Excellence Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, and 9 Richmond County School System October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 3		
ELAGSE3RI7 Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur.	Benchmark Literacy Common Core Grade 3. Page N/A, identified as Unit 5/Day One [Teacher Strategy] Teacher introduces the comprehension strategy of making inferences by sharing this example: <i>A boy named Eric asked his friend Matt to go swimming with him, Matt said he could not go because he did not know how to swim. Eric did not see Matt for several weeks because Matt went to summer camp. When Matt returned, he invited Eric to go swimming, and they swam together.</i> Students are asked what could be inferred or figured out about how Matt changed while he was away. Students are asked to share their inferences. Teacher displays the comprehension poster Celebration, and draws students' attention to the fireworks. Students are instructed to make an inference about the reason for the fireworks in the picture. The teacher points out that the title of the poster, "Celebration," can help them make an inference. Students are asked to tell which details in the photo and what connections they made helped them make an inference about the reason for the fireworks.	Content: Aligned The GSE and the activity match in content as both require the student to demonstrate understanding of text by using information gained from an illustration to explain. Context: Partially Aligned The activity requires the student to make observations about a photograph and to use the label on the picture to make an inference about why the event is occurring. This activity only engages the student verbally, although the standard isn't explicitly limited to only verbal demonstration of the skill. Therefore, this approach only partially aligns to the standard in context, as no writing is involved. Cognition: Partially Aligned The GSE and the activity require the student to use information in student thinking that requires recall (Recall/Reproduction).
ELAGSE3L1b Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns.	Benchmark Literacy Common Core Grade 3, page 2, [Teacher Strategy] Students are introduced to the comprehension strategy of sequence of events. The teacher gives an example of their morning routine before coming to school modeling the use of signal words, such as first, next, then, and last. Teacher asks students what things they do every day before coming to school. Students are asked to think about the order in which they do these things. Teacher asks students to 'turn and talk' to a partner and share at least three things they do every morning and the order in which they do them.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to form and use regular and irregular plural nouns. The activity requires the student to demonstrate understanding of sequence of events without reference to regular or irregular nouns. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition. It should be noted, however, that the student activity is oral in nature, while the standard suggests both verbal and written contexts.

Exhibit 2.4.12 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, and 9
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 3		
ELAGSE3RL9: Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).	Benchmark Literacy Common Core Grade 3, page 6 [Teacher Strategy] Students briefly summarize what they have learned the previous day about pourquoi tales. Teacher displays and reviews the Features of a Pourquoi Tale chart. Teacher reads aloud and discusses two pourquoi tales “How Red Bird Got Her Color” and “How Rainbow Serpent Made the World”. Teacher instructs students to identify cause and effect relationships as they read to better understand the story and asks text dependent questions to ensure student understanding. Teacher introduces the Pourquoi Tales Poster 3 to demonstrate how the two tales can be compared and contrasted. Students are directed to analyze the characters, the structure of each tale and the important themes the tales communicate. The teacher uses the questions on the poster to launch students’ discussion and records students’ ideas on the chart.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires that the student compare and contrast themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters. The activity requires the student to recall how the two stories are the same and how they are different. The stories in the activity are not by the same author. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition. However, it should be noted that the context of student engagement is verbal; no explicit requirement for writing is included.
Grade 5		
ELAGSE5RL3: Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).	Benchmark Literacy Common Core Edition Grade 5, Volume 2, page 7 [Teacher Strategy] [Students will have previously read “Mystery of the Creaking Stairs”.] Students are directed to silently reread “Mystery of the Missing Raffle Ticket.” When students have finished their reading the teacher displays Mystery Poster 4 and begins a discussion about how mysteries can be compared and contrasted by analyzing characters, setting and key events. The teacher uses the questions on the poster to begin students’ discussion. Students’ ideas are recorded on the poster. Students are required to support their compare and contrast statements with quotes directly from the two texts.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to compare and contrast two or more characters, settings or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text. The activity requires the students to compare and contrast two different texts of the same genre. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.

Exhibit 2.4.12 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, and 9
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis														
Grade 5																
ELAGSE5RI2: Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.	Benchmark Literacy Common Core Edition Grade 5, Volume 2, page 11 [Teacher Strategy] [Students reread and analyze the persuasive essay “Words of a Patriot: ‘We Must Be Independent!’”.] After students have reread the essay the teacher guides a discussion about how the essay writer has used reasons and evidence to support his point of view about the colonists separating from England. Students are required to identify the author’s arguments and reasons, as well as supporting evidence. The teacher records students’ citations on a T-chart like the sample below. <table><tr><td colspan="2">Problem: The British rule the colonies and impose rules and taxes without giving them representation.</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">Position: The colonists should fight the British to become free.</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">Audience: other colonists</td></tr><tr><td>Arguments for Position</td><td>Evidence to Support Argument</td></tr><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr></table>	Problem: The British rule the colonies and impose rules and taxes without giving them representation.		Position: The colonists should fight the British to become free.		Audience: other colonists		Arguments for Position	Evidence to Support Argument							Content: Inadequately Aligned Both the GSE and the activity require the student to determine two or more main ideas [arguments] in the text and to identify in detail how the arguments are supported. The GSE also requires the student to summarize the text, but the activity does not. Because the content is inadequately aligned, the reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition. However, it should be noted that the context of student engagement is verbal; no explicit requirement for writing is included. The teacher is the one writing down students’ citations, not the students.
Problem: The British rule the colonies and impose rules and taxes without giving them representation.																
Position: The colonists should fight the British to become free.																
Audience: other colonists																
Arguments for Position	Evidence to Support Argument															
ELAGSE5RI1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	Benchmark Literacy Common Core Edition Grade 5, Volume 2, page 8 [Student Activity] Instructions: Today you’re going to practice reading and drawing conclusions about a text. Remember to use what you’ve learned. You can make inferences about the text to help you. Students read the worksheet and are instructed to write a conclusion based on the evidence they cite. The teacher instructs students to underline, circle, or flag key information as they read. The worksheet is a short article entitled “The World’s Oceans”. The worksheet has a graphic of a world map with the oceans labeled. There are two text boxes for writing, labeled Evidence and Conclusion.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to show that he/she can quote accurately from a text, explaining what the text says explicitly. The activity has the student draw conclusions, but not quote the text. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.														

Exhibit 2.4.12 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, and 9
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
8.RL1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	Georgia Collections Teacher’s Edition Grade 8, page 230 [Teacher Strategy] [Students have read the poem “Hanging Fire” by Audre Lorde] Review that the speaker in a poem is the voice that talks to readers. From evidence in the poem, readers can make inferences about the speaker. Students are instructed to reread lines 24-35. Ask what they can infer about the speaker and what evidence supports the inference. <i>(The speaker is overly dramatic and sees herself as persecuted and misunderstood Evidence: “Nobody ever stops to think/about my side of it”; “why do I have to be/the one/wearing braces”; “I have nothing to wear tomorrow”)</i>	Content: Aligned The GSE and the activity match in content as both require the student to cite text evidence in support of an analysis of what the text says explicitly and inferences made from the text. Context: Partially Aligned The activity requires students to read a poem, make an inference about the speaker based on what is explicitly stated in the poem, and cite supporting evidence for the inference they draw from the text. This is a partial match to the GSE. The students are not explicitly asked to write out their findings; this activity could be conducted orally only. Without also requiring response in written form, the activity only partially aligns to the standard. Cognition: Aligned The GSE and activity both require the student to use information to make inferences requiring skill/concept (Skill/Concept).

Exhibit 2.4.12 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, and 9
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis												
Grade 8														
ELAGSE8.L3a Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).	Georgia Collections Teacher’s Edition Grade 8, page 70. [Student Activity] [Prior to this activity student will have defined active and passive voice, identified examples and discussed effective use of active and passive voice. Definitions and examples would be charted by the teacher using the graphic below.] <table border="1"><thead><tr><th></th><th>Definition</th><th>Examples</th><th>Use To...</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Active Voice</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Passive Voice</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></tbody></table> <p>The teacher uses examples from <i>The Latehomecomer</i> by Kalia Kao Yang to demonstrate how the author uses active and passive voice to show whether its subject performs or receives the action expressed by a verb The teacher cites several verb forms and charts the example by category.</p> <p>[Instruction to the student] Identify the voice of the verb in each sentence and tell if the subject performs or receives the action. Then rewrite the sentence in a different voice.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The people of Laos were affected by the Vietnam War.2. The war changed their country and their lives forever.3. New leaders took harsh actions against the Hmong people.4. The Hmong were uprooted from their homes by the war and its aftermath.		Definition	Examples	Use To...	Active Voice				Passive Voice				Content: Inadequately Aligned Both the GSE and activity require the student to use verbs in the active and passive voice; however, the GSE also requires the student to use verbs in the conditional and subjunctive mood as well to achieve particular effects. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.
	Definition	Examples	Use To...											
Active Voice														
Passive Voice														

Exhibit 2.4.12 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, and 9
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
<p>ELAGSE8RI3 Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).</p>	<p>Georgia Collections Teacher’s Edition Grade 8, page 43. [Student Activity] [Students will have read the article, “A Place to Call Home”.] The teacher explains that graphs provide visual support for the data and conclusions in the text. The information provided in the circle graph is reviewed with the students.</p> <p>Student instructions: Analyze and explain the connection between the circle graph and the authors’ conclusion in lines 40-41 that “Immigrants buy in to American society.”</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The content of the activity and the GSE match as they both require the student to analyze how a text makes connections to and distinctions between ideas.</p> <p>Context: Aligned The activity requires the student to break down [analyze] the circle graph, read to understand the author’s conclusions about how “Immigrants buy in to American society,” and then explain the connections between the circle graph [graph depicts survey results of immigrants views on American society] and the text. The context of the activity and the GSE match.</p> <p>Cognition: Aligned The activity requires the student to examine and analyze and compare the text and circle graph and explain the connection between the two. This is a match with the GSE requiring Skill/Concept.</p>

Exhibit 2.4.12 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, and 9
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 9		
ELAGSE9-10RL1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	Pearson Literature, Teacher’s Edition, Grade 9, page 15. [Student Activity] Students are to do a close reading of the story “The Jade Peony” by Wayson Choy. Following the reading students are to answer the comprehension questions below: 1. (a) Citing details from the story, explain who gave the grandmother her first wind chime. (b) Using this information, explain why the making of wind chimes was so important to the grandmother in her later years. 2. (a) What is the main conflict between the grandmother and her family? (b) How is this conflict resolved? 3. (a) How do Sek-Lung’s reactions to his grandmother’s activities differ from those of other family members? (b) How do you account for these differences? Cite details from the story to support your ideas. 4. Write a brief, objective summary of the story. Describe the important characters, events, and details but do not state your opinion.	Content: Aligned Both the GSE and the activity require the student to analyze what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text, and to cite textual evidence to support their understanding. Context: Aligned The activity requires the student to read a story closely and demonstrate their comprehension of the text, answering a number of questions in writing in which they are to cite textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text. The context of the activity and the GSE match. Cognition: Aligned The GSE and the activity ask the student to use information to summarize, compare, and draw conclusions that require Strategic Thinking.

Exhibit 2.4.12 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities
To Georgia Standards of Excellence
Language Arts, Grades 3, 5, 8, and 9
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 9		
ELAGSE9-10RL4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time).	Pearson Literature, Teacher’s Edition, Grade 9, page 334. [Student Activity] Students have read and discussed the poems “Uncoiling” and “A Voice” by Pat Mora. Teacher has directed the students to apply the close reading strategies they have learned as they read the poems multiple times.] Students are directed to analyze the text by answering the following questions: 1. In “Uncoiling,” what words and phrases, including examples of figurative language, does Mora use to describe the storm? (b) What is the effect of these choices? Explain. 2. In “Uncoiling,” how do the sounds used in the lines ‘sound, spins herself/to sleep, sand stinging her ankles’ emphasize the actions described? 3. (a) Identify one simile and one metaphor in “A Voice”. (b) What action does each example describe? 4. In “A Voice,” the speaker describes the mother’s voice as being “spunky as a peacock”. What meaning does this comparison suggest?	Content: Aligned This activity is topologically aligned with the GSE in most cases, determining meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text. Number seven (7) does have the student identify a simile and state the action that the example describes. Context: Aligned The activity requires the same mode of response as the GSE, indicating the context of the item is the same, if the activity is completed in writing. Cognition: Aligned The activity requires the student to interpret and use context to determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text. This is a match to the GSE requiring Skill/Concept.
ELAGSE9-10L4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies	Pearson Literature, Teacher’s Edition, Grade 9, page 154. [Student Activity] Student will have read and discussed Julia Alvarez’ essay “My English”. Prior to the language study students are informed that: The following passages appear in the essay. Identify the root in each boldfaced word. For each, explain what the root means and how that meaning is evident in the word. We lived then in the Dominican republic, and the family as a whole spoke only Spanish at home, until my sisters and I started attending the Carol Morgan School, and we became a bilingual family. He enumerated geniuses who had perhaps used two grains... She had an expressive, dreamy look that was accentuated by the wimple that framed her face.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases. The activity only requires the student to determine the meaning of specified words by determining the root of each word. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.

Sources: Benchmark Literacy Common Core Edition, Teacher’s Edition Grade 3, Grade 5, Georgia Collections Teacher’s Edition Grade 8, and Pearson Common Core Literature Georgia Teacher’s Edition Grade 9 samples provided by RCSS district administrators.

Reviewers noted the following in Exhibit 2.4.12 about language arts resource activities referenced in district adopted textbooks compared to the Georgia Standards of Excellence:

Grades 3 and 5

- At the third grade level, only one of the three instructional activities and resources in the teachers' editions of the district's adopted language arts textbook resource analyzed was aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content, and only partially aligned in context and cognitive types.
- The third grade resource activity compared to **ELAGSE3L1b** was inadequately aligned in content. The Georgia Standards of Excellence requires the student to form and use regular and irregular plural nouns. The resource activity suggested in the curriculum document requires the student to demonstrate an understanding of sequence of events and does not reference regular or irregular nouns.
- The third grade resource activity compared to **ELAGSE3RL9** was inadequately aligned in content. The Georgia Standards of Excellence requires the student to compare and contrast themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters. The resource activity suggested asks the student to recall how two stories, by different authors, are the same or different.
- At the fifth grade level, none of the instructional activities and resources in the teachers' editions of the district's adopted language arts textbook resource were found to be aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- The fifth grade resource activity compared to **ELAGSE5RL3** was inadequately aligned in context. The Georgia Standards of Excellence requires the student to compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on details in the text. The resource activity asks the student to compare and contrast two different texts of the same genre.
- The fifth grade resource activity compared to **ELAGSE5RI2** was inadequately aligned in context. The Georgia Standards of Excellence and the activity require the student to determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details. The Georgia Standards of Excellence also requires the student to summarize the text. The resource activity does not require the student to summarize.
- The fifth grade resource activity compared to **ELAGSE5RI1** was inadequately aligned in context. The Georgia Standards of Excellence requires the student to quote accurately from text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text, while the resource activity requires the student to draw conclusions about the text.
- When reviewers examined the type of cognition required by students as they responded to the grades 3 and 5 language arts resource activities, they found all require only DOK Level I Recall/Reproduction; no upper-level, more challenging types of cognition were present.

Grades 8 and 9

- At both the eighth and ninth grade levels, two of the three instructional activities and resources in the teachers' edition of the district's adopted language arts textbook resources analyzed were aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content. The two ninth grade activities aligned in content also aligned in context and cognitive type. Only one of the eighth grade activities that aligned in content also aligned in context and cognitive type; the other only partially aligned in context and cognitive type.
- One eighth grade resource activity compared to **ELAGSE8.L3a** was inadequately aligned in content. Both the Georgia Standards of Excellence and the resource activity require the student to use verbs in the active and passive voice. The Georgia Standards of Excellence additionally requires the student to use verbs in the conditional and subjunctive mood.
- One ninth grade resource activity compared to **ELAGSE9-10L4** was inadequately aligned in content. The resource activity requires the student to determine the meaning of words by determining the root

of each word, while the Georgia Standards of Excellence expects the student to determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

- When reviewers examined the type of cognition required of eighth and ninth grade students as they respond to language arts resource activities, they found three of the activities required students to respond at DOK Level II: Skill/Concept and one required students to respond at DOK Level III: Strategic Thinking. Overall, the type of cognition was low.

Exhibit 2.4.13 summarizes the analyses of language arts instructional resource activities to Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Exhibit 2.4.13

Summary of Analyses of Language Arts Instructional Resource Activities To Georgia Standards of Excellence Richmond County School System October 2017

Grade Level/ Course	Total # Items Analyzed	Content Congruent		Context Congruent		Cognition Congruent	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Grade 3	3	1	33	0	0	0	0
Grade 5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 8	3	2	67	1	33	2	67
Grade 9	3	2	67	2	67	2	67
Total	12	5	42%	3	25%	4	33%

Exhibit 2.4.13 indicates the following:

- Reviewers analyzed 12 suggested instructional strategies and activities, from district adopted language arts resources, for alignment with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- Five (42%) of the suggested instructional strategies and activities were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content.
- Three (25%) of the suggested instructional strategies and activities were found to be fully congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in context. The resources rarely aligned in context, especially at the elementary level, because the majority of the student activities required only oral participation, rather than requiring students to write. Being able to demonstrate mastery of the standards includes doing so in a written as well as spoken form.
- Four (33%) of the suggested instructional strategies and activities were found to be fully congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in cognitive type.
- Of the 12 strategies and activities analyzed, only three were congruent across all three dimensions of content, context, and cognition type with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

If the student activities and suggested teacher instructional strategies sampled from district adopted language arts textbooks are representatives of the overall alignment of textbooks with the Georgia Standards of Excellence, then they are not sufficiently aligned as a teaching resource to guide instruction that is adequately aligned with the rigor and demand of the state learning standards.

Mathematics Instructional Resources

Reviewers examined mathematics instructional activities and resources in teachers' editions of district adopted textbooks identified as linked to the Georgia Standard of Excellence for congruency at grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry. Reviewers selected, at random, three instructional activities or strategies from the teachers' edition of the district-adopted textbook for the given course to analyze.

Exhibit 2.4.14 displays reviewers' analysis of a sample of mathematics instructional strategies and resources compared to the Georgia Standards of Excellence for grades 2, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry.

Exhibit 2.4.14

Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Mathematics Textbooks For Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry Richmond County School System October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 3		
MGSE3.OA.2 Interpret whole number quotients of whole numbers, e.g., interpret $56 \div 8$ as the number of objects in each share when 56 objects are partitioned equally into 8 shares (How many in each group?), or as a number of shares when 56 objects are partitioned into equal shares of 8 objects each (How many groups can you make?). <i>For example, describe a context in which a number of shares or a number of groups can be expressed as $56 \div 8$.</i>	envision Math – Grade 3 Suggested Instructional Strategy, p. 172 Remind students that sharing equally means that each person or group has the same number of items or objects. Students may have difficulty modeling a division problem correctly. Help students to complete Exercise 5. Show 18 counters to represent marbles. Draw 6 boxes to represent sacks. Place an equal number of counters in each box. There are three counters in each box, [sic] or 3 marbles in each sack. Student Activity, p. 172 Use counters or draw a picture to solve. 6. 36 stickers, 4 people How many stickers for each person? Student Activity, p. 175 14. Model Toni has 6 tulips and 6 daisies. She wants to put 4 flowers in each vase. Which number sentence shows how many vases she needs? A. $12 + 4 = 16$ B. $12 - 4 = 8$ C. $6 \times 4 = 24$ D. $12 \div 4 = 3$	Content: Aligned The GSE matches the instructional strategy and two student activities that expect the student to interpret whole number quotients as the number of equal shares. Context Suggested Instructional Strategy and Student Activity # 6: Aligned The GSE, suggested instructional strategy, and student activity # 6 require the student to interpret how many objects in each group or share and how many equal groups can be made and do not expand or extend the GSE context. Context Student Activity # 14: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the student activity is multiple choice, and the activity does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply the interpretation of whole number quotients as the number of equal shares in an open-ended context. The activity requires the student to select the correct answer from the four possibilities given. Cognition Suggested Instructional Strategy and Student Activity # 6: Aligned The GSE, the instructional strategy, and student activity # 6 require the student to use a known procedure to solve the problem (Skill/Concept). Cognition Student Activity # 14: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires student to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but student activity # 16 only requires recall of information or a procedure (Recall/Reproduction).

Exhibit 2.4.14 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Mathematics Textbooks
For Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 3		
MGSE3.G.2 Partition shapes into parts with equal areas. Express the area of each part as a unit fraction of the whole. <i>For example, partition a shape into 4 parts with equal area, and describe the area of each part as 1/4 of the area of the shape.</i>	envision Math – Grade 3 Suggested Instructional Strategy, p. 224 Remind students that the denominator of a fraction tells the total number of equal parts in the region, and the numerator tells how many equal parts. When drawing their pictures for Exercises 10 and 11, students might focus on creating the equal parts and forget to shade a number of the parts to show the fraction. Point out that the fraction has two parts, the numerator and denominator, and so drawing the picture requires two steps. Use exercise 11 as an example. Student Activity, p. 224 11. Draw a circle that shows 6 equal parts. Shade 1/6 of the circle. Check students' drawings. Student Activity, p. 225 16. Construct Arguments A pan of cornbread is divided into 6 unequal parts. Alana serves 2 of the parts. Is it reasonable to say she has served 2/6 of the cornbread? Explain.	Content: Aligned The GSE, the suggested instructional strategy, and both student activities expect the student will partition shapes into equal parts and express the area of each part as a fraction. Context Suggested Instructional Strategy and Student Activity # 11: Aligned The GSE, suggested instructional strategy, and student activity #11 each focus on the partitioning shapes and expressing the area of each part as a unit fraction and do not expand or extend the GSE context. Context Student Activity # 16: Aligned Student activity # 16 goes deeper than the GSE in having the student explain unequal parts expressed as a fraction. Cognition Suggested Instructional Strategy and Student Activity # 11: Aligned The GSE, suggested instructional strategy, and student activity #11 require the student to use information or conceptual knowledge to partition and express the area of each part as a unit fraction (Skill/Concept). Cognition of Item # 16: Aligned Student activity # 16 requires the student to go deeper than recalling information or a procedure to explaining phenomena in terms of concepts and supporting ideas with details and examples (Strategic Thinking).

Exhibit 2.4.14 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Mathematics Textbooks
For Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 3		
MGSE3.MD.2 Measure and estimate liquid volumes and masses of objects using standard units of grams (g), kilograms (kg), and liters (l). ¹⁷ Add, subtract, multiply, or divide to solve one-step word problems involving masses or volumes that are given in the same units, e.g., by using drawings (such as a beaker with a measurement scale) to represent the problem.	<i>envision Math – Grade 3</i> Student Activity, p. 375 19. Which measurement best describes the capacity of a bathtub? A. 50 cups B. 50 quarts C. 50 gallons D. 50 pints Student Activity, p. 381 For 13-16 , choose the better unit to measure the weight of each. 13. student desk: lb or T 14. lemon: oz or lb 15. bicycle: oz or lb 16. truck: oz or T	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE expects the student to measure and estimate liquid volumes and masses of objects using standard units of grams, kilograms, and liters. Both items do not use the metric system of measurement. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition. However, the resource would not align in context due to the multiple-choice nature of the problem.
Grade 5		
MGSE5.NBT.4 Use place value understanding to round decimals up to the hundredths place.	<i>envision Math – Grade 5</i> Suggested Instructional Strategy, p. 34 If students look at the digit in the rounding place instead of the digit to the right of that place, then say: Underline the rounding place and draw a square around the digit to the right. Student Activity, p. 35 Round each number to the place of the underlined digit. 18. 0.7 <u>5</u> 8 24. 23.0 <u>0</u> 9	Content: Aligned The GSE, the suggested instructional strategy, and both student activities match in content for student to use place value to round decimals to the hundredths place. Context: Aligned The GSE, the suggested instructional strategy, and both student activities expect the student to use place value to round decimals to the hundredths place and do not expand or extend the GSE in context. Cognition: Aligned The GSE, the suggested instructional strategy, and both student activities require the student to use knowledge gained and conceptual understanding to round decimals to the hundredths place (Recall/Recognition).

Exhibit 2.4.14 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Mathematics Textbooks
For Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry
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Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
MGSE5.NBT.7 Add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals to hundredths, using concrete models or drawings and strategies based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction; relate the strategy to a written method and explain the reasoning used.	<p><i>envision Math – Grade 5</i></p> <p>Suggested Instructional Strategy, p. 146 Remind students to move the decimal point one place to the right for each power of 10. Explain to students that “annexing” zeros means “putting on” zeros to the number in the product.</p> <p>Student Activities, p. 146 Use mental math to find each product. 1. 0.009×10 6. 1.24×10^3 11. 4.23×100 18. $56.37 \times 1,000$</p> <p>Suggested Student Activity, p. 170 12. $13.65 \div 10$ 13. $175.3 \div 100$ 14. $890.1 \div 1,000$</p> <p>Suggested Instructional Strategy, p. 160 If students are having difficulties finding the hidden question, then have them identify what they know and what they need to find.</p> <p>Student Activity, p. 160 1. Nancy wants to transfer 11 movies to her 8 gigabyte (GB) memory card. Each movie is 0.25 GB and she has already used 4.3 GB. How much free space will she have left on the card after she transfers the movies?</p>	<p>Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to use all four mathematical operations on decimals to the hundredths using models, drawings, and strategies and to explain reasoning. While the suggested instructional strategies and student activities include the four mathematical operations for decimals using strategies, none ask the student to explain the reasoning being used. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.</p>

Exhibit 2.4.14 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Mathematics Textbooks
For Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry
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Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
MGSE5.G.3 Understand that attributes belonging to a category of two-dimensional figures also belong to all subcategories of that category. <i>For example, all rectangles have four right angles and squares are rectangles, so all squares have four right angles.</i>	<i>envision Math – Grade 5</i> Suggested Instructional Strategy, p. 372 Encourage students to look at the shapes for all the characteristics of a polygon: the sides are line segments, it is contained in one plane, and the figure is closed. Student Activity, p. 372 3. How many sides and how many vertices does a pentagon have? A hexagon? Student Activity, p. 373 16. Use Tools Divide a square in half by connecting two vertices. What types of polygons are formed? Are they regular or irregular?	Content: Aligned The GSE, suggested instructional strategy, and both student activities all match in their content that attributes belonging to a category of two-dimensional figures (polygons) also belong to all subcategories. Context: Aligned The GSE, suggested instructional strategy, and both student activities expect the student to demonstrate understanding of the attributes of polygons and their subcategories and do not expand or extend the GSE context. Cognition: Aligned The GSE, suggested instructional strategy, and student activity # 3 require students to use knowledge gained and conceptual understanding of the attributes of two-dimensional figures and their subcategories (Skill/Concept).
Grade 8		
MGSE8.G.1 Verify experimentally the congruence properties of rotations, reflections, and translations: lines are taken to lines and line segments to line segments of the same length; angles are taken to angles of the same measure; parallel lines are taken to parallel lines.	<i>Go Math Middle School – Grade 8</i> Student Activity, p. 282 4. Rashid drew rectangle PQRS on a coordinate plane. He then translated the rectangle 3 units up and 3 units to the left and labeled the image P'Q'R'S'. How do rectangle PQRS and rectangle P'Q'R'S' compare? Student Activity, p. 300 4. A triangle has vertices at $J(-2, -4)$, $K(1, 5)$, and $L(2, 2)$. What are the coordinates of the vertices of the image after the triangle is rotated 90° counterclockwise?	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE includes rotations, reflections, and translations, and neither student activity included a reflection to experimentally verify congruence. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.

Exhibit 2.4.14 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Mathematics Textbooks
For Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry
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Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis										
Grade 8												
<p>MGSE8.F.4 Construct a function to model a linear relationship between two quantities. Determine the rate of change and initial value of the function from a description of a relationship or from two (□, □) values, including reading these from a table or from a graph. Interpret the rate of change and initial value of a linear function in terms of the situation it models, and in terms of its graph or a table of values.</p>	<p>Go Math Middle School – Grade 8 Student Activity, p. 78</p> <p>1. The table shows the approximate height of a football after it is kicked. Tell whether the rates of change are constant or variable.</p> <table><tr><th>Time (s)</th><th>Height (ft)</th></tr><tr><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>0.5</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>1.5</td><td>31</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>26</td></tr></table> <p>Find the rates of change:</p>	Time (s)	Height (ft)	0	0	0.5	18	1.5	31	2	26	<p>Content: Aligned The GSE and student activity match in content by having the student construct a function to model a linear relationship between two quantities, determine the rate of change, and interpret the rate of change in terms of the situation as constant or variable.</p> <p>Context: Aligned The GSE and student activity match in the construction of a function to model a linear relationship between two quantities, to determine the rate of change, and to interpret the rate of change as constant or variable. It does not expand or exceed the GSE.</p> <p>Cognition: Aligned The student activity requires using information or conceptual knowledge employing two or more steps by interpreting information from a simple graph and applying a concept (Skill/Concept). Although the GSE does not include determining if the rate of change is constant or variable, it is still interpreting information and applying a concept and does not go beyond the level of the GSE (Skill/Concept)</p>
Time (s)	Height (ft)											
0	0											
0.5	18											
1.5	31											
2	26											

Exhibit 2.4.14 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Mathematics Textbooks
For Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry
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Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
MGSE8.EE.8b Solve systems of two linear equations in two variables algebraically, and estimate solutions by graphing the equations. Solve simple cases by inspection. <i>For example, $3x + 2y = 5$ and $3x + 2y = 6$ have no solution because $3x + 2y$ cannot simultaneously be 5 and 6.</i>	<p><i>Go Math Middle School – Grade 8</i> Suggested Instructional Strategy, p. 238 Give students two or more systems of equation....Have them complete tables that show ordered pair solutions for each of the equations, for all integers from $x = -5$ to $x = 5$. Ask them to find the solution to each system by identifying the ordered pair that appears in both tables for the system.</p> <p>Student Activity, p. 248 8. The Green River Freeway has a minimum and a maximum speed limit. Tony drove for 2 hours at the minimum speed limit and 3.5 hours at the maximum limit, a distance of 355 miles. Rae drove 2 hours at the minimum speed limit and 3 hours at the maximum limit, a distance of 320 miles. What are the two speed limits?</p> <p>a. Write equations to represent Tony's distance and Rae's distance. b. Solve the system.</p>	<p>Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE and student activity match in content for solving systems of linear equations in two variables algebraically but do not mention or require estimating the solutions by graphing the equations. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.</p>

Exhibit 2.4.14 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Mathematics Textbooks
For Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry
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Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Algebra I		
MGSE9-12.A.REI.3 Solve linear equations and inequalities in one variable including equations with coefficients represented by letters. <i>For example, given $ax + 3 = 7$, solve for x.</i>	Algebra I Suggested Instructional Strategy, p. 96 Some students forget to distribute a number to all terms within parentheses and will only distribute to the first term. Remind students that the number outside the parentheses must be multiplied by every term inside the parentheses. Student Activity, p. 96 1. Consider the new expression that is obtained by simplifying $8(x - 1) + 15$. Select True or False for each statement. A. The new expression has 3 terms. <input type="radio"/> True <input type="radio"/> False B. The coefficient of x in the new expression is 8. <input type="radio"/> True <input type="radio"/> False C. The constant in the new expression is 14. <input type="radio"/> True <input type="radio"/> False	Content: Aligned The GSE, suggested instructional strategy, and student activity match in content in that they center on solving linear equations in one variable including equations with coefficients. Context Suggested Instructional Strategy: Aligned The GSE expects students to solve linear equations with coefficients in one variable. The suggested instructional activity reminds students to perform correct operations to solve linear equations. Context Student Activity # 1: Inadequately Aligned The mode of response for the student activity is multiple choice and the activity does not meet the GSE in context since the student does not apply solving a linear equation with coefficients in an open-ended context. The activity requires the student to select true or false for four possibilities given. Cognition for Suggested Instructional Strategy : Aligned The GSE and the strategy require the student to use information or conceptual knowledge to solve a linear equation with coefficient in one variable (Skill/Concept). Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires student to use information or conceptual knowledge in student thinking, but student activity #1 only requires recall of information or a procedure (Recall/Reproduction).

Exhibit 2.4.14 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Mathematics Textbooks
For Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry
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Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Algebra I		
MGSE9-12.N.Q.3 Choose a level of accuracy appropriate to limitations on measurement when reporting quantities. <i>For example, money situations are generally reported to the nearest cent (hundredth). Also, an answer's precision is limited to the precision of the data given.</i>	Algebra I Student Activity, p. 98 6. Carla and Ross competed in the long-jump at a track meet. Carla jumped 3.5 meters. Ross jumped 99 inches. Who jumped farther and by approximately how many feet? Use $1 \text{ m} \approx 3.27 \text{ ft}$. Explain how you solved this problem.	Content: Aligned The GSE and student activity match in content in that both require choosing a level of accuracy appropriate to limitations of measurements. Context: Aligned The student activity requires converting meters to feet allowing for approximation and then converting feet to inches, meeting the context of the GSE for choosing an appropriate level of accuracy. The activity goes beyond the GSE by requiring the student to explain how the problem was solved. Cognition: Aligned Student activity requires the student to go deeper than choosing a level of accuracy to explaining how the problem was solved. This activity goes beyond using information or conceptual knowledge to developing a sequence of steps and explaining them with supporting ideas (Strategic Thinking).
MGSE9-12.F.LE.2 Construct linear and exponential functions, including arithmetic and geometric sequences, given a graph, a description of a relationship, or two input-output pairs (include reading these from a table).	Algebra I Suggested Instructional Strategy, p. 126 Discuss with students any patterns they see in their tables, graphs, and mappings. In the table, students should note that as the number of rides increases by 1, the total amount spent increases by 2. Student Activity, p. 126 At an amusement park, a person spends \$30 on admission and food, and then goes on r number of rides that cost \$2 each. a. Write an equation to represent the total amount A spent at the amusement park if a person goes on anywhere from 0 to 5 rides. b. Represent the relation as a table, as a graph, and as a mapping diagram. c. Find the domain and range, and then determine whether the relation is a function or not.	Content: Aligned The GSE, suggested instructional strategy, and student activity match content in that the student is expected to construct linear and exponential functions and a description of a relationship. Context: Aligned The GSE, suggested instructional strategy, and student activity go beyond constructing linear and exponential function by adding a mapping diagram and determining if it is a function or not. Cognition: Aligned The GSE, suggested instructional strategy, and student activity require the student to use a known procedure to solve the problem (Skill/Content).

Exhibit 2.4.14 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Mathematics Textbooks
For Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry
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Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Geometry		
MGSE9-12.G.GPE.4 Use coordinates to prove simple geometric theorems algebraically. <i>For example, prove or disprove that a figure defined by four given points in the coordinate plane is a rectangle; prove or disprove that the point $(1, \sqrt{3})$ lies on the circle centered at the origin and containing the point $(0,2)$.</i> (Focus on quadrilaterals, right triangles, and circles.)	Geometry Student Activity, p. 382 G. Let AX be the length of any median of a triangle from a vertex A , and let P be the intersection of the three medians. Write an equation to show the relationship between AX and AP .	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires the student to use coordinates, and the student activity does not require using coordinates to generate the algebraic equation for the geometric theorem. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.
MGSE9-12.G.SRT.2 Given two figures, use the definition of similarity in terms of similarity transformations to decide if they are similar; explain, using similarity transformations, the meaning of similarity for triangles as the equality of all corresponding pairs of angles and the proportionality of all corresponding pairs of sides.	Geometry Student Activity, p. 608 18. Is any pair of equilateral triangles similar to each other? Why or why not?	Content: Aligned Both the GSE and student activity match in content given that they require the student to use the definitions of similarity transformations and to explain the meaning of similarity for triangles. Context: Aligned The GSE and student activity match in context for the presence of two figures to use in determining similarity. Cognition: Aligned The GSE and student activity both require the student to use information or conceptual knowledge (Skill/Concept).

Exhibit 2.4.14 (continued) Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Mathematics Textbooks For Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry Richmond County School System October 2017		
Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Geometry		
MGSE9-12.G.SRT.8 Use trigonometric ratios and the Pythagorean Theorem to solve right triangles in applied problems.	Geometry Suggested Instructional Strategy, p. 703 How are cosine and the inverse cosine related? How do you decide which trigonometric ratio to use to find a missing side length or angle measure in a right triangle? Student Activity, p. 703 16. How are the inverse sine and cosine ratios for an acute angle of a right triangle defined?	Content: Aligned The GSE, suggested instructional strategy, and student activity match in content requiring the student to use trigonometric ratios and the Pythagorean Theorem to solve right triangle problems. Context: Aligned The GSE, suggested instructional strategy, and student activity contain the use of trigonometric ratios and the Pythagorean Theorem to solve right triangle problems and do not expand or extend the GSE. Cognition: Aligned The GSE, suggested instructional strategy, and student activity require the student to use information and conceptual knowledge to solve a multiple-step problem (Skill/Concept).
<i>Sources: Georgia Standards of Excellence-Mathematics; envision MATH Common Core Teachers' Editions for grades 3 and 5, Scott Foresman Addison Wesley; Go Math Middle School Grade 8 Teacher Edition), Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; Algebra I Teacher Edition, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; Geometry Teacher Edition Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; and mathematics curriculum documents found in RCSS Rubicon Atlas.</i>		

Reviewers noted the following in Exhibit 2.4.14 about mathematics instructional activities referenced in district adopted textbooks compared to the Georgia Standards of Excellence:

- At the third grade level, four of five instructional activities in the teachers' edition of the district's adopted mathematics textbook resource analyzed were aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content. Three instructional activities were also found to be aligned in context and cognition.
- At the fifth grade level, two of the three instructional activities analyzed were found to be aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content, context and cognition.
- At the eighth grade level, only one of three instructional activities analyzed was found to be aligned with the Georgia Standard of Excellence in content, context, and cognition.
- For Algebra I, all four of the instructional activities in the teachers' edition of the district's adopted Algebra textbook were found aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content. Three of the activities were also found aligned in context, and cognition.
- For Geometry, two of the three instructional activities analyzed were found to be aligned in content, context, and cognition with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- When reviewers examined the types of cognition required of students as they responded to the suggested instructional strategies and activities, three of the activities required DOK Level I: Recall/Reproduction level of responses, eight of the activities required DOK Level II: Skill/Concept types of responses, and two required DOK III: Strategic Thinking types of responses.

Exhibit 2.4.15 summarizes the analyses of alignment between mathematics textbook suggested instructional strategies and the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Exhibit 2.4.15

Summary of Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Mathematics Textbooks For Grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry Richmond County School System October 2017

Grade Level/ Course	Total # Items Analyzed	Content Congruent		Context Congruent		Cognition Congruent	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Grade 3	5	4	80	3	60	3	60
Grade 5	3	2	67	2	67	2	67
Grade 8	3	1	33	1	33	1	33
Algebra I	4	4	100	3	75	3	75
Geometry	3	2	67	2	67	2	67
Total	18	13	72	11	61	11	61

Exhibit 2.4.15 indicates:

- Reviewers analyzed 18 suggested instructional strategies and activities from district adopted mathematics textbook resources for alignment with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- Thirteen (72%) of the suggested instructional strategies and activities were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content.
- Eleven (61%) of the suggested instructional strategies and activities were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in context.
- Eleven (61%) of the suggested instructional strategies and activities were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in cognitive type.
- Of the 18 strategies and activities analyzed, 11 (61%) were topologically aligned, that is, congruent across all three dimensions of content, context, and cognitive type with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

If the student activities and suggested teacher instructional strategies sampled from district adopted mathematics textbooks are representative of the overall alignment of textbooks with the Georgia Standards of Excellence, then they are not sufficient as a teaching resource to support instruction that is 100% aligned in all dimensions with the demand of the state standards.

Science Instructional Resources Alignment

Reviewers examined science instructional activities and resources in teachers' editions of district adopted textbooks identified as linked to the Georgia Standards of Excellence, the Georgia Performance Standards, or the Next Generation Science Standards for congruency at grades 5, Environmental Science, Physical Science, and Biology. Reviewers selected, at random, three instructional activities or strategies from the teachers' edition of the district-adopted textbook for a given course and identified as linked to the Georgia Standards of Excellence to analyze. Reviewers noted an incongruence between the Georgia Performance Standards referenced in the 10-year-old grade 5 Georgia HSP Science textbook and the district curriculum where Georgia Standards of Excellence serve as the foundation for the grade 5 science curriculum. The Pearson Biology textbook references the Next Generation Science Standards, not the Georgia Standards of Excellence. However, both are listed in the district curriculum for Biology. The textbooks for the other courses included in this analysis reference the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Exhibit 2.4.16 displays reviewers' analyses of sample of science instructional strategies and resource activities compared to the Georgia Standards for Excellence for grades 5, Environmental Science, Physical Science, and Biology.

Exhibit 2.4.16

Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Science Textbooks For Grades 5, Environmental Science, Physical Science, and Biology Richmond County School System October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
Performance Standard GA.S5L1.a Demonstrate how animals are sorted into groups (vertebrate and invertebrate) and how vertebrates are sorted into groups (fish, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal).	Georgia HSP Science Suggested Instructional Strategy, p. 279 Have students read article about the Georgia Aquarium found on p. 279. Ask: What are the two different types of animals that can be found at the aquarium? Give an example of each type. Suggested Instructional Strategy, p. 284 Explain that the term <i>vertebra</i> (plural <i>vertebrae</i>) refers to the type of bone that makes up the backbone. Point out that animals can be classified into two major groups: vertebrates and invertebrates. Both groups, however, have many kinds of animals. Ask: How would you go about breaking the vertebrates into smaller groups? Ask: How are vertebrates alike? How are they different? Ask: Why do you think scientists might have formed animal groups based on whether a backbone was present?	Content: Aligned The Performance Standard and both the suggested instructional strategies expect the student to understand that animals are sorted into vertebrates and invertebrates) and that vertebrates consist of subgroups of animals based on animals' characteristics. Context: Aligned The strategies require the student to come up with a model to sort animals into vertebrates and invertebrates and then find ways animals in the vertebrate group can be sorted by finding ways they are similar and different. Cognition: Aligned The Performance Standard and the strategies require the student to use information or conceptual knowledge to compare and contrast animals' characteristics (Skill/Concept).

Exhibit 2.4.16 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Science Textbooks
For Grades 5, Environmental Science, Physical Science, and Biology
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Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
Performance Standard GA.S5P3.d Compare a bar magnet to an electromagnet.	Georgia HSP Science Student Activity, p. 215 Follow this Procedure <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wrap the 1-m length of wire tightly around the nail. Leave 20 cm of wire loose at each end. Record the number of coils. 2. Connect one end of the wire to the battery holder. Touch the other end to the holder, lower the nail toward a pile of paper clips, and lift. Record the number of clips lifted. Disconnect the wire. 3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 with the 1.5-m and 2-m lengths of wire. 4. Hold the point of the nail near the poles of the bar magnet. Observe which pole the nail attracts. 5. Turn the battery the other way in the holder. Repeat step 4. Draw Conclusions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does the number of coils relate to the electromagnet's strength? How do you know? 2. How do you know that an electromagnet has magnetic properties? 	Content: Aligned The student activity matches the Performance Standard in content. Both are about students understanding similarities and differences between a bar magnet and an electromagnet. Context: Aligned The student activity goes deeper than the Performance Standard in having the students construct meaning about the topic by conducting the steps of the investigation. The questions require the student to explain how he/she knows the relation of number of coils to the electromagnet's strength and that an electromagnet has magnetic properties. Cognition: Aligned Both the Performance Standard and the student activity require students to use information to understand relationships and cause/effects (Skill/Concept).
Performance Standard GA.S5C58.b Students will apply the following to inquiry learning practices: Clear and active communication is an essential part of science. It enables scientists to inform others about their work, expose their ideas to criticism by other scientists, and stay informed about scientific discoveries around the world.	Georgia HSP Science Student Activity, p. 253 Follow This Procedure <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put some water and hay in the jar. 2. With the pipette, put a sample of the water on a slide. Add a slide cover. Then use the microscope to look for living things in the water. Record and draw what you observe. 3. Cover the jar loosely. Wait a week. Then make slides of three more water samples, taken from the top, middle, and bottom of the jar. Label the slides <i>top</i>, <i>middle</i>, and <i>bottom</i>. 4. Observe the three samples under the microscope. Record and draw what you observe. Independent Inquiry Think about the steps in this investigation. What step would you add, take away, or rewrite to make it easier for a younger person to complete the investigation? Plan an investigation. What might you add to the jar? When would you take new samples? Carry out your plan.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The publishers of this textbook correlated this Performance Standard to the "Independent Inquiry" portion of the student activity. The Performance Standard focuses on students knowing the importance of clear and active communication as an essential part of science. The Independent Inquiry takes a different path, placing importance on students knowing the importance of making an investigation easier for a younger person to complete. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition for this item.

Exhibit 2.4.16 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Science Textbooks
For Grades 5, Environmental Science, Physical Science, and Biology
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Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Environmental Science		
GSE GA.SEV5.c Construct an argument from evidence regarding the ecological effects of human innovations_ (Agricultural, Industrial, Medical, and Technological Revolutions) on global ecosystems.	Pearson Environmental Science Student activity, p. 9 What do you think accounts for the variation in sizes of ecological footprints among societies? Do you think that nations with larger footprints should have to reduce their effects on the environment, to leave more resources available for nations with smaller footprints? Student activity, p. 10 Use the Internet or other reference material to look up the ten nations with the largest gross national product (GNP), a measure of a nation's wealth. How does the wealth of a nation relate to its relative ecological footprint?	Content: Aligned The GSE and both activities match in content in that both focus on the effects of human innovations on global ecosystems. Context: Aligned Both activities require the student to construct an argument from evidence as required in the GSE. Cognition: Aligned The GSE and both activities direct the student to compile information from sources to address a specific topic and develop a logical argument (Strategic Thinking).
GSE GA.SEV1.a Develop and use a model to compare and analyze the levels of biological organization including organisms, populations, communities, ecosystems, and biosphere.	Pearson Environmental Science Student activity, Lesson 2, p. 75 1. Compare and contrast: What are the two types of feedback loops? How are they similar? How are they different? 2. Classify: Suppose your lab partner were to empty a beaker of mud onto your lab table and ask you which of Earth's spheres it was part of. How would you answer? Explain.	Content: Aligned The GSE and both activities match in content in that both center on levels of organization. Context: Aligned The GSE has the students use a model to compare and analyze. The activities are about comparing, contrasting, and classifying. Cognition: Aligned The GSE and both activities require the student to use knowledge gained and conceptual understanding of the levels of biological organization (Skill/Concept).

Exhibit 2.4.16 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Science Textbooks
For Grades 5, Environmental Science, Physical Science, and Biology
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Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Environmental Science		
GSE GA.SEV5.D Design and defend a sustainability plan to reduce your individual contribution to environmental impacts, taking into account how market forces and societal demands (including political, legal, social, and economic) influence personal choices.	Pearson Environmental Science Student activity, p. 469-470 [Student read an article about the Southern Utes and their issues with pollution of the air from a processing of natural gas. The article describes the provisions of the Clean Air Act] Ask students to write a short newspaper-style article that explains the importance of one specific provision of the Clean Air Act listed in the text that they have just read. Remind students that their articles should not simply describe one of the provisions; they must include information to justify the importance of the provision.	Content: Aligned The GSE focuses on market forces and societal demands that influence personal choices about the environment when it directs the student to design and defend a sustainability plan to reduce his/her individual contribution to environmental impacts. The student activity addresses this focus as the student writes about and justifies the importance of a specific provision of the Clean Air Act. Context: Inadequately Aligned The activity does not require the student to design and defend a sustainability plan to reduce his/her individual contribution to environmental impacts. In order for this activity to be topologically aligned, the directions should state that in addition to justifying the importance of the provision, the student should relate it to his/her own sustainability plan. Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GSE requires an investigation, time to think and process multiple conditions of the problem to include specifying a problem and reporting results and solutions. The activity has the student develop a logical argument and identify and then justify a solution (Strategic Thinking).

Exhibit 2.4.16 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Science Textbooks
For Grades 5, Environmental Science, Physical Science, and Biology
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Physical Science		
GSE GA. SPS2.b Develop and use models to predict formulas for stable, binary ionic compounds based on balance of charges.	McGraw-Hill Physical Science Student activity, p. 555 Have students use various colors of modeling clay to make spheres that represent metals and nonmetals. Tell them to use smaller spheres of a specific color to show electrons. Attach the correct number of electrons to each model sphere to represent the outer energy level of the selected atoms. Challenge students to use a periodic table to identify possible elements that each model represents. Have them explain how the element in each model can obtain eight outer electrons.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE content is about models used to predict formulas for stable, binary ionic compounds based on balance of charges. The student activity focuses on representing metals, nonmetals, and electrons in different colors of clay. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition for this item.
GSE GA.SPS7.c Analyze and interpret specific heat data to justify the selection of a material for a practical application (e.g., insulators and cooking vessels).	McGraw-Hill Physical Science Student activity, p. 142 In their science journals, have students summarize the characteristics of thermal energy, kinetic energy, potential energy, and heat. Then have students work in groups to create a graphic that demonstrates how each type of energy is related to the other. Student activity, Practice Problems, p. 142 1. The air in a room has a mass of 50 kg and a specific heat of 1,000 J/(kg°C). What is the change in thermal energy of the air when it warms from 20°C to 30°C? 2. The temperature of a 2.0-kg block increases by 5°C when 2,000 J of thermal energy are added to the block. What is the specific heat of the block?	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GSE has the student analyze and interpret data to justify selection of a material. The first student activity simply has the student summarize characteristics. The second set of student activities does not link the problem to practical application. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition for this item.
GSE GA.SPS3.a Plan and carry out investigations to generate evidence supporting the claim that mass is conserved during a chemical reaction. (Clarification statement: Limited to synthesis, decomposition, simple replacement, and double replacement reactions.)	McGraw-Hill Physical Science Suggested Instructional Strategy, Quick Demo, p. 475 Materials: chalk, file, dilute hydrochloric acid Estimated time: 5 minutes Procedure: A piece of chalk can be used to show the physical and chemical changes discussed in the text. Have students observe the chalk and note its size, appearance, and color. Next, file the chalk to show bits of it breaking away and reducing its size and form. This illustrates physical changes like those produced by wind, geological movements, or cracking. Take the same chalk and place it in dilute hydrochloric acid. A noticeable gas-producing reaction occurs. This is a chemical change that produces new products, including carbon dioxide gas.	Content: Aligned The instructional strategy matches the GSE in content as it generates evidence supporting the claim that mass is conserved during chemical reaction. Context: Aligned The GSE intends that the student perform the investigation. However, given the gas-producing reaction, safety is ensured if the teacher demonstrates. Cognition: Aligned Both the GSE and the instructional strategy describe the cause/effect of a particular investigation and generate evidence supporting the claim that mass is conserved during a chemical reaction (Skill/Concept).

Exhibit 2.4.16 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Science Textbooks
For Grades 5, Environmental Science, Physical Science, and Biology
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Biology		
<p>NGSS LS2.4 Use mathematical representations to support claims for the cycling of matter and flow of energy among organisms in an ecosystem. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on using a mathematical model of stored energy in biomass to describe the transfer of energy from one trophic level to another and that matter and energy are conserved as matter cycles and energy flows through ecosystems. Emphasis is on atoms and molecules such as carbon, oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen being conserved as they move through an ecosystem.]</p>	<p>Pearson Biology Suggested Instructional Strategy, Connect to the Real World, p. 85 Ask: If wastewater containing phosphates from laundry detergent made its way into waterways, such as streams, rivers, and lakes, how would that affect the phosphorus cycle?</p> <p>Student Activity, Write About Science, p. 86 Describe how oxygen, although it does not have an independent cycle, moves through the biosphere as part of the carbon cycle. Include a description of the various forms that oxygen takes.</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The NGSS focuses on cycling of matter and flow of energy among organisms in an ecosystem. Likewise, the instructional strategy is about cycling of wastewater affecting the phosphorus cycle. The student activity is about how oxygen moves through the biosphere as part of the carbon cycle.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The NGSS requires the student to use mathematical representations (a model) to support claims for the cycling of matter and flow of energy among organisms in an ecosystem. Neither of the resources described here require the use of mathematical representations.</p> <p>Cognition of the Suggested Instructional Strategy: Aligned The GSE and the suggested instructional strategy require the student to use knowledge gained and conceptual understanding of the cycling of matter and flow of energy (Skill/Concept)</p> <p>Cognition of the Student Activity: Inadequately Aligned The activity requires the student to describe how oxygen, although it does not have an independent cycle, moves through the biosphere as part of the carbon cycle and describe the various forms that oxygen takes (Recall/Reproduction).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.16 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Science Textbooks
For Grades 5, Environmental Science, Physical Science, and Biology
Richmond County School System
October 2017

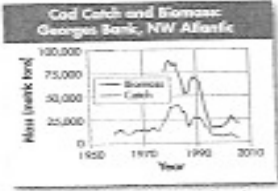
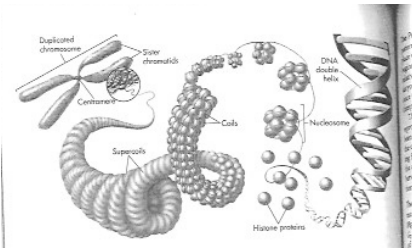
Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Biology		
NGSS LS2.7 Design, evaluate, and refine a solution for reducing the impacts of human activities on the environment and biodiversity. [Clarification Statement: Examples of human activities can include urbanization, building dams, and dissemination of invasive species.]	<p>Pearson Biology Suggested Instructional Strategy, Use Visuals, p. 176 [Student reads a case study of the North Atlantic Fisheries, p. 176]</p> <p>Focus students' attention on the information in the graph in Figure 6-27, The Decline of Cod, entitled "Cod Catch and Biomass: Georges Bank, NW Atlantic" to discuss the case study of North Atlantic Fisheries.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">FIGURE 6-27 The Decline of Cod</p> <p>Make sure students understand the meanings of <i>biomass</i> and <i>catch</i>. Explain that biomass refers to the total mass of cod in the North Atlantic, while catch refers to the total mass of the cod caught by the fishing boats.</p> <p>Ask: What caused the sharp increase in the catch between the late 1970s and the early 1980s?</p> <p>Ask: How do you know the decline in catch in the late 1980s was due to overfishing and not to something else, like a decline in fishing?</p> <p>Discuss the regulation of fisheries and why restoring fish populations has been slow.</p>	<p>Content: Aligned The suggested strategy matches the NGSS in that both are about the student understanding the impact of human activities on the environment and biodiversity.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The NGSS has the student designing, evaluating, and refining a solution for reducing the impacts of human activities on the environment and biodiversity. The suggested strategy has the students answering questions that require them to remember details about what they read.</p> <p>Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The NGSS generates reasoning and developing a solution to the problem. The suggested strategy requires the student to use knowledge gained and conceptual understanding to respond to the questions (Skill/Concept).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.16 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities
To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Science Textbooks
For Grades 5, Environmental Science, Physical Science, and Biology
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Standard	Resource/Activity	Alignment Analysis
Biology		
NGSS LS1.4 Use a model to illustrate the role of cellular division (mitosis) and differentiation in producing and maintaining complex organisms.	<p>Pearson Biology Suggested Instructional Strategy, Lead a Discussion, p. 294 Make sure students understand the difference between totipotent and pluripotent stem cells.</p> <p>Ask: What types of cells can totipotent stem cells form that pluripotent stem cells cannot?</p> <p>Point out that both totipotent and pluripotent stem cells can develop into all of the types of cells that make up an adult human body.</p> <p>Suggested Instructional Strategy, Teach for Understanding, p. 377 Enduring Understanding: DNA is the universal code of life; it enables an organism to transmit hereditary information and, along with the environment, determines an organism's characteristics.</p> <p>Guiding Question: How do cells regulate gene expression?</p> <p>Evidence of Understanding: After completing the lesson, assign students the following assessment to show they understand how eukaryotic cells regulate gene expression. Ask students to use presentation software to create and present a series of slides showing how gene expression in eukaryotic cells is regulated by transcription factors and RNA interference. Their slides should include both text and visuals.</p> <p>Suggested Instructional Strategy, Use Visuals, p. 280 Use Figure 10-5 to start a discussion on the structure of eukaryotic chromosomes. Discuss the levels of organization within the chromosome structure.</p>  <p>Figure 10-5</p> <p>Ask: What are nucleosomes composed of?</p> <p>Ask: Tightly-packed nucleosomes form what structure?</p>	<p>Content: Inadequately Aligned The three suggested strategies described here were on the pages that the publisher deemed to be correlated to this NGSS. All three strategies are inadequately aligned to the content of the NGSS. The student learning expected in the NGSS is to understand the role of cellular division and differentiation in producing and maintaining complex organisms. The first instructional strategy comes close to topological alignment when the teacher is instructed to point out that stem cells can develop into all types of cells. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition for these three instructional strategies.</p>

Source: Science curriculum documents found in RCSS Rubicon Atlas; Grade 5 Georgia HSP Science, Pearson Environmental Science, McGraw-Hill Physical Science, and Pearson Biology

Reviewers noted the following in Exhibit 2.4.16 about science resource activities referenced in district adopted textbooks compared to the Georgia Standards of Excellence:

- At the fifth grade level, three of the four instructional activities identified in the district's adopted science resources were aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content, context and cognition.
- For Environmental Science, all five instructional activities identified in the district's adopted science resources were aligned in content. Four of the five instructional activities were also aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in context and cognition.
- For Physical Science, one of the four instructional activities identified in the district's adopted science resources was found aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content, context, and cognition.
- For Biology, three of six instructional identified in the district's adopted science resources was found aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content. None were found aligned in content and one was aligned in cognitive type.
- A total of eight science instructional activities analyzed were found to be aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence across all three dimensions of content, context and cognition.
- Reviewers examined the type of cognition required of students for 12 of the 19 instructional strategies analyzed. One of the instructional strategies required DOK Level I: Recall/Reproduction; eight of the instructional strategies required DOK Level II: Skill/Concept; three of the instructional strategies required DOK Level III: Strategic Thinking.

Exhibit 2.4.17 summarizes the analyses of science instructional resource activities to the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Exhibit 2.4.17

Summary of Internal Consistency of Teacher Instructional Strategies or Student Activities To Standards Referenced in District-adopted Science Textbooks For Grades 5, Environmental Science, Physical Science, and Biology Richmond County School System October 2017

Grade Level/Course	Total # Items Analyzed	Content Congruent		Context Congruent		Cognition Congruent	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Grade 5	4	3	75	3	75	3	75
Environmental Science	5	5	100	4	80	4	80
Physical Science	4	1	25	1	25	1	25
Biology	6	3	50	0	0	1	33
Total	19	12	63	8	42	9	47

Exhibit 2.4.17 indicates the following:

- Nineteen suggested instructional activities found in adopted science instructional resources were analyzed for congruence with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- Twelve (63%) of the suggested instructional activities analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content.
- Eight (42%) of the suggested instructional activities analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in context.
- Nine (47%) of the suggested instructional activities analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in cognitive type.

- Of the 19 strategies and activities analyzed, only seven (37%) were topologically aligned, that is, congruent across all three dimensions of content, context, and cognition type with the Georgia Performance Standards.

If the student activities and suggested teacher instructional strategies sampled from district adopted science textbooks are representative of all the activities and strategies, then they are not sufficient as a teaching resource to guide instruction that is 100% aligned with the state learning standards in all three dimensions, content, context, and cognitive type.

Social Studies Instructional Resources

Reviewers examined social studies instructional activities and resources found in teachers' editions of district-adopted resources. Social studies textbook student activities and teacher suggested strategies are linked to the Georgia Performance Standards. Reviewers noted incongruence between the Georgia Performance Standards referenced in the social studies textbooks and the district curriculum, where Georgia Standards of Excellence serve as the foundation for what students are expected to master.

As noted, the publishers of the district-adopted social studies textbooks have correlated activities in the textbooks to the Georgia Performance Standards. Exhibit 2.4.18 reports reviewers' analyses of internal consistency between a sample of social studies instructional resource activities and the Georgia Performance Standards for grades 5, 8, U. S. History, and Economics. Sample activities correlated by the textbook publisher to three Georgia Performance Standards were randomly selected for each grade level.

Exhibit 2.4.18

Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities To Georgia Performance Standards Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics Richmond County School System October 2017

GPS	Resource Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
SS5H3d: Describe the reasons people emigrated to the United States, from where they emigrated, and where they settled. SS5CG4: The student will explain the meaning of and reason for the motto of the United States "e pluribus unum."	Houghton Mifflin; Social Studies; U.S. History Civil War to Today (Georgia Edition); Core Lesson 2, United States Today, pp. 484-487. (Instructions to the student) Lesson Review Questions. 1. Write a paragraph about immigration to the United States using the words refugee and heritage. 2. In what ways did the change in immigration laws in 1965 affect immigration from Asian countries? 3. Looks at the chart on page 485. From which area do most immigrants to the United States come? 4. What does "e pluribus unum" mean and what meaning does it have for the United State today? 5. Who is Daniel Inouye and what has he done in public life? 6. What are some contributions immigrants make to United States society? 7. What were the effects of the government's decision in 1965 to change immigration laws?	Content: Inadequately Aligned The resource activity is topologically aligned with SS5CG4. However, SS5H3d has the student describe the reasons people emigrated to the United states. The lesson review questions do not ask the student to describe reasons for emigrating. Because the activity is inadequately aligned to both standards correlated to the resource by the publisher, reviewers go no further in analyzing the activity for context and cognition.

Exhibit 2.4.18 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities
To Georgia Performance Standards
Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GPS	Resource Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 5		
SS5G2c: Map and explain how the dispersion of global economic activities contributed to the United States emerging from World War I as a world power.	Houghton Mifflin; Social Studies; U.S. History Civil War to Today (Georgia Edition); Core Lesson 1, United States Today, pp. 322-325. Students are asked to complete a reading in their textbook, which describes the economic boom period following WWI caused by the repayment of loans from foreign nations to the United States. Additionally, students are asked to locate Germany on a map.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The content of the activity does not meet the expectation of the standards in that the standard requires the student to explain how the U.S. became a world power following WWI. The activity simply describes the transfer of wealth from other nations to the United States but does not connect this action to the U.S.'s status as a world power. Additionally, while the student must identify Germany on a map, the connection between Germany and world power status of the U.S. is not presented. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.
SS5H9b: Explain the impact the development of the personal computer and Internet has had on American life.	Houghton Mifflin; Social Studies; U.S. History Civil War to Today (Georgia Edition); Core Lesson 3, United States Today, pp. 456-461. Students are asked to read a narrative from their textbook about the effects of computers on both personal lives and in the business world. Then they are to write a paragraph about changes in the computer industry using the words Internet and high-tech.	Content: Aligned The content of the activity is matched with the standards. The students are asked to understand how computers and technology impacted business and industry. Context: Aligned The activity requires the student to explain in writing the basic components of the standard. Cognition: Aligned The activity matches the cognition level of the standard (Recall/Recognition).

Exhibit 2.4.18 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities
To Georgia Performance Standards
Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GPS	Resource Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
SS8G1d: The student will evaluate the impact of climate on Georgia's development.	Clairmont Press, Georgia Studies for Georgia Students; pp. 20-25. Students are asked to read several pages in the text describing the following: climate vs. weather; types of weather phenomena; and climate's effect on the state's development.	<p>Content: Aligned The standard and activity are aligned inasmuch as climate's effect on development is mentioned in the reading. Reviewers noted that, of the five pages of reading, only two paragraphs are devoted to Georgia's development. The remainder of the narrative deals with weather phenomena and weather vs. climate, which are not part of the standard.</p> <p>Context: Inadequately Aligned The standard requires the student to evaluate; however, no opportunities are provided for this activity. At most, the students are asked to read.</p> <p>Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The instructional activity and standard expectation are not aligned. Reading, which can be a rigorous activity, is of factual material and at no time are students asked to evaluate the text. The standard requirement is an activity that would require the student to cite evidence, draw conclusions, and assess information. The activity requires conceptual understanding of what is being read (Skill/Concept).</p>

Exhibit 2.4.18 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities
To Georgia Performance Standards
Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GPS	Resource Activity	Alignment Analysis
Grade 8		
SS8H9a: The student will describe the impact of events leading up to American involvement in World War II; include Lend-Lease and the bombing of Pearl Harbor.	Clairmont Press, Georgia Studies for Georgia Students; pp. 572-579. The students are asked to read a narrative or their textbook looking for the following topics: the reasons for WWII, why the U.S. entered the war, how the war affected Georgia's economy, and how Georgian's [sic] contributed to the war effort. Additional activities include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students examine photos and a timeline of events, • A class discussion about the Treaty of Versailles, • Think-Pair-Share Activity about isolation, and neutrality in world events, • Provide and read three articles of the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, • Provide copies of the Lend-Lease Act of 1941, • Read a description of events of Pearl Harbor, and • Create a timeline of major events leading up to the U.S. entry into WWII. 	Content: Aligned Both the GPS and the activity require the student to understand the main ideas and supporting details of the impact of events leading up to American involvement in World War II. Context: Aligned The activity meets the GPS in context by requiring that students describe their thinking about the main idea and supporting details in the homework assignment. This is primarily accomplished through the Think-Pair-Share activities throughout the unit. Cognition: Aligned Both the GPS and the activity require the student to summarize a text generating understanding in student learning, in both oral and written form (Skill/Concept).
SS8CG4d: The student will describe ways to avoid trouble and settle disputes peacefully.	Clairmont Press, Georgia Studies for Georgia Students; pp. 120-122. After reading the text about the 7 stages in pretrial procedures, students are asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. use a graphic organizer (provided) to sequence the pretrial steps, 2. present a short skit depicting pretrial steps in the criminal justice process, and 3. given facts of a criminal case, write an opening argument for either the prosecution or the defense. 4. Share oral arguments. 	Content: Inadequately Aligned The activity is not a match with the GPS in that the student must describe pretrial procedural events, but this does not relate to the standard, which is to describe ways to avoid trouble and settle disputes peacefully. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.

Exhibit 2.4.18 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities
To Georgia Performance Standards
Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GPS	Resource Activity	Alignment Analysis
U.S. History		
SSUSH1a: Explain Virginia's development, including the Virginia Company, tobacco cultivation, relationships with Native Americans such as Powhatan, development of the House of Burgess, Bacon's Rebellion, and the development of slavery.	Pearson; United States History, pp. 4-9. Students are asked to read several sections from their textbook, which describe how American Indians may have come to America, Early American cultures in North America, and American Indian Cultures. Students are then asked to reflect on what information or sources have shaped their perspectives on America Indians.	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GPS and the activity do not match in content. The lesson involves much material about American Indians and their culture. The only reference to American Indians in the Georgia U.S. History standards asks students to explain relationships between the Native Americans and Virginia's development. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.
SSUSH21b: Describe the impact television has had on American culture, including the presidential debates (Kennedy/Nixon, 1960) and news coverage of the Civil Rights Movement.	Pearson; United States History, Digital Text 5 Following an introduction by the teacher, students are to read a digital text which emphasizes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emergence of television as a powerful form of communication, • Television's portrayal of the idealized family, • The effectiveness of television as an advertising medium, • Television's impact on the national postwar culture in the U.S., • Television's role as an agent of influence in presidential campaigns. 	Content: Aligned The standard and the activity match in content. Both require the student to understand the impact television has had. Context: Inadequately Aligned There is no description of a student performance activity that allows them to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts. Cognition: Inadequately Aligned The GPS states the student will "describe the impact," which requires students to assess information, perform strategic thinking, and develop a logical argument. However, the lesson does not describe a performance activity to demonstrate their learning, other than to read the narrative. Therefore, reviewers conclude that the activity generates conceptual understanding by the student (Skill/Concept).

Exhibit 2.4.18 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities
To Georgia Performance Standards
Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GPS	Resource Activity	Alignment Analysis
U.S. History		
SSUSH15c: Explain Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the proposed League of Nations.	Pearson; United States History, Digital Text 2 Students are presented with a chart describing Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the proposed League of Nations. Students are asked to discuss the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain why Wilson believed that a “peace without victory” would help avoid future wars. • Why did Wilson think that the Fourteen Points were the “only possible program” for world peace? • How did the debate over the United States joining the League of Nations reflect disagreement over participation in international organizations and treaties? 	Content: Aligned The content of the activity and the GPS match. Both require the student to explain Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the proposed League of Nations. Context: Aligned The activity requires students to read and analyze about the text and explain their answers. The context of the activity and the GPS match. Cognition: Aligned The activity requires students to examine and break apart the text in the reading and chart to find evidence to support their conclusions (Skill/Concept).
Economics		
SSEIN2: The student will explain why countries sometimes erect trade barriers and sometimes advocate free trade. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Define trade barriers as tariffs, quotas, embargoes, standards, and subsidies 	Pearson, Economics, Digital Text 1 Students will participate in a digital reading which defines many terms linked to trade, including tariff, import quota, health and safety regulations. The reading also emphasizes reasons that nations utilize trade barriers and students are asked to describe the barriers and explain the effects of each.	Content: Aligned The standard and the activity match in content in understanding why trade barriers sometimes countries erect and sometimes advocate free trade. Context: Aligned The activity matches the GPS in that it requires the student to define and explain key vocabulary. This is a match with the context of the GPS. Cognition: Aligned The activity requires the student to define and explain, which is a match with the GPS (Recall/Recognition).

Exhibit 2.4.18 (continued)
Internal Consistency of Sample District Instructional Resource Activities
To Georgia Performance Standards
Social Studies, Grades 5, 8, U.S. History, and Economics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

GPS	Resource Activity	Alignment Analysis
Economics		
SSEF1c: List a variety of strategies for allocating scarce resources.	Pearson, Economics, Digital Text 1 After reading the digital text, answer the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain why scarcity and choice are the basis of economics in every society. • Summarize how entrepreneurs fuel economic growth. • Describe the three economic factors of production and the differences between physical and human capital. • Explain how scarcity affects the factors of production. 	Content: Aligned The activity requires the student to read and gain an understanding of scarcity, the basic component of the standard. Additionally, students are expected to understand the impact of scarcity on factors of production, which exceeds the GPS expectation. Context: Aligned Students are asked in the standard to merely list, but in the activity students are asked to explain, summarize, and describe, which exceeds the expectation of the GPS. Cognition: Aligned The GPS requires recall/reproduction, but the instructional activity requires students to summarize (Skill/Concept).
SSEMA2b: Define monetary policy. SSEMA2c: Describe how the Federal Reserve uses the tools of monetary policy to promote price stability, full employment, and economic growth.	Pearson, Economics, Digital Texts 1, 2, and 3 Following the reading of several digital texts, students are asked to complete the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the uses and functions of money. • List the characteristics of money, including its commodity and representative forms. • Analyze the positive and negative aspects of currency, as well as other media of exchange. 	Content: Inadequately Aligned The GPS and the activity do not match in content. The activity describes the role of money, while the GPS describes the Federal Reserve and monetary policy. Because content is inadequately aligned, reviewers go no further with analysis of context and cognition.
<i>Sources: Houghton Mifflin, Social Studies; U.S. History Civil War to Today (Georgia Edition); Clairmont Press, Georgia Studies for Georgia Students; Pearson, United States History, Digital; and Pearson, Economics, Digital</i>		

Reviewers noted the following in [Exhibit 2.4.18](#) about social studies resource activities referenced in curriculum documents:

- At the fifth grade level, only one of the three instructional activities found in the district adopted social studies textbook resource analyzed was aligned with the Georgia Performance Standards in content, context, and cognition.
- At the eighth grade level, two of the three instructional activities from the district adopted social studies resource were aligned with the Georgia Performance Standards in content, context, and cognition.

- For the course U.S. History, two of the three instructional activities analyzed from the district adopted textbook were aligned for content with the Georgia Performance Standards. Of the two activities found aligned in content, one was also aligned in context and in the type of cognition required.
- For Economics, two of the three instructional activities analyzed were found aligned with the Georgia Performance Standards in content. One of the two found aligned in content was also aligned in context and cognition. The second activity related to Georgia Performance Standards SSEF1c required a more complex response that went beyond the expected standard. This is an example of deep alignment.
- When reviewers examined the type of cognition required by students as they responded to social studies activities, they found two of the activities required students to respond at the DOK Level I: Recall/ Respond and five required students to respond at the DOK Level II: Skill/Concept.

Exhibit 2.4.19 summarizes the analyses of alignment between social studies textbook activities and the GPS.

Exhibit 2.4.19

Summary of Analyses of Social Studies Instructional Resource Activities To Georgia Performance Standards Richmond County School System October 2017

Grade Level/ Course	Total # Items Analyzed	Content Congruent		Context Congruent		Cognition Congruent	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Grade 5	3	1	33	1	33	1	33
Grade 8	3	2	67	1	33	1	33
U.S. History	3	2	67	1	33	1	33
Economics	3	2	66	2	66	2	66
Total	12	6	50	5	42	5	42

Exhibit 2.4.19 indicates the following:

- Reviewers analyzed 12 suggested instructional strategies and activities from district adopted social studies resources for alignment with the Georgia Performance Standards.
- Six (50%) of the suggested instructional strategies and activities were found to be congruent with the Georgia Performance Standards in content.
- Five (42%) of the suggested instructional strategies and activities were found to be congruent with the Georgia Performance Standards in context.
- Five (42%) of the suggested instructional strategies and activities were found to be congruent with the Georgia Performance Standards in cognition.
- Of the 12 strategies and activities analyzed, only five (42%) were topologically aligned, that is, congruent across all three dimensions of content, context, and cognitive type with the Georgia Performance Standards.

If the student activities and suggested teacher instructional strategies sampled from district adopted social studies textbooks are representative of the overall alignment of textbooks with state content standards, then they are not sufficiently aligned as a resource to guide instruction that is aligned with district and state learning standards.

Of the 61 suggested instructional strategies sampled by reviewers, 25 (41%) were not aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content. When the content was not adequately aligned with the Georgia academic standards, then the reviewers did not analyze alignment of the resource in context or cognition. Exhibit 2.4.20 summarizes reviewers' analyses of a sampling of suggested instructional strategies and student activities found

in district-adopted textbooks for alignment in content, context, and cognition with the Georgia academic standards.

Exhibit 2.4.20

Summary of Analyses of District-adopted Textbooks for Alignment To the Georgia Standards of Excellence Student Expectations Richmond County School System October 2017

Subject/Course	Total #Items Analyzed	Content Congruent		Context Congruent		Cognition Congruent	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Language Arts	12	5	42	3	25	4	33
Mathematics	18	13	72	11	61	11	61
Science	19	12	63	8	42	9	47
Social Studies	12	6	50	5	42	5	42
Total	61	36	59%	27	44%	29	48%

As can be noted in Exhibit 2.4.20:

- Reviewers analyzed 61 textbook suggested instructional strategies and activities for alignment with Georgia academic standards.
- Fifty-nine percent of the textbooks' suggested instructional strategies and activities analyzed were congruent with state academic standards in content.
- Forty-four percent of the textbooks' suggested instructional strategies and activities analyzed were congruent with state academic standards in context.
- Forty-eight percent of the textbooks' suggested instructional strategies and activities analyzed were congruent with state academic standards in cognitive type.
- Of the 61 suggested instructional strategies and activities analyzed, 27 (44%) were found to be topologically aligned for content, context, and cognition with Georgia academic standards.

Overall, reviewers found over half (54%) of the textbook suggested instructional strategies and activities analyzed were not fully aligned with Georgia's academic standards, and did not provide a one-to-one match of the content, context, and cognition requirement with each learning standard. The alignment found is insufficient to promote student attainment of curriculum standards and success on the state assessments.

IV. Feasibility of Standards and Learning Targets for Language Arts and Mathematics

For any grade level or course, the number of standards and/or objectives must be feasible for the time allotted for instruction if teachers are to be able to teach to mastery rather than coverage. When teaching to mastery, students need to be provided numerous practice opportunities over a period of time in order to retain the learning. The amount of time needed to master an objective will vary depending on the complexity of the learning. Those developing curriculum need to consider not only the amount of time a typical student may need to acquire the learning but also the time needed to retain the learning. Designing a curriculum around the typical learner ensures that there are not too many objectives to be taught. Reviewers analyzed the number of standards and learning targets per grade level and course offering for language arts and mathematics in the Richmond County School System.

The reviewers found that the number of standards and learning targets contained in the K-8 language arts and mathematics units of study is too numerous to ensure that teachers are able to teach those standards to mastery in the instructional time allotted.

Language Arts

Language arts is made up of components including language, reading foundational, reading informational, reading literacy, speaking and listening, and writing. Each unit of study contains Georgia Standards of Excellence and learning targets to be taught to mastery. Learning targets are defined in Rubicon Atlas as student-friendly descriptions—via words, pictures, actions, or some combination of the three—of what the teacher intends students to learn or accomplish in a given lesson. Because the amount of time needed to teach an objective to mastery varies, as does the amount of instructional time available at a particular grade level and/or school, reviewers used a consistent assumption regarding the amount of time available for language arts instruction in the Richmond County School System. At grades K-5, reviewers assumed there is 120 minutes of language arts instruction available per day and 160 days of uninterrupted instruction available per school year for a total of 320 hours of time available for language arts instruction. Assuming it takes an average of eight hours to teach an objective to mastery, elementary teachers might reasonably be expected to teach approximately 40 objectives per year to mastery. At the middle school level (grades 6-8), due to the variety of instructional schedules found across the school district, reviewers assumed 160 hours of uninterrupted language arts instruction per year. Assuming it takes three hours to teach an objective to mastery, middle school teachers might reasonably be expected to teach 53 language arts objectives per year to mastery.

The Rubicon Atlas language arts K-12 scope and sequence was used to identify and count the number of Georgia Standards of Excellence to be taught to mastery in each grade. Reviewers also counted the number of language arts learning targets listed in each unit for each grade level and then checked for duplication. When a learning target was found in more than one unit of study, it was only counted only once. It was noted that the curriculum map divides K-2 language arts learnings into eight units, while at grades 4-8 language arts has four units for each grade level.

Exhibit 2.4.21 displays the number of language arts Georgia Standards of Excellence and learning targets at each grade level K-8.

Exhibit 2.4.21

Analysis of Feasibility of Learning Targets for Language Arts K-8 Richmond County School System October 2017

	Number of Georgia Standards of Excellence and Learning Targets								
Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
GSES	76	88	77	93	89	86	80	77	79
Learning Targets	70	59	39	51	130	64	80	90	234
<i>Sources: Rubicon Atlas language arts curriculum maps, unit plans, and K-12 scope and sequence of GSEs for language arts</i>									

From Exhibit 2.4.21 the following is noted:

- The number of language arts Georgia Standards of Excellence and district learning targets students are expected to master differs greatly from grade to grade.
- The number of language arts Georgia Standards of Excellence to be taught to mastery over the course of a school year ranged from 76 standards in kindergarten to 93 standards in third grade.
- The number of unduplicated district learning targets students are expected to master ranged from 51 for third grade to 234 for eighth grade.
- At all grade levels the number of learning targets students are expected to master within the course of a school year exceeded what is feasible considering the amount of instructional time available per school year.

Reviewers took a closer look at the numbers of learning targets at grades 4 and 8 to see how the learning targets are divided among reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. [Exhibit 2.4.22](#) displays the number of learning targets by skill area for grades 4 and 8.

Exhibit 2.4.22

**Analysis of Feasibility of Language Arts Learning Targets
By Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language
Grades 4 and 8
Richmond County School System
October 2017**

Grade	Reading	Writing	Speaking and Listening	Language	Total
Grade 4	90	30	None listed	None listed	130
Grade 8	92	60	32	50	234

As can be noted in [Exhibit 2.4.22](#):

- None of the language arts units of study in grade 4 listed learning targets for speaking and listening or language.
- Teachers of grades 4 and 8 are expected to teach to mastery 90 and 92 reading learning targets, respectfully.
- Grade 4 teachers are expected to teach to mastery 30 learning targets for writing. There is an expectation that grade 8 teachers are to teach to mastery twice as many learning targets (60) as in grade 4.

Given the assumptions outlined above, the number of language arts standards and learning targets, kindergarten through eighth grade, that students are expected to master is too numerous to ensure the ability of teachers to teach to mastery in the instructional time allotted.

Mathematics

Curriculum documents for mathematics, grades K-8, list Georgia Standards of Excellence for each grade. For each of these standards, learning targets (“I Can” statements) are identified. Because the amount of time needed to teach an objective to mastery varies, as does the amount of instructional time available at a particular grade level and/or school, reviewers used a consistent assumption regarding the amount of time available for mathematics instruction in the Richmond County School System. At grades K-5, reviewers assumed there is 50 minutes of mathematics instruction available per day and 160 days of uninterrupted instruction available per school year for a total of 133 hours of mathematics instruction. Assuming it takes an average of eight hours to teach an objective to mastery, elementary teachers might reasonably be expected to teach approximately 16 objectives per year to mastery. At the middle school level (grades 6-8) due to the variety of instructional schedules found across the school district, reviewers assumed 160 hours of uninterrupted mathematics instruction available per year. Assuming it takes three class periods to teach an objective to mastery, middle school teachers might reasonably be expected to teach 53 mathematics objectives per year to mastery.

The Rubicon Atlas mathematics K-12 scope and sequence was used to count the number of mathematics Georgia Standards of Excellence to be taught to mastery in each grade. Reviewers also counted the number of mathematics learning targets (“I Can” statements) in each unit for each grade level and then checked for duplication. As noted above, the district considers the “I Can” statements skills that students should learn or accomplish in a unit. When a learning target was found in more than one unit of study, it was only counted once. It was also noted that the last unit of each grade is a preview of the next year’s standards, and expectations are that these standards will be introduced. Reviewers included these standards and learning targets in the count for a given grade.

Exhibit 2.4.23 displays the number of mathematics Georgia Standards of Excellence and learning targets included at each grade.

Exhibit 2.4.23
Analysis of Feasibility of Learning Targets for Mathematics K-8
Richmond County School System
October 2017

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
GSE	28	27	28	36	43	40	45	44	38
Learning Targets	33	34	36	61	77	62	66	70	57
<i>Source: Rubicon Atlas mathematics curriculum maps, unit plans, and K-12 scope and sequence of GSEs for mathematics</i>									

As can be noted in Exhibit 2.4.23:

- The number of mathematics Georgia Standards of Excellence to be taught to mastery over the course of a school year ranged from 28 in Kindergarten and second grade to 45 in sixth grade.
- The number of unduplicated district learning targets students are expected to master ranged from 33 in kindergarten to 77 in the fourth grade.
- At all grade levels, the number of learning targets students are expected to master within the course of a school year exceeded what is feasible considering the amount of instructional time available per school year.

Given the assumptions outlined above, reviewers concluded that the number of mathematics standards and learning targets, kindergarten through eighth grade, students are expected to master is too numerous to ensure the ability of teachers to teach to mastery in the instructional time allotted.

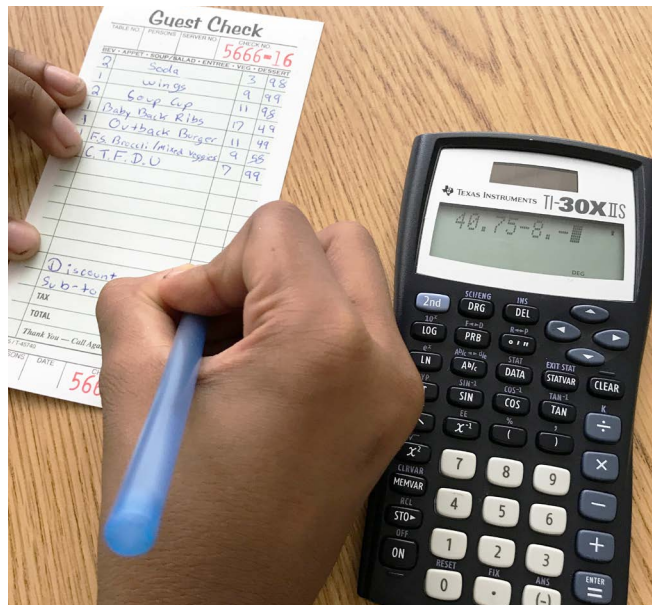
Through an anonymous online survey, teachers in the Richmond County School System were provided an opportunity to comment on the reasonableness of the number of learning objectives students are expected to master during the course of a school year. Four hundred fifty-one teachers responded to the survey question. Following is a representative sampling of the comments reviewers received regarding the feasibility of the number of skills to be taught from teachers:

- “The curriculum moves too fast each week. We basically have one week to teach 3 different skills in ELA and sometimes the students need extra practice.”
- “There are so many standards for each grade that it is difficult to keep up with them.”
- “For ELA, [there are] basically four different subjects being covered. I do not feel there is enough time to truly cover all that is on the pacing guide.”
- “Math moves at an extreme pace. I think that for mastery of each standard, we need more time for practice and re-teaching.”
- “Standards based instruction requires a deep level of mastery. Students have to have various opportunities to develop and show deep mastery of the standards. This is difficult when you have so many standards.”
- “Kindergarten is full of learning outcomes. Children at that state need time to practice and master the skills.”
- “NO, I do not have enough time to teach the objectives in my content area the way they should be taught. I am skimming the surface.”

Overall reviewers determined that the number of learning targets contained in the K-8 language arts and mathematics units of study is too numerous to ensure the ability of teachers to teach to mastery in the instructional time allotted.

Summary

The reviewers conducted an in-depth analysis of the Richmond County School System curriculum to determine the extent to which alignment exists. District policy does not specify requirements concerning the components of curriculum and their alignment to the standards, beyond that the curriculum be aligned. Reviewers compared a sample of benchmark assessments to the Georgia Standards of Excellence and found the assessments are not always congruent in content, context, or cognition with state learning standards for language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. An analysis of adopted instructional resources found suggested instructional strategies and activities are not consistently aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content, context, and cognition. The number of learning targets identified in the district's language arts and mathematics curriculum is not feasible for the instructional time available and does not contribute to mastery learning (see [Recommendations 3, 4, 5, and 6](#)).



A seventh grade student at CT Walker Traditional Magnet School rewriting a math expression



Anatomy students at Cross Creek High School identifying parts of the human skeleton

Finding 2.5: The Gifted and Talented and Special Education programs have seen an increase in student eligibility and must continue planning for responsiveness to meet increasing demands and to support student success in the regular and specialized curriculum.

When school leaders working in effective school districts attempt to select instructional materials and supplemental programs to meet targeted or general student needs, they establish criteria to determine the purpose and focus of the decision. Such districts also identify the evidence of alignment of the material or programs with the district curriculum, state expectations, or other sources of accountability for students and teachers. While the need for variation in approaches to the intended curriculum is typically a reason for choosing supplemental programs, the focus fluctuates between emphasis on intervening with changes in design or delivery, supplementing existing instructional materials and methods, or finding materials and methods that address specific student needs identified through analysis of data.

The Richmond County School System has two programs that have experienced increased enrollment over the past few years: the Gifted and Talent Program, and the Special Education Program. The Gifted and Talent program has seen increases due to a deliberate attempt by the district to identify previously under-identified populations of qualifying students. The Special Education program has seen an increase through normal identification processes.

Gifted and Talented

Reviewers were presented with a variety of documents related to gifted programming in the Richmond County School System. Documents included in the review are listed in Exhibit 2.5.1.

Exhibit 2.5.1

**Gifted and Talented Program Documents
Richmond County School System
October 2017**

Document	Date
Board Policy IDDD, Gifted Student Programs	2015
Academic and Creative Enrichment (ACE) Program (Gifted Instructor's Policies and Procedures Handbook)	2016
Gifted Education Handbook	2017-18
RCSS Gifted Department Improvement Plan	2015-2018
Gifted Department Monthly Meetings and PL Agendas	2016-17

Board Policy IDDD: Gifted Student Programs requires that the district develop a program to support the development and identification of gifted students. Included is the expectation to “Establish qualifying criteria” and an environment to “extend student competencies in the areas of cognitive skills, learning skills, research skills, communication skills, and metacognitive skills beyond the regular classroom.”

The *Gifted Education Handbook* ensures the district's gifted programming is delivered in accordance with GaDOE rule 160-4-2-.38, which makes provisions for the special needs of gifted students. Also included in this handbook, are the nomination procedures, qualifying processes, and eligibility rules. Delivery of services is also discussed in the handbook, with an emphasis on the principles of a differentiated curriculum for gifted/talented students.

The *Gifted Education Handbook* also presents several Program Delivery Models, including Resources Classes (grades K-5), Advanced Content Classes (grades 6-12), Cluster Grouping (grades 1-8), and Collaborative Teaching (grades 2-12). The handbook notes that Collaborative Teaching is not currently in use in the RCSS. Students identified as gifted shall receive at least five segments per week using one of the service delivery models. Students in the middle school and high school also receive services via Advanced Placement, honors, and International Baccalaureate curricula.

The *Academic and Creative Enrichment Program Handbook* presents further details and “teacher friendly” information about program requirements and the instructor’s roles and responsibilities, including requirements to access and utilize the RCSS K-5 Gifted Curriculum and to attend monthly department meetings and serve on collaborative teams with other elementary G/T teachers.

The Richmond County School System K-5 Gifted Curriculum is located in two places: the Rubicon Atlas website and in paper form within the *Academic and Creative Enrichment Program Handbook*. The curriculum presented in the *Academic and Creative Enrichment Program Handbook* is a pacing guide for grades 1-5 and presents instructional units of covering between four and six weeks in lengths. Sample unit titles include topics such as Poetry, The Nervous System, Creative Writing, Problem Solving, Genius Hour, and Architecture. GaDOE Gifted Standards are also presented, although in a different document than the pacing guide.

The *Gifted Department Improvement Plan* includes a goal to “provide ongoing professional development to continue developing teacher efficacy in the areas of referring, screening, and testing of potential gifted students.” In discussion with district personnel at Richmond County School System, reviewers learned that there has been an effort to increase the number of Richmond County School System student enrolled in the district’s gifted program to more closely resemble the state of Georgia enrollment average of 11.5%. District screening records indicate an increase in students screened over the past five years, as displayed in Exhibit 2.5.2.

Exhibit 2.5.2

Gifted and Talented Program Referrals and Enrollment Richmond County School System 2013-2017

Screening Year	Referrals	Potential Enrollment Year	Subsequent Year Enrollment	Percent of RCSS October Enrollment
FY13	1466	FY14	956	3.0
FY14	1068	FY15	1281	3.8
FY15	1755	FY16	1614	5.2
FY16	1967	FY17	1765	5.7
FY17	1436	FY18	1882	N/A
<i>Source: Referral and Enrollment is District Provided Data</i>				

As can be noted in Exhibit 2.5.2:

- Referrals for gifted and talented screening increased markedly beginning with the first year of the Improvement Plan Goals, 2015.
- Enrollment has also grown since FY13, increasing from 956 in 2013 to 1882 in 2017.
- The percent of G/T student enrollment district-wide has increased from 3.0% in 2014 to 5.7% in 2016.

Reviewers next examined the actual number of G/T students in each elementary, middle, and high school across the district.

Exhibit 2.5.3 displays the elementary Gifted and Talented enrollment for FY2015 through FY2017.

Exhibit 2.5.3

Gifted and Talented Enrollment by Elementary School Richmond County School System 2015-2017

School	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY17 ADM	Percent G/T
Lake Forest	127	137	127	683	18.6
Walker Magnet	171	189	128	798	16.0
State Average*					11.5*
Goshen	18	22	41	520	7.9
McBean	22	24	30	407	7.4
Blythe	10	10	21	301	7.0
Garrett	25	27	29	455	6.4
Hephzibah	12	8	26	410	6.3
Freedom Park	19	43	41	682	6.0
Deer Chase	38	39	25	559	4.5
Lamar-Milledge	6	6	18	433	4.2
Hains	6	6	25	640	3.9
Merry	5	5	13	354	3.7
Welles Foreman	9	9	11	339	3.2
Craig-Houghton	3	2	12	391	3.0
Reynolds	17	19	26	955	2.7
Gracewood	14	17	12	473	2.5
Monte Sano	7	6	9	357	2.5
Barton Chapel	3	3	12	505	2.4
Hornsby	6	12	7	309	2.3
Tobacco Road	4	4	10	443	2.3
Copeland	7	9	10	470	2.1
Glenn Hills	8	7	8	395	2.0
Diamond Lakes	6	6	11	631	1.7
Windsor Springs	6	5	7	473	1.5
Jamestown	4	5	5	354	1.4
Meadowbrook	4	3	7	472	1.4
Wilkinson Gardens	3	5	6	486	1.2
Jenkins	4	5	4	419	1.0
Rollins	4	4	4	412	1.0
Southside	9	8	4	408	1.0
Bayvale	3	7	4	496	0.8
Terrace Manor	2	2	2	365	0.5
Warren Road	58	66	40	611	0.2
Bold indicates meets or exceeds state average by +/- 5%.					
Source: *Governor's Office of Student Achievement; Enrollment data from Georgia Department of Education website					

Reviewers used a range of +/- 5% (6.5 or above) to determine if schools have achieved the goal of meeting the state average. As can be noted in [Exhibit 2.5.3](#):

- Gifted and Talented enrollments have increased in some, but not all, of the district's elementary schools over the past three years.
- Gifted and Talented enrollments at Lake Forest Elementary School and Walker Traditional Magnet School exceed the state average. Gifted and Talented enrollments at all other district elementary schools remain below the state average.

[Exhibit 2.5.4](#) displays middle school Gifted and Talented enrollment for FY2015 through FY2017.

Exhibit 2.5.4

Gifted and Talented Enrollment by Middle School Richmond County School System 2015-2017

School	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY17 ADM	Percent G/T
State Average*					11.5*
Pine Hill	34	32	37	584	6.3
Tutt	28	33	24	455	5.3
Hephzibah	30	30	18	446	4.0
Spirit Creek	6	10	18	481	3.7
Langford	34	38	28	792	3.5
Hornsby	12	12	9	295	3.1
Morgan Road	2	2	6	371	1.6
Murphy	6	11	6	625	1.0
Glenn Hills	4	3	5	546	0.9
Bold indicates meets or exceeds state average by +/- 5%.					
<i>Sources: *Governor's Office of Student Achievement; Enrollment data from Georgia Department of Education website</i>					

As noted in [Exhibit 2.5.4](#),

- Gifted and Talented enrollment at all middle schools in the Richmond County School System is below the state average of 11.5%.
- Gifted and Talented enrollment in FY2017 compared to FY2015 has decreased in all but four district middle schools.

Exhibit 2.5.5 displays high school Gifted and Talented enrollment for FY2015 through FY2017.

Exhibit 2.5.5
Gifted and Talented Enrollment by High School
Richmond County School System
2015-2017

School	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY17 ADM	Percent G/T
Davidson Magnet	377	371	409	795	51.4
Johnson Magnet	206	223	250	690	36.2
Richmond Co Technical Magnet	18	16	55	397	13.9
State Average*					11.5*
Westside	39	40	58	735	7.9
Academy of Richmond	61	66	69	1,241	5.6
Hephzibah	35	42	49	976	5.0
Cross Creek	36	44	48	1,228	3.9
Laney	6	14	19	567	3.4
Butler	11	15	23	840	2.7
Glenn Hills	3	6	6	732	0.8
Josey	6	6	2	552	0.3
Bold indicates meets or exceeds state average by +/- 5%.					
<i>Source: *Governor's Office of Student Achievement; Enrollment data from Georgia Department of Education website</i>					

As can be noted in Exhibit 2.5.5,

- Between FY2015 and FY2017, Gifted and Talented enrollment has increased at all high schools in the district except for TW Josey High School.
- Gifted and Talented enrollments are below the state average at all but three of the district's high schools.

While Gifted and Talented enrollment has increased in the district, it still lags far behind the state average of 11.5%. Enrollment has almost doubled since 2013, with current enrollment of 1,882. Reviewers noted that enrollment increases are focused primarily in a few school buildings. In discussions with district staff, it was noted that once students are identified for gifted services, parents will sometimes choose to enroll their student in one of the magnet schools in the district, a school with a strong Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate program, or a school with a reputation for higher student achievement, thereby leaving their neighborhood school. These decisions are fully identifiable when noticing the large number of G/T students in the magnet schools. Davidson Magnet School, for instance, has over 50% of its ADM identified as gifted and talented. While the decision to change schools is fully within the parameters for enrollment in the Richmond County School System, it presents potential difficulties for the district, including the following:

- As students elect to switch schools, there remains a smaller cohort of Gifted and Talented students to serve in the neighborhood school. Gifted and talented students remaining at their neighborhood schools are often served through in-class differentiation. However, as was noted by reviewers in classroom visits, few classrooms utilized differentiation of either curriculum or instruction (see Finding 3.3). With little or no differentiation, the curriculum remains the same as that for the general population and is not specialized to meet the unique learning needs of gifted and talented students. A sampling of comments received by reviewers during interviews related to this status follows:
 - “We need better processes for monitoring those who are gifted. In lower-performing schools, I know that there are more students who are gifted and talented.” (Building Administrator)
 - “We say we differentiate for the advanced kids, but I don’t see it in the classrooms in my school.” (Building Administrator)

- “Our gifted numbers are VERY low. Only 12 students in the building. Plus 40 others in the talent development program.” (Building Administrator)
- “We currently receive more gifted teacher referrals from some schools than from others. This creates an imbalance of students who might qualify for the program from building to building.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Once kids are identified as gifted – they tend to transfer to the magnet schools.” (Central Office Administrator)
- While all schools are required to have teaching staff in place who are credentialed by the state of Georgia as trained to teach in a G/T program, not all schools have full-time staff, nor are they able to retain the existing staff who are G/T trained. Building administrators commented to reviewers of the difficulty of retaining teachers who hold gifted credentials. In fact, while the district provides funding for teachers to earn the gifted credential, often times, once the credential is earned, that teacher leaves RCSS to obtain a position in a more lucrative district elsewhere. Most often the departing teachers had been assigned to a school with a lower G/T population. Data related to teacher retention were not presented to reviewers for analysis. However, even if such data were available, the reason for the G/T teacher departure would not be indicated. Comments made to reviewers verify the concern about G/T teacher retention:
 - “Some of my best teachers [gifted] have been hired away by the neighboring county.” (Building Administrator)
 - “We [the district] pay for training teachers for the gifted endorsement, then they leave for higher paying jobs in Columbia County.” (Building Administrator)
 - “My gifted teacher left for better paying job the year after we trained her.” (Building Administrator)
 - “There’s an issue with the quality of the teachers in those [Gifted and Talented] positions. Are they truly trained to be gifted teachers? We have no control over who’s chosen.” (Building Administrator)
- While Gifted and Talented enrollments have increased over the past three years, increases have not been uniform across district schools. Most of the increased Gifted and Talented enrollment can be tracked to a few school buildings. Even if some parents elect to transfer schools, reviewers would expect to see at least a modest increase in Gifted and Talented enrollments across all district schools since services are provided at all schools. Determination of eligibility for Gifted and Talented services in the Richmond County School System is based primarily upon students obtaining a *CogAT* score of 90th percentile or above. The *CogAT* (*Cognitive Abilities Test*) is a reasoning and problem-solving test commonly used for qualifying students for gifted and talented programs. To increase the number of students in the district’s pool of potential students for screening, district leaders relaxed the qualifying *CogAT* score to the 80th percentile. A second strategy to increase the pool of potential gifted students was to provide training for staff in gifted and talented identification with the hope of increasing the number of teacher referrals. This would be especially helpful for those students who might not qualify based on mental ability or achievement, but could qualify based on creativity or motivation. However, in discussions with building administrators, reviewers heard concerns about the reluctance of teachers to refer potential gifted and talented candidates for screening.
 - “We would have more gifted students if the classroom teachers would refer them for eligibility. Often time the teachers don’t refer some of their brightest students because the child might be a behavior problem in the classroom.” (Building Administrator)
 - “I liked it better when the gifted students were sent to another school where they could be engaged all day. Now they stay here all day and get pulled from my classroom.” (Teacher)

A combination of factors, including uneven distribution of gifted and talented students throughout the district, difficulty retaining credentialed teachers with a specialization in teaching the gifted, the inconsistent nomination processes for nominating potential gifted students, and service delivery in the regular education classroom that may not be differentiated to meet the child's learning needs, has created a program where some students may not have full access to services or not be identified for services at all. This creates an inequity for this population of students that must be addressed by district administration. Finding 3.2 provides a full analysis of potential equity issues in RCSS, including that of the gifted and talented program.

Special Education

Special Education has experienced an increase in enrollment over the past few years. Unlike the Gifted and Talented program, recruiting efforts were not necessary, and students are identified for special education services based on classroom learning difficulties. Exhibit 2.5.6 displays the number of students receiving special education services in the Richmond County School System over the past four years.

Exhibit 2.5.6

Special Education Enrollment by Qualifying Category Richmond County School System 2014-2017

Category	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY14 to FY17 Change
Autism (A)	184	181	198	211	+27
Emotional & Behavioral Disorder (EBD)	237	184	152	146	-91
Hard of Hearing (HH)	15	16	18	20	+5
Mild Intellectual Disability (MID)	240	232	220	227	-13
Moderate Intellectual Disability (MoID)	108	92	93	97	-11
Other Health Impaired (OHI)	453	506	559	593	+140
Orthopedic Impairment (OI)	14	12	14	11	-3
Significant Development Delay (SDD)	472	541	562	620	+148
Speech-Language Impairment (SL)	320	324	349	414	+94
Severe Intellectual Disability (SID)	32	24	30	23	-9
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	584	698	825	937	+353
Total	2,659	2,810	3,020	3,299	+640
Students qualifying with more than one category are listed by primary disability only.					
<i>Source: Georgia Department of Education website</i>					

As can be noted from Exhibit 2.5.6:

- Overall, the number of students identified for special education services has increased by 640 (24%) students from 2014 to 2017.
- In total, 3,299 students received special education services in FY2017
- Specific Learning Disability (SLD) is the leading qualifying category, with 937 students receiving services.
- Significant Development Delay (SDD), Other Health Impaired (OHI), and Speech-Language Impairment (SL) are the next three highest categories.

The Richmond County School System utilizes a variety of interventions for service delivery to students who are struggling academically, both IEP and non-IEP students. The RCK12 Pyramid of Interventions is a four-tier service delivery model that focuses on increased support across a continuum of services as follows:

- Tier 1: Standards-Based Instruction: Utilizes the general curriculum and instructional model approved for use in the district. Essentially, no additional supports are implemented.
- Tier 2: Data Driven Targeted Instruction: Small group instruction (no more than seven students) is utilized. Intervention strategies include a variety of programs in English language arts including iReady, Pearson Intervention, and virtual school (specific interventions will vary by content area). Progress monitoring is completed once monthly.
- Tier 3: SST Driven Instruction: Small group instruction of no more than three students. Individually assigned and needs based intervention is the focus of Tier 3. Sample programs include iReady, Start Up, and Build Up. Progress monitoring is completed every two weeks.
- Tier 4: Special Education: Individually determined instructional programs delivered via an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

With 3,299 students identified as receiving special education services, of which 937 are identified as Specific Learning Disability, reviewers would expect to see Tier 2 and 3 services provided to students in district classrooms. During brief classroom visits to 392 classrooms across the district, reviewers noted evidence of differentiated instruction present in 13% of classrooms visited. Since small group work is the cornerstone of Tier 2 and 3 services, reviewers looked for evidence of small group work. Of the classrooms visited, small group work was present in 19% of classrooms, while whole group instruction was present in 68% of classrooms. Reviewers noted that, in those classrooms where students were working in small groups, the assignments in the small group were identical to those of the rest of the class, so no differentiation of curriculum or instruction was observed. The small group was simply a seating arrangement for the class (see [Finding 3.3](#)).

The *Special Education Department Improvement Plan* includes a performance measure to “Implement rigorous and relevant curriculum and instruction to provide a foundation to maximize student achievement and prepare students to be College and Career Ready.” One of the components of reaching this goal is to ensure that the curriculum for special education needs is available to all teachers. District staff explained that special education is in the middle of a three-year plan to revise the curriculum to include specially designed instruction.

Another Department of Special Education action step to help meet the goal to implement rigorous and relevant curriculum and instruction is to work with other departments (including English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) to ensure staff assigned to work with students with disabilities have access to instructional resources to improve outcomes for all students. While laudable as a goal and action step, comments made by district staff revealed the extent to which educators within the district are faced with difficulties as they attempt to meet the academic needs of students in the classroom. Many of the following comments heard by reviewers during interviews with district administrators and teachers are related to the overwhelming number of students requiring special services and a lack of available staff to serve the children.

- “Staffing for increasing special enrollment is lagging behind the need.” (Building Administrator)
- “We used to have a bigger department [for special education] and it has been downsized because of our budget. It has impacted our department in the special education curriculum.” (District Administrator)
- “Nobody wants to sign up to be the inclusion class because that is nine additional students with IEPs; sometimes we may have another teacher there for only four hours. No professional development to the extent that they need to be effective; special education segments and scheduling common planning is difficult because of the schedule.” (Building Administrator)
- “No, we are not meeting the needs of the special ed. kids. Thirty-five kids with 1.5 teachers to cover self-contained and pull-out. It’s under staffed.” (Building Administrator)

- “The class sizes in Richmond County are very large which make it difficult for the teachers to instruct giving small group instruction.” (Teacher Survey)
- “Response to Intervention is done with fidelity in the earlier grades. [However,] students are entering 6th grade with significant deficits in Reading and Mathematics, but received A’s and B’s all throughout elementary school. Their grades do not correlate with I-Ready Assessments or State Assessments at the end of the year. With this being said we have way too many students below grade level when they reach middle school.” (Teacher Survey)
- “I am overwhelmed by the number of students that I have to see in a single day. I teach both pullout and collaboratively and feel that due to the number of students I teach, I cannot give each student the time and individualized instruction they require.” (Teacher Survey)

The Richmond County School System has seen an increase in the number of students qualifying for special education services over the past four years. The number of students identified with Specific Learning Disabilities has increased the most dramatically. To address student learning needs, the district utilizes a four-tier model of intervention supports, with increasing levels of direct support as needed on a pupil-by-pupil basis. To help address the increased burden on the district staff, the Department of Special Education has outlined goals in its improvement plan to make specialized curricula needs more readily available to teachers via Rubicon Atlas, and provide professional learning to district staff focused on meeting the needs of special education students in the general education classroom.

The successful implementation of both improvement plan action steps should help provide necessary resources to teachers and building administrators to meet the learning needs of special education students. However, the concern remains whether students who qualify for special education services are receiving all the supports they require to be successful in the Richmond County School System. Reports from district staff indicate that overcrowded classrooms create an impediment to providing needed services, particularly small group or individualized instruction. Additionally, in the absence of differentiated instructional strategies, student specialized learning needs are not met in the general education classroom. See [Finding 3.2](#) for a full description of the ramifications and discussion of potential equity issues related to special education programming.

Summary

Reviewers examined both the Gifted and Talented and Special Education programs with a focus on the potential consequences of increased enrollment in both programs. Reviewers noted that both programs have experienced increased enrollments. While the Gifted and Talented program has focused its efforts recently on increasing numbers to approach state averages, the Special Education program focus has been on addressing accessibility to the curriculum and instructional resources to support teachers and building administrators. Reviewers determined that the increase in enrollment in both programs has resulted in a potential equity issue related to availability of services to meet the specialized learning needs of these student populations. While the causes for these potential equity issues vary, that access to programs must be made available to students regardless of their school of attendance, number of children in the program, or availability of staffing in a particular department/school (see [Recommendations 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7](#)).

STANDARD 3: The School District Demonstrates Internal Consistency and Rational Equity in Its Program Development and Implementation.

A school system meeting this System Review standard is able to show how its program has been created as the result of a systematic identification of deficiencies in the achievement and growth of its students compared to measurable standards of pupil learning.

In addition, a school system meeting this standard is able to demonstrate that it possesses a focused and coherent approach toward defining curriculum and that, as a whole, it is more effective than the sum of its parts, i.e., any arbitrary combinations of programs or schools do not equate to the larger school system entity.

The purpose of having a school system is to obtain the educational and economic benefits of a coordinated and focused program for students, both to enhance learning, which is complex and multi-year in its dimensions, and to employ economies of scale where applicable.

What the Reviewers Expected to Find in the Richmond County School System:

The CMSi reviewers expected to find a highly-developed, articulated, and coordinated curriculum in the school system that was effectively monitored by the administrative and supervisory staffs at the central and site levels. Common indicators are:

- Documents/sources that reveal internal connections at different levels in the system;
- Predictable consistency through a coherent rationale for content delineation within the curriculum;
- Equity of curriculum/course access and opportunity;
- Allocation of resource flow to areas of greatest need;
- A curriculum that is clearly explained to members of the teaching staff and building-level administrators and other supervisory personnel;
- Specific professional development programs to enhance curricular design and delivery;
- A curriculum that is monitored by central office and site supervisory personnel; and
- Teacher and administrator responsiveness to school board policies, currently and over time.

Overview of What the Reviewers Found in the Richmond County School System:

This section is an overview of the findings that follow in the area of Standard Three. Details follow within separate findings.

The district does not have a comprehensive plan in place that drives decision making about professional learning program design, delivery, and program evaluation. Professional learning is offered by many central office staff and school-based staff, which sometimes leads to conflicting messages about programming and expectations. Various perceptions of the effectiveness and efficiency of professional learning exist. The vision of professional learning is clouded by inconsistencies in communication among teaching and administrative staff.

Inconsistencies in the allocation of staff and resources have led to inequities throughout the school system. Funding and resources for Gifted and Talented, Special Education, and English as a Second Language programs are distributed inequitably, often impacting student achievement negatively. Inconsistencies in the allocation of library books and computers were identified. Student suspension rates varied between schools based on socioeconomic levels. Placement of waiver teachers in lower performing schools also leads to inequities.

The reviewers also found inconsistencies between what administrators believe is taking place in classrooms and what is actually taking place in classrooms. Monitoring of curriculum delivery is inconsistent. Data collected proved these inconsistencies exist at schools throughout the district and at each instructional level in the core subject areas.

Board policy directs professional learning for the district. The district Professional Learning Plan is not an effective document to guide professional learning on a daily basis. Information pertaining to the characteristics of an effective professional learning plan was not included in the professional learning plan but was found in various other documents submitted for the reviewers to study. Administrator and teacher feelings about professional learning programming varied. The district provides many professional learning programs opportunities, most of which focus on digital learning and teaching and learning. Teaching and learning workshops and seminars focus on effective instruction but usually did not include wording in the course description pertaining to rigorous teaching and learning and higher level thinking skills. Processes and procedures for monitoring the implementation of curriculum were not found in professional learning activities.

Inconsistencies in program implementation, district staffing practices, and programming for smaller groups within the student enrollment lead to inequities throughout the school district. Instructional resources, library books, and computers were found to be inequitably distributed to schools, especially those enrolling students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Students in Special Education and Gifted and Talented programs are often not engaged in instructional programs designed to address their specific learning needs. The percentage of students suspended from school was higher in lower performing schools.

Study of student artifacts indicated that most instructional programming did not demonstrate higher levels of thinking and/or rigorous instruction at any of the instructional levels, elementary, middle, or high school.

Classroom visitation data clearly show that district administrators' expectations that classrooms instruction is rigorous and promotes higher level thinking are not transferred to classroom instruction. Written learning standards were not consistently evident in classrooms. Very little evidence of differentiation and small group instruction was evident in classrooms across the district.

Finding 3.1: The district offers an array of professional learning opportunities; however, a comprehensive professional learning plan is not in place to provide long-range direction, system coordination, and evaluation in terms of desired student achievement.

Professional learning is the primary vehicle to achieve the overall purpose of improving teacher effectiveness and increasing student achievement. Quality professional development is research-based, driven by data, individualized to allow for differentiation for both the teacher and the learner, and provides all staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the needs of a diverse student population. A well-planned professional learning program is an essential component of a district's efforts to achieve its mission and goals and to connect curriculum design and classroom delivery. A high quality program results from a comprehensive professional development plan that addresses short-term and long-range needs. To be comprehensive, a professional learning plan must be linked to district goals, aligned with identified needs, include a district planning process, incorporate long-term implementation, and provide opportunities for meaningful practice and follow-up. Professional learning needs to be well defined and coordinated at the district level, with a limited number of focus areas at any given time and opportunities to revisit key areas of training from one year to the next to provide depth to the learning and move it from an awareness level into standard practice. Effective professional learning programs are focused on the delivery of curriculum and include multiple evaluation methods to evaluate effectiveness in terms of results attained. In addition, a quality professional learning program includes a systemic feedback process designed to gather data to inform the direction of the program and the training. Furthermore, quality professional development is critical to ensuring teachers are effectively trained to deliver instruction that is at the identified cognitive level to assure students achieve mastery of Georgia's academic standards and can demonstrate such mastery on district and state assessments.

A comprehensive professional learning plan incorporates long-range planning to guide the district in a direction that is aligned with identified district expectations and is coordinated among district departments and schools. The comprehensive plan is measured and evaluated in terms of student achievement outcomes. The most successful professional learning programs articulate and communicate to staff a clear, focused mission and vision. The program begins with a focused needs assessment by analyzing data to determine strengths and weaknesses in curriculum delivery and to establish a starting point for the initial planning phase. Training should be job-embedded and offer a variety of delivery models that will mirror expectations for delivery of

classroom instruction at the necessary depth and complexity aligned with the expectations of the Georgia academic standards. Professional learning starts with a clear purpose aligned with identified needs and must be relevant and meaningful. Additionally, good professional development models the instructional strategies expected to demonstrate to learners what a quality classroom environment looks and feels like. It requires policy guidance and should be inclusive of all employee groups. Monitoring is a key component; measuring the success of the training is critical to its direct impact on student achievement and intended results.

To determine the adequacy and effectiveness of the professional learning program in the Richmond County School System, the reviewers examined board policies, job descriptions, and district planning documents and interviewed district administrators and teachers about professional learning development, planning, and programing in the district.

Reviewers found there was no policy to provide direction and an absence of a comprehensive plan to guide and inform professional development in the Richmond County School System. Implementation of professional learning is inadequate in design to determine if desired improvements in measured student achievement are being obtained. Professional learning activities across the school system are not clearly aligned to district goals or priorities. There is no indication that teacher evaluation results or student achievement data have been used systematically in prioritizing professional learning needs or evaluating the effectiveness of professional learning activities.

Reviewers examined board policies to identify direction and expectations regarding professional learning. The following board policies address professional development.

- *Board Policy IDA: Basic Program* states, “The Board of Education shall encourage and support professional staff development as it relates to curriculum implementation.” It was noted that *Policy IDA* encourages but does not require professional learning in the school district.
- *Board Policy GAD: Professional Learning Opportunities* recognized the importance of establishing, coordinating, and maintaining professional learning programs that address the assessed needs of all students and school personnel. This policy directs the superintendent to include professional learning as a major component of a system-level strategic plan and to appoint a Professional Learning Director. The superintendent is also required to report to the board annually describing progress in meeting goals of a comprehensive learning plan.
- *Board Policy GAMA: Drug-Free Workplace* states, “The school system shall provide such professional learning activities as required by state or federal law to inform employees of the dangers of drug abuse, the availability of employee assistance and drug counseling and treatment and the terms of this policy.”
- *Board Policy BBBC: Board Member Development Opportunities* encourages board members to keep abreast of educational trends, in part, by attending workshops, seminars, and conventions of the Georgia School Boards Association.

Overall, board policies of the Richmond County School System communicate a clear expectation for professional learning in the school system that is funded, included as a component of the district’s strategic plan, and coordinated by a Director of Professional Learning. Board policies, however, did not communicate expectations for:

- Professional learning needs to be identified, prioritized, and coordinated at the district, school, and individual level.
- Professional learning needs to be based on an analysis of student achievement results and aggregated professional summative evaluations.
- Professional learning opportunities to be designed to train staff in the effective delivery of the adopted curriculum.
- Results of professional learning initiatives to be evaluated based on increased student achievement.

- An ongoing program of professional learning designed to identify and solve problems of bias in all aspects of school programming.

Reviewers also examined job descriptions of district personnel to determine what district expectations are relative to professional learning planning and implementation. District administrators, building administrators and teachers all serve distinctive roles in the design and delivery of instruction to students. Inherent in each position is an expectation of how the individual shall meet the district expectations of the position held. Listed below in [Exhibit 3.1.1](#) is a listing of job descriptions that reference professional development, a brief summary of the roles and responsibilities of each, and an indication if the responsibilities are considered essential.

Exhibit 3.1.1

Job Descriptions: Roles and Responsibilities Related to Professional Learning Richmond County School System October 2017

Job Title	Roles and Responsibilities	Essential Job Duty
Assistant Superintendent (Area I, II, and III)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the planning, coordination, delivery, and monitoring of professional learning and school improvement with the purpose of enhancing student achievement. • Assumes responsibility for additional strategic and tactical assignments, initiatives, and programs from time to time as designated by the Superintendent of Schools (e.g. technology, magnet programs, professional learning, teacher presentation and reader evaluations programs, system accreditation). 	
Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Associate Superintendent oversees the instructional programs including all curriculum such as Pre-K and CTAE, Technology, Student Services, Specialist Education, Title I, Professional Learning... • Develop, implement, and supervise staff professional development to be aligned with all district curriculum initiatives. • Develop, oversee and evaluate school system plans for federal programs, curriculum development, professional development... • Works collaboratively with Human Resources on the professional development of all educators to ensure staff is highly qualified and highly effective. 	Y
Director of Professional Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The coordinator of staff/professional learning works with central office and schools to set staff/professional learning priorities to meet the needs of staff; manages the professional development teacher program; develops and disseminates innovative and successful school improvement practices; coordinates system-wide professional learning initiatives and activities through the implantation of a comprehensive training calendar; serves as a liaison to other offices and departments on professional learning needs; and assists the superintendent or designee on other school system initiatives. 	Y
Director of Curriculum and Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides leadership in design and delivery of professional development training activities for principals, teachers, and support staff to promote innovative teaching approaches and techniques. Provides support and guidance to in-service instructors and coordinators. 	Y
Director of CTAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes recommendations to the Superintendent regarding long-term planning for professional learning with respect to the vocational education programs in Richmond County. 	Y
Director of Title I/GA Pre-K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for planning and supervising appropriate in-service activities for program staff. 	

Exhibit 3.1.1 (continued) Job Descriptions: Roles and Responsibilities Related to Professional Learning Richmond County School System October 2017		
Job Title	Roles and Responsibilities	Essential Job Duty
Instructional Technology Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducts workshops, seminars, conferences and training sessions with school staff to increase knowledge of hardware, software, networking and telecommunications for successful implementation into the instructional program. 	Y
Middle School Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides Professional Learning that supports the School Improvement Plan by collaboratively identifying the professional learning needs of the staff. 	
Assistant Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists with identification of professional learning needs and the development and implementation of a school improvement plan to meet those needs. 	
Professional Learning Facilitator for Leader Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans, conducts, and evaluates professional development activities throughout the RCSS for teachers. Works cooperatively with Director of Professional Development and School Improvement, Superintendent, and other appropriate administrators in identifying and projecting staff needs and providing training to support identified needs. 	Y

As can be noted from [Exhibit 3.1.1](#):

- Within various job descriptions there are expectations that professional learning activities will be planned, implemented, and evaluated.
- Several positions are charged with responsibilities associated with developing and delivering professional learning.
- The Director of Professional Learning is responsible for coordinating professional learning efforts.
- The Professional Learning Facilitator is responsible for planning professional learning activities.
- There is no clear expectation that professional learning will be monitored in terms of professional practices or evaluated in terms of improved student achievement.
- Based on the job descriptions reviewed, there is an expectation that professional learning will align with curriculum initiatives, but there is no clear expectation that professional learning will be aligned with district goals.

Planning

Reviewers were presented with a *District Improvement Plan for the Professional Learning School Improvement Division*, which was represented as the district's professional learning plan. To determine the adequacy of the professional learning plan, reviewers compared the district's professional learning plan against 18 characteristics of a comprehensive professional learning program. An "X" in the "Adequate" column indicates that the characteristic was met. "Partial" indicates that not all parts of a characteristic were present. An "X" in the "Inadequate" column indicates that the characteristic was not met. In order for the district's professional learning plan to be considered adequate, the district's approach to professional learning must demonstrate 13 (70%) of the characteristics of a comprehensive professional learning program. The reviewers' assessment of the district's professional development program is presented in [Exhibit 3.1.2](#).

Exhibit 3.1.2

Curriculum Management Improvement Model Professional Learning Criteria Reviewers' Assessment of Professional Learning Program Richmond County School System October 2017

Characteristics	Reviewers' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
Policy		
1. Has policy that directs staff development efforts.	Partial*	
2. Fosters an expectation for professional growth.	X	
3. Is for all employees.	X	
Planning and Design		
4. Is based on a careful analysis of data and is data-driven.		X
5. Provides for system-wide coordination and has a clearinghouse function in place.		X
6. Provides the necessary funding to carry out professional development goals.	X	
7. Has a current plan that provides a framework for integrating innovations related to mission.		X
8. Has a professional development mission in place.	Partial*	
9. Is built using a long-range planning approach.		X
10. Provides for organizational, unit, and individual development in a systemic manner.	Partial*	
11. Focuses on organizational change—staff development efforts are aligned to district goals.		X
Delivery		
12. Is based on proven research-based approaches that have been shown to increase productivity.		X
13. Provides for three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.	Partial*	
14. Is based on human learning and development and adult learning.		X
15. Uses a variety of professional development approaches.	X	
16. Provides for follow-up and on-the-job application necessary to ensure improvement.		X
17. Expects each supervisor to be a staff developer of staff supervised.	Partial*	
Evaluation		
18. Requires an evaluation of process that is ongoing, includes multiple sources of information, focuses on all levels of the organization, and is based on actual change in behavior.		X
Total	4	14
Percentage	22%	
*Partial ratings are tallied as inadequate.		
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Reviewers found the Richmond County School System professional learning program to be not yet adequate. As shown in Exhibit 3.1.2, the Richmond County School System's professional learning program was rated adequate on four (22%) of the 18 criteria and inadequate on 14 (78%) of the 18 characteristics. Details regarding the reviewers' assessment of each characteristic follow:

Characteristic 1: Has policy that directs professional learning efforts

This characteristic was rated partially adequate. The reviewers examined several board policies that gave some direction concerning professional learning. *Board Policy GAD* establishes an expectation that the district's strategic plan and individual school improvement plans include professional learning as a major component. While there is a clear expectation for professional learning in the Richmond County School System, board policies were considered weak regarding guidance in how to select, prioritize, and coordinate professional learning activities. Policies also did not have an expectation requiring evaluation of the effectiveness of professional learning to be based on student achievement.

Characteristic 2: Fosters an expectation for professional growth

This characteristic was rated adequate. Reviewers note that there is value placed on professional learning that addresses the needs of all students and staff and enhances the skills and knowledge of school system personnel that directly relate to improving student achievement. Board policies communicate an expectation for professional learning, although they were considered weak in communicating expectations for how professional learning will be planned, coordinated, and evaluated. District job descriptions establish roles and responsibilities associated with planning, developing, coordinating, and delivering of professional learning. The Professional Learning School Improvement Division plan established an expectation that district employees will participate in 20 hours of job-embedded professional learning yearly.

Characteristic 3: For all employees

This characteristic was rated adequate. Documents provided reviewers communicate an expectation that all district employees are to participate in ongoing professional learning. *Board Policy GAD* establishes the importance of professional learning for all school and system personnel. The Professional Learning School Improvement Division plan includes as an action step providing professional learning opportunities for all district employees. Job descriptions, however, were inconsistent in communicating expectations that employees in named positions participate in their own ongoing professional development.

Characteristic 4: Based on data and is data-driven

This characteristic was rated inadequate. No evidence that professional learning goals or course offerings have been developed in response to student achievement data, performance evaluation data, or classroom data was found in documents provided reviewers. While the Professional Learning School Improvement Division plan lists as an action step examining comprehensive needs assessments, school improvement, and professional learning plans, no documentation was found indicating what data were used to prepare the current professional learning plan. The current professional learning plan lists a variety of data that are to be collected by district leaders; however, the majority of the data listed are in the form of sign-in sheets, surveys, meeting agendas, and mentor logs, with only one mention of student data. Although school improvement plans provided performance measures, none documented how the professional learning activities listed were identified or selected in response to specific student learning data. There is no policy expectation that all professional learning programs will be based on student academic achievement needs, and there was no evidence that professional learning activities have been evaluated in terms of student achievement.

Characteristic 5: System-wide coordination with a clearinghouse function

This characteristic was rated inadequate. Reviewers found no overall coordination of professional learning initiatives or activities across the district. There is, within *Board Policy GAD*, an expectation that the Professional Learning Director will be responsible for coordinating the professional learning program. The job description for the Director of Professional Learning assigns responsibility for coordinating system-wide professional learning initiatives and activities through the implantation of a comprehensive training calendar. Although there is a policy expectation and a role charged with coordinating professional learning across the school district, there is no evidence that the coordination of professional learning has taken place to ensure a focus on district goals, avoid duplication of efforts, ensure consistency of focus, and avoid overloading individual staff members with unrealistic professional learning expectations and/or schedules.

Characteristic 6: Provides necessary funding

This characteristic was rated adequate. District budget documents and school improvement plans indicate funds have been allocated for professional development activities. School improvement plans primarily indicate the use of Title I funds to support site-based professional learning initiatives. The Professional Learning School Improvement Division plan does not contain any language related to funding necessary to implement the various action steps listed.

Characteristic 7: Plan providing a framework

This characteristic was rated inadequate. While the Professional Learning School Improvement Division plan is presented as the district's professional learning plan, there is a catalog of professional learning opportunities, and school improvement plans include professional learning activities, no written framework for professional development is in place that explicitly linked district student achievement goals and priorities to professional learning activities. Because there was no comprehensive professional learning plan or system-wide coordination and a clearinghouse function, the district is limited in its ability to focus district professional learning efforts toward achieving specific goals. No expectation was found in board policy or administrative regulations requiring the development of a framework for professional development.

Characteristic 8: Has a professional learning mission in place

This characteristic was rated partially adequate. On the district's website, reviewers found posted a mission of professional learning that states, "To provide quality job embedded professional learning for all employees to enhance and refine their knowledge and skills to advance student achievement," which paraphrases a statement found in *Board Policy GAD*. Reviewers found no evidence indicating how this mission statement has been translated into a focus for the district's professional learning efforts. The mission statement is not referenced in the fall 2017 Professional Learning Catalogue, nor was it referenced in the Professional Learning School Improvement Division plan.

Characteristic 9: Is built using a long-range planning approach

This characteristic was rated inadequate. Although the Professional Learning School Improvement Division plan identifies performance measure targets for a three-year period, all listed plan activities are for the current plan year only. Reviewers found no evidence of a multi-year approach to planning for professional learning in the Richmond County School System. No policy expectation is in place requiring a multi-year approach to professional learning planning. No job descriptions were found requiring those responsible for planning professional learning to take a multi-year approach to the planning.

Characteristic 10: Provides for organizational, unit, and individual development

This characteristic was rated partially adequate. The district provides an extensive catalog of professional learning opportunities in which teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and retired teachers may participate. A cadre of professional learning facilitators, professional learning specialists, and content area coordinators are available to provide professional learning support at individuals schools and for individual teachers who may be struggling. Reviewers found no organizational structures in place for coordinating professional learning at the district, campus, or individual level.

Characteristic 11: Professional development efforts are focused on organizational change

This characteristic was rated inadequate. Reviewers noted references in board policy communicating an expectation that professional learning is to enhance the skills and knowledge of school system personnel that directly relate to improving student achievement. In terms of alignment between professional learning plan initiatives and district strategic initiatives, reviewers noted incongruencies. For example, the professional learning division plan lists as an initiatives providing training for employees to engage in professional learning communities, but there is no corresponding initiative listed in the district's strategic plan. The lack of congruence among strategic initiatives and actions often results in a fragmented system that may not be tightly focused on accomplishing desired goals. In district, department, and school improvement plans, no statements were found that related desired change, in professional practices to improved student achievement.

Characteristic 12: Training is based on proven research-based approaches

This characteristic was rated inadequate. Reviewers found no direct or indirect references to a research-based professional development approach in district documents. Reviewers were provided with no documentation that would indicate any specific professional development initiatives or activities had been selected based on effectiveness in improving professional practice and, ultimately, improving student academic achievement, particularly for students who are not meeting rigorous academic standards.

Characteristic 13: Provides initiation, implementation, and institutionalization

This characteristic was rated partially adequate. Quality professional learning begins with an initiation phase that includes orienting participants to the desired changed behavior and providing clear, rational explanations and demonstrations for the new learning. Successful implementation requires sufficient practice to ensure mastery and coaching over time so that new learning and skills are implemented with fidelity. Institutionalization requires revisiting the training over time as well as inducting new staff who have not had the training. Reviewers noted that there is in place an induction program for new teachers to the district called the SMART Induction Program, which employs trained mentors. Beyond the SMART Induction Program, reviewers were unable to determine to what degree professional learning in the Richmond County School System actually provides for initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.

Characteristic 14: Based on principles of adult learning and development

This characteristic was rated inadequate. Reviewers found no plan in place describing how professional development will be developed and delivered congruent with adult learning theory or designed to align with the professional needs of individual teachers. Adults have firmly established attitudes and habits, and a wealth of prior information and experiences, which must be integrated with the acquisition of any new professional knowledge and skills. To support adult learners as they progress from surface compliance to deep commitment to any knowledge or practice requires internal dissonance and resolution over time. No evidence was presented by district leaders that the consideration of these factors has formed a coherent philosophy of adult learning that guides professional training in the Richmond County School System.

Characteristic 15: Uses a variety of professional learning approaches

This characteristic was rated adequate. Reviewers noted a variety of approaches to professional learning in the Richmond County School System, including large- and small-groups presentations, face-to-face coaching and mentoring, and online training opportunities. While there are a variety of approaches in place for delivery of professional learning, there is no indication that district leaders have analyzed which strategies produced the best results in terms of improved professional practice and/or improved student achievement.

Characteristic 16: Provides for follow-up and on-the-job application

This characteristic was rated inadequate. Reviewers found no expectations communicated through board policies of district planning documents that professional learning initiatives exists to refine and reinforce professional practice in the classrooms. The Professional Learning School Improvement Division plan lists a variety of data sources that are to be collected, including TKES data, ELEOT observation data, formatives, student data, attendance sheets, surveys, and meeting logs, but the plan does not address how the data collected will be used refine and reinforce professional instructional practices in the classroom. While building administrators report they are regularly observing classroom instruction, using the ELEOT classroom observation tool that focuses on the extent to which learners are engaged and not on teacher performance, no plan for the use of aggregated observation data was provided.

Characteristic 17: Expects each supervisor to be a developer of staff

This characteristic was rated partially adequate. District job descriptions for supervisory personnel are inconsistent in the inclusion of responsibilities for professional learning. Several job descriptions for key leadership positions, including the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Chief Financial Officer, High School Principal, and Elementary and Middle School Principal, do not make any references to responsibilities associated with training, coaching, and professional development. Job descriptions do not have sufficient specificity regarding teaching practices, student learning, delivery of an aligned curriculum, providing staff with constructive and/or directive feedback, and monitoring progress toward changed practice.

Characteristic 18: Requires an evaluation process

This characteristic is rated inadequate. Reviewers found no evidence that the effectiveness of professional learning activities had been evaluated in terms of specific outcomes concerning teaching practices or student learning. No documentation was provided reviewers that would indicate professional development programs and activities had been assessed for quality or appropriateness.

Overall, the Professional Learning School Improvement Division plan, presented as the district's professional learning plan, is inadequate for guiding professional learning programming in pursuit of improved student achievement. Board policies and district job descriptions communicate a general expectations for professional development. A variety of professional development opportunities are provided; however, there is no coordination of professional development activities across the district, and there is no process in place for evaluating the effectiveness of professional learning activities in terms of improved instructional practices or student achievement. Only four characteristics of an a comprehensive professional development program were considered adequate.

Professional Learning Programming

Reviewers noted that a variety of professional learning opportunities have been implemented in the Richmond County School System. To determine the current focus for professional learning in the school district, reviewers compiled a list of professional learning topics listed in the Fall 2017 Professional Learning Catalog. Reviewers noted that 36 professional learning programs are scheduled to be offered, including the following categories of topics:

- Classroom Management: 3 programs (8.3%)
- Professional Learning Communities: 3 (8.3%)
- Digital Learning: 16 (44.4%)
- Teaching and Learning: 14 (38.9%)

Based on the program descriptions, five of the Teaching and Learning programs described the program content as addressing higher order thinking.

Reviewers also noted in the fall professional learning catalog program listings for administrators on professional learning communities, programs for staff who work with special education students on the identification and education of children with special needs, along with courses for teachers new to the school system, retired teachers, and paraprofessionals.

Reviewers used an anonymous online survey to solicit responses from teachers about the quality and relevance of professional development. Exhibit 3.1.3 displays a summary of the responses to the survey prompt "I consider the quality and relevance of professional development to be..."

Exhibit 3.1.3
Summary of Teacher Online Survey Responses
Related to Quality and Relevance of Professional Development
Richmond County School District
October 2017

Professional Learning Provider	Reported Quality				Total Responses
	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Poor	
District provided training by outside consultant	17% 74	25.1% 109	43.5% 189	14.5% 63	435
District provided training by district personnel	13.9% 61	23.5% 103	46.4% 203	16.2% 71	438
School provided training by principal, department head, etc.	18.4% 80	16.8% 117	47.5% 207	7.3% 32	436
State provided training or workshop	12.8% 54	26.8% 113	48.5% 204	11.9% 50	421
Out of district conferences, workshops	23.2% 96	30.5% 126	34.9% 144	11.4% 47	413
Total	17.0% 365	26.5% 568	44.1% 947	12.7% 263	2,143

As can be noted from [Exhibit 3.1.3](#):

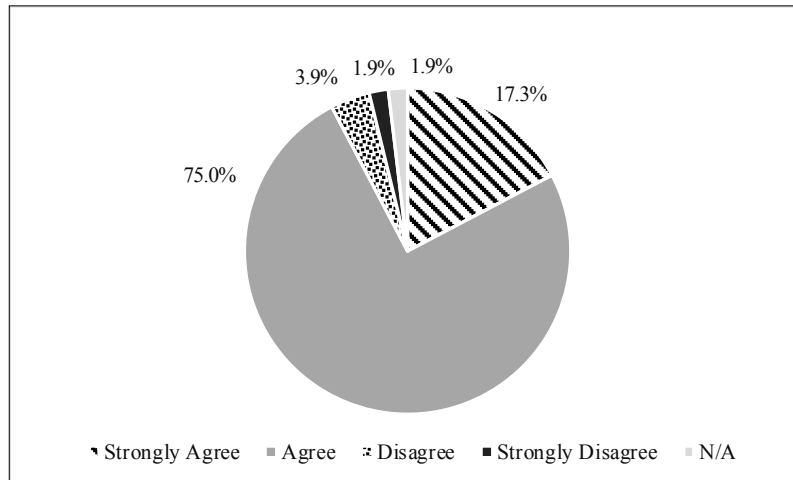
- Overall, 44.1% of teachers responding to an online survey rated the quality and relevance of professional development as “average.”
- Teachers rated the quality and relevance of professional development as poor 12.7% of the time.
- Overall, 43.5% of teachers rated the quality and relevance of professional development as “above average” or “excellent.”

Following is a representative sampling of anonymous comments submitted by teachers, along with their rating of the quality and relevance of professional development opportunities in the Richmond County School System:

- “Professional development has not been a focus for our school. We only attend the workshops that are County Wide.”
- “Conferences are an Excellent [sic] resource and way for teachers, to reignite their love for their subject matter!”
- “The district provided training goes through the material too fast to really do hands on or absorb the material.”
- “Professional development quality fluctuates.”
- “Most district PL is poorly run. We were given a PL on standards-based report cards this summer and our ‘trainers’ barely knew what they were talking about and were unable to answer questions.”
- “I selected average for district provided training, but some particular sessions have been very good and others have been very poor. School based training is far more effective because it can address the specific needs of the consumers.”

Reviewers also used an anonymous online survey to solicit responses from building administrators about the sufficiency of district professional development to meet their needs. [Exhibit 3.1.4](#) displays a summary of the responses to the survey prompt “The professional development I receive in my position as a building leader sufficiently meets my needs.”

Exhibit 3.1.4
Summary of Building Administrator Online Survey Responses
Related to Sufficiency of Professional Development
Richmond County School District
October 2017



As can be noted from [Exhibit 3.1.4](#):

- The majority of building administrators (75%) agreed with the survey questions “The professional development I receive in my position as a building leader sufficiently meets my needs.”
- Indicating they “strongly agreed” with the statement the professional development they were receiving sufficiently meets their needs was 17.3% of building administrators responding to an online survey.

Following is a representative sampling of anonymous comments submitted by building administrators along with their response regarding the sufficiency of the professional development they are receiving in the Richmond County School System:

- “Sometimes it’s a lot of information at once, I need to learn to manage my time better so that I can digest it all.”
- “There are too many things put on your plate at one time.”
- “Professional development is completely insufficient; most of the professional development sessions that administrators attend consists [sic] of PowerPoint presentations that read to the audience. Critical issues and/or concerns are not addressed or briefly addressed.”
- “I have not been able to choose professional learning for myself in many years due to budget. Richmond County does a good job of trying to do PL here, but I would like to get ideas and knowledge from others outside of the county.”

Reviewers conducted interviews with teachers, building administrators, and district administrators. During interviews reviewers received a number of comments about professional learning in the Richmond County School System. The following comments are typical of those received by reviewers:

- “When we provide professional learning for differentiated instruction teachers don’t attend. The implementation piece is not a part of it. We don’t necessarily monitor and evaluate.” (Central Office Administrator).
- “Professional learning has been a little challenging for us with principals who don’t want to participate.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “We haven’t for years done professional learning in a way that is effective.” (Building Administrator)

- “Almost all professional learning is done through the ‘Trainer of Trainers’ model... Teachers reading from a PowerPoint presentation. No follow-up for professional learning.” (Building Administrator)
- “Professional learning is redundant. Should be differentiated. It feels like you are punching a ticket sometimes.” (Building Administrator)
- “It seems we always get trained after whatever is started. We are always in catch-up (mode).” (Building Administrator)
- “Professional learning generated from the district is a waste of time.” (Building Administrator).
- “We forget that new people need the background and training on the changes and initiatives that are taking place.” (Building Administrator)
- “It seems like we have professional learning...so there’s a box that can be checked off.” (Teacher)
- “High school teachers need time to collaborate and/or have professional learning that is meaningful to them.” (Teacher)
- “We need to get good professional development BEFORE something is implemented.” (Teacher)

Summary

Overall, there is a variety of professional learning provided in the Richmond County School System. The professional learning system that is currently in place does not have a sufficient system-wide focus to improve the delivery of curriculum or student achievement. While there is a professional learning department plan, which functions as the district’s professional learning plan, it was found insufficient to function as a comprehensive long-range plan to guide professional learning in the school district. There is no documentation that teacher evaluation results, student achievement data, or program results have been used in planning professional learning activities or evaluating professional learning activities (see [Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7](#)).

Finding 3.2: Current practices in the Richmond County School System are leading to inequities among the schools in the areas of teacher assignment, Gifted and Talented, and the distribution of resources. In addition, the distribution of Title I funds has created an inequitable system of funding.

The concept of equity is distinguished from equality in an important way. Equality refers to treating people the exact same way, or impartially, while equity refers to a state of fairness that may require inequalities. In other words, equity treatment means treating un-equals unequally until they are equal. For example, under a state of equality, children with greater needs receive the same as children with fewer needs – they are treated equally. But under a state of equity, students with greater needs receive greater attention and resources to make up for the difference with children who begin with more. Equity is the more relevant and important aspect of educational success in effective school systems. These school systems recognize that if students are all treated the same, regardless of their individual challenges and needs, some of those students will be limited in their opportunities to succeed. Providing children with equal opportunities in a spirit of equity may, in fact, mean that resources and attention must be divided unequally.

The concepts of equity and equality may become blurred in a system such as the Richmond County School System where the district is a majority-minority district and where nearly all students qualify for free or reduced priced meals. Quite often inequalities may be hidden in the data and unrecognizable at first glance. To better understand the expectations for equity in the Richmond County School System, the reviewers examined board policy, regulations, planning documents, curriculum documents, and other documents.

Reviewers found the Richmond County School System has students with limited access to resources such as advanced courses, Gifted and Talented services, computers, and library books. The system also has an inequitable distribution system for waiver teachers that put the neediest students in classrooms with the most inexperienced teachers. Finally, the distribution of Title I funds is done through an equal distribution and has created an inequitable situation in the system.

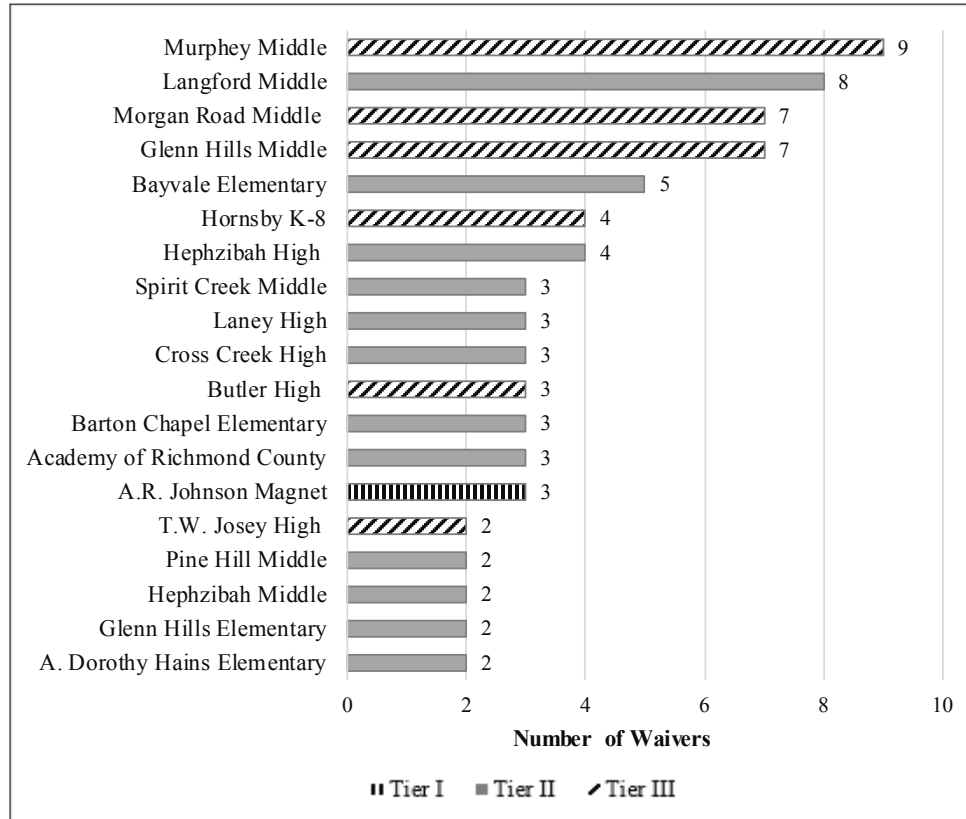
Board policies provide little guidance regarding equity in the Richmond County School System. Reviewers noted *Board Policy JAA: Equal Educational Opportunities* stated, “It is the policy of the Richmond County Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, race, disability, religion, or national origin in the educational programs and activities.” Also, *Board Policy IDA: Basic Program* states, “It is policy of the Richmond County Board of Education to provide a comprehensive Richmond County K-12 curriculum, instruction and assessment program (RCK12) to serve the educational needs of the System’s students.”

Waiver Teachers

Waiver teachers are teachers who have not completed all certification requirements for a teaching certificate in the state of Georgia. Waivers are good for one year and are non-renewable. At the time of the system review, the Richmond County School System employed 95 waiver teachers. Reviewers compared the number of waiver teachers by school to each school’s Tier level. Under the provisions of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, school improvement funds are focused on each state’s Tier I and Tier II schools. Tier I schools are the lowest achieving 5% of the state’s Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. Tier II schools are the lowest achieving 5% of the state’s secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds. Tier III schools are Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that are not identified as Tier I or Tier II schools. At the time of the review, 20 schools had one waiver teacher assigned to their faculty. The remaining 75 waiver teachers were assigned across 19 schools. [Exhibit 3.2.1](#) displays the number of waiver teachers assigned to schools receiving more than one waiver teacher, along with each school’s respective Title I tier rating.

Exhibit 3.2.1

**Waiver Teachers by Campus and Tier
Richmond County School System
October 2017**



As can be noted from [Exhibit 3.2.1](#):

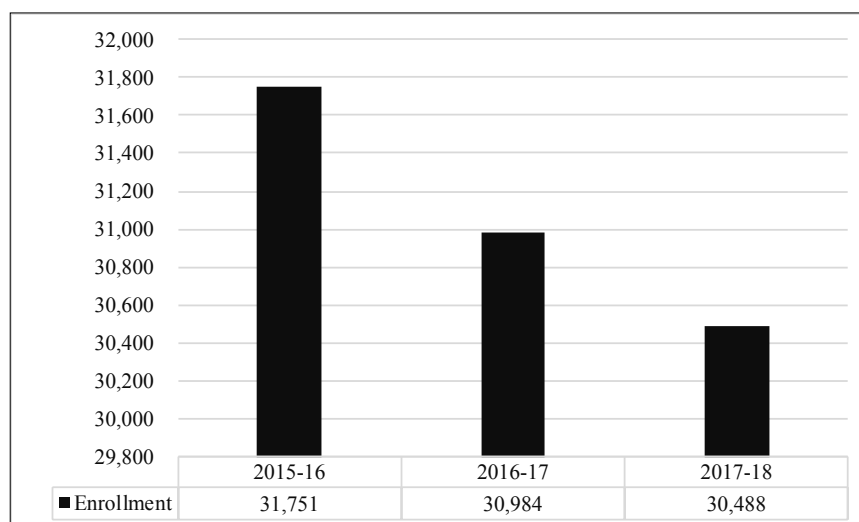
- Of all the schools receiving more than one waiver teacher, only one campus was rated as Tier I.
- Three of the four schools assigned the largest number of waiver teachers were rated as Tier III schools.

The assignment of the most inexperienced teachers to schools identified as Tier III, schools with students who need the most support, can be detrimental to the students being served.

Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Gifted and Talented Programs

Students who excel in their coursework should be allowed opportunities to do so. This may include access to programs such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Gifted and Talented (GT). Reviewers expect that access to these types of programs is open to all students and that the enrollments mirror the overall demographics of students enrolled in the school system as a whole. Too often, certain demographics within the overall school population are underrepresented in such programs. As baseline data to understand enrollment in these particular programs, reviewers examined three-year enrollment data for the district by race. [Exhibit 3.2.2](#) displays the enrollment for the past three years, and [Exhibit 3.2.3](#) examines the enrollment trends by race.

Exhibit 3.2.2
Enrollment Trends
Richmond County School System
2015-16 to 2017-18

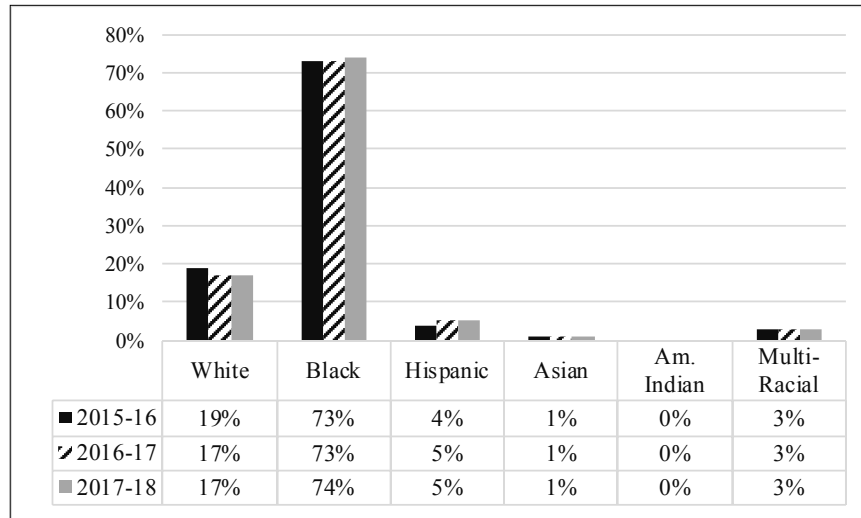


As can be noted from [Exhibit 3.2.2](#), the enrollment has steadily decreased over the last three years.

Exhibit 3.2.3 displays the enrollment by the percentages of students identifying by race.

Exhibit 3.2.3

Enrollment by Race in Percentages Richmond County School System October 2017

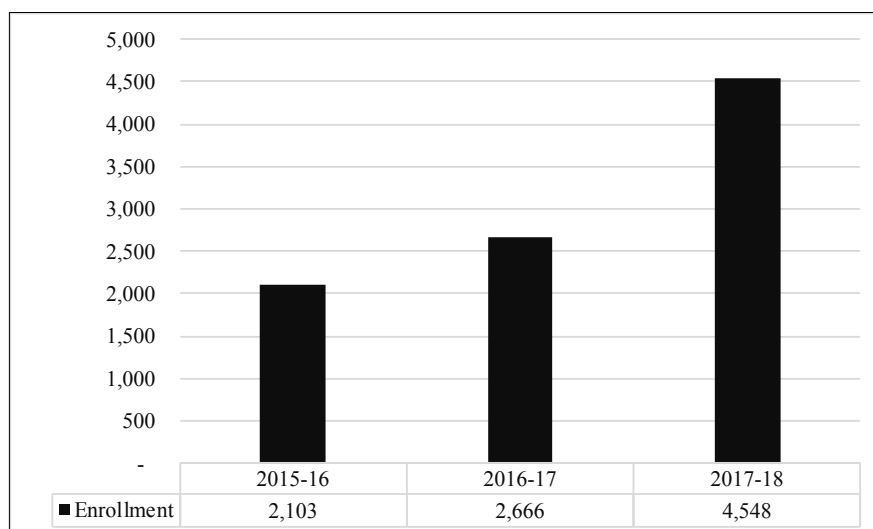


As can be noted from Exhibit 3.2.3, the demographic representation of student enrollment by race has changed little over the past three years, while overall student enrollment in the school district has declined (see Exhibit 3.2.2).

Reviewers examined enrollments trends in the district's Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. Exhibit 3.2.4 displays the three-year enrollment trend for the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs.

Exhibit 3.2.4

Enrollment Trends in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs Richmond County School System 2015-16 to 2017-18

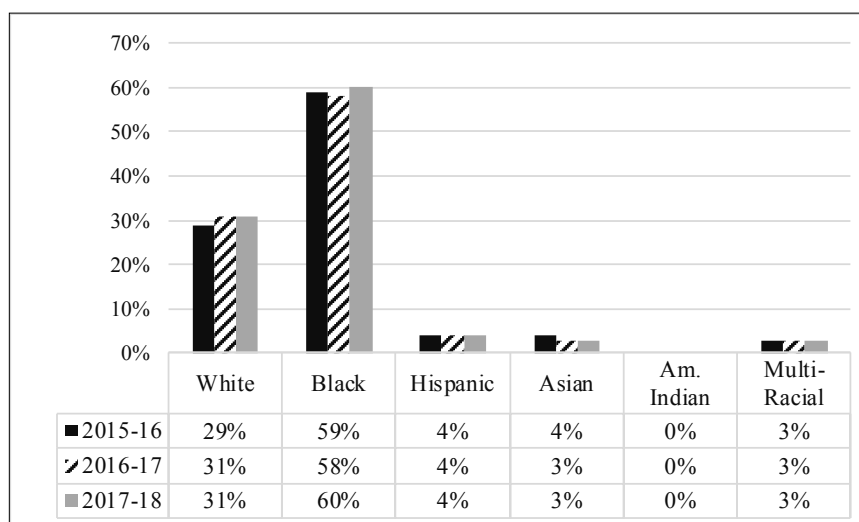


As can be noted from Exhibit 3.2.4, enrollment in the district's Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs has grown considerably over the past three years, with the largest increase noted in the past two years.

Reviewers examined the enrollment by race for the district's Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs to determine if enrollments by race reflects the racial demographics of the school system overall. [Exhibit 3.2.5](#) displays the three-year trend for enrollment in the Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs by race.

Exhibit 3.2.5

Enrollment Trends by Race in Advanced Placement And International Baccalaureate Programs Richmond County School System 2015-16 to 2017-18



As can be noted from [Exhibit 3.2.5](#):

- The breakdown of enrollment, by race, in the district's Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate Programs (IB) has remained steady for the previous three years.
- Black students, which make up more than 73% of the total district student enrollment, made up only 60% or less of the enrollment in the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs.
- White students, which make up 17% to 19% of the school district's overall total student enrollment, make up 29% to 31% of the enrollment in the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs.
- As a group, Black students are underrepresented in the district's Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs.

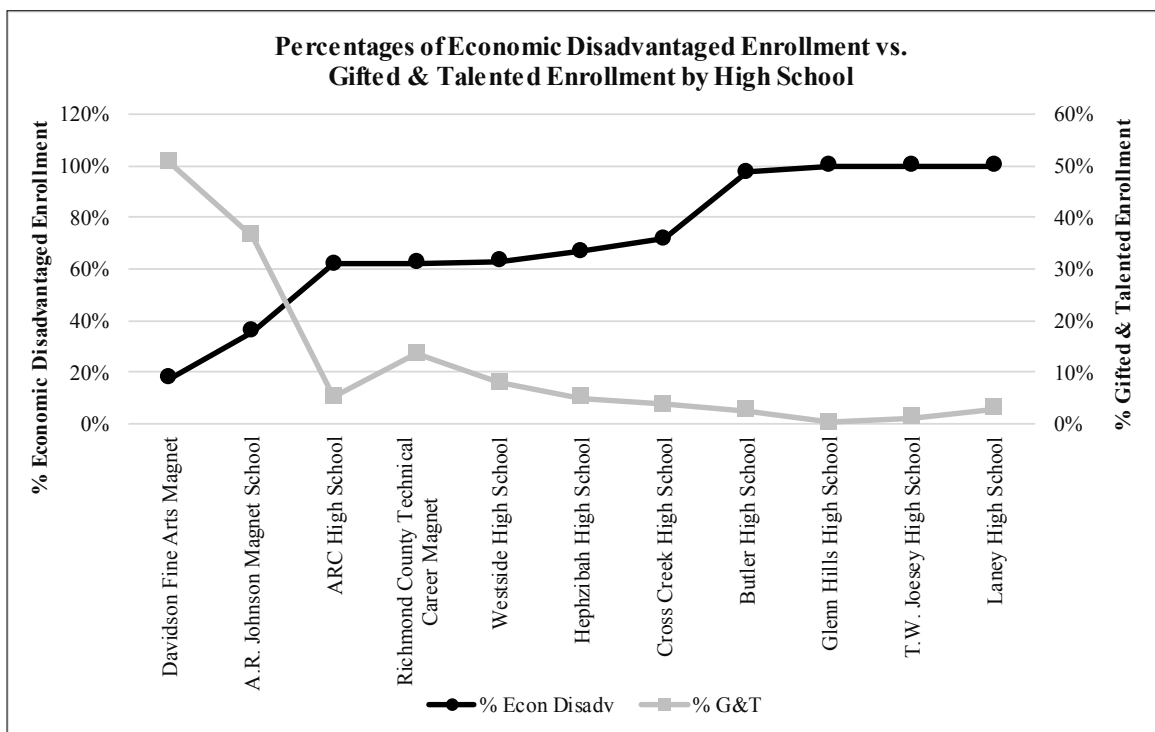
One of the actions steps in the school system's Strategic Plan is to increase post-secondary options for district students. As indicated in [Exhibit 3.2.4](#), the district has succeeded in increasing student enrollments in Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate Programs (IB). However, as indicated in [Exhibit 3.2.5](#), the district has not made progress in closing the gap in the proportion of Black students enrolled in advanced academic programs. Access to AP and IB programs help not only prepare students for college level course work but also increase the opportunities for students to college admissions. The district's strategic plan does not include sufficient detail to describe what policies and strategies have been implemented to expand the capacity of the Richmond County School System to increase enrollment of underrepresented student groups in rigorous courses, such as AP and IB, ultimately influencing their chances for success beyond high school.

Reviewers also examined whether students receiving free and reduced lunches were equally represented in the district's Gifted and Talented program. Reviewers expected to find enrollment of economically disadvantaged students in the district's Gifted and Talented program to be proportional to the percentage of all district students identified as economically disadvantaged.

In [Exhibit 3.2.6](#), reviewers compare the percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled at each high school to the percentage of students being served in each school's Gifted and Talented program.

Exhibit 3.2.6

Comparison: High School Economically Disadvantaged Students Enrollment Total Enrollment, and Gifted and Talented Program Enrollment Richmond County School System October 2017



Source: RCSS Enrollment data from Funding Report dated 10/10/2017, Percent economically disadvantaged data from Title IA School Allocation 2017, and G/T numbers from Gifted Enrollment by School 2017.

As can be noted from [Exhibit 3.2.6](#):

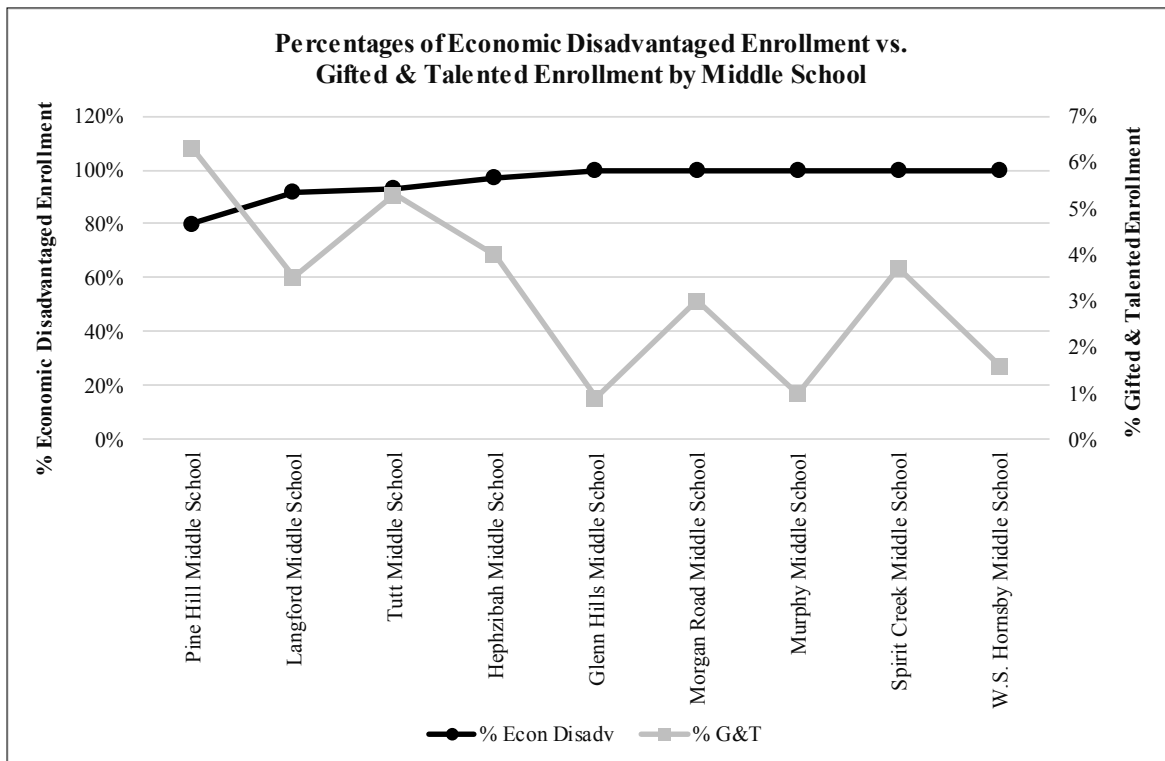
- As the percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged in a school increases, the percentage of students identified for Gifted and Talented services decreases.
- The percentage of high school students identified as economically disadvantaged ranged from a low of 17.8% at Davidson Fine Arts Magnet to 100% at Glenn Hills High School, T.W. Josey High School, and Laney High School.
- The percentage of students identified as Gifted and Talented ranged from 0.3% at Glenn Hills High School to a high of 50.6% at Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School.
- The Magnet Schools have the lowest concentration of students identified as economically disadvantaged and the highest concentration of students enrolled in Gifted and Talented services.

Reviewers found a relationship between the percent of students identified for gifted and talented services and the percent of economically disadvantaged students at the high school level. High schools with the higher percentages of economically disadvantaged students had lower numbers of students in the gifted program. Overall, reviewers found an underrepresentation of economically disadvantaged students in the high school Gifted and Talented programs.

In [Exhibit 3.2.7](#), reviewers compare the percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled at each middle school to the percentage of economically disadvantaged students being served in each school's Gifted and Talented program.

Exhibit 3.2.7

Comparison: Middle School Economically Disadvantaged Students Enrollment, Total Enrollment, and Gifted and Talented Program Enrollment Richmond County School System October 2017



Source: RCSS Enrollment data from Funding Report dated 10/10/2017, Percent economically disadvantaged data from Title IA School Allocation 2017, and G/T numbers from Gifted Enrollment by School 2017.

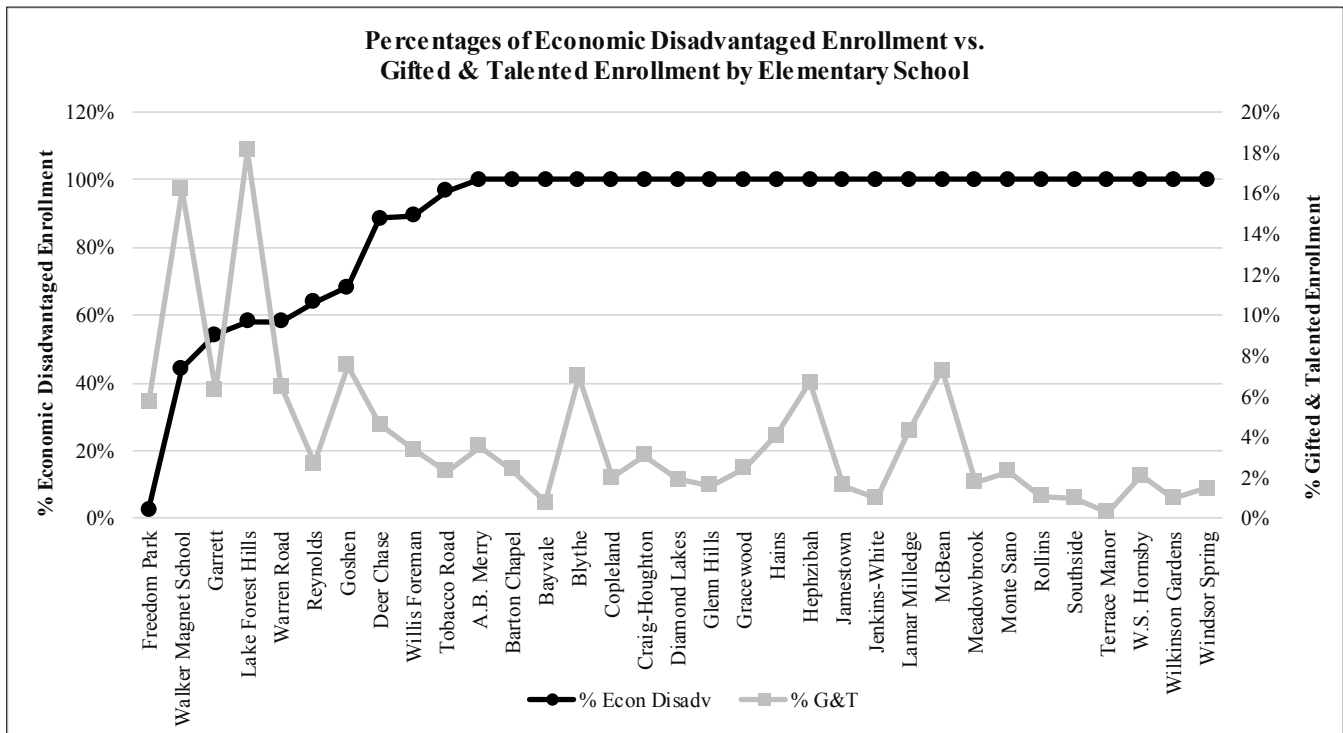
As can be noted from [Exhibit 3.2.7](#):

- The percentage of students identified for the Gifted and Talented program ranges from a low 0.9% at Glenn Hills Middle School to 6.3% at Pine Hill Middle School.
- The percentage of middle school students identified as economically disadvantaged ranged from 80.1% at Pine Hill Middle School to 100% at Glenn Hill Middle School, Morgan Road Middle School, Murphy Middle School, Spirit Creek Middle School, and W.S. Hornsby Middle School.
- In general, the percentage of students enrolled in the Gifted and Talented program decreases as the overall percentage of students in middle school increases.

Reviewers found a relationship between the percent of gifted students and the percent of economically disadvantaged students at the middle schools. The middle schools with the higher percentages of economically disadvantaged students had lower percentages of gifted students. Reviewers found an underrepresentation of economically disadvantaged middle school students in the Gifted and Talented program. In [Exhibit 3.2.8](#), reviewers compare the percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled at each elementary school to the percentage of economically disadvantaged students being served in each school's Gifted and Talented program.

Exhibit 3.2.8

Comparison: Elementary School Economically Disadvantaged Students Enrollment Total Enrollment, and Gifted and Talented Program Enrollment Richmond County School System October 2017



Source: RCSS Enrollment data from Funding Report dated 10/10/2017, Percent economically disadvantaged data from Title IA School Allocation 2017, and G/T numbers from Gifted Enrollment by School 2017.

As can be noted from [Exhibit 3.2.8](#):

- The percentage of students identified for the Gifted and Talented program ranges from a low 0.3% at Terrace Manor Elementary School to 18.1% at Lake Forest Hills Elementary School.
- The percentage of elementary school students identified as economically disadvantaged ranged from a low of 2.6% at Freedom Park Elementary School to 100% at 23 elementary schools. In general, the percentage economically disadvantaged students enrolled in the Gifted and Talented program is higher at schools with lower percentages of economically disadvantaged students enrolled.

Reviewers did not find a consistent relationship between the percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled an elementary school and the percentage of economically disadvantaged students served in the gifted and talented program. It is still apparent, however, that as the percentage of students in a school identified as economically disadvantaged increases, the number of students served in the gifted and talented program declines.

Reviewers surveyed administrators, teachers, and parents before and during the on-site visit. They also conducted face-to-face interviews with central office staff, building administrators, and teachers. The following is a representative sample of the comment reviewers received about the district's Gifted and Talented program enrollment.

- “We have increased the number of students identified for gifted services.” (Central Office Administrator).
- “Once kids are identified as gifted – they tend to transfer to the magnet schools.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Gifted program (is) local now at their schools. Numbers have increased.” (Central Office Administrator)

- “If they don’t speak English, I don’t know if we can tell if they are gifted.” (Building Administrator)
- “It is difficult for students to qualify for the program (referring to the gifted program).” (Building Administrator)
- “No consistency in serving students, schedules are different each day, and some parents opt for pulling students out because of missing other activities.” (Building Administrator)
- “The curriculum doesn’t reflect the needs of GT students.” (Teacher)
- “We have just started to look at identifying twice exceptional children to be included in gifted services.” (Teacher)
- “You have a whole group of (gifted) kids who just aren’t having their needs met.” (Teacher)

Library Books per Student by School

This section examines data related to access students have to library books across the Richmond County Schools. Reviewers expected to find equal access to library books without regard to the campus attended by the students. It is understood that more library books exist in elementary schools and steadily decrease in numbers through middle schools and high schools as students utilize other forms and sources of reading material such as online sources. The expectation is that the number of books per student is similar across the three levels of schools: elementary, middle, and high school.

Reviewers calculated the number of library books available per student at each of the high schools using data provided by Richmond County School System administrators. Exhibit 3.2.9 summarizes the number of library books per student available by school.

Exhibit 3.2.9

Library Books by High School and Per Pupil Richmond County School System October 2017

High Schools	Total Enrollment	Total Number of Books	Books per Student
T.W. Josey High School	519	12,959	25.0
Glenn Hills High School	663	14,138	21.3
Hephzibah High School	977	19,273	19.7
Cross Creek High School	1,252	19,608	15.7
Davidson Fine Arts Magnet	808	12,485	15.5
Richmond County Technical Career Magnet	403	6,206	15.4
Butler High School	913	13,678	15.0
A.R. Johnson Magnet School	686	9,965	14.5
ARC High School	1,316	17,445	13.3
Laney High School	644	8,207	12.7
Westside High School	738	6,227	8.4
Totals/Average	8,919	140,191	16
<i>Sources: RCSS Enrollment data from Funding Report dated 10/10/2017. Library Book data from 3.090 District Library Statistics Report.</i>			

As can be noted from Exhibit 3.2.9:

- On average, across the 11 high schools listed, there is an average of 16 library books per student.
- There is a range of library books available per students across the school district, from 8.4 library books per student at Westside High School to 25 library books per student at T.W. Josey High School.

Reviewers calculated the number of library books available per student at each of the middle schools using data provided by Richmond County School System administrators. [Exhibit 3.2.10](#) summarizes the number of library books per student available by school.

Exhibit 3.2.10

**Library Books by Middle School and Per Pupil
Richmond County School System
October 2017**

Middle Schools	Total Enrollment	Total Number of Books	Books per Student
W. S. Hornsby Middle School	331	14,730	44.5
Spirit Creek Middle School	570	19,509	34.2
Glenn Hills Middle School	599	20,098	33.6
Hephzibah Middle School	425	13,819	32.5
Murphey Middle School	670	16,235	24.2
Tutt Middle School	479	10,103	21.1
Pine Hill Middle School	605	9,702	16.0
Langford Middle School	816	12,267	15.0
Morgan Road Middle School	665	8,388	12.6
Totals/Average	5,160	124,851	24.0
<i>Sources: RCSS Enrollment data from Funding Report dated 10/10/2017. Library Book data from 3.090 District Library Statistics Report.</i>			

As can be noted from [Exhibit 3.2.10](#):

- On average, across the nine middle schools listed, there is an average of 24 library books per student.
- There is a range of library books available per students across the school district, from 12.6 library books available per student at Morgan Road Middle School to 44.5 library books per students at W.S. Hornsby Middle School.

Reviewers calculated the number of library books available per student at each of the elementary schools using data provided by Richmond County School System administrators. [Exhibit 3.2.11](#) summarizes the number of library books per student available by school.

Exhibit 3.2.11

**Library Books by Elementary School and Per Pupil
Richmond County School System
October 2017**

Elementary Schools	Total Enrollment	Total Number of Books	Books per Student
Jamestown Elementary School	311	17,053	54.8
McBean Elementary School	410	21,604	52.7
Willis Foreman Elementary School	326	15,896	48.8
W. S. Hornsby Elementary School	332	14,730	44.4
Rollins Elementary School	352	13,147	37.3
Garrett Elementary School	464	15,624	33.7
Meadowbrook Elementary School	386	12,725	33.0
Tobacco Road Elementary School	442	14,191	32.1
Monte Sano Elementary School	384	11,869	30.9

Exhibit 3.2.11 Library Books by Elementary School and Per Pupil Richmond County School System October 2017			
Elementary Schools	Total Enrollment	Total Number of Books	Books per Student
Blythe Elementary School	299	8,979	30.0
Goshen Elementary School	548	15,233	27.8
Jenkins-White Elementary School	393	10,762	27.4
Windsor Spring Elementary School	484	13,199	27.3
Southside Elementary School	405	10,862	26.8
Terrace Manor Elementary School	523	13,987	26.7
Bayvale Elementary School	481	12,121	25.2
Craig-Houghton Elementary School	385	9,484	24.6
A.B. Merry Elementary School	368	9,023	24.5
Glenn Hills Elementary School	489	11,945	24.4
Hephzibah Elementary School	389	9,136	23.5
Wilkinson Gardens Elementary School	584	12,396	21.2
Barton Chapel Elementary School	497	10,226	20.6
Lamar Milledge Elementary School	423	8,370	19.8
Walker Magnet School	791	15,157	19.2
Freedom Park Elementary School	726	13,722	18.9
Gracewood Elementary School	475	8,806	18.5
Diamond Lakes Elementary School	572	10,365	18.1
Hains Elementary School	609	10,894	17.9
Warren Road Elementary School	615	10,737	17.5
Deer Chase Elementary School	547	9,466	17.3
Lake Forest Hills Elementary School	702	12,163	17.3
Copeland Elementary School	509	8,627	17.0
Reynolds Elementary School	952	12,165	12.8
Totals/Average	16,173	404,664	25.0
<i>Sources: RCSS Enrollment data from Funding Report dated 10/10/2017. Library Book data from 3.090 District Library Statistics Report.</i>			

As can be noted from Exhibit 3.2.11:

- On average, across the 33 elementary schools listed, there is an average of 25 library books per student.
- There is a range of library books available per students across the school district, from 12.8 library books per student at Reynolds Elementary School to 54.8 library books per student available at Jamestown Elementary School.

Exhibit 3.2.12 provides a summary of library books available per student in the Richmond County School System at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Exhibit 3.2.12

System Total Library Books and Per Pupil Average Richmond County School System Fall 2017

Schools	Total Enrollment	Total Number of Books	Books per Student
High Schools Totals/Average	8,919	140,191	16
Middle Schools Totals/Average	5,160	124,851	24
Elementary Schools Totals/Average	16,173	404,664	25
System Totals/Average	30,252	669,706	22

As can be noted from Exhibit 3.2.12:

- The number of library books per student by school type ranges from 16 at the high schools to 25 at the elementary schools.
- Average number of library books per student system wide is 22 books per student.

There is a positive relationship between the adequacy of a school's library and student learning, including academic achievement, reading literacy, student attitudes towards reading, and information literacy. The adequacy of the school library involves many factors including the presence of media specialists and their role in supporting curriculum delivery, the access to and quality of the resource collection, and the integration of technology into the learning and teaching process. Student access to a balanced resource collection of fiction and non-fiction that is developmentally appropriate, diverse, and multicultural in scope is part of ensuring a quality library program. While there are no set standards for the number of volumes that should be available per student in a school library, 15 to 16 books per student at all grades levels is generally considered desirable. While the quality of the school libraries in the Richmond County School System is not the focus of this review, equitable access to library resources is.

Overall, reviewers found a wide variation in the access students have to library resources based on the school they attend. The number of library books available to students in the district's school libraries ranged from a low of 8.4 library books per student at Westside High School to a high of 54.8 library books per student at Jamestown Elementary School. While collectively the number of library books available per students district wide certainly falls within what is generally considered desirable, not all students are afforded the same access across the district.

Distribution of Title I Funds

Title I funds are intended to ensure all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and demonstrate proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards. The purpose of Title I can be accomplished by many means, including ensuring high quality curriculum and instruction; meeting the educational needs of low-achieving students, students who are not proficient in English, and students with disabilities; and closing the achievement gap between high- and low-achieving students. For FY2017, the Richmond County School System allocated \$11,180,650 in federal Title I funds to 58 schools. According to district leaders, a distribution formula is used to allocate Title I funds to each school. Exhibit 3.2.13 displays the distribution formula used by district leaders to distribute federal Title I funds in the Richmond County School System.

Exhibit 3.2.13

Title I Funding Distribution Formula Richmond County School System FY2017

Percent of Students Qualifying to Receiving Free and Reduced Meals	Dollars per Student
100	\$500.00
80-99	\$450.00
40-79	\$350.00
20-39	\$200.00
0-19	\$0.00

As can be noted from Exhibit 3.2.13:

- Schools in which 100% of all students qualified to receive free and reduced priced meals received \$500 per student in Title I funding.
- Schools in which 80% to 99% of all students qualified to receive free and reduced priced meals received \$450 per student in Title I funding.
- Schools in which 40% to 79% of all students qualified to receive free and reduced priced meals received \$350 per student in Title I funding.
- Schools in which 20% to 39% of all students qualified to received free and reduced priced meals received \$200 per student in Title I funding.

Reviewers found no documentation, nor were they provided any documentation, describing the rationale upon which the Title I distribution formula was based. Based on the formula simply as presented in Exhibit 3.2.14, it could be surmised that the distribution of Title I funds is based on the concentration of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in a particular school. Title I funding distribution formulas could also be based on a weighted value assigned to specific characteristics, such as economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient, a disability, or other identifiable characteristics that may impact a student's potential to achieve at high levels without additional supports. Distribution formulas could also be based upon the cost of needed resources assigned to a school, including staffing and supplies. Without a clearly defined distribution formula, the district's leadership is limited in its ability to examine the effectiveness of Title I reform efforts to ensure all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and demonstrate proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards.

Exhibit 3.2.14 displays the allocation of Title I funds by school for the 2017 fiscal year based on information obtained from Richmond County School System administrators.

Exhibit 3.2.14

**Distribution of Title I Funds by School
Richmond County School System
FY2017**

Name of School	Enrollment	Poverty Students	Poverty Percent	Per Pupil Amt	School Allocation
Academy of Richmond County High School	1,339	832	62.1	\$350	\$291,200
Alternative Education Center at Lamar	160	136	85.0	\$450	\$61,200
Barton Chapel Elementary School	464	464	100	\$500	\$232,000
Bayvale Elementary School	476	476	100	\$500	\$238,000
Blythe Elementary School	271	271	100	\$500	\$135,500
Butler High School	781	762	97.6	\$450	\$342,900
Copeland Elementary School	471	471	100	\$500	\$235,500
Craig-Houghton Elementary School	389	389	100	\$500	\$194,500
Cross Creek High School	1,216	872	71.7	\$350	\$305,200
Davidson Magnet School	808	144	17.8	\$0	\$0
Deer Chase Elementary School	569	504	88.6	\$450	\$226,800
Diamond Lakes Elementary School	534	534	100	\$500	\$267,000
Dorothy Hains Elementary School	495	495	100	\$500	\$247,500
Freedom Park Elementary	693	18	2.6	\$0	\$0
Garrett Elementary School	447	242	54.1	\$350	\$84,700
Glenn Hills Elementary School	363	363	100	\$500	\$181,500
Glenn Hills High School	716	716	100	\$500	\$358,000
Glenn Hills Middle School	647	647	100	\$500	\$323,500
Goshen Elementary School	356	243	68.3	\$350	\$85,050
Gracewood Elementary School	388	388	100	\$500	\$194,000
Hephzibah Elementary School	343	343	100	\$500	\$171,500
Hephzibah High School	981	656	66.9	\$350	\$229,600
Hephzibah Middle School	493	478	97.0	\$450	\$215,100
Jamestown Elementary School	323	323	100	\$500	\$161,500
Jenkins-White Elementary School	419	419	100	\$500	\$209,500
Johnson Magnet	681	245	36.0	\$200	\$49,000
Josey High School	632	632	100	\$500	\$316,000
Lake Forest Hills Elementary School	621	360	58.0	\$350	\$126,000
Lamar - Milledge Elementary School	389	389	100	\$500	\$194,500
Laney High School	549	549	100	\$500	\$274,500
Langford Middle School	851	782	91.9	\$450	\$351,900
Lighthouse Care Center of Augusta	22	14	63.6	\$350	\$4,900
McBean Elementary School	381	381	100	\$500	\$190,500
Meadowbrook Elementary School	491	491	100	\$500	\$245,500
Merry Elementary School	283	283	100	\$500	\$141,500
Monte Sano Elementary School	342	342	100	\$500	\$171,000
Morgan Road Middle School	453	453	100	\$500	\$226,500
Murphey Middle School	609	609	100	\$500	\$304,500
Performance Learning Center	207	147	71.0	\$350	\$51,450

Exhibit 3.2.14 (continued) Distribution of Title I Funds by School Richmond County School System FY2017					
Name of School	Enrollment	Poverty Students	Poverty Percent	Per Pupil Amt	School Allocation
Pine Hill Middle School	593	475	80.1	\$450	\$213,750
Richmond County Technical Career Magnet School	444	277	62.4	\$350	\$96,950
Rollins Elementary School	355	355	100	\$500	\$177,500
Sego Middle School	608	608	100	\$500	\$304,000
Southside Elementary School	365	365	100	\$500	\$182,500
Spirit Creek Middle School	482	482	100	\$500	\$241,000
Sue Reynolds Elementary School	876	560	63.9	\$350	\$196,000
Terrace Manor Elementary School	321	321	100	\$500	\$160,500
Tobacco Road Elementary School	422	395	93.6	\$450	\$177,750
Tutt Middle School	500	466	93.2	\$450	\$209,700
W.S. Hornsby Elementary School	275	275	100	\$500	\$137,500
W.S. Hornsby Middle School	356	356	100	\$500	\$178,000
Walker Traditional Elementary School	842	373	44.3	\$350	\$130,550
Warren Road Elementary School	597	347	58.1	\$350	\$121,450
Westside High School	752	474	63.0	\$350	\$165,900
Wheless Road Elementary School	516	516	100	\$500	\$258,000
Wilkinson Gardens Elementary School	476	476	100	\$500	\$238,000
Willis Foreman Elementary School	322	288	89.4	\$450	\$129,600
Windsor Spring Road Elementary School	446	446	100	\$500	\$223,000
Total	30,201	24,718	81.8	\$25,300	\$11,180,650
<i>Source: Title I Distribution provided by RCSS Administration.</i>					

As can be noted from [Exhibit 3.2.14](#):

- The total Title I funds allocated to schools in the Richmond County School System for fiscal year 2017 was \$11,180,650.
- Distribution of Title I funds is based on the percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged and qualifying to receiving free and reduced meals.
- The per pupil allocation of Title I funds ranged from \$0 to \$500 per student.
- The per school allocation of Title I funds ranged from \$0 at Freedom Park Elementary and Davidson Magnet School to \$358,000 at Glenn Hills High School.
- Glenn Hills High School, with 716 students enrolled, 100% of whom qualify for free and reduced priced meals, receives \$500.00 per student in Title I funds.
- Cross Creek High School, with 1,216 students enrolled, of which 872 (71.7%) qualify for free and reduced priced meals, receives \$350 dollars per student.

Without a clearly defined district rationale to inform the distribution of Title I funds, how those funds should be used, and whether they are equitable and rationally based on the actual needs of students is left open to individual interpretation. Reviewers found no board policies or administrative regulations that provide guidance regarding the distribution of Title I funds to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and demonstrate proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards.

Summary

Reviewers examined board policies, district programs, and district documents to understand Richmond County School Systems' approach to equity. Equity refers to treating un-equals unequally until they are equal. Reviewers found inequities in some district practices associated with the distribution of waiver teachers, access to Gifted and Talented programs, access to library books, and the distribution of Title I funds. Waiver teachers, with the least experience in instructional pedagogical practices are disproportionately assigned to some of the district's neediest schools. Student enrollments in advanced academic programs and the district's Gifted and Talented program did not reflect the overall demographics of the school system. Black students are underrepresented in the district's Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs, while the enrollment of economically disadvantaged students generally declined as the concentration of economically disadvantaged students increased in a particular schools. Reviewers also found no documented description of how the formula used to distribute Title I funds was focused on ensuring the ability of district schools to close the achievement gap between high- and low-achieving students. These areas of inequalities are not exhaustive but serve as illustrative examples of where inequalities may exist within a school system (see [Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8](#)).



A variation in the access students have to library resources based on the school they attend was noted. Blythe Elementary School, pictured here, averages 30 library books per student.

Finding 3.3: Expectations for curriculum delivery and monitoring instruction are not clearly defined to provide consistent direction for district instructional practices. Teaching strategies observed during classroom visits were limited in cognitive demand and not consistent with strategies commonly associated with high student achievement. Monitoring of instruction is inconsistent and is insufficiently focused to improve curriculum delivery.

Delivery of the intended curriculum is a key determinant of a district's capacity to impact student achievement. The effectiveness of curriculum delivery is dependent on the quality of the written curriculum; adherence to an instructional model that reflects practices known to be effective in improving student mastery of the desired skills, concepts, and knowledge; and a high degree of fluidity based on teacher expertise and judgement. An aligned curriculum with clearly defined instructional targets and an identified instructional model form a strong framework for student success. However, great teachers exercise the freedom to make choices based on solid diagnostic information and their own knowledge of student affective needs. Effective school districts often provide clarification of their instructional philosophy and expectations in planning documents, with teachers responsible for applying those expectations in ways appropriate to the needs of their students. This allows districts and teachers to work collaboratively to move students along the achievement continuum as rapidly as possible. In order for the delivery system to continuously improve over time, administrators need to consistently monitor curriculum implementation and instructional practices and provide teachers with feedback about their

teaching. When all of these components are deeply embedded into the instructional process, the result is an instructional system in which the written, taught, and tested curricula are connected and aligned to the state performance standards and assessments, thus providing an environment fully conducive to student achievement.

To determine district expectations for classroom instructional practices, reviewers examined board policies, district and school improvement plans, job descriptions, evaluation instruments, and other guiding documents to determine if district expectations for instructional practices and classroom activities were present. Reviewers interviewed district administrators, building administrators, instructional leaders, and teachers regarding instructional practices in the Richmond County School System. In addition, reviewers visited each school site and most classrooms to gather information about the nature of teaching practices used in district classrooms.

The reviewers found that board policies and other district documents do not clearly establish expectations concerning instructional strategies and approaches for monitoring instruction in the Richmond County School System. Whole class instruction with passive student engagement was the dominant teaching and student activity observed. Instructional practices observed during on-site visits revealed the most common teacher/student behaviors to be large group instruction and listening. Student learning strategies generally associated with more complex learning were not apparent in a majority of classrooms observed. Student work samples were not fully aligned with the state's academic standards. While building administrators are observing classroom instruction, the purpose and focus vary across the district.

Reviewers examined board policies and other district documents to determine whether clear expectations have been established regarding instructional approaches, teaching practices, and monitoring delivery in the district. Based on their review of board policies, reviewers noted that district policies do not establish clear expectations regarding instructional approaches or strategies.

The following board policy was reviewed regarding district instructional expectations:

- *Board Policy IDA: Curriculum Design and Development* states that the district curriculum guides will serve “as the framework from which a teacher will develop units of study, individual lesson plans, strategies for instruction, and assessments.” It further requires that teachers adhere to the standards and required assessments and use the guides to map the logical sequence of instruction. It does not require differentiation of instruction, although it states that “there will be only one core curriculum with equal access for all students regardless of funding source.” It indicates the board will “encourage and support professional learning related to curriculum implementation,” although the details of that professional learning are left to the strategic plan. *Policy IDA* also includes a general expectation that principals “shall be responsible for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum.” A uniform process for monitoring delivery is not required in this policy.

Reviewers next looked to district planning documents to assess the current board priorities and direction for curriculum delivery and monitoring. They noted a general expectation that teachers will deliver the district curriculum effectively and that teachers will differentiate their instruction. But, no descriptions were provided of what instruction that met district expectations would look like. A general expectation for monitoring teaching strategies in the classroom was noted in several district documents. Specifically, the following documents addressed or alluded to curriculum delivery:

- The *Annual Report* for 2016 states, “Our workforce is one of the systems’ most important resources; therefore, hiring highly effective teachers is paramount to ensuring we support our schools in achieving high academic success for all students.” The *Annual Report* does not provide a definition of highly effective teachers.
- The *District Improvement Plan* identifies the lack of effective teachers as an overarching need in the district, citing both a lack of consistent implementation of effective strategies following training and a lack of qualified candidates as root causes. However, of the 17 action steps for this overarching need, only one addresses implementation of instructional strategies. That step is to “continue implementation and monitoring of effective teaching strategies in the classroom.”

- The *District Accountability Manual* utilizes the Georgia model for continuous improvement to describe a student-centered operation that includes assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring phases known as the APIM (Assess, Plan, Implement, Monitor) Framework. Implementation of the curriculum is not listed as part of the accountability process, but monitoring classroom performance through several instruments is specified.
- The district's *Instructional Expectations Manuals* all contain the district instructional model known as the RCK12 Instructional Framework. This model uses the APIM Framework as it pertains to curriculum delivery. With the exception of English language arts, the manuals also include "look fors" that give teachers some indication of teacher and student behaviors the district believes foster engagement and learning. However, the overall message of the manuals is that teachers should follow the district pacing guides using a three-step lesson process that includes the five E's (engage, explore, explain, elaborate, evaluate). It was noted that the five E's were not defined or explained in the manuals. The math and English language arts guides also contain an explanation of the Response To Intervention (RTI) system and minimal suggestions for small group interventions.
- The district's *Response to Intervention/Student Support Team Procedures: Quick Reference Manual* states that Tier One instruction is what every student in the class receives and that it includes "differentiation of instruction such as flexible grouping and varied instructional strategies." However, no further explanation of differentiation was noted in this document.

Reviewers examined job descriptions for district administrators, building administrators, and other relevant district staff to determine expectations for curriculum delivery and responsibility for monitoring instruction. The following central office job descriptions listed responsibilities related to implementation and monitoring classroom delivery of the curriculum:

- Area Assistant Superintendent – "coordinates the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of instructional programs and materials at the school/program level," including the responsibility to conduct observations to provide feedback to help strengthen the effectiveness of standards-based instruction and interventions.
- Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Technology – This position "develops and leads the district instructional planning and implementation process" and "develops and implements curriculum to prepare students for academic and career success."
- Director of Curriculum and Instruction – This position reports to the Associate Superintendent and directs "the planning, implementation, and supervision of the K-12 curriculum."
- Content Area Curriculum Coordinators – These positions are not directly responsible for implementation of the curriculum, but are required to "coordinate countywide the work of K-12 teachers, including on-site visits in classrooms."
- Professional Learning Facilitators – The job description for these positions alludes to indirect classroom monitoring with two responsibilities: "serves as resource for coaches and teachers in identifying appropriate instructional and facilitation strategies" and "debriefs with Coordinator and other key personnel about possible actions that could be taken to improve core academic instruction and program implementation."

Reviewers also examined job descriptions for school-based positions to determine responsibilities for curriculum delivery and monitoring instruction. The following job descriptions listed responsibilities related to curriculum delivery and monitoring at the school level:

- Elementary, Middle, and High School Principals – are responsible for monitoring curriculum implementation to ensure that the appropriate content and sequence are followed. The principal job descriptions contains no requirement to monitor the effectiveness of curriculum delivery.

- Assistant Principals – The job responsibilities for assistant principals include “supervises teaching and learning on a continuous basis for improvement of classroom instructions and teacher-pupil relationships.”
- Teachers – Teachers are directly responsible for implementing the curriculum. Their job responsibilities include “plans a program of study that meets the needs, interests and abilities of individuals to ensure success,” “creates a classroom environment that provides student involvement in the learning process and enables each student to achieve learning objectives,” and “provides an instructional program to meet the needs of all students including students with disabilities.” Teachers are also responsible to establish “learning objectives consistent with...requirements of [the] RCSS curriculum framework.”

Overall, reviewers found that written district direction for curriculum delivery and monitoring was inconsistent and general in nature. District documents did not clearly link teacher classroom strategies and differentiation with district curriculum maps as the definition of effective delivery of the curriculum. Job descriptions establish a general expectation for monitoring the curriculum sequence but do not address monitoring instructional effectiveness. Teachers are directed to establish objectives that promote student engagement and achievement and provide for differentiation based on individual needs. However, the person responsible for evaluating teacher performance, the principal, is directed to monitor for compliance with content and sequence, but not quality of delivery.

During interviews with central office administrators and building administrators, reviewers received a variety of comments regarding district expectations regarding instructional approaches and practices in the classroom. The following is a representative sample of the comments received by reviewers during interviews:

- “I don’t know the district’s definition of engagement. I am looking to see what the students are doing, not what the teacher is doing. I want to see them on task and excited about learning.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “We have an expectation that teachers are creating collaborative learning experiences for students.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “We expect to see Marzano 9, three part lessons, plan, teach, reflect, revise.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “The district is very clear that they expect opening and closing work sessions, small group instruction, and daily instructional time dedicated to intervention.” (Building Administrator)
- “[The district expects] opening, mini-lesson, major lesson, and closing.” (Building Administrator)

Reviewers used an online survey to gather information from building administrators and teachers about various aspects of their work in the Richmond County School System. Following is a summary of responses received from building administrators to survey questions regarding instructional expectations:

- Three hundred and forty-six out of 446 teachers (77.6%) agreed or strongly agreed with the online survey statement “We have a clearly defined model for delivering instruction to students in the district.”
- Three hundred and forty out of 445 teachers (76.4%) agreed or strongly agreed with the online survey statement “There is clear direction from the district regarding what classroom instruction should look like.”
- Forty-seven building administrators out of 52 (92%) agreed or strongly agreed with the online survey statement “We have a clearly defined model for delivering instruction to students in the district.”
- Forty-six building administrators out of 52 (89%) agreed or strongly agreed with the online survey statement “There is clear direction from the district regarding what classroom instruction should look like.”

Reviewers found that district documents provide generalized direction for curriculum delivery in the Richmond County School System; however, board policies, job descriptions, and district planning documents are not sufficiently specific to clearly define district expectations. Comments received by reviewers during interviews and through an online survey indicate that a majority of teachers and building administrators believe there is clear direction for the delivery of instruction in the district, yet there was no uniform expectation articulated by teachers or administrators across the district. Additionally, reliance on oral communications to transmit system-wide expectations often results in inaccuracies, misunderstandings, and/or selective interpretation of what is considered important and what is discretionary.

Classroom Observations

To observe the degree to which actual classroom activities matched district expectations, reviewers visited all schools in the district and most classroom in which instruction was occurring. During these brief classroom visits, reviewers recorded and categorized their observations. These “snapshot” observations were collected for 392 classrooms pre-kindergarten through grade 12, including 245 elementary classrooms, 77 middle school classrooms, and 93 high school classrooms. The majority of classrooms visited (379) were for core content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Classroom visits were made during various times of the school day, including morning, afternoon, at the beginning of instructional periods, during the middle of instructional periods, and at the end of instructional periods. Classrooms that were staffed by a substitute teacher were not visited.

It is important to note that the segments of classroom activities observed by reviewers were brief in duration, lasting three to seven minutes each, and the kinds of activities observed were dependent on the scheduling patterns of individual campuses and classrooms. It should also be noted that teachers and principals were aware that outside reviewers would be visiting classrooms at a predetermined time during the week.

Reviewers focused on 10 elements of curriculum delivery during their classroom observations. These elements can be grouped into three general areas:

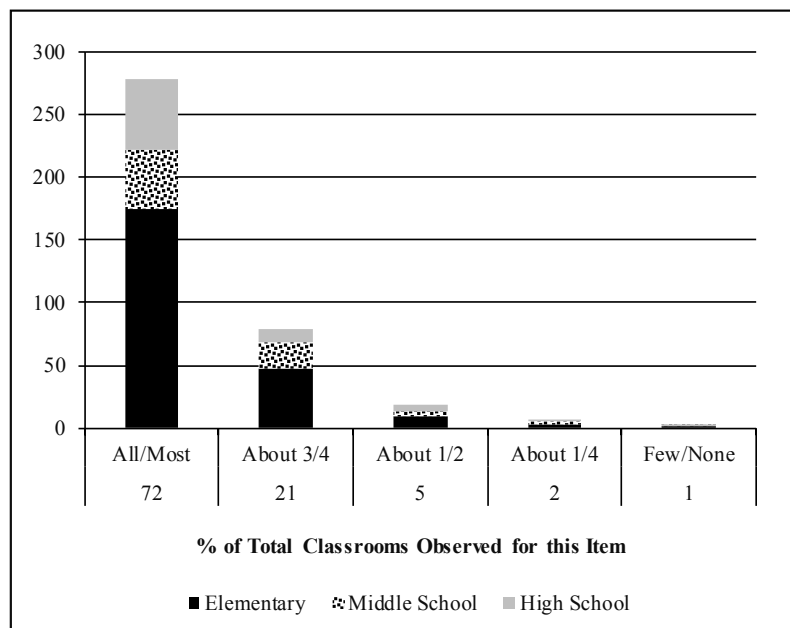
- Setting the stage, including the level of student attention to the immediate task and the general learning arrangement;
- Delivery practices, including dominant student/teacher activity and evidence of differentiation based on student needs such as use of English Language Learner strategies, extension activities for gifted and advanced students, and scaffolding for struggling students (active use of technology was documented during observations but is discussed in [Finding 5.3](#)); and
- Evidence of high expectations, including the cognitive requirements of posted objective(s) and the content being taught.

Because these elements are universal, no distinction was made in the analysis between types of classes, such as general education, special education, or advanced placement. Likewise, no distinction was made between grade levels of the observed classrooms.

Setting the Stage

The first area of the reviewers' focus during classroom visits was the orientation of students to their work. Student orientation refers to whether students appear to be attentive to the expected work. The works could be listening and interacting with the teachers, interacting with other students, or working alone. The nature of the learning tasks or what the teacher was doing at the time of the classroom visit is not part of this particular focus. Reviewers rated the observed level of student orientation on a scale ranging from Few/None to All/Most. [Exhibit 3.3.1](#) depicts the reviewers' observations

Exhibit 3.3.1
Frequency of Observed Student Orientation to Their Work
Richmond County School System
October 2017



As can be noted regarding [Exhibit 3.3.1](#), in 72% of classrooms visited, the reviewers noted that all or most of the students displayed attentive behavior. Few examples of non-attentive behavior were observed. Student engagement—described as the student's willingness, desire, and compulsion to participate in and be successful in the learning process—was not included as a focus of the reviewers' classroom visits. Many factors contribute to a student's interest and level of engagement in learning, including teacher influence, the students' development level, and locus of motivation, that are beyond the score of a brief classroom observation.

Learning Arrangement

The second area of focus of the reviewers' observation was the general learning arrangement. The general learning arrangement was noted for 390 of the classrooms visited. The review has no bias regarding how a classroom should be arranged except that the arrangement should be appropriate for the activity at hand, and therefore it is expected to see a variety of learning arrangements in use. Exhibit 3.3.2 displays the learning arrangements noted by reviewers in Richmond County School System classrooms.

Exhibit 3.3.2

General Classroom Learning Arrangement Richmond County School System October 2017

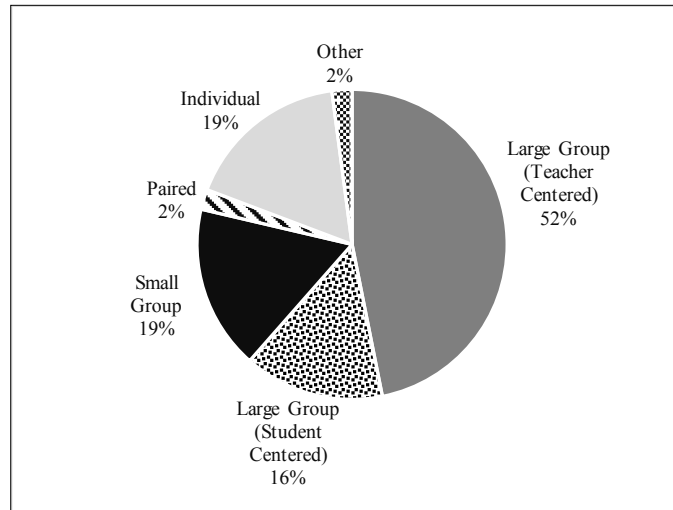


Exhibit 3.3.2 shows the following:

- In 52% of classrooms visited, students were involved in teacher-centered large group activities.
- In 19% of classrooms, students were working in small groups, generally three to six students.
- Students working individually, were observed in 19% of classrooms visited.
- In 16% of classrooms visited, students were involved in student-centered large group activities.
- Students working in pairs were observed in 2% of the classrooms visited.



Students arranged into whole group instruction were frequency observed in classrooms across the Richmond County School System

Delivery Practices

During classroom visits, reviewers noted specific types of instructional strategies used by teachers to engage students in their learning. Since minimal direction was provided through board policies and other district documents regarding expectations that teachers use specific instructional strategies, the reviewers created a list of widely recognized instructional strategies prior to classroom visits. [Exhibits 3.3.3](#) and [3.3.4](#) present a list of descriptors used by reviewers to record the types of teaching and learning activities observed during brief visits to Richmond County School System classrooms.

[Exhibit 3.3.3](#) displays a list of instructional strategies, along with description, reviewers used to categorize the dominant teacher instructional activities in the classrooms at the time of the reviewers' brief classroom visits.

Exhibit 3.3.3

Classification of Recorded Teacher Instructional Strategies

Teacher Instructional Behavior	Classification Description
Advanced Organizers	Cognitive strategies used to help set the stage for instruction and help students learn and retain new knowledge and vocabulary; sets the stage for informing students about what they are about to learn
Cues and Questions	Use of questioning that helps student focus on the content that is most important and helps them analyze information (higher order questioning)
Direct/Explicit Instruction	Detailed instruction whereby teacher guides students through a defined instructional sequence that provides students with strategies for integrating new information with prior knowledge and strategies for solving problems
Discussion	Oral exploration of a topic, concept, object, or experience that may be open-ended (no one correct answer) or guided (lead students through a particular theme or issue)
Lecture	Verbal presentation of knowledge by teacher to the students, often supplemented by visual aids and/or handouts
Meta-cognitive Strategies	Strategies that address students' attention to how they go about learning. May include direct step-by-step approaches and strategies that encourage planning, preparation, and idea generation as well as monitoring, self-checking, and revising
Modeling/ Demonstrating	Teaching academic skills or concepts through a step-by-step process that involves physical movement and verbalizing of the thinking involved by the teacher
Monitoring	Keeping track of student learning for the purpose of making instructional decisions and providing feedback to students on their progress
Nonlinguistic Representations	Strategies that help students acquire and store information and enhance their understanding of the content through the use of visual imagery, kinesthetic or whole-body modes, and auditory experiences. These strategies may take many forms including graphic organizers, concept maps, idea webs, pictures and pictographs, mental pictures, concrete representations, and dramatizations
Peer Tutoring	Students working in pairs to help one another learn material or practice an academic task
Providing Feedback	Providing students with specific information about their learning and how their performance ranks relative to the performance expectations
Reinforcing Effort/Praise	Strategies for improving students' belief about their abilities and understanding the relationship between effort and achievement.
Review and Re-teaching	Teacher reviewing previously learned content and assisting students who may not have fully acquired the knowledge
Small Group Instruction	Intervention that involves organizing students to work in small groups. May include "mixed ability" or "like-ability" groups

Exhibit 3.3.3 (continued) Classification of Recorded Teacher Instructional Strategies	
Teacher Instructional Behavior	Classification Description
Tutoring	Intervention for addressing the learning needs of an individual student that involves a personal, intense interaction between tutor and tutee. Tutors may be professional, volunteer, or peers.
Video	Use of visual presentations ranging from full-length commercial movies to short informational or news segments to provide new information to students
Visual Representation	Approach to solving problems using manipulatives, pictures, number lines, or graphs to help make abstract concepts tangible and understandable.
Whole Class Instruction	Approach in which the whole class is moved through the same content at roughly the same pace using the same materials and methods
Other	Instructional strategies not included in this list
Could Not Determine	Reviewers could not determine teacher strategies from the observed interactions

Exhibit 3.3.4 displays a list of instructional strategies, along with descriptions that reviewers used to categorize dominant student activities in classrooms at the time of their brief classroom visits.

Exhibit 3.3.4

Classification of Recorded Student Learning Activities

Category	Description
Brainstorming	Strategy used in large or small group setting that encourages students to focus on a topic and contribute to the free flow of ideas that are accepted without criticism or judgment
Cooperative Learning	Students working together to accomplish shared goals, often with a division of assignment of several specific tasks or roles
Discussion	Open ended or guided oral exploration of a topic, object, concept, or experience
Games	Multi-modal and non-linear instructional activities, structured by authentic rules, that provide students the opportunity to model or explore knowledge and skills and that teach competition strategies, cooperation and teamwork, and conflict resolution
Generating and Testing Hypotheses	Inquiry process that includes opportunities for students to engage in asking good questions, generating hypotheses and predictions, investigating through testing or research, making observations, and analyzing and communicating results
Graphic Organizer	Tasks related to summarizing that involve students using graphics, diagrams, and symbols to represent information
Guided Practice	Teacher-designed activities that engage students in applying new learning, often repeatedly with the goal of moving students to mastery
Homework	Guided practice activities assigned to be done outside of class
Identifying Similarities and Differences	Classroom practices that include comparison tasks, classifying tasks, and the use of metaphors and analogies
Instructional Technology	A resource in which the nature of the software defines the nature of the student activity, such as word processing, web resources, organizing, data collection, multimedia, skill practice, and programming
Lab Activity	Classroom activities designed to be performed in an environment that fosters inquiry through experimentation and exploration

Exhibit 3.3.4 (continued) Classification of Recorded Student Learning Activities	
Category	Description
Listening	Students intentionally focused on who they are listening to, whether in a group or one-on-one, in order to understand what is being said
Note Taking	Tasks related to summarizing that involve students recording main ideas as they sift through and synthesize information, which may include the use of informal outlines, graphic representations, or a combination of the two
Presentations	Learning task that requires students to make oral presentations that require them to organize ideas and express them in their own words
Projects	Tasks that require students to integrate their skills and knowledge to create their own literary, technological, or artistic work as individuals or in a group
Reading	Instructional tasks that require students to decode text to derive meaning for the purpose of confirming predictions, visualizing, summarizing, drawing inferences, making connections, and developing knowledge
Research	Task that requires students to locate and retrieve information from several sources such as library references, textbooks, other individuals, and electronic databases via the Internet
Simulations	Multi-modal and non-linear instructional activities, structured by authentic rules, that provide students the opportunity to model or explore knowledge and skills
Summarizing	Task that involves students putting into their own words a shortened version of written or spoken material, stating the main points and leaving out material considered not essential. Summarizing involves analyzing information, distinguishing important from unimportant elements, and translating large chunks of information into a few short cohesive sentences
Test/Quiz	Strategies for assessing students' acquisition/mastery of previously taught knowledge, concepts, or skills
Worksheet	Seatwork activity involving commercially prepared materials/workbooks or teacher prepared materials that engage students by filling in the blank, circling, underlining, or selecting from a list of given responses
Writing	Instructional tasks that require students to organize their knowledge and reinforce concepts in any writing form from a one-paragraph answer to a multi-page research report
Other	Any instructional activity not listed above
Could Not Determine	The assigned task(s) were unclear during the observation

It is important to note that the segments of classroom activities observed by reviewers were quite brief in duration (normally three to seven minutes), and types of activities varied dependent on the instructional patterns of individual classrooms. For example, a teacher may prefer to use the beginning of a class period to review prior learning and use the middle of the class period to engage students in group activities. In any event, these brief classroom visits were adequate for the purpose stated—to identify the type of instructional strategies noted at the time of the visit.

Exhibits 3.3.5 and 3.3.6 display the types of instructional strategies observed by reviewers. More than one activity may be noted for a classroom, such as Homework/Guided Practice, Providing Feedback, and Review and Reteaching. The instructional strategies observed by reviewers were categorized in accordance with the definitions above. If students and teachers were engaged in more than one instructional activity, or the nature of the activity changed during the period of observation, the reviewers recorded all instructional strategies observed.

Exhibit 3.3.5 shows the types and frequency of teacher instructional practices observed in the Richmond County School System classrooms.

Exhibit 3.3.5
Frequency of Observed Teacher Focused Instructional Strategies
Richmond County School System
October 2017

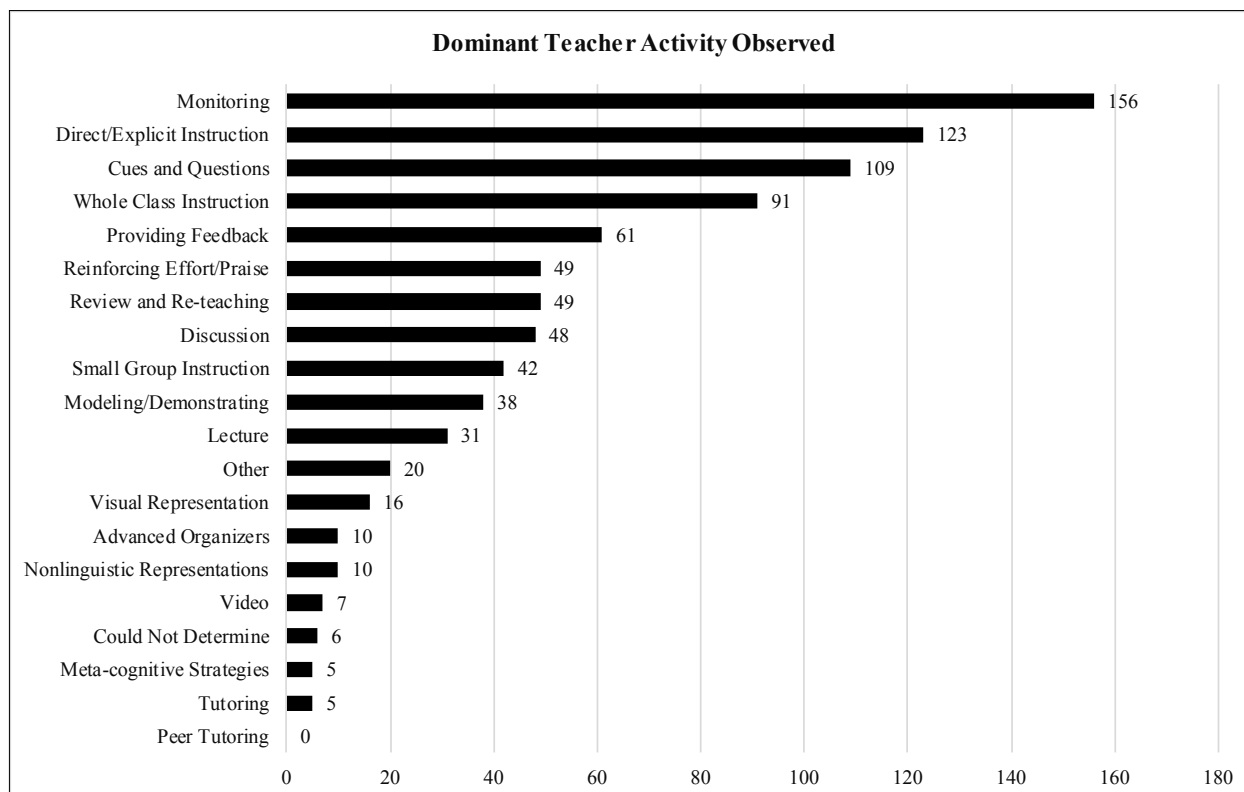


Exhibit 3.3.5 shows the following:

- The most frequently observed teacher instructional strategies were monitoring and direct/explicit instruction, which were observed in 156 and 123 classrooms, respectively.
- Cues and questions seen in 109 classrooms and whole class instruction observed in 91 classrooms were the third and fourth most observed teacher instructional strategies.
- The least observed teacher instructional activities were meta-cognitive strategies, tutoring, and watching a video.

Exhibit 3.3.6 displays the student learning activities observed in classrooms. As part of each classroom visit, the reviewers recorded the predominant student learning activity observed. Reviewers noted that during classroom observations, multiple student activities were often seen; thus, multiple student instructional activities are reflected in the following exhibit.

Exhibit 3.3.6
Frequency of Dominant Student Activity Classifications Observed by Reviewers
Richmond County School System
October 2017

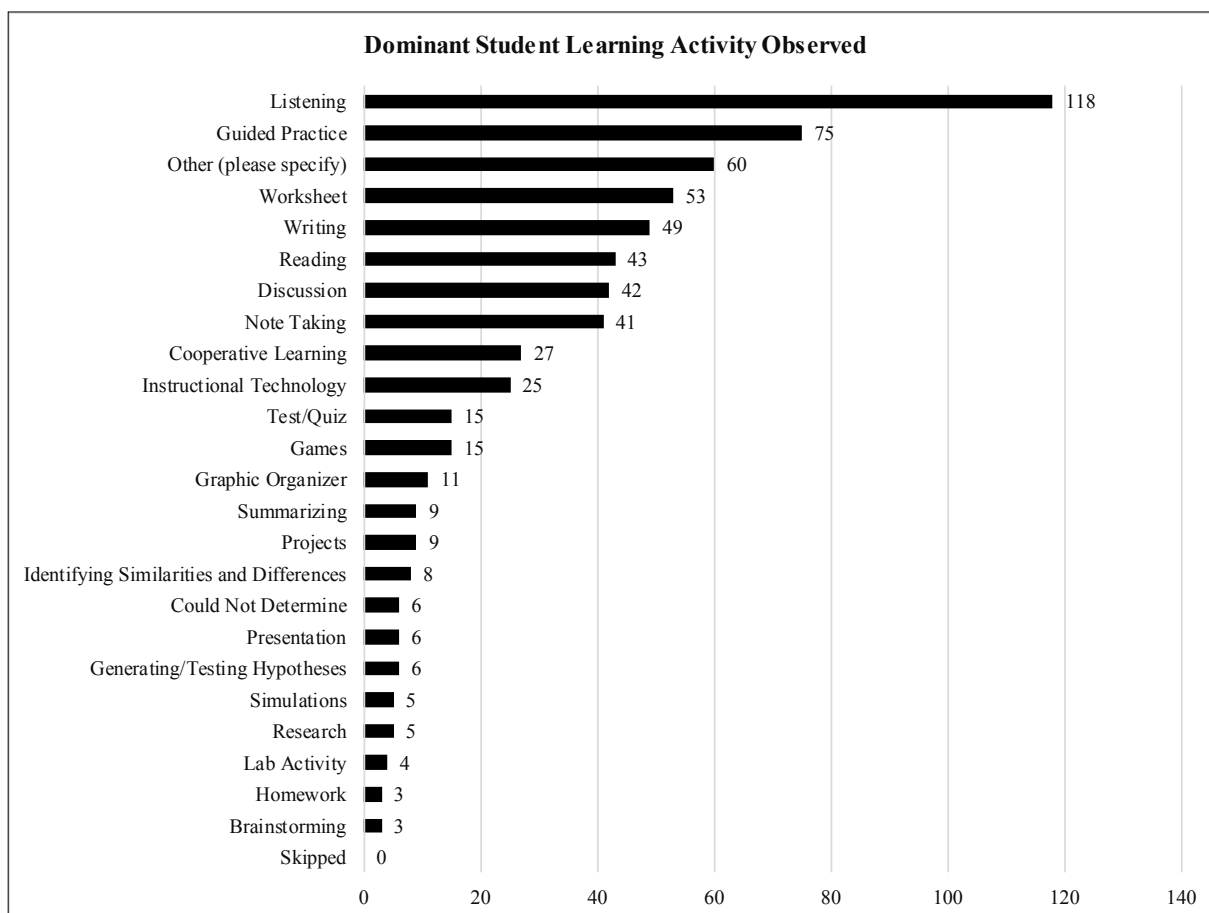


Exhibit 3.3.6 shows the following:

- The most common student learning activity observed in the Richmond County School System was listening, which was observed in 118 classrooms visited.
- The second most observed learning activity was guided practice, which is described as teacher designed activities that engage students in applying new learning, often repeatedly with the goal of moving students to mastery.
- The least observed student learning activities were those generally associated with more complex thinking, such as brainstorming observed in three classrooms, research observed in five classrooms, and generating/testing hypotheses observed in six classrooms.

Differentiation of instruction refers to adjusting the delivery of curriculum to maximize the learning of each student based on individual needs and readiness. Effective classrooms provide differentiation in delivery of the curriculum in order to move students along the continuum of achievement in an equitable fashion. Differentiation is not synonymous with station teaching. If all students rotate through the same stations in order to complete a lesson, differentiation is not assumed. Differentiation requires changing the content, time, process, product, or environment for learning. It is understood that special programs, such as special education and RTI and Gifted/Talented pull-out interventions, are often the source of differentiation for their participants. However, differentiation in the regular classroom provides optimal leaning for all students based on their needs.

During classroom visits, reviewers looked for evidence of differentiated instruction. Reviewers specifically looked for evidence of teachers differentiating instruction by modifying the content, the learning process, the product through which students will demonstrate their learning, and the learning environment. Reviewers observed evidence of differentiation in 50 (13%) of the 392 classroom visited. In the 50 classrooms where evidence of differentiation was noted, the content was differentiated in 26 (17%) of the classrooms, the learning process was differentiated in 33 (22%) of the classrooms, and the product was differentiated in 16 (11%) of observed classrooms.

The content differentiation noted by reviewers was primarily in Early Intervention Classrooms (EIC), which the district utilizes for intensive interventions beyond the scope of classroom-based interventions. Content differentiation in these classrooms was achieved by individual students working on skills that had been identified through a computerized assessment as weak and in needs of additional instruction. Process differentiation noted by reviewers primarily consisted of teachers using different modalities to teach the same content objective. For example, kindergarten students might be circling pictures, counting on a hundreds chart, or grouping objects to identify sets of 10 within a given number. Differentiated products noted by reviewers consisted of student work at varying levels of complexity. For example, some students might be expected to write three sentences in response to a daily journal prompt while other students were asked to write a paragraph.

If the instructional strategies noted by reviewers during brief classroom visits across the Richmond County School System represent business as usual, instructional practices are dominated by primarily large group instruction with little evidence of differentiation.

When reviewers interviewed district administrators and asked what they expected reviewers would observe during brief classroom visits, reviewers received many comments about the specific types of instructional strategies that would be apparent in the district's classrooms. Following is a small sampling of types of comments reviewers received:

- "I really feel...you'll see collaboration." (Central Office Administrator).
- "You should see engaged students, intervention planning, and see teachers teaching the standards." (Central Office Administrator).
- "Cloze reading strategies, low level readers dissecting the passages...technology, standards based instruction, teachers working one on one with students, closure and checking for understanding. Differentiation; teachers are doing it." (Building Administrator).
- "Hands on, small groups, technology for an instructional tool, a variety of activities." (Building Administrator)

Within the Richmond County School System, perceptions regarding the frequency with which teachers are differentiating their instruction varied. At the central office level, district administrators indicated differentiation was not a standard practice yet across the district. The following interview comments are representative of the comments reviewers heard from central office administrators:

- "There is an awareness [of differentiation], but it has been a challenge to implement well." (Central Office Administrator)
- "Differentiation will be at a surface level. The mindset is differentiation is for remediation." (Central Office Administrator)

Building administrators and district teachers, through an online survey, reported that differentiated instruction was occurring more frequently in district classrooms compared to what was observed by reviewers during brief classroom visits. Following is a summary of the responses received through an online survey completed by building administrators and district teachers.

- Of 50 building administrators responding to an online survey asking administrators how often their teachers use strategies for differentiating their instruction, 21 (42%) indicated that their teachers differentiate their instructional daily, while another 17 (34%) indicated their teachers differentiate instruction at least weekly.
- One administrator in an online comment stated, “On a good day I may see differentiation in 60% of observed classes; most frequently differentiation in process.”
- Of 435 teachers responding to an online survey asking teachers how often they use strategies for differentiating their instruction, 270 (62%) reported they differentiate their instruction daily and 119 (27%) indicated they differentiate their instruction at least weekly.

Although the use of differentiation was reported as high by teachers and building administrators through an online survey, reviewers received many comments during interviews with teachers that suggest that what differentiation is or should look like is not clearly understood. The following comments are a representative sample received by reviewers.

- “There is no clear definition of differentiation so we can’t know what to do.” (Teacher)
- “We need to have a clear set of standards of what differentiation looks like on the high school level... School level administrators and district level administrators can’t agree on what it looks like so it is almost impossible to master...because it is always changing.” (Teacher)
- “Everyone seems to think that differentiation is center based. We need to think about what best serves the students.” (Teacher)

A fundamental disbelief in differentiation, as it is currently understood, was also expressed by some teachers. Following is a sample of comments submitted by district teachers through an online survey.

- “When it comes to differentiation, not all students need this. When we force this, we teach students that everything will be changed to meet their needs. At some point in teaching they need to learn that this is not true.” (Teacher)
- “Sometimes we differentiate so much but yet ALL students are expected to take the SAME test.” (Teacher)
- “If we differentiate to the point that we teach children on their ‘level,’ then we are giving them assignments and assessments that are FAR below grade level. These students may be successful, and even make A/B Honor roll, but they fail miserably on the *GMAS* because it was on grade level.” (Teacher)

Overall, board policies do not provide clear expectations regarding an instructional model, desired instructional approaches, or differentiation of the curriculum, although district documents do provide some guidance. Curriculum delivery strategies observed during classroom visits were not consistent with district expectations as expressed by district administrators. Data collected during brief classroom visits indicated that a limited range of instructional strategies are being utilized.

Evidence of High Expectations

High expectations are a critical aspect of student achievement. In effective classrooms, teachers communicate high expectations through their interactions with students, how they design their lessons, how they extend student knowledge, and how they require students to communicate and express their knowledge. Scaffolding and incremental steps are frequently necessary to move students from where they are to where they need to be, so daily objectives are developed by the teacher to move students toward achieving a desired standard. Thus, an entire standard is not taught to mastery every day, but every day serves as another purposeful step toward mastery. Students benefit from seeing this road map of daily objectives leading to their mastery of a standard, which often seems more attainable than the final goal.

Reviewers looked for evidence of high expectations in the classrooms they visited and documented several items including the posted standard or objective (if any), the type of cognitive activities observed, and whether the content being taught was on grade level. To determine cognitive type, reviewers used the Depth of Knowledge scale. Congruence with grade level standards was determined by matching the objective (either posted or derived from content) with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Posted Instructional Objective

District administrators expressed an expectation that the standard being taught be posted in every classroom. Of the 392 classrooms reviewers visited, the instructional objectives were observed posted in 185 (47.2%) of classrooms. Reviewers analyzed the wording of the posted objectives and grouped them into the categories summarized in Exhibit 3.3.7.

Exhibit 3.3.7

Posted Instructional Objectives Richmond County School System October 2017

Format of Objective	Examples	Frequency of Use
"I can" statement	"I can explain the difference between additional and subtraction."	17 classrooms (4%)
Georgia Standards of Excellence notation	ELA, MGSE5.NBT.7	29 classrooms (7%)
Standard reference plus an explanation or essential question	SS5H4 "The student will describe U.S. involvement in WWI and post WWI American." Essential question: "How did American newspapers influence peoples' opinions of Spain?" SSC610 "Demonstrate knowledge of executive branch: Analyze role of electoral college."	58 classrooms (15%)
Topic of study with varying degrees of detail	"Polynomial functions." "Writing a letter." "Use properties of triangles to solve real work problems." "Identify animals in a region. Differentiate between habitats."	81 classrooms (21%)

As can be noted from Exhibit 3.3.7, there was no consistency in how the learning standard was communicated to students in the classrooms visited by reviewers. In some classrooms, reviewers noted a student-oriented statement describing what students would be able to do as a result of the current learning. In other classrooms, teachers simply noted the reference designation from the Georgia Standards of Excellence, which does not communicate what the intended learning will be unless everyone is intimately familiar with the Georgia academic standards.



Students working at their seats practicing new learning, often involving a worksheet, was a common student learning activity observed.

Type of Cognitive Activities Observed

To examine the extent to which instruction matched expectations of high order thinking skills, reviewers noted the type of cognitive expectation demanded by instructional activities used in classrooms. To categorize the type of thinking skills observed, reviewers used Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) model, which is presented in [Exhibit 3.3.8](#). The DOK model was selected based on input from district administrators who indicated the DOK model was the preferred taxonomy for describing cognitive instructional demand and the framework to guide teachers in the selection of instructional approaches and activities that would engage students in high levels of cognition. Reviewers analyzed instruction observed in the brief 392 classroom visits and determined the overall cognitive type.

Webb's Depth of Knowledge Model Used by Reviewers to Categorize Snapshot Data

The diagram is a circular representation of Bloom's Taxonomy, organized into four levels around a central core. The central core is a black square with the text "Describe Explain Interpret". Surrounding this is a ring divided into four quadrants, each representing a level of the taxonomy. The outermost ring contains 60 specific cognitive verbs, each associated with a quadrant.

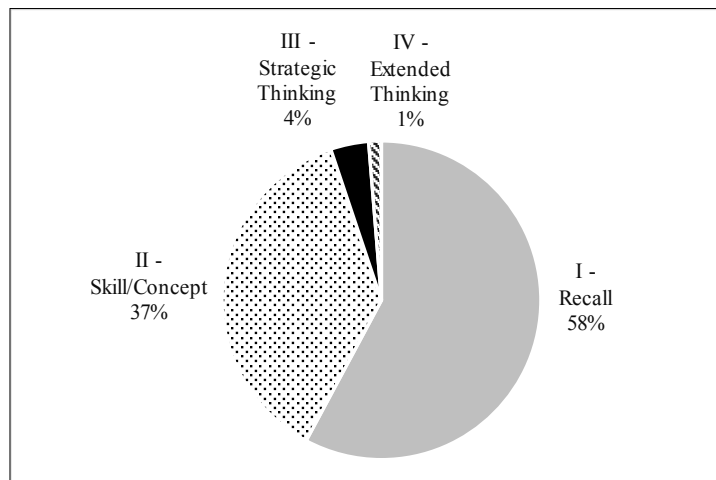
- Level One (Recall)**: Draw, Identify, List, Label, Illustrate, Measure, Infer, Categorize, Collect and Display, Identify Patterns, Organize, Construct, Modify, Predict, Interpret, Distinguish, Use Context Cues, Make Observations, Summarize, Show, Compare, Investigate, Differentiate, Cite Evidence, Hypothesize, Draw Conclusions, Formulate, Critique, Use Concepts to Solve Non-Routine Problems, Develop a Logical Argument, Apprise, Revise, Prove, Create, Analyze, Critique, Apply Concepts, Synthesize, Connect, Design.
- Level Two (Skill/Concept)**: Memorize, Name, Report, Quote, Match, Recognize, Tell, State, Repeat, Arrange, Calculate, Define, Draw, Identify, List, Label, Illustrate, Measure, Infer, Categorize, Collect and Display, Identify Patterns, Organize, Construct, Modify, Predict, Interpret, Distinguish, Use Context Cues, Make Observations, Summarize, Show, Compare, Investigate, Differentiate, Cite Evidence, Hypothesize, Draw Conclusions, Formulate, Critique, Use Concepts to Solve Non-Routine Problems, Develop a Logical Argument, Apprise, Revise, Prove, Create, Analyze, Critique, Apply Concepts, Synthesize, Connect, Design.
- Level Three (Strategic Thinking)**: Memorize, Name, Report, Quote, Match, Recognize, Tell, State, Repeat, Arrange, Calculate, Define, Draw, Identify, List, Label, Illustrate, Measure, Infer, Categorize, Collect and Display, Identify Patterns, Organize, Construct, Modify, Predict, Interpret, Distinguish, Use Context Cues, Make Observations, Summarize, Show, Compare, Investigate, Differentiate, Cite Evidence, Hypothesize, Draw Conclusions, Formulate, Critique, Use Concepts to Solve Non-Routine Problems, Develop a Logical Argument, Apprise, Revise, Prove, Create, Analyze, Critique, Apply Concepts, Synthesize, Connect, Design.
- Level Four (Extended Thinking)**: Memorize, Name, Report, Quote, Match, Recognize, Tell, State, Repeat, Arrange, Calculate, Define, Draw, Identify, List, Label, Illustrate, Measure, Infer, Categorize, Collect and Display, Identify Patterns, Organize, Construct, Modify, Predict, Interpret, Distinguish, Use Context Cues, Make Observations, Summarize, Show, Compare, Investigate, Differentiate, Cite Evidence, Hypothesize, Draw Conclusions, Formulate, Critique, Use Concepts to Solve Non-Routine Problems, Develop a Logical Argument, Apprise, Revise, Prove, Create, Analyze, Critique, Apply Concepts, Synthesize, Connect, Design.

Level One Activities	Level Two Activities	Level Three Activities	Level Four Activities
Recall elements and details of story structure, such as sequence of events, character, plot and setting.	Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative.	Support ideas with details and examples.	Conduct a project that requires specifying a problem, designing and conducting an experiment, analyzing its data, and reporting results/ solutions.
Conduct basic mathematical calculations.	Use context cues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words.	Use voice appropriate to the purpose and audience.	
Label locations on a map.	Solve routine multiple-step problems.	Identify research questions and design investigations for a scientific problem.	Apply mathematical model to illuminate a problem or situation.
Represent in words or diagrams a scientific concept or relationship.	Describe the cause/effect of a particular event.	Develop a scientific model for a complex situation.	Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources.
Perform routine procedures like measuring length or using punctuation marks correctly.	Identify patterns in events or behavior.	Determine the author's purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection.	Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures.
Describe the features of a place or people.	Formulate a routine problem given data and conditions.		Design a mathematical model to inform and solve a practical or abstract situation.
	Organize, represent and interpret data.	Apply a concept in other contexts.	

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Exhibit 3.3.9 presents the reviewers' categorization of noted cognitive expectations, using the Depth of Knowledge model presented in Exhibit 3.3.8.

Exhibit 3.3.9
Cognitive Demand of Observed Classroom Activity
Richmond County School System
October 2017



The following points can be noted from Exhibit 3.3.9:

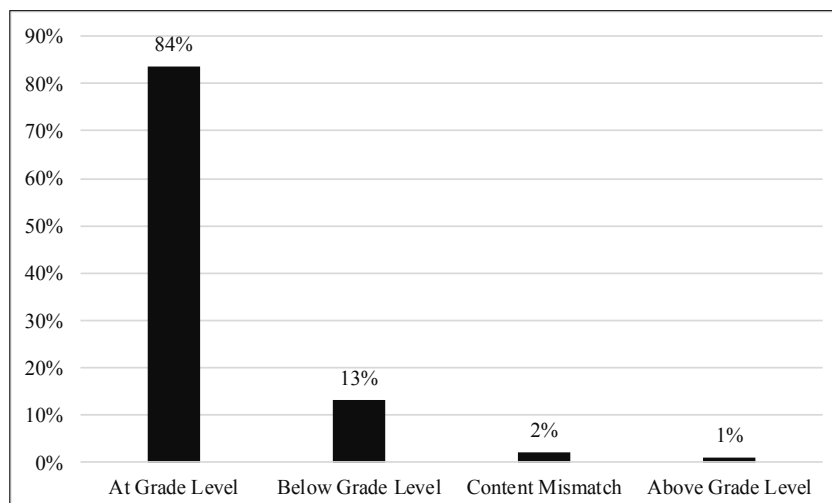
- The majority of classrooms observed, 58%, required students to function at Level I – Recall and Reproduction. Cognitive expectations included in this category involve the recall of facts or rote application of simple procedures. Copying, computing, defining, and recognizing are examples of tasks categorized as Level I.
- Thirty-seven percent of observed classroom activities had students engaged at Level II – Skills and Concepts. Cognitive expectations in this category require students to make decisions about their approach to a task that involves more than one step, such as comparing, organizing, summarizing, predicting, and estimating.
- Four percent of observed classroom activities had students engaged at Level III – Strategic Thinking. Cognitive expectations included in this category demand a short-term use of higher order thinking processes, such as analysis and evaluation, to solve real-world problems with predictable outcomes.
- Instructional activities categorized at Level IV – Extended Thinking were observed in only 1% of district classrooms. Cognitive expectations included in this category demand extended use of higher order thinking processes such as synthesis, reflection, assessment, and adjustment of plans over time.

Congruence with Grade Level Standards

During their visits to district classrooms, reviewers were able to identify the learning objective being taught at the time of the classroom visit for 380 classrooms. Reviewers calibrated the observed learning objective with the Georgia Standards of Excellence to determine if the observed learning objective was on grade level, below grade level, or not a match to the state standards. The results of the reviewers' analysis are illustrated in Exhibit 3.3.10.

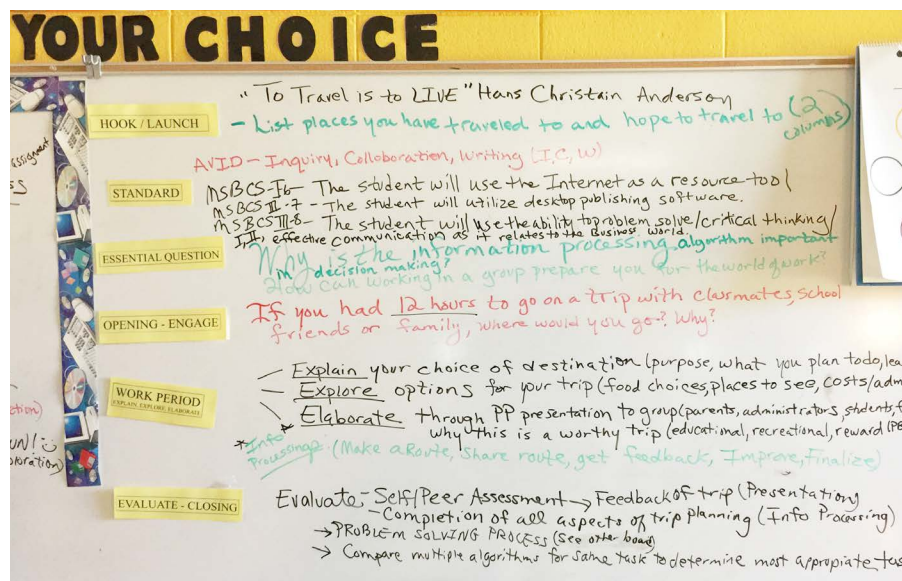
Exhibit 3.3.10

Calibration of Observed Learning Objectives to the Georgia Standards of Excellence Richmond County School System October 2017



As can be noted from Exhibit 3.3.10:

- In most observed classrooms, 84%, the observed learning objective was on grade level.
- In 13% of classrooms where the learning objective was determined, the objective was below grade level.
- In 1% of observed classrooms where the learning objective was noted, the objective was above grade level.
- For 2% of observed classrooms, the learning objective did not match to any of the state standards.



Bulletin board at W.S. Hornsby K-8 describing the writing process including references to the Georgia learning standards

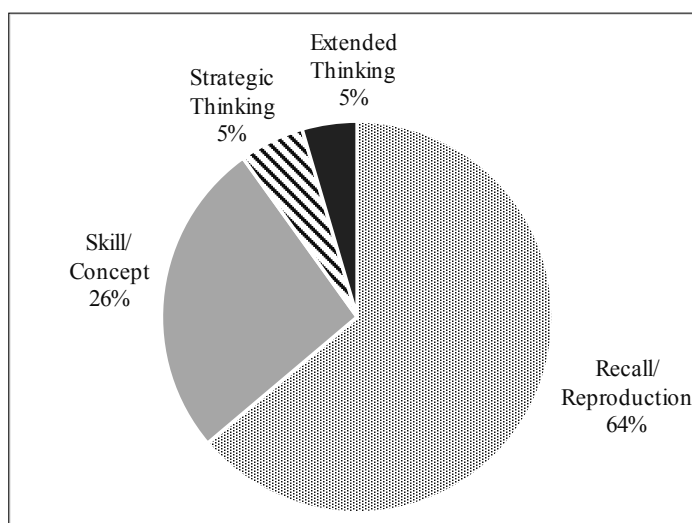
Student Artifact Analysis

Reviewers requested from each school a sample of student artifacts (worksheets, tests, teacher handout, copies of workbook pages, etc.) from one of the four content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The intent was to analyze each artifact for Depth of Knowledge (see [Exhibit 3.3.8](#)). The sample of artifacts collected should reveal a range of cognitive demands so that students have ample opportunity to practice the cognitive skills they need to be successful on national, state, and local assessments. After eliminating any duplicate artifacts, reviewers analyzed 484 student artifacts. When artifacts contained several learning objectives, reviewers classified the Depth of Knowledge based on the dominant activity or concept being addressed in the artifact. Most of the artifacts collected for the reviewers were from textbooks and other published teaching resources. Very few of the artifacts were teacher created. During their analysis, reviewers noted little difference across content areas in the percentage of artifacts categorized at each level of the Depth of Knowledge Model.

[Exhibit 3.3.11](#) presents Depth of Knowledge analyses of core content artifacts collected by building administrators for the reviewers.

Exhibit 3.3.11

Summary: Cognitive Demand of Collected Student Artifacts
English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies
Richmond County School System
October 2017



As can be noted from [Exhibit 3.3.11](#):

- The majority of student work samples, 64%, analyzed by reviewers required students to engage in Level I cognitive activities associated with recall or reproducing knowledge and/or skills.
- Twenty-six percent of all student work samples analyzed by reviewers required students to engage in Level II cognitive activities associated with categorizing, comparing, describing, or converting information from one form to another.
- Five percent of student work samples analyzed required students to engage in Level III cognitive activities, which may require students to analyze and evaluate information to solve a problem with predictable outcomes.
- Five percent of student work samples analyzed contained activities at Level IV, which included cognitive demands associated with synthesis, reflection, and assessment.

Reviewers randomly selected from the student artifacts provided for grades 3, 5, 8, and high school core subjects to check for alignment with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content, context, and cognition. A total of 83 artifacts were selected for comparison. Exhibit 3.3.12 displays the results of this analysis for English language arts.

Exhibit 3.3.12

Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence English Language Arts Richmond County School System October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
3	New England Colonies details, and clear event sequences.	SS3H3	X			X		X	Reviewer unsure of the prompt students were given to complete the task. Students answered multiple choice questions.
3	N/A	ELA GS E5W3 Text types and Purpose Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. (5 Sub –topics)	X		X		X		
5	N/A	ELA GS SRL1 Quote accurately explaining text and drawing inferences	X			X		X	Student product was to answer multiple choice questions
5	N/A	ELA GS RL5A Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fit together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.		X	X			X	The reviewer could not determine the assignment and what students were expected to do in order to meet the standard based on the artifact presented.
5	U.S. entering WWI	ELA GSE 5W2 Write informative, explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. & ELA GSE 5R12 Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.	X		X		X		
5	Choose the Word	ELA GSE 5RF 3 Know and apply grade level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words, & 4 Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.		X		X		X	Student work did not reflect anything related to phonics or word analysis. Worksheet given to students to show their final work required filling in the blank and writing a simple sentence for answers.

Exhibit 3.3.12 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
English Language Arts
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
5	Reasons Williams did not want to use chemicals to kill plants and unwanted vegetation.	ELA GSE SRL1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	X			X		X	Teacher prompt for the work was not evident. Student work did not include any quotations in the answer.
3	Spelling Test 9	ELA GSE 3RF3 Knows and applies grade-level phonics and word analysis in decoding		X		X		X	Students were given a worksheet on which they had to complete several tasks: circle the word that is spelled correctly; categorize words by vowel+y or consonant+y to show an understanding of spelling patterns
3	Mary Leakey	ELA GSE 3W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.	X		X		X		
10	The Crucible Acts 1 and 2 Tic Tac Toe Board	ELA GSE 10RL1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, RL3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme, RL4 and W9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research		X		X		X	Reviewer did not have the prompt and could not determine exactly what students were expected to do in order demonstrate mastery of the standard.
10	Performance Task II	ELA GSE 9-10R11 and 12; 9-10W2; 9-10W6; 9 – 10 W8	X			X		X	Date of expected completion of the project was 10/27/17, but reviewers were not apprised of the date on which the artifact was submitted. Worksheet outlining the components of a thesis paper was submitted. Students had to write responses to questions asked.

Exhibit 3.3.12 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
English Language Arts
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
10	How has gender inequity persisted in the modern world	ELA GSE 10RL2 Determine a theme or central idea of text and closely analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details	X		X		X		
10	The Shipping News	ELAGSE9-10RL4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).	X			X		X	Student product to indicate that content had been mastered is a worksheet on which students have to fill in the blank.
8	The Drummer Boy of Shiloh	ELA GSE 8RL4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.	X			X		X	The reviewer was unable to determine what product should indicate that the student had mastered the standard.

Exhibit 3.3.12 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
English Language Arts
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
8	The Big Test	ELA GSE 8RI1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text; ELA GASE 8 RL2: Determine a theme and/or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. ELAGSE 8RL2 Determine a theme and/or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. ELAGSE 8RL10- By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.	X		X			X	Students given a reading assignment which was grade appropriate for 8 th grade. However, they had to give their responses for the content on four question multiple choice questions and various other types of short answer response.
8	Mt. Pinatubo and the Ring of Fire	ELA GSE 8RI 1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. ELAGSE 8 RI 2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.	X		X			X	Students given a reading assignment that was grade appropriate for eighth grade. However, they had to give their responses for the content on four multiple choice questions and various other types of short answer response.

Exhibit 3.3.12 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
English Language Arts
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
8	Hidden Figures	ELAGSE8W2- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant information.	X		X			X	Reviewers gave the artifact the benefit of the doubt for context. The teacher provided nothing but the student's essay. Grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation were not on par for that of an eighth grader. It seems that the teacher had the student view the movie.
3	N/A	ELAGSE3RL3- Describe how characters in a story (e.g. their traits, motivations, or feelings) and how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.		X		X		X	This is a task given to a third grade student who is academically at a first grade level. The student had to draw pictures to illustrate a sentence. There was evidence of describing characters, or sequencing events.
3	Pattern Sort	ELAGSE 3RF3- Know and apply grade level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. Decoding multi-syllable words UNIT 9 Inflectional endings.	X		X			X	Student had to complete a worksheet to place words in proper column Vowel+/-y or Consonant +/-y.
3	Max and Tommy	3R13/3R18- identify text structure and describes its relationship (with compare and contrast)	X		X		X		
8	Hawaiian Ranching (From RCK12 Eight Grade ELA Benchmark 1)	ELA GSE 8 RI1-8 Reading Informational-Integration of knowledge and ideas- Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound, and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.	X		X			X	How students are to respond is unclear. Only one multiple choice question was evident in the materials the reviewer received.
Total by Alignment Yes/No			16	5	11	10	5	16	
Percentages of Alignment			76	24	52	48	24	76	

As can be noted from Exhibit 3.3.12:

- For content, 76% of the English language arts student artifacts analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- For context, 52% of the English language arts student artifacts analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- For cognition, only 24% of the English language arts student artifacts analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Exhibit 3.3.13 displays the results of the analysis for mathematics.

Exhibit 3.3.13

Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence Mathematics Richmond County School System October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
3	Topic 5 Test	MCC3.OA.3 Use multiplication and division within 100 to solve word problems in situations involving equal groups, arrays, and measurements quantities, e.g., by using drawings and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem.	X		X		X		
3	Addition Meaning and Properties	MGSE3.NBT.2 Use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic. Fluently add and subtract within 1000 using strategies and algorithms based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction.		X		X		X	The worksheet was done in a test-like manner with only single digit numbers.
3	Math Must Dos	MCC3.OA.1 Represent and solve problems involving multiplication and division. Interpret products of whole numbers, e.g., interpret 5×7 as the total number of objects in 5 groups of 7 objects each.	X		X		X		
3	Monday Must Do	MCC3.NBT.1 Use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic. Use place value understanding to round whole numbers to nearest 10 or 100.	X		X			X	The worksheet simply had numbers and students were asked to round to the nearest 10. There is no clear aspect to show an understanding; a 50/50 guess could simply arrive at the correct answer.

Exhibit 3.3.13 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Mathematics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
3	Lesson Practice	MCC3.OA.3 Use multiplication and division within 100 to solve word problems in situations involving equal groups, arrays, and measurements quantities, e.g., by using drawings and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem.		X		X		X	This worksheet reviewed only arrays and involved only drawings. There were no unknown numbers as students had to simply choose the correct answer on the test-like worksheet.
5	No Name	MGSE.5.OA.1 Operations and Algebraic Thinking Use parentheses, brackets, or braces in numerical expressions, and evaluate expressions with these symbols. MGSE.5.OA.2 ; Operations and Algebraic Thinking Write simple expressions that record calculations with numbers, and interpret numerical expressions without evaluating them. MSGE.5.NBT.1 Number and Operations in Base Ten Recognize that in a multi-digit number, a digit in one place represents 10 times as much as it represents in the place to its right and 1/10 of what it represents in the place to its left. MGSE.5.NBT.2 Number and Operations in Base Ten Explain patterns in the number of zeroes of the product when multiplying a number by powers of 10, and explain patterns in the placement of the decimal point when a decimal is multiplied or divided by a power of 10. Use whole-number exponents to denote powers of 10. MGSE.5.NBT.5 ; Number and Operations in Base Ten Fluently multiply multi-digit whole numbers using the standard algorithm (or other strategies demonstrating understanding of multiplication) up to a 3 digit by 2-digit factor. MGSE.5.NBT.6 Number and Operations in Base Ten Fluently divide up to 4-digit dividends and 2-digit divisors by using at least one of the following methods...		X	X			X	The worksheet matched only two of the standards used (MGSE.5.OA.1 and MGSE.5.OA.2). The other standards attached to this worksheet make it non-congruent with the stated standards. There appear to be only five problems and there are too many standards for only five problems.

Exhibit 3.3.13 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Mathematics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
5	No Name	<p>MGSE5.NBT.5 Perform operation with multi-digit whole numbers and with decimals to hundredths. Fluently multiply multi-digit whole numbers using the standard algorithm (or other strategies demonstrating understanding of multiplication) up to a 3 digit by 2-digit factor.</p> <p>MGSE5.NBT.6 Perform operations with multi-digit whole numbers and with decimals to hundredths. Fluently divide up to 4-digit dividends and 2-digit divisors by using at least one of the following methods: strategies based on place value, the properties of operations, and/or the relationship between multiplication and division, illustrate and explain the calculation by using equations or concrete models. (e.g., rectangular arrays, area models)</p>		X	X		X		The worksheet has only two problems that deal with the first standard, while 10 problems address the second standard; therefore, there is no congruency with the first standard.
5	Test	<p>MGSE.5.OA.1; MGSE.5.OA.2; MGSE.5.NBT.1; MGSE.5.NBT.2; MGSE.5.NBT.5; MGSE.5.NBT.6 (too many standards to list individual standards here).</p>		X		X		X	This test covers multiple standards, but most only have up to two questions with no indication which questions match with which standard. It is just like a test with multiple choice questions, and while students had to show their work, there was no way to understand which questions go with which standards to understand content mastery.

Exhibit 3.3.13 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Mathematics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
5	Common Assessment Week 9: Operations with Decimals – Adding and Subtracting	MGSE.5.NBT.7 Perform operations with multi-digit whole numbers and with decimals to hundredths. Add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals to hundredths, using concrete models or drawings and strategies based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction, relate the strategy to a written method and explain the reasoning used. MGSE.5.NBT.4 Understand the place value system. Use place value understanding to round decimals to the hundredths place.	X			X		X	The test-like quiz covers both standards, but the standards are not attached to any specific questions, so teachers are unable to understand which standards are mastered by students.
5	Decimal Multiplication	MGSE.5.NBT.7 Perform operations with multi-digit whole numbers and with decimals to hundredths. Add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals to hundredths, using concrete models or drawings and strategies based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction, relate the strategy to a written method and explain the reasoning used.		X		X		X	The worksheet has nine multiplication problems using decimals to the 10, not the 100. There are no concrete models or drawings for students to use.
8	Linear and Non-linear Functions	MGSE9-12.F.IF.1; MGSE9-12.F.IF.2; MGSE9-12.F.IF.4; MGSE.8.F.3 (too many standards to list individual standards here).		X	X		X		This activity involves multiple standards and students are to choose five out of eight scenarios. While the actual work is congruent with specific standards, it is not possible to understand which standards students master because the various scenarios are not tied to specific standard. Students could possibly choose so that not all standards are utilized.

Exhibit 3.3.13 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Mathematics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
8	Graphic Organizer/ Foldable	MGSE.8.EE.7.a Analyze and solve linear equations and pairs of simultaneous linear equations. Give examples of linear equations in one variable with one solution, infinitely many solutions, or no solutions. Show which of these possibilities is the case by successfully transforming the given equation into simpler forms, until an equivalent equation of the form $x=a$, $a=a$, or $a=b$ results (where a and b are different numbers).	X			X	X		The assignment matches the standard and cognition, but is found to be non-congruent for context because this appears to be simple problems worked out by students with possible direction from a teacher.
8	No Name	MGSE.8.G.5 Understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or geometry software. Use informal arguments to establish facts about the angle sum and exterior angle of triangles, about the angles created when parallel lines are cut by a transversal, and the angle-angle criterion for similarity of triangles.	X		X		X		
8	Color by Classifying	MGSE.8.NS.1 Know that there are numbers that are not rational, and approximate them by rational numbers. Know that numbers that are not rational are called irrational. Understand informally that every number has a decimal expansion; for rational numbers show that the decimal expansion repeats eventually, and convert a decimal expansion which repeats eventually into a rational number.		X		X		X	While this could be a fun activity, it is basically low level work that asks students to simply recognize real and rational numbers.
8	No Name	MGSE.8.G.5 Understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or geometry software. Use informal arguments to establish facts about the angle sum and exterior angle of triangles, about the angles created when parallel lines are cut by a transversal, and the angle-angle criterion for similarity of triangles.	X			X	X		Students are to complete a test-like worksheet that checks for understanding of angle relationships. The worksheet is a typical worksheet found in a classroom and does not employ anything beyond what would be found in a classroom.

Exhibit 3.3.13 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Mathematics
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
9	Practice – Solving Equations by Using Multiplication and Division	MGSE.9-12.A.REI.1 Understand solving equations as a process of reasoning and explain the reasoning. Using algebraic properties and the properties of real numbers, justify the steps of a simple, one-solution equation. Students should justify their own steps, or if given two or more steps of an equation, explain the progression from one step to the next using properties.	X			X	X		This worksheet is a typical classroom worksheet, but it does measure the standard indicated and also works at the cognition expected of the standard.
10	Quiz 5, Unit 2 Quadrilaterals	MGSE.G.CO.11 Congruence Prove theorems about parallelograms		X		X		X	This worksheet addresses only part of the stated standard. Students work through given problems, but they are not asked to prove theorems. They are simply asked to complete calculations.
10	Quiz 7.1-7.3	MGSE.G.CO.10 Prove Congruence Theorems about triangles		X		X		X	This worksheet addresses only part of the stated standard. The students are to answer multiple choice questions and are not asked to give their reasoning behind their answers. Only one question is congruent to the standard.
9/10	Triangle Congruence	MGSE.G.CO.6; MGSE.G.CO.8; MGSE.G.CO.9; MGSE.G.CO.10; MGSE.G.SRT.5 (too many standards to list individual standards here).		X		X		X	This test measures the standards indicated, but does not relate any question to a specific standard; therefore, it is impossible to understand which standards are mastered by students. This would be congruent in cognition if students were asked to justify their answers.

Exhibit 3.3.13 (continued) Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence Mathematics Richmond County School System October 2017									
Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
9/10	Evaluate: Homework and Practice	MGSE.G.SRT.4 Prove theorems about triangles; MGSE.G.CO.10 Congruence Prove Theorems about triangles; MGSE.G.SRT.5 Similarity, Right Triangles, and Trigonometry Use congruence and similarity criteria for triangles to solve problems and to prove relationships in geometric figures.	X		X		X		This worksheet asks students to solve open-ended questions with prompts.
Total by Alignment Yes/No			9	11	8	12	9	11	
Percentages of Alignment			45	55	40	60	45	55	

As can be noted from [Exhibit 3.3.13](#):

- For content, 45% of the math student artifacts analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- For context, 40% of the math student artifacts analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- For cognition, 45% of the math artifacts analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

[Exhibit 3.3.14](#) displays the results of this analysis for science.

Exhibit 3.3.14
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Science
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
3	Flip Book: Types of rocks and the rock cycle	S3E1a Explain the difference between a rock and a mineral.		X		X		X	The activity requires students to define three types of rock and how they are formed. There is no connection to the minerals.
3	Worksheet: Read Works Fossils and Dinosaurs	S3E1 Students will investigate the physical attributes of rocks and soils.		X		X		X	The activity requires students to recall information about fossils from a passage. There is no connection to the standard.

Exhibit 3.3.14 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Science
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
3	Worksheet: Students will write a story and draw a picture about what they would do if they were a rock.	S3E1 Students will investigate the physical attributes of rocks and soils.		X		X		X	The activity requires students to write a story about a rock. There is no connection to the skill required by the standard.
3	Activity: Skittles Weathering and Erosion	S3E1 Students will investigate the physical attributes of rocks and soils.	X		X		X		The activity requires students to conduct an experiment, make observations, and reflect on the process of rock weathering. The activity matches the standard.
3	Habitat Insta-Lab	S3L1a Differentiate between habitats of Georgia (mountains, marsh/swamp, coast, Piedmont, Atlantic Ocean) and the organisms that live there		X		X		X	The activity requires students to choose a displaced animal from its habitat and create a habitat for it. The activity does not match the standard.
5	Similarities and differences between animal and plant cells. Parts of an animal and plant cell to know.	S5L3 Students will diagram and label parts of various cells (plant, animal, single-celled, multi-celled)		X		X		X	The activity required students to diagram and label parts of edible cells and animal cells. There is partial match to the standard. Single-celled, and multi-celled are not required. The activity is below grade level.
5	STEM Challenge Alien Classification	S5L1a Animal Classification.		X		X		X	The activity requires classification and grouping of alien figures. There is no connection to the skill required by the standard. This activity is below grade level.
5	Investigate Log Classify Shoes	S5L1 I can obtain, evaluate, and communicate information to group organisms using scientific classification procedures.		X		X		X	There is no connection to the skill required by the standard. This activity is below grade level.

Exhibit 3.3.14 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Science
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
5	MyOn Assignment	S5L1 Students will log in to MyOn. Read the 5 books about vertebrate animal groups. Complete a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting two vertebrate groups. Students will then create a brochure for the McBean Zoo highlighting facts and examples for a group of vertebrates.		X		X	X		While there is connection to the standard, the activity only requires partial completion of the standard.
5	Cell Simile Project	S5L3 Develop a model to identify and label parts of a plant cell (membrane, wall, cytoplasm, nucleus, chloroplasts) and an animal cell (membrane, cytoplasm, and nucleus)		X		X		X	The activity requires students to come up with similes for the cell of their choice. The activity does not match the rigor of the standard.
8	Density Lab Station	S8P1c Plan and carry out investigations to compare and contrast chemical (i.e., reactivity, combustibility) and (i.e. density, melting point, boiling point) properties of matter.	X		X		X		The activity requires students to develop a hypothesis, conduct observations, do calculations, and make conclusions. The activity matches the standard.
8	Atomic Theory Timeline	S8P1e Develop models (e.g., atomic-level models, including drawings, and computer representations) by analyzing patterns with the periodic table that illustrate the structure, composition, and characteristics of atoms (protons, neutrons, and electrons) and simple molecules		X		X		X	The standard requires the student to distinguish between changes in matter, while the activity requires a student to develop a model.

Exhibit 3.3.14 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Science
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
8	The Alien Periodic Table Challenge	S8P1e Develop models (e.g., atomic-level models, including drawings, and computer representations) by analyzing patterns with the periodic table that illustrate the structure, composition, and characteristics of atoms (protons, neutrons, and electrons) and simple molecules		X		X		X	The standard requires the student to distinguish between changes in atomic structure of matter, while the activity requires students to arrange alien elements onto a blank periodic table.
12	Design an Experiment	SP1d Grade 12 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about the relationship between distance, displacement, speed, velocity, and acceleration as functions of time.	X		X		X		The standard matches the activity as it relates to Newton's three laws of motion.
11/12	Worksheet	SP2a Grade 11 & 12 Calculate the acceleration for an object using Newton's 2 nd law, including situations where multiple forces act together.		X		X		X	The standard given in the artifact does not match the physics standard, which is related to energy produced through fission and fusion by stars as driving forces in the universe.
10	Projectile Motion Worksheet	SP1 SP1d Grade 10 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about the relationship between distance, displacement, speed, velocity, and acceleration as functions of time.	X			X		X	The worksheet requires students to solve problems. While the activity is related to the standard, it does not support evaluation and communication of the skill.
11	Worksheet	SP26 Grade 11 No description of the standard		X		X		X	The standard given in the artifact was not found in the Georgia Performance Standards.

Exhibit 3.3.14 (continued) Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence Science Richmond County School System October 2017									
Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
11/12	Egg Drop Challenge	SP2 Grade 11-12 Obtain, evaluate and communicate information about how forces affect the motion of objects.		X		X		X	While the activity requires a high-level thinking skill of students, it does not relate to understanding the structure of matter and the universe.
Total by Alignment Yes/No			4	14	3	15	4	14	
Percentages of Alignment			22	78	17	83	22	78	

As can be noted from Exhibit 3.3.14:

- For content, 22% of the science student artifacts analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- For context, 17% of the science student artifacts analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- For cognition, only 22% of the science student artifacts analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Exhibit 3.3.15 displays the results of the analysis for social studies.

Exhibit 3.3.15

Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence Social Studies Richmond County School System October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
3	<i>Life in the New England Colonies</i> selection and questions	SS3H3 Explain the factors that shaped British Colonial America. a. Identify key reasons why the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and Southern colonies were founded (religious freedom and profit). b. Compare and contrast colonial life in the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and Southern colonies (education, economy, and religion). c. Describe colonial life in America from the perspectives of various people: large landowners, farmers, artisans, women, children, indentured servants, slaves, and American Indians.		X		X		X	Did not meet all parts of the standard. Multiple choice format allows students to choose cultural characteristics instead of explaining factors.
3	Native American mini-poster	SS3H1 Describe early American Indian cultures and their development in North America. a. Locate the regions where American Indians settled in North America: Arctic, Northwest Southwest, Plains, Northeast, and Southeast. b. Compare and contrast how American Indians in each region used their environment to obtain food, clothing, and shelter. c. Discuss how American Indians continue to contribute to American life (e.g., arts, literature).		X	X			X	While the assignment is completed in a real-world context, it meets only part of the standard for content and cognition.
3	Christopher Columbus Assessment	SS3H2b Describe the accomplishments of: John Cabot (England), Vasco Núñez de Balboa (Spain), Hernando de Soto (Spain), Christopher Columbus (Spain), Henry Hudson (The Netherlands), and Jacques Cartier (France).		X	X			X	The assigned task was to complete a crossword about the first voyage of Columbus to the new world using a word bank. Although a crossword can be considered a real-world context, it requires students to choose the correct word rather than describe and it did not include other explorers.

Exhibit 3.3.15 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Social Studies
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
3	Explorer Routes Map	SS3H3c Describe colonial life in America from the perspectives of various people: large landowners, farmers, artisans, women, children, indentured servants, slaves, and American Indians. SS3H2b Describe the accomplishments of: John Cabot (England), Vasco Núñez de Balboa (Spain), Hernando de Soto (Spain), Christopher Columbus (Spain), Henry Hudson (The Netherlands), and Jacques Cartier (France).		X		X		X	The assignment required students to label and color a map of routes taken by Balboa, Cabot, Cartier, Columbus, de Soto, and Hudson. Thus, there is some content connection to SS3H2b , but none to SS3H3c . It was rated low on context and cognition because it did not have a real-world component and did not require students to describe anything.
3	Video Notes for <i>Diversity of Colonial Communities</i>	SS3H3c Describe colonial life in America from the perspectives of various people: large landowners, farmers, artisans, women, children, indentured servants, slaves, and American Indians.	X			X	X		This assignment directly matched the content and cognition of the standard. The format of the worksheet prevented it being considered a real-world context or meaningful writing.
5	Theodore Roosevelt Facts	SS5H4b Describe major events in the war in both Europe and the Pacific; include Pearl Harbor, Iwo Jima, D-Day, VE and VJ Days, and the Holocaust.		X		X		X	This item required students to read a biography of Theodore Roosevelt and answer true/false questions about events in his life. No congruency was noted to the standard in any area.
5	Internet Questions	SS5H3 Explain how the Great Depression and New Deal affected the lives of millions of Americans. a. Discuss the Stock Market Crash of 1929, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, the Dust Bowl, and soup kitchens. b. Analyze the main features of the New Deal; include the significance of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Works Progress Administration, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. c. Discuss important cultural elements of the 1930s; include Duke Ellington, Margaret Mitchell, and Jesse Owens.		X	X		X		This task had a real-world context (Internet research) and required short paragraph answers. It was rated low on content because the questions did not address many parts of the standard. Had the questions been tagged as only SS5H3b , the alignment would have been closer.

Exhibit 3.3.15 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Social Studies
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
5	Civil War Questions	<p>SS4H5 Explain the causes, major events, and consequences of the Civil War.</p> <p>a. Identify Uncle Tom’s Cabin and John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry and explain how each of these events was related to the Civil War.</p> <p>b. Discuss how the issues of states’ rights and slavery increased tensions between the North and South.</p> <p>c. Identify major battles, campaigns, and events: Fort Sumter, Gettysburg, the Atlanta Campaign, Sherman’s March to the Sea, and Appomattox Court House.</p> <p>d. Describe the roles of Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, Jefferson Davis, Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, and William T. Sherman.</p> <p>e. Describe the effects of war on the North and South.</p>	X			X		X	<p>This task addresses all parts of the standard for content. It was rated low for context and cognition because it asked the students to produce short answer responses to a series of closed-ended questions rather than discussing and describing.</p> <p>The content was noted to be in the fourth grade standards although the assignment was labeled as fifth grade.</p>
5	Inventors Exam	<p>SS5H3 Explain how the Great Depression and New Deal affected the lives of millions of Americans.</p> <p>a. Discuss the Stock Market Crash of 1929, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, the Dust Bowl, and soup kitchens.</p> <p>b. Analyze the main features of the New Deal; include the significance of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Works Progress Administration, and the Tennessee Valley Authority.</p> <p>c. Discuss important cultural elements of the 1930s; include Duke Ellington, Margaret Mitchell, and Jesse Owens.</p>		X		X		X	<p>This exam covered several prominent inventors of the early twentieth century and their accomplishments. No congruence was noted to the standard SS5H3, although the content matched the standard SS5H1b.</p> <p>The test was rated low in context and cognition because it contained no real-world context or significant writing, and because the format did not provide for discussion or analysis.</p>

Exhibit 3.3.15 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Social Studies
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
5	Civil War and Reconstruction Test	<p>SS4H5 Explain the causes, major events, and consequences of the Civil War.</p> <p>a. Identify Uncle Tom’s Cabin and John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry and explain how each of these events was related to the Civil War.</p> <p>b. Discuss how the issues of states’ rights and slavery increased tensions between the North and South.</p> <p>c. Identify major battles, campaigns, and events: Fort Sumter, Gettysburg, the Atlanta Campaign, Sherman’s March to the Sea, and Appomattox Court House.</p> <p>d. Describe the roles of Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, Jefferson Davis, Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, and William T. Sherman.</p> <p>e. Describe the effects of war on the North and South.</p> <p>SS4H6 Analyze the effects of Reconstruction on American life. Describe the purpose of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments.</p> <p>b. Explain the work of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen’s Bureau).</p> <p>c. Explain how slavery was replaced by sharecropping and how freed African Americans or Blacks were prevented from exercising their newly won rights.</p> <p>d. Describe the effects of Jim Crow laws and practices</p>	X			X		X	This exam matched almost all of the content components within the two standards listed. It was rated low for content and cognition because the multiple choice, matching, and short answer format contained no real-world components and only allowed for identification without discussion or analysis. It was also noted that these standards are listed as fourth grade, although the paper was clearly labeled as a fifth grade assignment.

Exhibit 3.3.15 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Social Studies
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
8	DeSoto Eyewitness Reporter	SS8H1b & c b. Explain reasons for European exploration and settlement of North America, with emphasis on the interests of the Spanish and British in the Southeastern area. c. Evaluate the impact of Spanish contact on American Indians, including the explorations of Hernando DeSoto and the establishment of Spanish missions along the barrier islands.		X	X		X		This task involved using Internet resources to write from an eye-witness perspective citing textual evidence. It thus was rated highly for context and cognition. Overall, the assignment was directly congruent with student expectation c. However, the prompt made no reference to reasons for European exploration, making the content congruency low for student expectation b.
8	Exploration and Settlement Cloze Notes	SS8H1b & c b. Explain reasons for European exploration and settlement of North America, with emphasis on the interests of the Spanish and British in the Southeastern area. c. Evaluate the impact of Spanish contact on American Indians, including the explorations of Hernando DeSoto and the establishment of Spanish missions along the barrier islands.	X			X		X	For this assignment students were asked to fill in blanks in note-type statements. Credit was given for content congruence, because all parts of the student expectation were specifically cited except the establishment of missions along the barrier islands. However, the school-only context and fill-in-the-blank format precluded high marks for context and cognition.

Exhibit 3.3.15 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Social Studies
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
8	Illustrated/ Annotated Timeline	SS8H1b & c b. Explain reasons for European exploration and settlement of North America, with emphasis on the interests of the Spanish and British in the Southeastern area. c. Evaluate the impact of Spanish contact on American Indians, including the explorations of Hernando DeSoto and the establishment of Spanish missions along the barrier islands.		X	X			X	This assignment was limited to the effect of European contact with Native Americans, so congruence with the content of the cited student expectations was limited. Credit was given for context because the task involved the collection, analysis, and display of information such as is often required in real-world business settings. However, the cognitive congruence was low, since the task required analysis, but not evaluation.
8	Citation for Injustice	SS8H2b,c, & d b. Analyze the relationship between James Oglethorpe, Tomochichi, and Mary Musgrove in establishing the city of Savannah at Yamacraw Bluff. c. Evaluate the role of diverse groups (Jews, Salzburger, Highland Scots, and Malcontents) in settling Georgia during the Trustee Period. d. Explain the transition of Georgia into a royal colony with regard to land ownership, slavery, alcohol, and government.		X	X			X	This assignment was to create a citation for injustice against Hernando DeSoto, providing evidence of his crimes and an alternative strategy he could have used. While the task was rated highly for real-world context, no congruence to the cited student expectations was noted.

Exhibit 3.3.15 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Social Studies
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
8	Guided Reading	SS8H5 Analyze the impact of the Civil War on Georgia. a. Explain the importance of key issues and events that led to the Civil War; include slavery, states' rights, nullification, Compromise of 1850 and the Georgia Platform, the Dred Scott case, Abraham Lincoln's election in 1860, and the debate over secession in Georgia. b. Explain Georgia's role in the Civil War; include the Union blockade of Georgia's coast, the Emancipation Proclamation, Chickamauga, Sherman's Atlanta Campaign, Sherman's March to the Sea, and Andersonville.		X		X		X	The fill-in-the-blank notes of this assignment covered the years 1789-1850, so no content congruency was noted to the cited standard. The format of the assignment only required students to locate and copy missing words, so it was rated low in context and cognitive congruence.
9-12	Mongol History Timeline	SSWH4e Describe the impact of the Mongols on Russia, China, and the Middle East; include the role of Chinggis (Genghis) Khan in developing the Mongol Empire.	X			X	X		While it directly addressed the content and cognition of the cited standard, this assignment was rated low for contextual congruency because it involved no real-world tasks or significant writing.
9-12	Chapter 12 Questions	SSWH6 Describe the diverse characteristics of early African societies before 1500 CE/AD. a. Describe the development and decline of the Sudanic kingdoms (Ghana, Mali, Songhai); include the roles of Sundiata, and the pilgrimage of Mansa Musa to Mecca. b. Describe the trading networks and distribution of resources by examining trans-Saharan trade in gold, salt, and slaves; include the Swahili trading cities. c. Understand the blending of traditional African beliefs with new ideas from Islam and Christianity and their impact on early African societies.		X		X		X	This assignment hit several points mentioned in the standard, but did not cover all portions. The questions did not lead students toward developing a description of characteristics or events.

Exhibit 3.3.15 (continued)
Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence
Social Studies
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
9-12	Medieval Social Roles Worksheet	SSWH7 Analyze European medieval society with regard to culture, politics, society, and economics. a. Explain the manorial system and feudal relationships; include the status of peasants and feudal monarchies and the importance of Charlemagne. b. Explain the political impact of Christianity and the role of the church in medieval society. c. Describe how increasing trade led to the growth of towns and cities; include the impact of the Bubonic Plague. d. Describe the causes and impact of the Crusades on the Islamic World and Europe.		X		X		X	The short answer format of these factual research questions did not meet all parts of the standard, nor did it require explanation or analysis.
9-12	Origins of Islam Timeline	SSWH5 Examine the political, economic, and cultural interactions within the medieval Mediterranean World between 600 CE/AD and 1300 CE/AD. a. Analyze the origins of Islam and the growth of the Islamic Empire. b. Understand the reasons for the split between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. c. Assess the economic impact of Muslim trade routes to India, China, Europe and Africa. d. Identify the contributions of Islamic scholars in science, math, and geography e. Analyze the relationship between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.		X		X		X	Had this assignment been listed as only SSWH5a it would have been considered congruent in content. It met no other parts of the standard.

Exhibit 3.3.15 (continued) Analysis of Student Artifacts for Congruence with Georgia Standards of Excellence Social Studies Richmond County School System October 2017									
Grade	Classroom Artifact Title	GSE Standards	Content Cong.		Context Cong.		Cognition Cong.		Comments on Congruency
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
9-12	Comparison of Athens and Sparta brochure	SSWH3 Examine the political, philosophical, and cultural interaction of Classical Mediterranean societies from 700 BCE/BC to 400 CE/AD. a. Compare the origins and structure of the Greek polis, the Roman Republic, and the Roman Empire. b. Identify the ideas and impact of important individuals; include Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Augustus Caesar. c. Analyze the impact of Greek and Roman culture, politics, and technology. d. Describe polytheism in the Greek and Roman world. e. Explain the origins and diffusion of Christianity in the Roman world. f. Analyze the factors that led to the collapse of the Western Roman Empire		X	X			X	This assignment was congruent with SSWH3a in content, context, and cognition. However, it had no content or cognitive congruence to the rest of the items in standard SSWH3 .
Total by Alignment Yes/No			5	15	7	13	4	16	
Percentages of Alignment			25	75	35	65	20	80	

As can be noted from Exhibit 3.3.15:

- For content, 25% of the social studies student artifacts analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- For context, 35% of the social studies student artifacts analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- For cognition, only 20% of the social student artifacts analyzed were found to be congruent with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Exhibit 3.3.16 displays a summary of all artifacts examined for alignment with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for content, context, and cognition.

Exhibit 3.3.16

Summary of Analysis of Student Artifacts for Alignment With Georgia Standards of Excellence Richmond County School System October 2017

Subject	Content No. Congruent		Context No. Congruent		Cognition No. Congruent	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
ELA	16	5	11	10	5	16
Mathematics	9	11	8	12	9	11
Science	4	14	3	15	4	14
Social Studies	5	15	7	13	4	16
Totals	34	45	29	50	22	57
Percentage of Totals:	43%	57%	37%	63%	28%	72%

As can be noted from Exhibit 3.3.16:

- Overall, reviewers noted there is a weak alignment between a sampling of student artifacts and the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content, context, and cognition.
- Overall, 43% of the student artifacts examined were aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content.
- Thirty-seven percent of the student artifacts examined were aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in context.
- Twenty-eight percent of the student artifacts examined were aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in cognition.

Overall, cognitive expectations for students observed during classroom visits were primarily at the Recall/ Reproduction and Skill/Concept levels, with few observed opportunities for students to engage with the complexities of real-world problems or activities that require higher levels of thinking. While a majority of observed learning objectives were noted at grade level, reviewers found that student artifacts, representative of how students are asked to practice and demonstrate their acquisition of new learning, were not tightly aligned for content, context, or cognition with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Although artifacts were more aligned in content than in other areas, lower degrees of alignment in context and cognition mean that students are not being well prepared for Georgia's high-stakes assessments.

Monitoring Curriculum Delivery

Academic success for students depends on having a quality curriculum available to teachers and effective instructional delivery of that curriculum. To ensure effective delivery of a high quality curriculum and to make certain that delivery is aligned to state standards and that instruction is being differentiated to meet individual needs, instruction must be monitored on a consistent basis throughout the district. Although teacher appraisals are one facet of monitoring instruction, monitoring is more than simply observing teachers during instruction. As instructional leaders, building administrators are the first line of accountability and support for the effective and aligned delivery of curriculum. To effectively monitor delivery, administrators need a clearly defined curriculum, aligned to state standards at the appropriate depth and complexity, and a specific instructional model as a guide.

Monitoring is more than just observing daily activities and interactions of teachers and students during classroom visits. Lesson plans should be monitored to ensure linkage to curriculum scope and sequence, appropriate instructional levels, and alignment to the state learning standards for the subject and grade level

taught. Instruction should be monitored to verify that the appropriate objectives are being taught; that the most effective instructional strategies are being used; that assessments are varied, including both formative and summative procedures; and that assessment results are being used to differentiate instruction and improve student achievement. Resources should be calibrated to assure content is on level and students are cognitively engaged in learning that promotes critical and high-level thinking.

To determine the expectations for monitoring the district's curriculum and instruction, the reviewers examined board policies, job descriptions, appraisal instruments, district and school improvement plans, and other district documents. The reviewers also visited each school in the district and interviewed building administrators, district administrators, and teachers and conducted an online survey of building administrators and teachers.



Students at Warren Road Elementary School were using QR code readers as part of a math skill practice

Responsibility for Monitoring

Reviewers examined board policy and district documents to determine what written direction exists regarding practices to monitor curriculum delivery in the district. The following guidance was noted in board policies and district documents.

- *Board Policy IDA: Curriculum Design and Development* includes a general expectation that principals shall be responsible for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum, although there is no clear direction regarding the focus or purpose for curriculum monitoring.
- The *District Improvement Plan* establishes two different monitoring systems with two different purposes. One goal dealing with increasing professional capacity states in part, "...increase the use of effective teaching strategies in the classroom as measured by ELEOT [Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool] observations." The district curriculum and instruction and professional learning departments are listed as the responsible parties for these observations. An action step listed under a goal to improve student performance in math and reading states, "...system leadership teams will use the ELEOT to observe classroom environments conducive to student learning." The district accountability department is assigned responsibility for these observations. Another action step, listed under a goal for improving student performance, states, "...school administrators will use TKES [Teacher Keys Effectiveness System] data to provide professional learning on standard deficiencies."
- The *Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) Implementation Handbook* outlines the state's teacher performance evaluation system. The TKES is comprised of three components including teacher assessment on performance standards, surveys of instructional practices, and student growth. The *Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS)* listed in the *Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) Implementation Handbook* includes 10 performance standards, 2 of which deal with delivery of instruction. Standard Three states, "The teacher promotes student learning by

using research-based instructional strategies relevant to the content area to engage students in active learning and to facilitate the students' acquisition of key knowledge and skills." Standard Four adds, "The teacher challenges and supports each student's learning by providing appropriate content and developing skills which address individual learning differences." The handbook places responsibility for implementing the system on building administrators.

Job descriptions were reviewed to further clarify who is responsible for monitoring implementation of the curriculum within Richmond County schools. The following responsibilities were noted:

- *Area Assistant Superintendents* – conduct walk-throughs "to provide feedback to help strengthen the effectiveness of standards-based instruction and interventions."
- The *Director of Curriculum and Instruction* – is to "direct in the planning, implementation, and supervision of the K-12 curriculum," although walk-through observations are not specified.
- *Curriculum Coordinator* – duties include "coordinate countywide the work of K-12 teachers, including on-site visits in classrooms."
- *Math, Science, or Literacy Academic Support Specialists* – have as a responsibility "conduct classroom observations and provide teachers with suggestions and feedback in one-on-one meetings."
- The *Accountability Officer* – duties do not include walk-throughs or observations. However, this position is directed to "obtain and report evaluative findings...to assist with the examination of curriculum and instruction program effectiveness."
- *Principals* – are directed to "monitor curriculum implementation to ensure that the appropriate content and sequence are followed." Under the TKES system, this can involve two to six observations per teacher.
- *Assistant Principals* – "...supervise teaching and learning on a continuous basis for improvement of classroom instructions" and "monitor, assist, and evaluate staff implementation of ... effective instructional and assessment practices."

Overall, district board policies and job descriptions provide a general expectation for monitoring curriculum delivery. District planning documents make specific references to TKES and ELEOT as the tools that will be used for monitoring instruction.

ELEOT Monitoring

The *District Improvement Plan* establishes the ELEOT observation tool as the means by which the district will determine whether classroom environments are conducive to learning and whether the use of effective teaching strategies is increasing. According to the publisher's website (www.advanc-ed.org/services/eleot/faq), the ELEOT is a learner-centric observation tool that organizes 28 learner behaviors into seven "environments":

- equitable learning,
- high expectations,
- supportive learning,
- active learning,
- progress monitoring and feedback,
- well-managed learning, and
- digital learning.

The tool is organized as a checklist where observers mark each of the 28 learner behaviors as "very evident," "evident," somewhat evident," or "not observed." Since the ELEOT is designed to measure the overall learning environment through learner behaviors, it does not directly address teacher use of effective instructional strategies, the curriculum being taught, or the alignment of the curriculum taught to the district's adopted

curriculum or state standards. Instead, the focus of the ELEOT is on equitable learning opportunities, high expectations, supportive learning environment, progress monitoring and feedback, management of the learning environment, and use of digital learning tools.

Many people in the district are conducting observations with the ELEOT tool. Some observers use the entire form, and some use only a portion of the observation tool. Observation teams, assigned by the Accountability Department, collect data using the ELEOT for an internal school report card known as the WSAI. Additional observations are conducted by central office administrators to collect data associated with their respective areas of responsibility. Some building administrators are using the ELEOT observation tool for their own purposes.

Curriculum Implementation Monitoring

Although significant time and energy is spent on monitoring with the ELEOT in Richmond County School System, it does not directly measure whether the district curriculum is being implemented. For this, a different focus for monitoring classroom instruction is required.

Reviewers interviewed building administrators and asked questions about how they monitored instruction in their respective schools and what was the focus of their classroom observations. The most common responses reviewers received from building administrators was that they checked lesson plans. Several building administrators mentioned that they monitored instruction by participating in common planning periods or collaborative planning meetings, while others mentioned using assessment data or data rooms to monitor instruction. The following interview comments were typical of the comments noted by reviewers:

- “I make sure that curriculum is aligned by reviewing the RCK-12 portal for the supplementary resources that teachers are using.” (Building Administrator)
- “We have collaborative planning two days a week. We look at data, review standards, and determine assessments we may need to give. I look at the lesson plan template and conduct walk-throughs.” (Building Administrator)
- “I look for time on task, student engagement and interaction, and classroom management.” (Building Administrator)
- “I do focus walks based on data collected by my leadership team. We include things like differentiating instruction for accelerated learners.” (Building Administrator)
- “My priorities on this campus are discourse, engagement, and a strong lesson ending.” (Building Administrator)
- “I use the TKES system for evaluation. We don’t need to recreate the tool.” (Building Administrator)
- “I expect to see whole class lessons as an introduction to new learning then mini-lessons as the main instructional mode.” (Building Administrator)
- “The district uploads information into Rubicon and gives us what we need to look for daily.” (Building Administrator)

One recurring theme reviewers heard during interviews was the need for a consistent protocol for conducting classroom observations. The following comments are representative of those heard by reviewers:

- “There is no common protocol on how to monitor instruction.” (Building Administrator)
- “I started out with expectations for monitoring instruction and getting into the classrooms regularly...a protocol would help.” (Building Administrator)

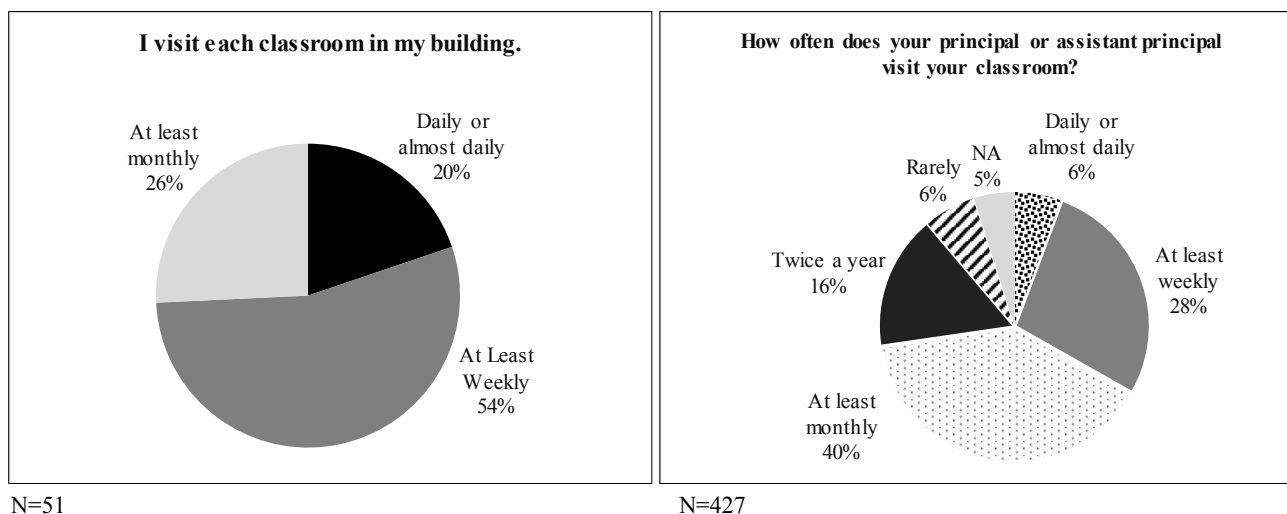
Through an online survey, reviewers asked building administrators to identify if they used a walk-through protocol to monitor instructional delivery. Fifty-two building administrators responded to this survey question, with 24 (46%) indicating they used a district walk-through protocol, 14 (27%) indicating that they used a walk-through protocol they selected for their school, and 12 administrators (23%) indicating they used both the ELEOT and TKES for their walk-through protocols.

Based on interviews with building administrators, reviewers concluded that a consistent protocol for monitoring instruction is not in place. Building administrators identified a variety of focuses for their classroom observations, with few focused on what is being taught and how that aligns with the state's academic standards. Because there is no consistent walk-through strategy, district leaders are limited in their ability to monitor those aspects of curriculum delivery considered essential for improving student achievement, use the aggregated walk-through data to inform future professional learning needs, and monitor the effectiveness of professional learning initiatives.

Through the use of an anonymous online survey, reviewers asked teachers to indicate how frequently their building principal or assistant principal visited their classrooms, and asked building administrators to indicate how frequently they were visiting classrooms. Four hundred twenty-seven (427) teachers responded to this online survey question, as did 51 building administrators. [Exhibit 3.3.17](#) summarizes the survey responses.

Exhibit 3.3.17

Frequency of Classroom Visits by Building Administrators As Reported by Classroom Teachers and Building Administrators Richmond County School System October 2017



As can be seen in [Exhibit 3.3.17](#):

- More than one half of building administrators (54%) report visiting classrooms at least weekly; however, less than one third of teachers (28%) report that a building administrators visits their classroom at least weekly.
- Forty percent of teachers report that a building administrator visits their classrooms monthly, while 26% of building administrators report visiting classrooms at least monthly.
- Less than one quarter of building administrators (20%) and teachers (6%) report that the building administrator visits at least daily.
- Twenty-two percent of teachers reported that a building administrator visits their classroom twice a year or rarely.
- The frequency of classroom visits perceived by building administrators exceeds the frequency of visits perceived by teachers.

Reviewers noted that building administrators are reportedly making regular classroom visits; however, the frequency of those visits varies across the district. No clear district expectation has been established regarding the desired or expected frequency of classroom visits. Reviewers also noted no consistent focus regarding what building administrators should look for when observing classrooms. Current approaches for monitoring

instruction are not sufficiently focused on desired or expected instructional strategies, or on curriculum content aligned with state academic standards to adequately inform an assessment of the effectiveness of curriculum delivery across the Richmond County School System.

Summary

Reviewers found that the sample of observed instructional and learning strategies was not consistent with expectations expressed by district leaders. Data collected by reviewers during brief classroom visits indicate that a limited range of instructional strategies and student learning activities are utilized. Teachers monitoring student work or providing whole class instruction with students passively listening or doing homework or guided practices were the predominant observed teaching strategies. An analysis of a sample of student artifacts found that many were not fully aligned with the state's academic standards for either content, context, or cognition. Although building administrators are making classroom visits, the strategies and focus are inconsistent across the district, with no consistent use of observation data to inform instruction. Board policies, job descriptions, and district planning documents communicate a general expectation for curriculum delivery and monitoring of instruction but are not comprehensive or specific enough to clearly communicate expectations (see Recommendations 4, 5, 6, and 7).

STANDARD 4: The School District Uses the Results from System-Designed and/or -Adopted Assessments to Adjust, Improve, or Terminate Ineffective Practices or Programs.

A school system meeting this review standard has designed a comprehensive system of assessment/testing and uses valid measurement tools that indicate how well its students are achieving designated priority learning goals and objectives. Common indicators are:

- A formative and summative assessment system linked to a clear rationale in board policy;
- Knowledge, local validation, and use of current curricular and program assessment best practices;
- Use of a student and program assessment plan that provides for diverse assessment strategies for varied purposes at all levels—district, school, and classroom;
- A way to provide feedback to the teaching and administrative staffs regarding how classroom instruction may be evaluated and subsequently improved;
- A timely and relevant data base upon which to analyze important trends in student achievement;
- A vehicle to examine how well specific programs are actually producing desired learner outcomes or results;
- A data base to compare the strengths and weaknesses of various programs and program alternatives, as well as to engage in equity analysis;
- A data base to modify or terminate ineffective educational programs;
- A method/means to relate to a programmatic budget and enable the school system to engage in cost-benefit analysis; and
- Organizational data gathered and used to continually improve system functions.

A school district meeting this review standard has a full range of formal and informal assessment tools that provide program information relevant to decision making at classroom, building (principals and school-site councils), system, and board levels.

A school system meeting this review standard has taken steps to ensure that the full range of its programs is systematically and regularly examined. Assessment data have been matched to program objectives and are used in decision making.

What the Reviewers Expected to Find in the Richmond County School System:

The reviewers expected to find a comprehensive assessment program for all aspects of the curriculum, Pre-K through grade 12, which:

- Was keyed to a valid, officially adopted, and comprehensive set of goals/objectives of the school district;
- Was used extensively at the site level to engage in program review, analysis, evaluation, and improvement;
- Was used by the policy-making groups in the system and the community to engage in specific policy review for validity and accuracy;
- Was the foci and basis of formulating short- and long-range plans for continual improvement;
- Was used to establish costs and select needed curriculum alternatives; and
- Was publicly reported on a regular basis in terms that were understood by key stakeholders in the community.

Overview of What the Reviewers Found in the Richmond County School System:

This section is an overview of the findings that follow in the area of Standard Four. Details follow within separate findings.

In Standard Four the focus is on assessment. This includes planning for assessment, scope of the curriculum covered by assessments, and the use of assessment and program evaluation data. Although assessment is referenced as part of the district's strategic plan, the reviewers found that the Richmond County School System does not have a focused, comprehensive assessment and program evaluation plan that specifically defines the critical characteristics essential for directing the district's efforts in assessment and program evaluation.

The reviewers found that the scope of formal assessment in Richmond County School System was not adequate to guide decision making about the written and taught curriculum in all core and non-core courses. The overall scope of assessment for the district's academic content did not meet review criteria for assessing 100% of the core curriculum and 70% of all other courses. Overall, 24% of the curriculum had an assessment available.

Data on state assessments showed that Richmond County School System students performed consistently below state averages over the past three years and that substantial achievement gaps exist between district and state achievement scores. Improvements in assessment results have not been significant enough to close existing achievement gaps that exist between district and state performance levels.

A well designed assessment program will provide data to inform professional learning and training, as well as use the data to evaluate the instructional programs within a school system. In the Richmond County School System a systematic approach to the use of data to guide programmatic decision making is not in place. Board policies and job descriptions do not provide sufficient direction for the implementation of a comprehensive assessment program.

Finding 4.1: The district is missing a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan to guide instructional curricular and program decisions and to ensure that assessment data are used for improving student achievement.

A comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan provides the primary basis for making decisions about the effectiveness of curriculum design, delivery, and the efficacy of specific school district programs. A system for assessment provides a school district's leadership with the means for determining how well programs and instructional practices are producing desired learning results. A well-designed assessment program generates a variety of data, including formative and summative test results and observation data that enable school leaders to evaluate the instructional programs and related efforts and judge how well the system's goals are being met. Without this critical information, programs that are ineffective are often allowed to continue without modification or elimination. Ineffective programs continue to use resources that could be utilized more effectively to meet student learning needs. Data from the student assessment measures can also be used to guide decisions regarding professional development training for administrative and instructional staff. Such purposeful approaches to program evaluation reduce the chance that unnecessary and ineffective programs will be adopted in a rush to "do something." Appropriate and continuous program evaluation is an integral part of the overall program implementation and assessment system of effective school organizations. The absence of a systematic, comprehensive, and impartial program evaluation effort increases the possibility that vital program decisions will be based on program popularity, hearsay, personal preference, or on maintaining the status quo rather than based on program effectiveness data.

To determine the adequacy of the Richmond County School System assessment and program evaluation plan, the reviewers examined board policies and administrative guidelines, reviewed job descriptions, interviewed administrators and staff members, visited classrooms, and analyzed additional district documents. They also reviewed assessment data and reports provided by district staff.

The reviewers found no comprehensive planned approach to student assessment and program evaluation. Board policies require a comprehensive assessment program with the effectiveness of the district curriculum determined in part by student performance on assessments. However, board policies did not have sufficient content or specificity for a comprehensive planned approach to student assessment and program evaluation.

The reviewers examined board policies and related documents for references providing guidance related to assessment planning and program evaluation. Reviewers found no single policy or group of policies that addressed a systemic approach to assessment planning and program evaluation. A few policies were found to have some connection to either student assessment or program evaluation.

- *Board Policy IDA: Basic Program, Curriculum Design and Development* requires the Richmond County Board of Education “to provide a comprehensive Richmond County K-12 curriculum, instruction, and assessment program to serve the educational needs of the system’s students. The Board shall utilize and implement a standards based approach to curriculum and instruction. Curriculum guides shall include, but not be limited to, Georgia Department of Education Standards requirements and will be aligned with criterion referenced, norm referenced and System developed assessment. Curriculum guides are to serve as the framework from which a teacher will develop units of study, individual lesson plans, strategies for instruction and assessments. Teachers must adhere to the standards and required assessments and use the guides to map logically sequence of instruction. Instruction must focus on teaching that which is assessed and assessing that which is taught. Assessment of the effectiveness of the curriculum shall be determined in part by the performance of students on local, state, and national criterion referenced and norm referenced assessments.”
- *Board Policy IHE: Promotion and Retention* states “it is the policy of the Richmond Board of Education that placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class, or program be based on an assessment of the academic achievement of the student and a determination of the educational setting in which the student is most likely to receive instruction and other services needed in order to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement. The superintendent and appropriate staff shall develop rules and regulations governing promotion, placement, and retention of students in grades K-12. Such rules and regulations shall include the following requirements: all students shall be tested in accordance with requirements specified in State Board Rule 160-3-1-.07: the promotion of students in grade 3, 5, and 8 shall be determined in accordance with State Board Rule 160-4-2-.11 that required those students to achieve grade level on the applicable subject of the appropriate grade *Georgia Milestones* assessment and satisfaction of local promotion criteria as specified in the rules and regulations described above; and the promotion of students in grades 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7 shall be based on a review of factors specified within the System’s rules and regulations including student’s performance and the appropriate end of grade *Georgia Milestones* assessment and satisfaction of local promotion criteria.”
- *Board Policy LEBA: Parental Involvement in Education* states the Richmond County Board of Education “affirms and assures the right of parents and legal guardians of children being served in activities funded in Title I the opportunities to participate in the planning, design and implementation of the Title I program and its activities. The Board shall build the schools’ and parents’ capacity for strong parental involvement through a variety of activities such as: providing information to parents in written form or through meetings on topics such as the State’s academic contents standards, State and local student academic achievement standards/assessments and the requirements of parent involvement under the law; and providing materials and training to help parents work with their children and monitor their progress to improve their children’s achievement.”
- *Administrative Regulation IHA-R(1): Grading Systems* states “the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Division of the Richmond County School Systems shall devise a grading system, which shall be used to report student progress toward academic standards to parents/guardians and to record this progress in each student’s educational record. Courses with state/required end of course *Georgia Milestone* assessments will count this test as the only comprehensive final exam and must calculate the score as 20% of the final grade.”

Board of education policies establish expectations that there will be alignment between the written, taught, and tested curriculum. Board policies were considered weak in establishing the following expectations:

- An assessment program that goes beyond that required by state accountability systems and is more rigorous.
- An assessment system that is differentiated to address variations in student achievement.
- Assessment data disaggregated at the school, classroom, student subgroup, and student level to determine program and curriculum effectiveness.
- A comprehensive assessment and program evaluation plan.
- A program assessment process linked to district planning initiatives.
- Regular reports to the board of education regarding program effectiveness for all new programs.

Next, the reviewers examined job descriptions for administrative positions to determine responsibilities for student assessment and program evaluation. The following district personnel job descriptions contained references to such responsibilities:

- Superintendent – is responsible for “preparing long-and short-term goals for the system, including student achievement and responsible for monitoring student data collection and state reporting.”
- Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Technology – has the responsibility for “directing and supervising all aspects of the national, state, and local testing programs, and all other District initiated student assessment programs such as benchmark testing, gifted testing, student learning objectives, psychological evaluations and behavioral analysis and any other assessment initiatives. Works with schools and other departments in the monitoring of student achievement and school effectiveness and assists with the analysis and presentations of research findings and evaluation results.”
- Senior Director of Curriculum and Instruction – participates in the “development and pilot of new and revised countywide assessments. Develops new curriculum and instructional units to support instructional programs in school and achievement on the state and local assessments.”
- Statistical Analyst and Research Coordinator – “analyzes test data for individual schools and school system. Determines relationship between specific courses taken and test performance and makes recommendations to appropriate personnel. Assists in planning and developing the criteria to evaluate the county and state-wide testing programs. Assists in the development of new instruments for assessment and conducts analysis of pertinent data related to the same.”
- Accountability and IE² Officer – “oversees federal and state accountability requirements related to No Child Left Behind, and local accountability requirements, and administration of assessments as required by state and federal law. Analyzes assessment data for national, state and district assessment programs and prepares that data for release to the public. Plans, improves, and oversees testing for the state and local assessment programs.”
- Assistant Principal – “monitors, assists, and evaluates staff implementation of school improvement plans, SACs, SAT, Academic Reform Plan, and effective instructional and assessment practices.”
- Math, Science, or Literacy Academic Support Specialist – “prepares feedback (written, oral presentation) for administrators, teachers, and perhaps students documenting changes in student achievement.”
- Special Education Teacher – “interprets both formal and informal classroom based assessments for students in order to make instructional decisions. Administers and interprets formal assessments as appropriate and maintains student portfolios with current educational data.”

District job descriptions assign some duties associated with a student achievement and program evaluation system, such as directing assessment and analyzing data. Job descriptions, however, did not have adequate direction to guide planning and analysis of the written and taught curriculum and related programs to inform decisions about curriculum refinement or program effectiveness.

Reviewers expected to find a planned approach to measuring the effectiveness of curriculum design and delivery via student assessment in all courses taught and the use of data to measure program effectiveness to meet student needs. The review criteria in [Exhibit 4.1.1](#) illustrate the elements of a quality assessment program found in effective school systems where the tested curriculum provides a reliable feedback loop to the effectiveness of the written and taught curriculum and the instructional program in use. Since the reviewers found no comprehensive student assessment and evaluation plan, the reviewers looked for evidence of 15 characteristics of a comprehensive student assessment and evaluation plan. An “X” in the “Adequate” column indicates that the characteristic was met. “Partial” indicates that not all parts of a characteristic were present. An “X” in the “Inadequate” column indicates that the characteristic was not met. In order for the district’s approach to student assessment and program evaluation planning to be considered adequate, 11 (70%) of the 15 characteristics must be evident. The review team’s analysis is displayed in [Exhibit 4.1.1](#).

Exhibit 4.1.1

Characteristics of a Comprehensive Student Assessment and Program Evaluation Plan Richmond County School System October 2017

Characteristic (The plan...)	Reviewers’ Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Describes the philosophical framework for the design of the student assessment plan and directs both formative and summative assessment of the curriculum by course and grade in congruence with board policy. Expects ongoing formative and summative program evaluation; directs use of data to analyze group, school, program, and system student trends.		X
2. Includes an explicit set of formative and summative assessment procedures to carry out the expectations outlined in the plan and in board policy. Provides for regular formative and summative assessment at all levels of the system (organization, program, student).		X
3. Requires that formative, diagnostic assessment instruments that align to the district curriculum be administered to students frequently to give teachers information for instructional decision making. This includes information regarding which students need which learner objectives to be at the appropriate level of difficulty (e.g., provides data for differentiated instruction).		X
4. Provides a list of student assessment and program evaluation tools, purposes, subjects, type of student tested, timelines, etc.	Partial*	
5. Identifies and provides direction on the use of diverse assessment strategies for multiple purposes at all levels—district, program, school, and classroom—that are both formative and summative.		X
6. Specifies the roles and responsibilities of the central office staff and school-based staff for assessing all students using designated assessment measures, and for analyzing test data.	Partial*	
7. Specifies the connection(s) among district, state, and national assessments.	Partial*	
8. Specifies the overall assessment and analysis procedures used to determine curriculum effectiveness.		X

Exhibit 4.1.1 (continued) Characteristics of a Comprehensive Student Assessment and Program Evaluation Plan Richmond County School System October 2017		
Characteristic (The plan...)	Reviewers' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
9. Requires aligned student assessment examples and tools to be placed in curriculum and assessment documents.	Partial*	
10. Specifies how equity issues will be identified and addressed using data sources; controls for possible bias.		X
11. Identifies the components of the student assessment system that will be included in program evaluation efforts and specifies how these data will be used to determine continuation, modification, or termination of a given program.		X
12. Provides for appropriate trainings for various audiences on assessment and the instructional use of assessment results.		X
13. Delineates responsibilities and procedures for <u>monitoring</u> the administration of the comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan and/or procedures.		X
14. Establishes a process for communicating and training staff in the interpretation of results, changes in state and local student achievement tests, and new trends in the student assessment field.	Partial*	
15. Specifies creation of an assessment data system that allows for the attribution of costs by program, permitting program evaluations to support program-based cost-benefit analyses.		X
Total	0	15
Percentage of Adequacy	0%	
*Partial ratings are tallied as inadequate.		
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The reviewers found little evidence that the characteristics of a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan were in place in the Richmond County School System. As shown in [Exhibit 4.1.1](#), none of the 15 characteristics of a comprehensive student assessment plan were met. In order to be considered adequate, 11 (70%) of the 15 characteristics needed to be evident. Details regarding reviewers' assessment of the characteristics follow:

Characteristic 1: Describes the philosophical framework for assessment plan

This characteristic was rated inadequate. No board policy explicitly directs formative and summative assessment of the curriculum by course, grade, or program evaluation. Although reference is made to both interim and state summative assessments, there is no policy stating that the assessments must be available for every course and grade level. Additionally, the district does not have a cohesive philosophical framework that creates a context for developing a system-wide plan for assessment evaluation.

Characteristic 2: Includes an explicit set of assessment procedures

This characteristic was rated inadequate. Reviewers noted, through review of district documents and interviews with district administrators, that there is an expectation that both formative and summative assessments will be administered. There are no board policies or administrative regulations directing the development and implementation of formative and summative assessment procedures.

Characteristic 3: Required assessments aligned to the district's curriculum

This characteristic was rated inadequate. The district's list of assessments included some assessments with the potential for formative and/or diagnostic use. The documents reviewed, interviews conducted, and classroom visits completed by the reviewers indicate that currently the practice of formative assessments is not consistently in place across the school district. There is no system-wide direction regarding how specific data from formative assessments are to be used to provide instruction at the appropriate level of difficulty.

Characteristic 4: Provides a list of student assessment and program evaluation tools

This characteristic was rated partially adequate. The reviewers were provided an assessment calendar that listed the test dates, assessments, grade, and subjects to be assessed. The list included state-mandated assessments, as well as assessments used at various grade levels across the district. There was no reference made concerning any current and future program evaluations to be conducted.

Characteristic 5: Identifies and provides direction for diverse assessment strategies

This characteristic was rated inadequate. Reviewers found no written expectation or direction for the use of diverse summative assessment strategies for multiple purposes at various levels within the organization.

Characteristic 6: Specifies roles and responsibilities

This characteristic was rated partially adequate. As previously noted, there are job descriptions designating responsibilities for student assessment and data analysis, although the references vary in scope and specificity. In order for an adequate rating to be given, all relevant job descriptions would need to contain explicit direction for the assessment of student learning and for the analysis and use of student outcome data for improving instruction at all levels.

Characteristic 7: Specifies connections among assessments

This characteristic was rated partially adequate. Documents provided, such as the assessment calendar and *Board Policy IDA*, referred to student performance on local, state, and national assessments. However, reviewers did not find specific direction regarding connections among national, state, and local assessments.

Characteristic 8: Specifies assessment and analysis procedures

This characteristic was rated inadequate. Reviewers found no comprehensive set of analysis procedures in writing for using assessment feedback to measure the effectiveness of the curriculum. Further, the reviewers did not find evidence that the district has an established procedure for using assessment results inferentially to determine the causal links among instructional practices, student mastery of curriculum objectives, and *Georgia Milestone* scores.

Characteristic 9: Requires aligned assessment examples

The characteristic was partially adequate. The district's strategic plan makes reference to providing all students access to a rigorous curriculum, including instructional units and standards-aligned assessments. The plan further states that there will be alignment of instructional materials and practices to the RCK12 curriculum standards. Reviewers found no specific written direction or system-wide requirement for aligned assessment examples and tools to be included in all curriculum and assessment documents or guides.

Characteristic 10: Specifies how equity issues will be addressed

This characteristic was rated inadequate. Reviewers found no evidence of a system plan or approach to identifying and addressing equity issues using various sources of data and controlling for possible bias.

Characteristic 11: Identifies components of assessment system

This characteristic was rated inadequate. Reviewers found no evidence of any district-level documents that contained requirements or procedures for the use of student assessment data for program evaluation in order to ascertain the continuation, modification, or termination of a given program.

Characteristic 12: Provides appropriate training

This characteristic was rated inadequate. Reviewers did receive anecdotal evidence that some training occurred sporadically, depending on the wishes of district administrators or building level principals. However, evidence of a consistent district plan to provide appropriate trainings for all staff members at all levels of the school on assessments and the instructional use of assessment results was not present. Further, it was unclear whether the training would focus on how to use assessment results to improve student achievement of instructional outcomes.

Characteristic 13: Delineates responsibilities for monitoring the assessment program

This characteristic was rated inadequate. None of the documents provided to the reviewers specified procedures or assigned responsibilities for monitoring the administration of a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan. Also, reviewers were not provided documents describing how progress was specifically to be measured and monitored.

Characteristic 14: Establishes a communications process

This characteristic was rated partially adequate. Reviewers found no system-wide process for communicating the district assessment plan and training staff in the interpretation of assessment results and changes in state and local achievement tests. Based on interviews and training schedules, reviewers noted that some district assessment training was ongoing. Implementation was left to individual school administrators and, at best, was inconsistent and sporadic. While there are pockets of data utilization in the district, and a district-defined data framework referred to as APIM (Assess, Planned, Implement, and Monitored), there is no evidence that data inform classroom instruction system-wide.

Characteristic 15: Specifies creation of an assessment data system

This characteristic was rated inadequate. Reviewers found no evidence of planning for an assessment data system that tracks costs by program, enabling program evaluations to support program-based cost-benefit analysis.

The following comments were shared with reviewers regarding the school system's assessment policies, planning, and practices:

- "There are too many forms of assessments." (Teacher)
- "Teachers don't do a good job of writing classroom assessments. It just hasn't been a focus of professional learning. Assessment literacy is not consistent across the district." (District Administrator)
- "Test scores are one of our biggest challenges...we're trying to move our students year after year but that's not happening." (Building Level Administrator)
- "If we did nothing but teach 'performance matters' we would only get to reading every day." (Building Level Administrator)
- "Teachers are to score writing against a rubric, but there has been no training and it is not part of teachers' current practice." (District Administrator)
- "The only thing we have done since the start of school is tests." (Building Level Administrator)
- "We're exploring how to share our student achievement in a more accurate procedure." (District Administrator)
- "The assessment schedule is a bit much. We're overwhelmed. Now it looks like we're going back to too much testing." (Building Level Administrators)
- "We are seeing a disconnect between our grading practices and our performance on standardized tests." (District Administrator)
- "Not all teachers are using district pre- and post-tests because some teachers think their tests are better." (Building Level Administrator)

- “We have iReady then why are we doing benchmarks? Aren’t their purposes the same?” (Building Level Administrator)
- “I expect formative assessments six to eight times a semester.” (Building Level Administrator)

Summary

None of the characteristics associated with a comprehensive assessment and program evaluation plan were found to be adequate in place in the Richmond County School System. Reviewers concluded that the Richmond County School System does not have a comprehensive plan for student assessment and program evaluation that effectively generates and uses achievement data, informs instruction, and facilitates student mastery of the curriculum (see Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7).



There is a variety of testing in the Richmond County School System; however, there is no plan in place to guide the use of assessment data to inform instruction.

Finding 4.2: The scope of the formal student assessment program is inadequate in both core and non-core K-12 courses to provide sufficient data for making sound curricular and instructional decisions.

A comprehensive student assessment program based on the district’s written curriculum allows the district to measure the effectiveness of the taught curriculum in attaining desired levels of student achievement. It completes the connection between the written and taught curriculum. Without summative assessment, the district has no factual way of knowing if its curriculum is appropriate for students or if it is being properly implemented in the classroom as designed. Formative data allow district administrators to monitor the effectiveness of classroom instruction in delivering the written curriculum and teachers to monitor individual student progress toward mastery of the curriculum on a regular basis. Frequent formative assessments provide data to make adjustments as needed prior to summative assessments. An effective assessment program requires that student achievement is evaluated in every course at every grade level.

To determine the scope of student assessment in the Richmond County School System, the reviewers examined various documents provided by district administrators as well as documents available on the district and Georgia’s Department of Education websites. Reviewers also interviewed curriculum staff, district administrators, building level administrators, and teachers. To determine the scope of assessment in the district, the reviewers focused on the tests that were administered in each academic content area for a grade level/course and calculated the percentage of offerings that were assessed.

The reviewers found that the scope of assessment in the Richmond County School System did not meet review criteria and is not adequate to provide feedback about student progress in all courses and grade levels K-12.

For this finding, a “formal assessment” is defined as an assessment that is used across the district and that is administratively mandated for all the district’s students in a grade level or course. The results for these assessments are collected at the district level and are available for district decision making. Please note the following special cases related to the reviewers’ definition of formal assessments:

- Both formative and summative assessments are considered to be formal if they meet the criteria for standardization and administrative mandate.
- State and national examinations are considered formal assessments if they are mandated for all Richmond students in a grade level course.
- Teacher-made tests are not counted as formal assessments unless they are standardized district-wide and mandated by administrative regulation for all the district’s students in a course or grade level.
- Assessments that are mandated for all of the district’s students in a particular subgroup are considered formal assessments if their results are collected at the district level. An example is the *Georgia English Language Learner Assessment (ACCESS)*.
- Assessments that are given by specialists on an as-needed basis to diagnose individual students’ learning difficulties are not considered formal assessments for the purposes of this finding.

Board policies do not specifically require assessment of all subjects taught at every grade level. However, the reviewers identified the following policy that generically referenced the scope of assessment:

- *Board Policy IDA: Basic Program, Curriculum Design and Development* requires the Richmond County Board of Education to provide a comprehensive Richmond County K-12 curriculum, instruction, and assessment program to serve the educational needs of the system’s students. This policy requires that district curriculum guides be aligned with criterion-referenced, norm-referenced, and system developed assessments. Teachers are required to adhere to the standards and required assessments and use the guides to map logically sequence of instruction. Instruction must focus on teaching that which is assessed and assessing that which is taught. Assessment of the effectiveness of the curriculum will be determined, in part, by the performance of students on local, state, and national criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments.

District documents provided to reviewers identified a number of assessments available to school staff. Reviewers found that the assessments listed in [Exhibit 4.2.1](#) have varying degrees of applicability in the Richmond County School System. [Exhibit 4.2.1](#) identifies each assessment noted by reviewers with a brief description.

Exhibit 4.2.1
List and Description of Formal Assessments
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Assessment	Description
Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)	A year-long, performance-based assessment aligned to the state-mandated content standard in the areas of English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Personal/ Social Development, and Approaches to Learning. The goal of the assessment program is to provide teachers with information about the level of instructional support needed by individual students entering kindergarten and first grade.
Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA)	A portfolio of student work that demonstrates achievement and progress relative to selected skills that are aligned to the Georgia curriculum in English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. This assessment program promotes a vision of enhancing capacities and integrated life opportunities for students who experience significant cognitive disabilities.

Exhibit 4.2.1 (continued)
List and Description of Formal Assessments
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Assessment	Description
Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment (EOG)	Students in grades 3 through 8 take end of grade assessments in English language arts and mathematics, while students in grades 5 and 8 are also assessed in science and social studies. The purpose of this assessment system is to measure how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards.
Georgia Milestones End of Course Assessment (EOC)	Students take an end of course assessment in the following 10 courses designated by the State Board of Education: Ninth Grade Literature and Composition, American Literature and Composition, Algebra I or Coordinate Algebra, Geometry or Analytic Geometry, Biology, Physical Science, United States History, and Economic/Business/Free Enterprise.
CogAT	Cognitive Abilities Test measures students' learned reasoning abilities in the three areas linked to academic success in school: Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal. Given by the district in grades 1, 4, and 6.
ACT	National College admissions examination measuring what a student has learned in high school to determine academic readiness for college. Consists of subject area tests in English, mathematics, reading, and science. Also includes a writing test as an option.
SAT	A standardized national norm-referenced test widely used for college admission. Two sections are assessed: math and evidenced-based reading and writing.
AP	College-level exams on specific subjects taken upon completion of an AP course. Can be used to award college credit or college course exemption.
PSAT	A standardized test to measure readiness for college, offer opportunities to access scholarships, and provide practice for the SAT. All tenth graders in the district are required to take this test.
ACCESS for ELLs	ACCESS is a standards-based, criterion referenced English language proficiency test administered annually to all English Language learners in Georgia. It is used to determine the English language proficiency levels and progress of ELLs in the domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
End-of-Pathway Assessment (EOPA)	Used to ascertain the technical skill attainment level of students participating in career and technical education courses and determine the number of students leaving high school with industry-recognized credentials.
iReady	Adaptive diagnostic that accesses student performance across the key domains in reading and mathematics. Links assessment results to instructional plans and student placement decisions. Used in the district three times a year as a universal screener.
International Baccalaureate (IB)	Assesses student work as direct evidence of achievement against the stated goals of the Diploma Programme (DP) courses. Students' results are determined against set standards, not by each student's position in the overall rank order.
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)	Nationally representative assessment administered on a sampling basis. Provides a common measure of student achievement across the country. Although NAEP results are released for a variety of subjects, assessments are given most frequently in mathematics and reading.
District Benchmarks	District-developed standards-based interim assessments for mathematics and English language arts. For 2017-18 school year, the assessments will be administered on a quarterly basis in order to insure educators are provided ongoing information about the teaching and learning of the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Purpose of the benchmark assessments is to provide a bridge between classroom assessment and end-of-year state summative assessments.
<i>Data source: Georgia Department of Education Website, District Assessment Calendar, District Website, and Documents Related to Assessment provided by District Staff</i>	

Reviewers noted the following in Exhibit 4.2.1:

- Both criterion-and norm-referenced assessments are utilized by the school system.
- Several college preparatory exams are administered.
- All students with limited English proficiency are assessed.
- Students enrolled in career and technical courses are assessed to determine credential attainment.

Exhibits 4.2.2 shows the scope of for core and non-core content areas in kindergarten through grade 5. To be considered adequate, the scope of the curriculum that is assessed must be 100% for the four core content areas and 70% for non-core courses.

Exhibit 4.2.2
Scope of Formal Assessment Grades K-5
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Courses Offered	Number of Courses Offered	Number of Courses Assessed	Percent of Courses Assessed
Core Courses			
English Language Arts	6	6	100
Mathematics	6	6	100
Science	6	1	17
Social Studies	6	1	17
Total Core	24	14	58%
Non-Core Courses			
Dance, Theatre, and Visual Art	24	0	0
Music	6	0	0
Health and Physical Education	15	0	0
ESOL	6	6	100
Spanish	6	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Computer Literacy	6	0	0
Gifted Resource	5	0	0
Total Non Core	71	6	8%
Total of Core and Non Core	95	20	21%
<i>Source: Curriculum and Assessment Documents, Interviews, District and State Websites, and District Testing Calendar.</i>			

As can be noted from Exhibit 4.2.2:

- The total scope of assessments for core courses was 58%.
- English language and mathematics had 100% of courses covered by an assessment.
- Science and social studies had 17% of courses covered by an assessment.
- The scope of assessments for non-core courses was 8%.
- ESOL was the only non-core program covered by assessments.
- The scope of assessment at the elementary level was inadequate in both core and non-core areas.

Exhibit 4.2.3 shows the scope of assessments by content areas for middle school, grades 6 through 8. To be considered adequate, the scope of the curriculum that is assessed must be 100% for the four academic core content areas and 70% for the non-core courses.

Exhibit 4.2.3

Scope of Formal Assessment Grades 6-8 Richmond County School System October 2017

Courses Offered	Number of Courses Offered	Number of Courses Assessed	Percent of Courses Assessed
Core Courses			
Language Arts	3	3	100
Mathematics	3	3	100
Science	3	1	33
Social Studies	3	1	33
Total Core	12	8	67%
Non-Core Courses			
Fine Arts	48	0	0
ESOL	3	3	100
Health and Physical Education	6	0	0
Foreign Language	3	0	0
Personal/Social Skills	6	0	0
CTAE	15	0	0
Total Non-Core	81	3	4%
Total of Core and Non-Core	93	11	12%
<i>Source: Curriculum and Assessment Documents, Interviews, District and State Websites, and District Testing Calendar.</i>			

As noted from Exhibit 4.2.3:

- The total score for core courses was 67%.
- English language and mathematics had 100% of courses covered by an assessment.
- Science and social studies had 33% of courses covered by an assessment.
- The scope of assessments for non-core courses was 4%.
- ESOL was the only non-core program covered by assessments.
- The scope of assessment at the middle school level was inadequate in both core and non-core areas.

Exhibit 4.2.4 shows the scope of assessments by content areas for high school, grades 9 through 12. To be considered adequate, the scope of the curriculum that is assessed must be 100% for the four academic core content areas and 70% for the non-core courses.

Exhibit 4.2.4
Scope of Formal Assessment Grades 9-12
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Courses Offered	Number of Courses Offered	Number of Courses Assessed	Percent of Courses Assessed
Core Courses			
Language Arts	53	17	32
Mathematics	29	12	41
Science	37	21	57
Social Studies	49	29	59
Total Core	168	79	47%
Non-Core Courses			
Career Technical Agricultural Education	100	25	25
English as Second Language	3	0	0
Fine and Performing Arts	75	11	15
Health/Physical Education	24	0	0
JROTC	20	0	0
Other*	5	0	0
Special Education	12	1	8
World Languages	23	5	22
Total Non-Core	262	42	16%
Total of Core and Non-Core	430	121	28%
*Included the following courses: AVID Study Skill I, II, III, SAT Preparation, Tools for College Success			
<i>Sources: Curriculum and Assessment Documents, Interviews, District and State Websites, and District Testing Calendar.</i>			

As can be noted from Exhibit 4.2.4:

- The total score for core courses was 47%.
- Science and social studies have the highest rates of assessment, with 57% and 59%, respectively, of the courses formally assessed.
- English language arts had the lowest percentage of assessment among core courses, with 32% of courses assessed.
- The scope of assessments for non-core courses was 16%.
- Career Technical Agricultural Education had the highest percentage of assessed courses with 25% coverage.
- English as Second Language, health/physical education, and JROTC were not covered by any formal assessments.
- The scope of assessment at the high school level was inadequate in both core and non-core areas.

Exhibit 4.2.5 shows a summary of the scope of district assessments of the written curriculum, kindergarten through grade 12.

Exhibit 4.2.5
Scope of Formal Assessment Grades K-12
Richmond County School System
October 2017

Level	Number of Courses Offered	Number of Courses Assessed	Percent of Courses Assessed
Core Course			
Elementary	24	14	58
Middle School	12	8	67
High School	168	79	47
Total Core	204	101	49%
Non-Core Courses			
Elementary	71	6	8
Middle School	81	3	4
High School	262	42	16
Total Non-Core	414	51	12%
Total of Core and Non-Core	618		
Total Core and Non-Core Tested		152	
Total Percent Core and Non-Core Assessed			24%

As can be noted from Exhibit 4.2.5:

- The district assesses 24% of all courses offered in grades kindergarten through 12.
- The district assesses 49% of core courses offered in grades kindergarten through 12.
- The district assesses 12% of non-core courses offered in grades kindergarten through 12.

Summary

The scope of the formal student assessment in the Richmond County School System is not adequate to monitor student achievement and to guide instructional decision making regarding the written and taught curriculum. The scope of assessment for core courses was 58% at the elementary level, 67% at the middle school level, and 47% at the high school level. For non-core courses, the scope of assessment was 8% at the elementary level, 4% at the middle school level, and 12% at the high school level. Therefore, the overall scope of assessment did not meet review criteria for assessing 100% of the core curriculum and 70% of all other courses (see Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7).

Finding 4.3: The trend in student assessment results shows low achievement when compared to state and national averages. Although student achievement has shown improvement, overall student achievement is below state averages. Student grades are not an accurate indicator of student performance on Georgia Milestones EOC results.

Assessment data provide information for use by district personnel to determine the effectiveness of the written curriculum and the instructional methods used to impact student achievement. Assessment data complete the feedback loop from the written curriculum to the taught curriculum. Analysis of assessment data reveals any performance gaps in individual student learning, grade level deficiencies, and building level progress toward attainment of desired school curriculum goals and objectives, as well as state standards.

Comparative data from student assessments to a set of standards or to other students at local, state, and national levels help administrators, teachers, and board members determine the effectiveness of district instructional

programs. Analysis of achievement trends provides information on how assessment results change over time. Furthermore, reviewing disaggregated results and trends from the same assessments allows districts to identify groups of students who need greater support. Such analysis can identify gaps in achievement between ethnic subgroups and between socioeconomic subgroups and determine which groups need additional resources and interventions to be successful. In a system with effective quality control, performance for all students should improve over time, and achievement gaps among student subgroup populations should decrease in size.

Reviewers examined *Georgia Milestones End of Grade (EOG)* and *End of Course (EOC)* assessments for the past three years and compared Richmond County School System's results to statewide results. In addition, the reviewers examined the results for three national tests at the secondary level and compared those to Georgia statewide results and, where available, to national results. Finally, reviewers examined the relationship between secondary course grades and *End Of Course* assessment results.

Reviewers found the percentage of Richmond County School System students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* assessments was below state averages. While there has been some improvement in some district assessment results, in most cases student achievement is improving faster across the state. On measures of college readiness, as demonstrated on *AP*, *ACT*, and *SAT* exam results, district students consistently scored below state and national averages. High school course grades are not an accurate predictor of how well district students will perform on *Georgia Milestones End of Course* tests and as a result do not necessarily reflect the students' mastery of the curriculum.

Comparison of District and Statewide Performance on the Georgia Milestones Assessments

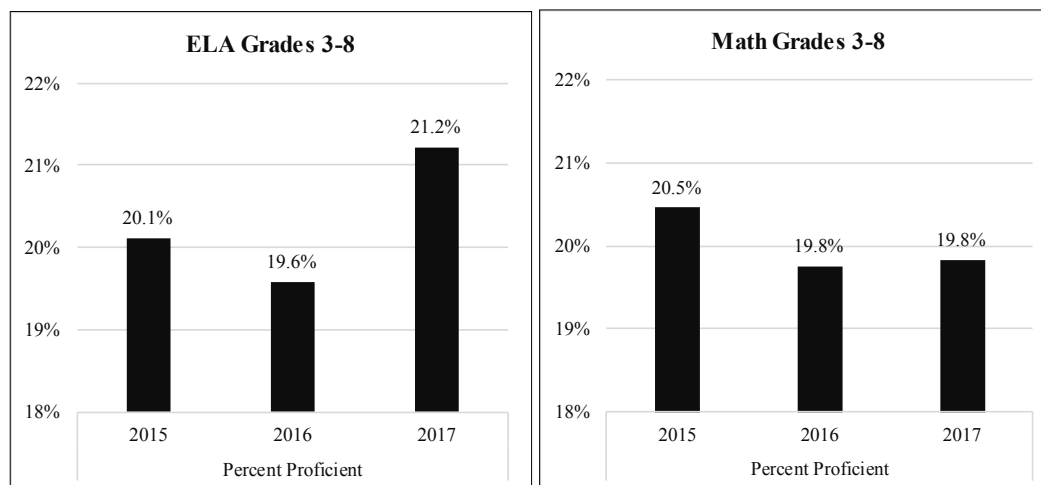
Reviewers used state achievement data to analyze trends in student achievement on the *Georgia Milestones* over a three-year period (2015-2017) in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The following exhibits compare Richmond County School System results with statewide results. Data for comparison were taken from district-provided reports on the percentage of all students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* in each subject.

Exhibits 4.3.1 through 4.3.8 present a summary of student performance on the *Georgia Milestones End of Course* tests and a comparison of Richmond County School System results compared to statewide results. For the comparison exhibits, because students in the Richmond County School System on average are consistently performing below Georgia statewide averages the graphic representation depicts the performance gap as bars extending downward from zero. The comparison graphs also include a trend line indicating whether the existing performance gap is increasing or decreasing over time.

Exhibit 4.3.1 displays the percentage of students, grades 3 through 8 combined, who scored proficient range or above on the *Georgia Milestones* English language arts and mathematics *End of Grade* assessments.

Exhibit 4.3.1

**Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above
Georgia Milestones End of Grade Tests English Language Arts and Mathematics
Grades 3-8 Combined
Richmond County School System
2015-2017**



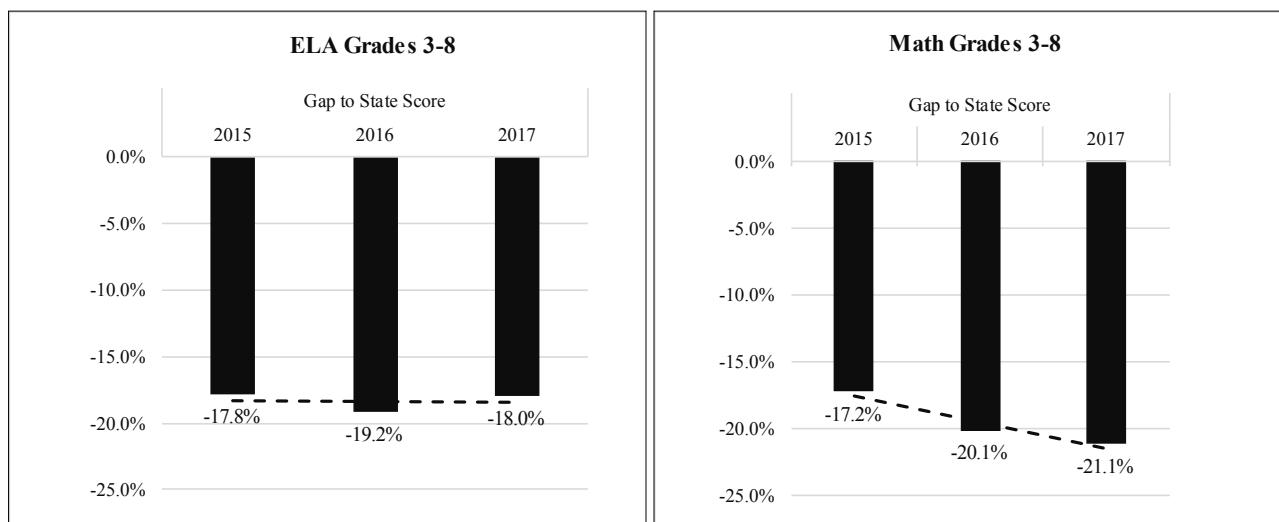
The following can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.1:

- Overall, approximately one-fifth of Richmond County School System students taking *Georgia Milestones End of Grade* assessments scored proficient and above over the past three years.
- From 2015 to 2017, collectively grades 3 through 8, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* English language arts *End of Grade* assessment increased from 20.1% to 21.2%.
- From 2015-2017, collectively grades 3 through 8, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* mathematics *End of Grade* assessment decreased from 20.5% to 19.8%.

Exhibit 4.3.2 displays the difference (gap) in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* English language arts and mathematics *End of Grade* assessments for grades 3 through 8 collectively compared to the percentage of students scoring proficient and above in the state of Georgia.

Exhibit 4.3.2

Comparison of State and District English Language Arts and Mathematics Performance By Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above On the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Tests Grades 3-8 Richmond County School System 2015-2017



The following can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.2:

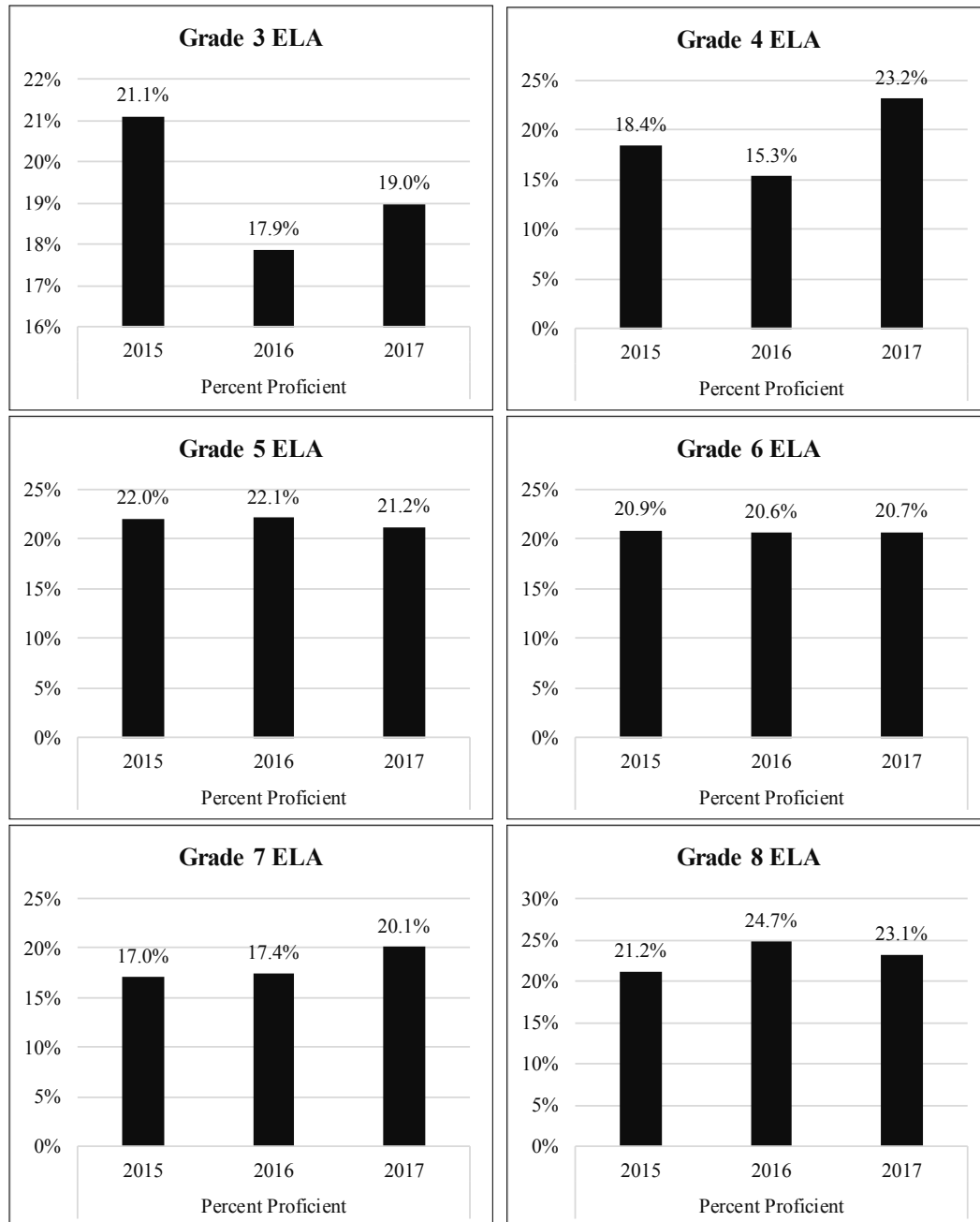
- Overall, Richmond County School System students taking *Georgia Milestones* English language arts and mathematics *End of Grade* assessments have been consistently below the percentage of students scoring proficient and above in the state of Georgia.
- From 2015 to 2017, collectively for grades 3 through 8, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* English language arts assessments, compared to state averages, has shown no discernible increase or decrease.
- From 2015 to 2017, collectively for grades 3 through 8, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* mathematics assessments, compared to state averages, has declined with Richmond County School System's students falling further behind the state average.

Combined, Exhibits 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 indicate English language arts achievement at the state and local level has remained static. According to data from the Georgia Department of Education website, statewide achievement results on the *Georgia Milestones End of Grade* mathematics assessments has increased 1.3% between 2015 and 2017, while results in the Richmond County School System has declined by 0.7% over the same period.

Exhibit 4.3.3 displays the percentage of students in grades 3 through 8 who scored proficient or above on the *Georgia Milestones* English language arts *End of Grade* assessments.

Exhibit 4.3.3

**Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above
Georgia Milestones End of Grade Tests English Language Arts
Grades 3-8
Richmond County School System
2015-2017**



The following can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.3:

- From 2015 to 2017, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* English language arts *End of Grade* assessment declined at three of the six grade levels depicted.

- At the third grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessment declined from 21.1% to 19.0%.
- At the fifth grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessment declined from 22.0% to 21.2%.
- At the sixth grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessment declined from 20.9% to 20.7%.
- The largest decline in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessment was noted at the third grade level of 2.1 percentage points
- From 2015 to 2017, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* English language arts *End of Grade* assessment increased at three of the six grade levels depicted.
 - At the fourth grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessment increased from 18.4% to 23.2%.
 - At the seventh grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessment increased from 17.0% to 20.1%.
 - At the eighth grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessment increased from 21.2% to 23.1%.
 - The largest increase in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessment was noted at the fourth grade level, with an increase of 4.8 percentage points.

Exhibit 4.3.4 display the cohort trends for students scoring proficient or above on the *Georgia Milestones* English language arts *End of Grade* assessments over a three year period.

Exhibit 4.3.4
Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above
Georgia Milestones End of Grade Tests English Language Arts
Three-Year Cohort Trend Data
Richmond County School System
2015-2017

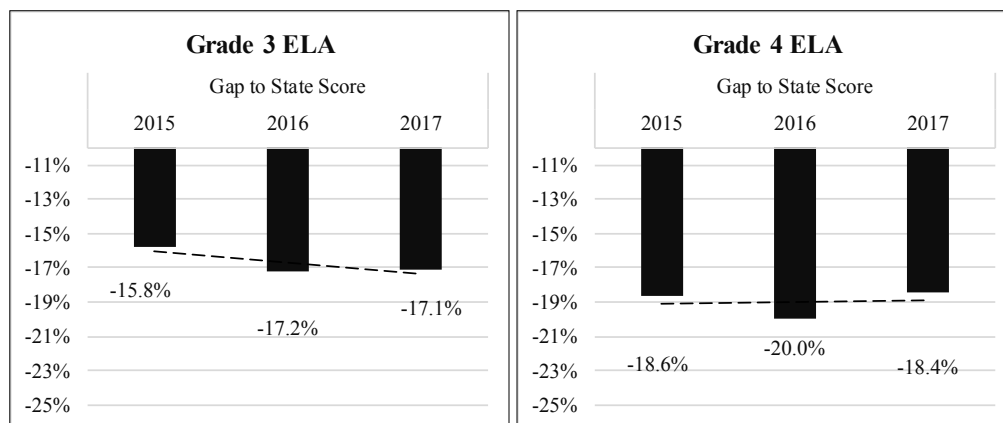
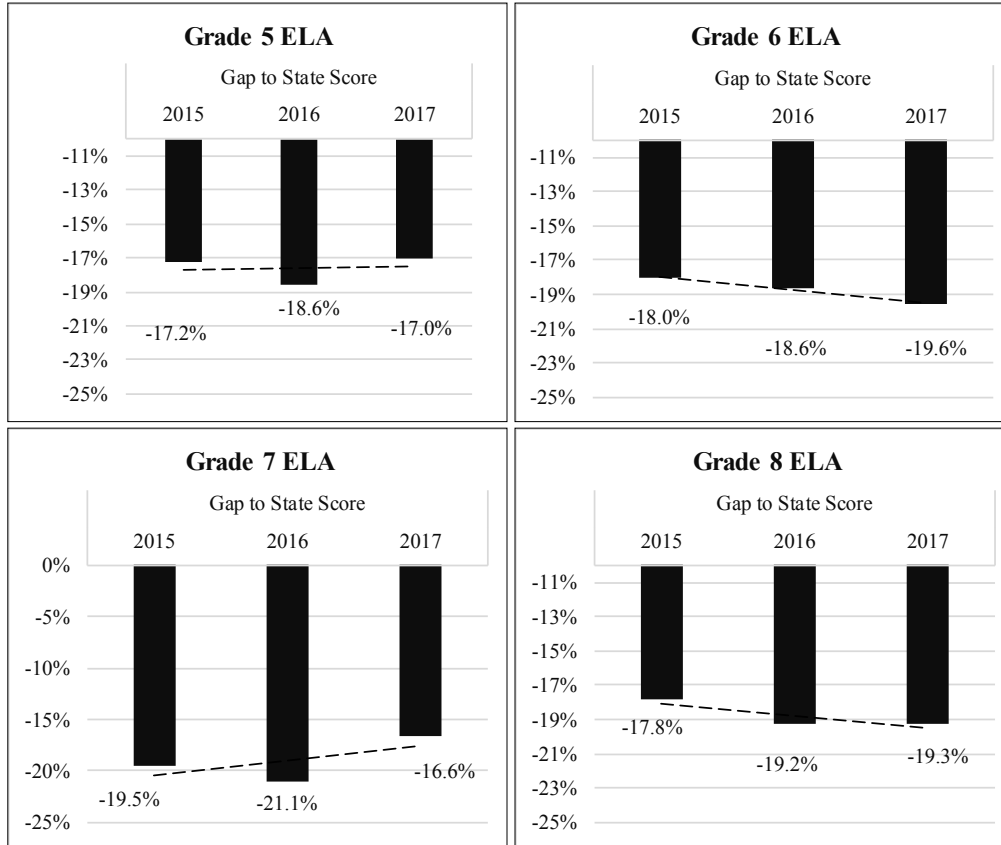


Exhibit 4.3.4 (continued)
Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above
Georgia Milestones End of Grade Tests English Language Arts
Three-Year Cohort Trend Data
Richmond County School System
2015-2017



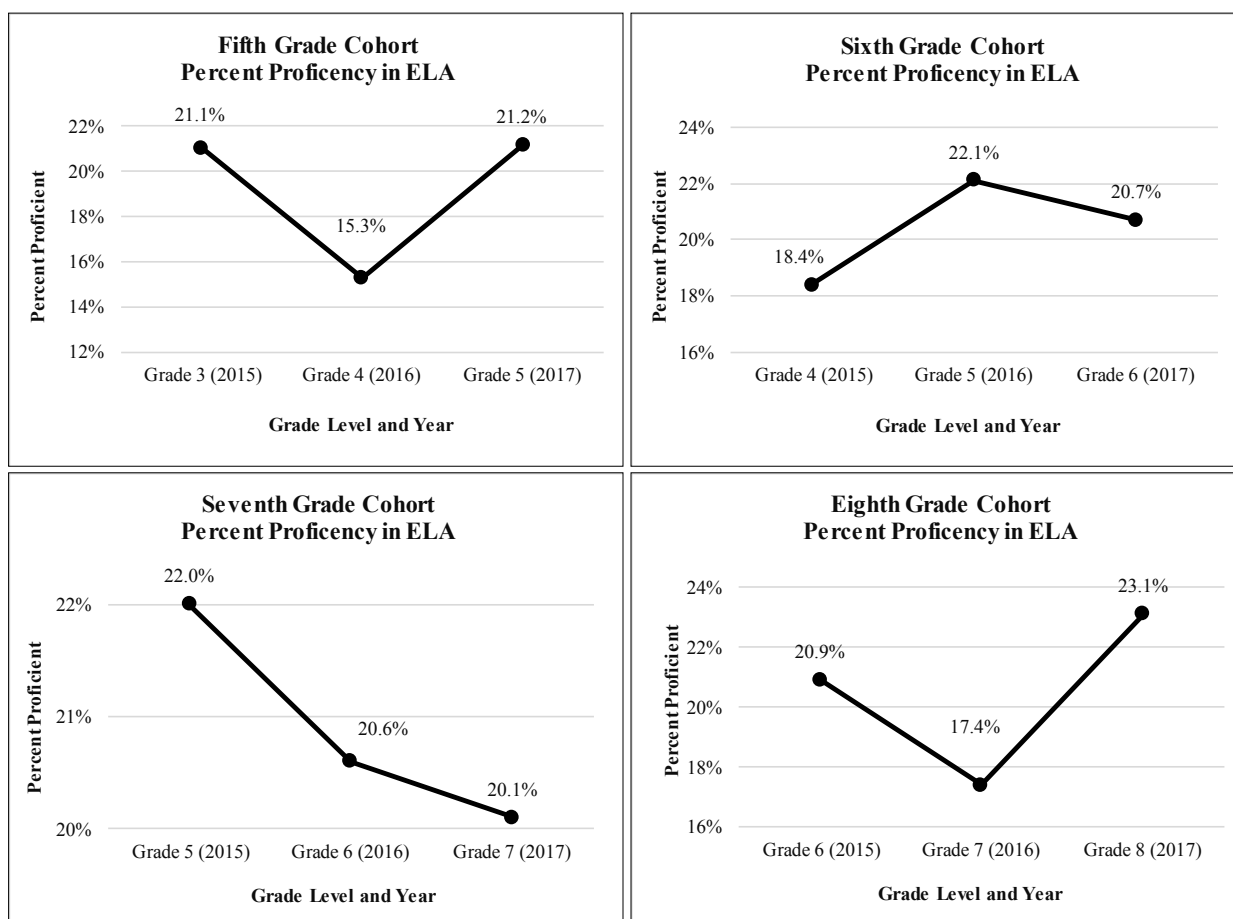
As can be noted from [Exhibit 4.3.4](#):

- In each cohort group, no consistent pattern of growth found in the number of students scoring proficient or above on the *Georgia Milestones* English language arts *End of Grade* assessment over the three year period depicted.
- The percentage of students in the fifth grade cohort scoring proficient or above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessments fluctuated from 21.1% in 2015 to 15.3% in 2016 back to 21.2% in 2017.
- The percentage of students in the sixth grade cohort scoring proficient or above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessments increased from 18.4% in 2015 to 20.7% in 2017.
- The percentage of students in the seventh grade cohort scoring proficient or above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessments declined from 22.0% in 2015 to 20.1% in 2017.
- The percentage of students in the eighth grad cohort scoring proficient or above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessments increased to 23.1% in 2017 after declining from 20.9% to 17.4% in 2016.

Exhibit 4.3.5 displays the difference (gap) in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* English language arts *End of Grade* assessments for grades 3 through 8 compared to the percentage of students scoring proficient and above in the state of Georgia.

Exhibit 4.3.5

Comparison of State and District English Language Arts Performance By Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above On the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Tests for Grades 3-8 Richmond County School System 2015-2017



The following can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.5:

- Over the three years depicted, the gap between the percentage of Richmond County School System students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* English language arts *End of Grade* assessment compared to students across the state of Georgia has ranged from -15.8 percentage points in grade 3 in 2015 to -21.1 percentage points in grade 7 in 2016.
- In 2017, the largest gap in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessment was -19.6 percentage points at the sixth grade.
- In 2017, the smallest gap in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the English language arts *End of Grade* assessment was -16.6 percentage points at the seventh grade level.
- At the fourth grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *End of Grade* assessment examined was 4.8 percentage points higher in 2017 compared to 2015 (see Exhibit 4.3.3). However, the gap between the percentage of Richmond County School System students scoring proficient and above compared to fourth students in the state of Georgia remained essentially unchanged. This

indicates that fourth grade English language arts performance is improving across the state of Georgia faster than in the Richmond County School System.

- At the eighth grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *End of Grade* assessment examined was 1.9 percentage points higher in 2017 compared to 2015 (see [Exhibit 4.3.3](#)). However, the gap between the percentage of Richmond County School System students scoring proficient and above compared to fourth students in the state of Georgia increased, indicating that eighth grade English language arts performance is improving across the state of Georgia faster than in the Richmond County School System.

[Exhibit 4.3.6](#) displays the percentage of students in grades 3 through 8 who scored proficient or above on the *Georgia Milestones* mathematics *End of Grade* assessments.

Exhibit 4.3.6

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above Georgia Milestones End of Grade Tests Mathematics Grades 3-8 Richmond County School System 2015-2017

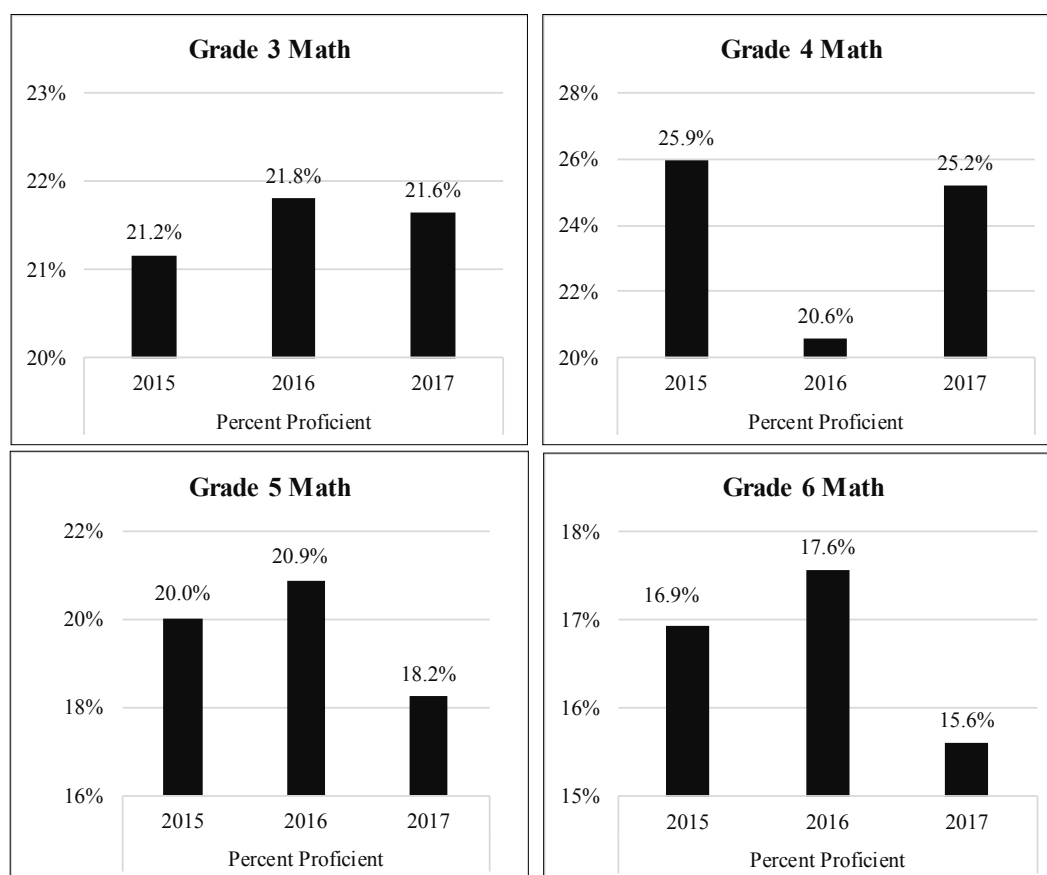
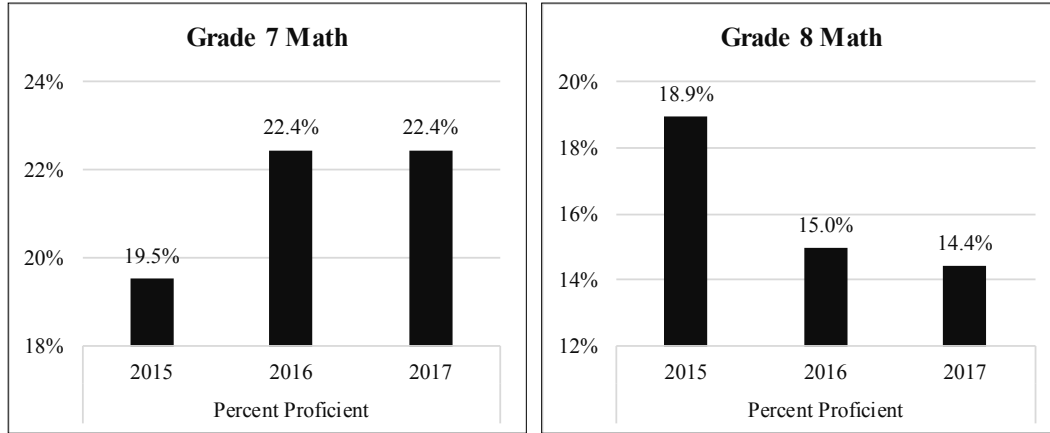


Exhibit 4.3.6 (continued)
Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above
Georgia Milestones End of Grade Tests Mathematics
Grades 3-8
Richmond County School System
2015-2017



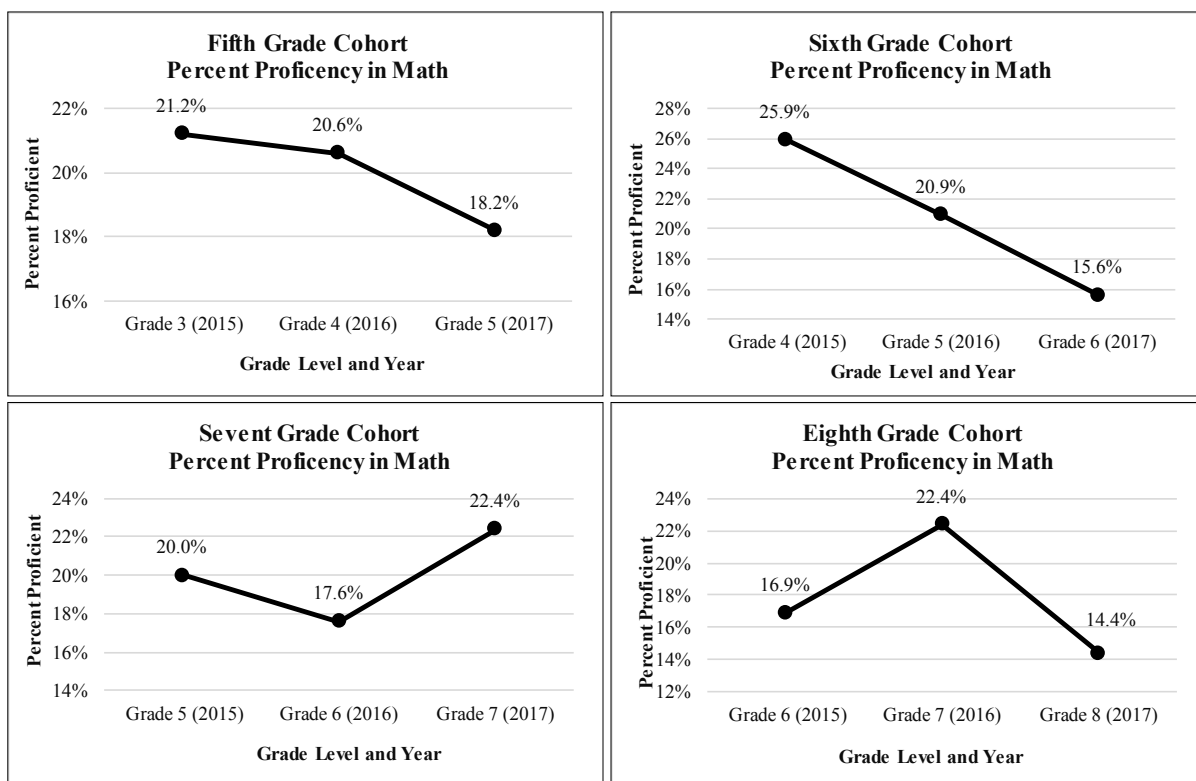
The following can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.6:

- From 2015 to 2017, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* mathematics *End of Grade* assessment declined in four of the six grade levels depicted.
- At the fourth grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the mathematics *End of Grade* assessment declined from 25.9% to 25.2%.
- At the fifth grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the mathematics *End of Grade* assessment declined from 20.0% to 18.2%.
- At the sixth grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the mathematics *End of Grade* assessment declined from 16.9% to 15.6%.
- At the eighth grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the mathematics *End of Grade* assessment declined from 18.9% to 14.4%, the lowest level depicted and largest decline depicted.
- From 2015 to 2017 the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* mathematics *End of Grade* assessment increased in two of the six grade levels depicted.
- At the third grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the mathematics *End of Grade* assessment increased from 21.2% to 21.6%.
- At the seventh grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the mathematics *End of Grade* assessment increased from 19.5% to 22.4%, the largest increased depicted.

Exhibit 4.3.7 display the cohort trends for students scoring proficient or above on the *Georgia Milestones* mathematics *End of Grade* assessments over a three year period.

Exhibit 4.3.7

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above Georgia Milestones End of Grade Tests Mathematics Three-Year Cohort Trend Data Richmond County School System 2015-2017



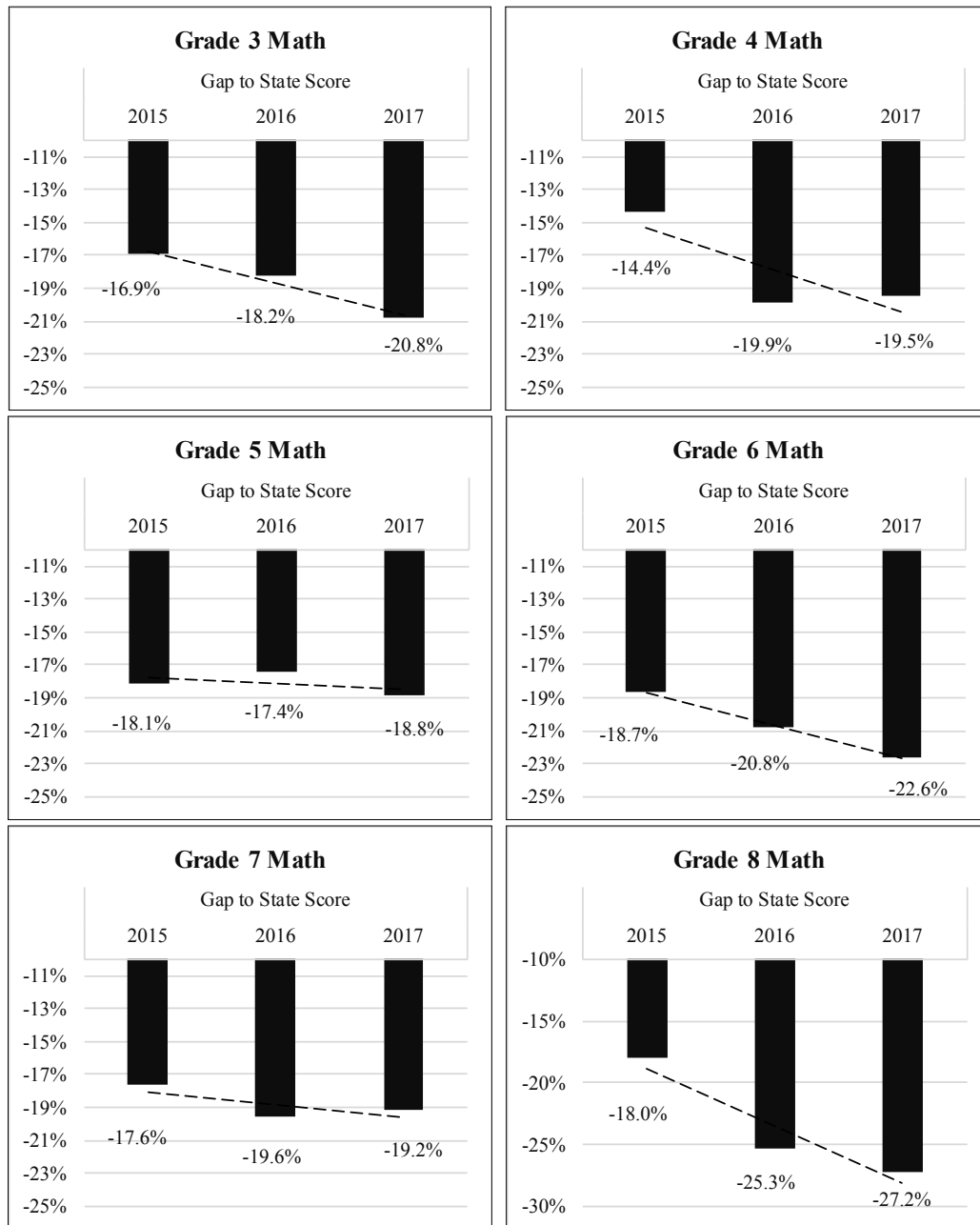
As can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.7:

- In all but one cohort group presented in the exhibit, the number of students scoring proficient or above on the *Georgia Milestones* mathematics *End of Grade* assessment declined over the three year period depicted.
- The percentage of students in the fifth grade cohort scoring proficient or above on the mathematics *End of Grade* assessments declined from 21.2% in 2015 to 18.2% in 2017.
- The percentage of students in the sixth grade cohort scoring proficient or above on the mathematics *End of Grade* assessments declined from 25.9% in 2015 to 15.6% in 2017.
- The percentage of students in the eighth grade cohort scoring proficient or above on the mathematics *End of Grade* assessments declined from 16.9% in 2015 to 14.4% in 2017 following an increase to 22.4% in 2016.
- The percentage of students in the seventh grade cohort scoring proficient or above on the mathematics *End of Grade* assessments increased from 20.0% in 2015 to 22.4% in 2017 after declining to 17.6% in 2016.

Exhibit 4.3.8 displays the difference (gap) in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* mathematics *End of Grade* assessments for grades 3 through 8 compared to the percentage of students scoring proficient and above in the state of Georgia.

Exhibit 4.3.8

Comparison of State and District Mathematics Performance By Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above On the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Tests for Grades 3-8 Richmond County School System 2015-2017



The following can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.8:

- Over the three years depicted, the gap between the percentage of Richmond County School System students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* mathematics *End of Grade* assessment compared to students across the state of Georgia increased at all six grade levels depicted.

- Over the three years depicted, the gap between the percentage of Richmond County School System students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* mathematics *End of Grade* assessment compared to students across the state of Georgia has ranged from -14.4 percentage points in grade 4 in 2015 to -27.2 percentage points in grade 8 in 2017.
- In 2017, the largest gap in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the mathematics *End of Grade* assessment was -27.2 percentage points at the eighth grade.
- In 2017, the smallest gap in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the mathematics *End of Grade* assessment was -18.8 percentage points at the fifth grade.
- At the seventh grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *End of Grade* examined was 2.9 percentage points higher in 2017 compared to 2015 (see [Exhibit 4.3.6](#)). However, the gap between the percentage of Richmond County School System students scoring proficient and above compared to seventh students in the state of Georgia declined 1.6 percentage points. This indicates that seventh grade mathematics performance is improving across the state of Georgia faster than it is in the Richmond County School System.

Based on the information presented in [Exhibits 4.3.1](#) through [4.3.8](#), the static performance seen in English language arts and mathematics achievement on grades 3 through 8 conceals variations in performance from one year to the next. The variations are evident in both achievement levels and in the disparity (gap) between district and state results. Despite some improvement in local achievement results, the increases have not kept pace with improvements in statewide achievement results.

[Exhibit 4.3.9](#) displays the percentage of high school students who scored in the proficient range or above on the *Georgia Milestones* literature, mathematics, science, and social studies, *End of Course* assessments.

Exhibit 4.3.9

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above Georgia Milestones High School End of Course Tests Literature, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies Richmond County School System 2015-2017

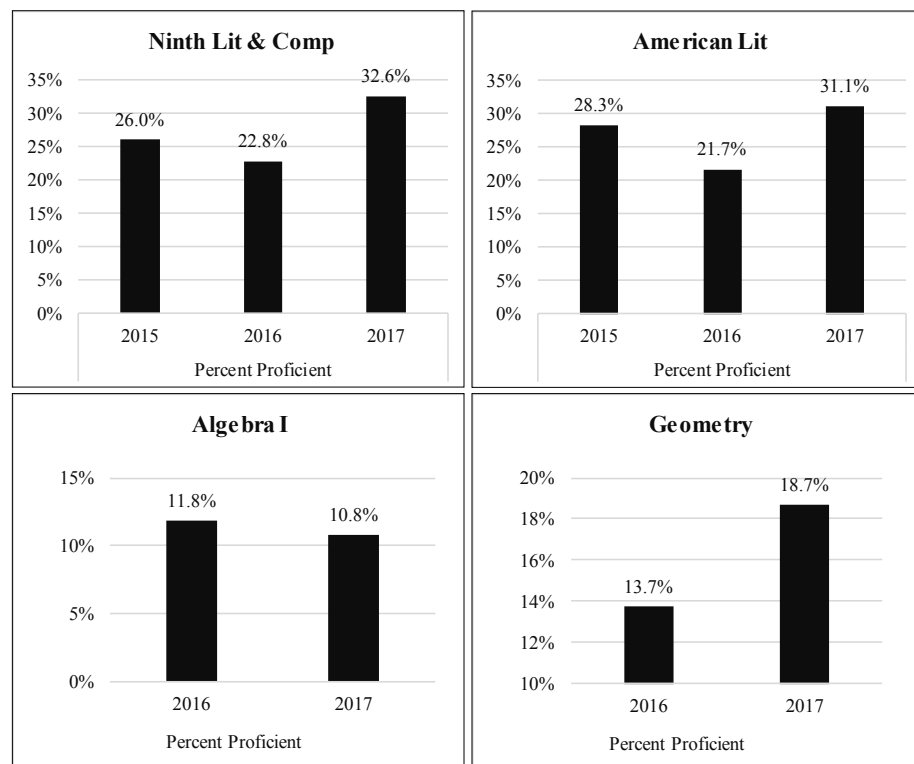
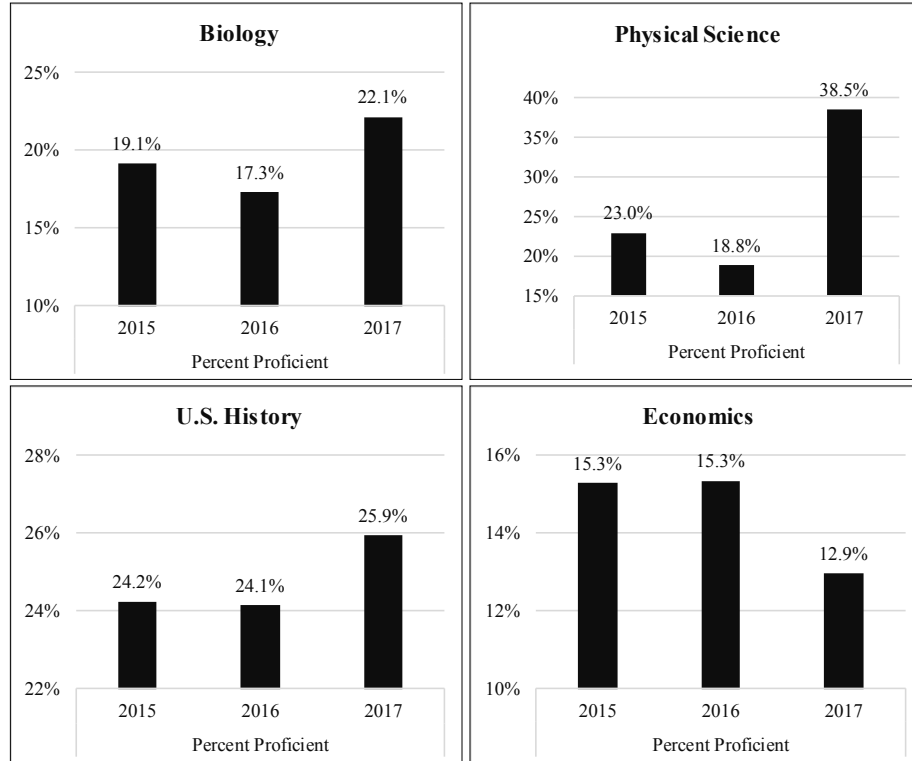


Exhibit 4.3.9 (continued)
Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above
Georgia Milestones High School End of Course Tests
Literature, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies
Richmond County School System
2015-2017



The following can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.9:

- From 2015 to 2017, the percentage of high school students scoring proficient and above on *End of Course* tests for Ninth Grade Literature and Composition, American Literature, Biology, Physical Science, and U.S. History increased.
- From 2015 to 2017, the percentage of high school students scoring proficient and above on *End of Course* tests for Economics declined.
- From 2016 to 2017, the percentage of Algebra I students scoring proficient and above on *End of Course* tests declined and increased for Geometry.
- The largest increase in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on *End of Course* tests was noted for Physical Science, with a 15.5 percentage point increase between 2015 and 2017.

Exhibit 4.3.10 displays the difference (gap) in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones* high school *End of Course* tests compared to the percentage of students scoring proficient and above in the state of Georgia.

Exhibit 4.3.10

**Comparison of State and District Scoring Proficient and Above
Georgia Milestones High School End of Course Tests
Literature, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies
Richmond County School System
2015-2017**

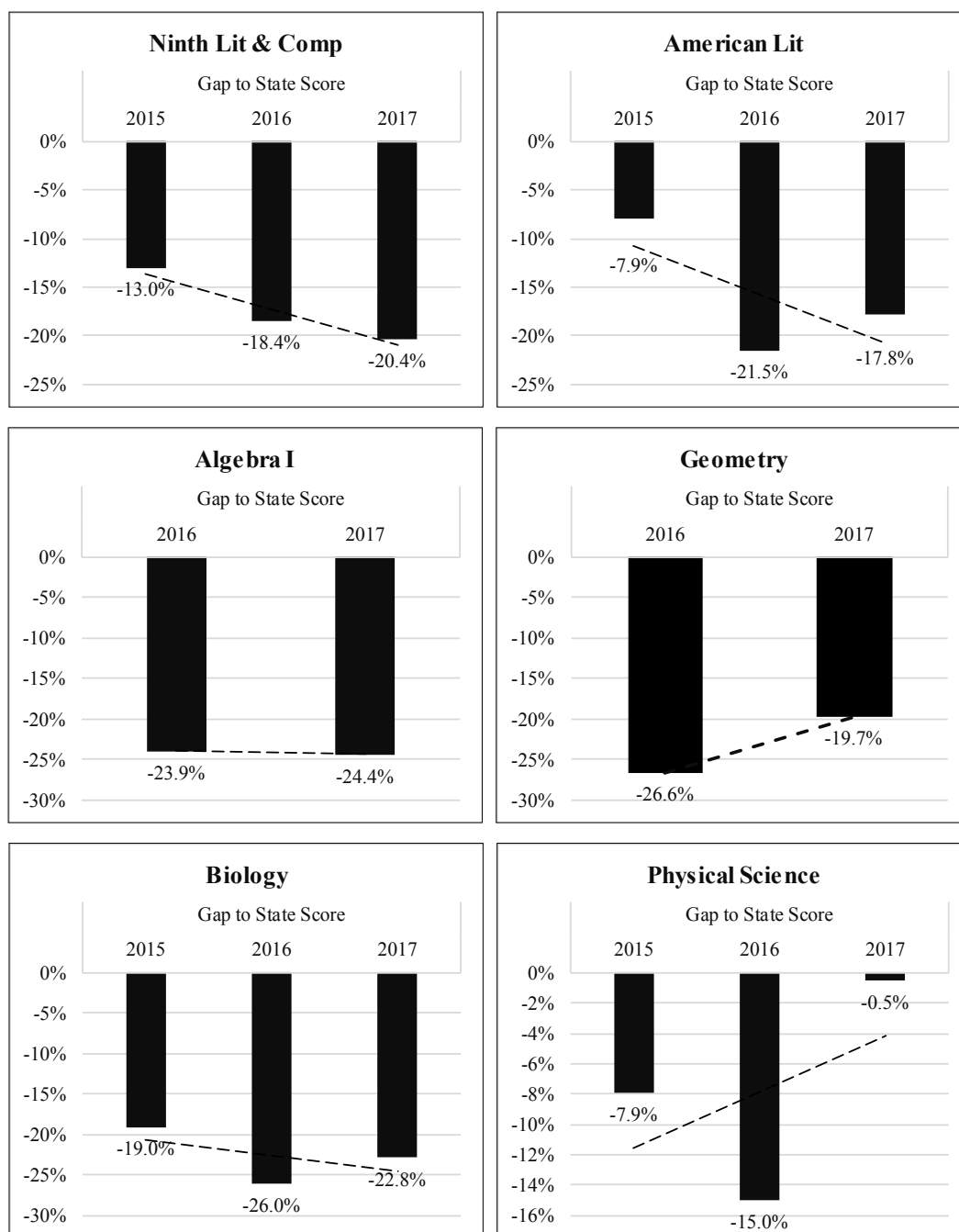
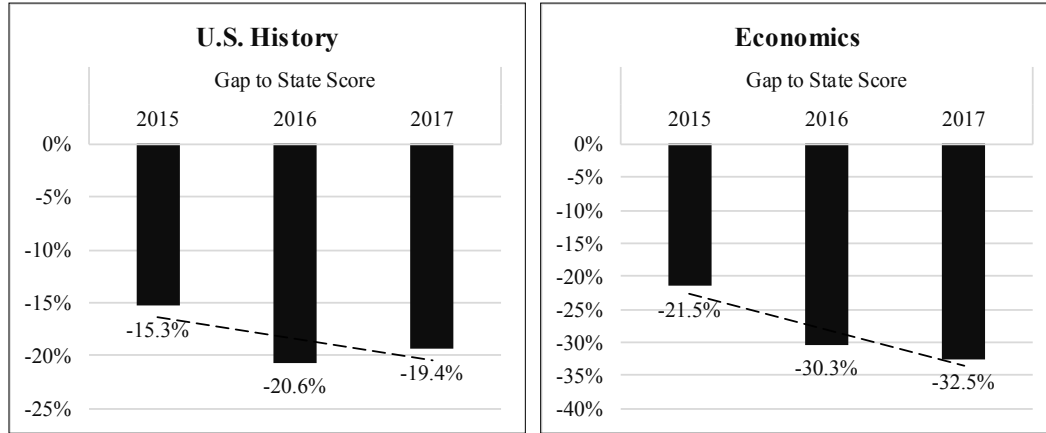


Exhibit 4.3.10 (continued)
Comparison of State and District Scoring Proficient and Above
Georgia Milestones High School End of Course Tests
Literature, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies
Richmond County School System
2015-2017



The following can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.10:

- Over the three years depicted, the gap between the percentage of Richmond County School System students scoring proficient and above on the *Georgia Milestones End of Course* assessments compared to students across the state of Georgia increased in Ninth Grade Literature and Composition, American Literature, Biology, U.S. History, and Economics.
- For Ninth Grade Literature and Composition, the gap between the percentage of Richmond County School System students scoring proficient and above on *End of Course* assessments compared to students across the state of Georgia increased from -13.0% to -20.4%. Although the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the *End of Course* assessment increased, the increase did not keep pace with improved achievement across the state Georgia.
- For American Literature, the gap between the percentage of Richmond County School System students scoring proficient and above on the *End of Course* assessments compared to students across the state of Georgia increased from -7.9% to -17.8%. Although the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the *End of Course* assessment increased, the increase did not keep pace with improved achievement across the state Georgia.
- For Biology, the gap between the percentage of Richmond County School System students scoring proficient and above on *End of Course* assessments compared to students across the state of Georgia increased from -19.0% to -22.8%. Although the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the *End of Course* assessment increased, the increase did not keep pace with improved achievement across the state Georgia.
- For U.S. History, the gap between the percentage of Richmond County School System students scoring proficient and above on *End of Course* assessments compared to students across the state of Georgia increased from -15.3% to -19.4%. Although the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the *End of Course* assessment increased, the increase did not keep pace with improved achievement across the state Georgia.
- Geometry and Physical Science are the only two content areas where the gap between the percentage of Richmond County School System students scoring proficient and above on *End of Course* assessments compared to students across the state of Georgia declined.

- In 2017, the largest gap in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above compared to students across the state of Georgia was in -32.5 percentage points for Economics.
- In 2017, the smallest gap in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above compared to students across the state of Georgia was in -0.5 percentage points for Physical Science.

Based on the information presented in [Exhibits 4.3.9](#) and [4.3.10](#), it can be noted that there are six subjects areas where local performance on the *Georgia Milestones End of Course* exam has improved, but Richmond County School System students are falling further behind in comparison to Georgia state averages.

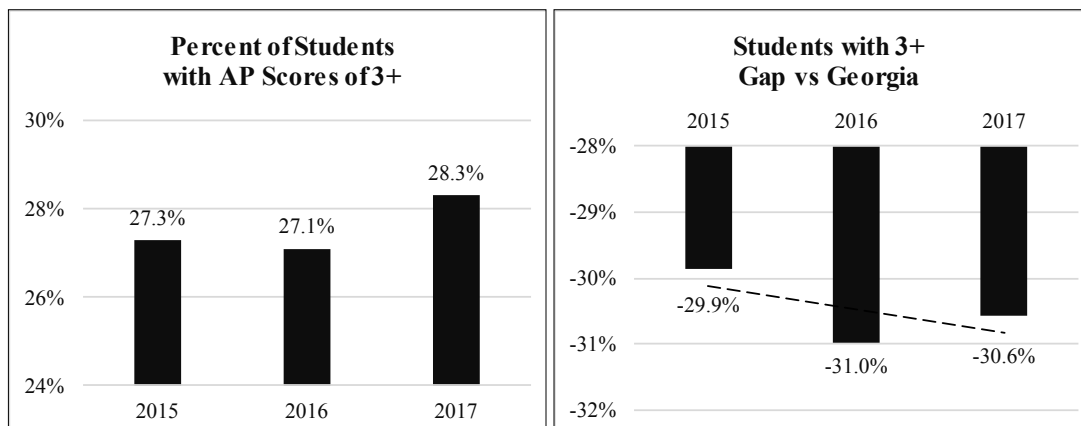
College Preparedness Assessments

The reviewers also examined the performance of Richmond County high school students beyond the state-required course assessments for a more complete comparison to national assessments. The reviews examined available trend data for high school students taking the *SAT*, the *American College Test (ACT)*, and *Advanced Placement (AP)* tests.

The reviewers first examined student performance on the *Advanced Placement (AP)* exam. The *AP* exam is an optional assessment with scores ranging from “1” to “5.” A score of “3” or higher generally qualified students for college credit depending on criteria established at each college or university.

[Exhibit 4.3.11](#) displays a comparison of state and district students scoring 3 and above on the *Advanced Placement* tests.

Exhibit 4.3.11
State and District Comparison
Percentage of Students Scoring 3 or Higher on the Advanced Placement Test
Richmond County School System
2015-2017



The following can be noted from [Exhibit 4.3.11](#):

- The percentage of district students earning scores of 3 and above has increased from 27.3% in 2015 to 28.3% in 2017.
- The gap between the percentage of district students earning scores of 3 and above compared to students across the state of Georgia has increased from -29.9 percentage points in 2015 to -30.6 percentage points in 2017.
- Although the percentage of district students earning scores of 3 or above has increased over the three years depicted, district students are falling further behind the Georgia state average.

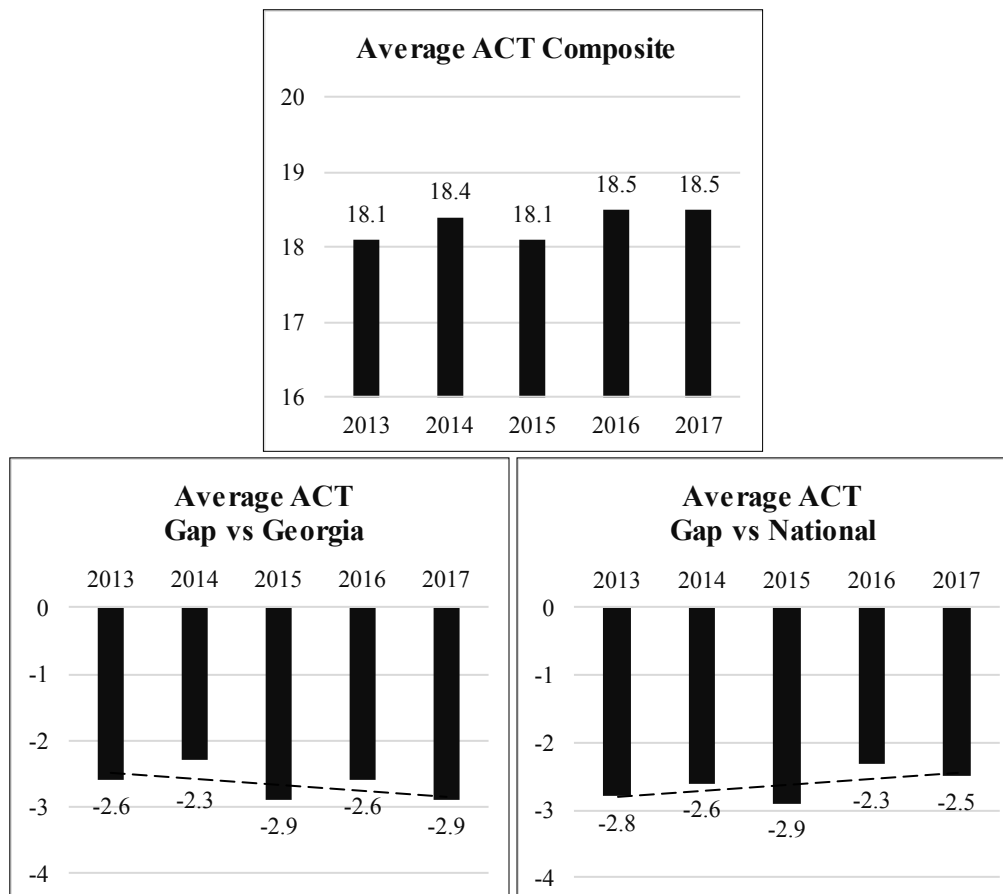
As presented in [Finding 3.2](#), enrollment in the Richmond County School System’s Advanced Placement programs has increased over the past three school years. Advance Placement programs enable students to pursue college-level studies, with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement or both, while attending

high school. To ensure adequate feedback regarding the effectiveness of a district's Advanced Placement programs all students should be required to take the *AP* exam at the school district's expense. In the Richmond County School System, students are not required to take the *AP* exam and those electing to take the exam must pay the exam fee. Reviewers found no policy expectation regarding requirements for students to take *AP* exams if enrolled in an Advanced Placement course. Since not all students take the *AP* exam limits the ability of the school system to assess the effectiveness of Advanced Placement programs and monitor progress toward stated system strategic goals.

The reviewers next examined student performance on the *ACT*. The *ACT* is an optional assessment given to college bound seniors. It is a norm-referenced assessment that predicts readiness for college level courses in the areas of English, mathematics, reading, and science. Each area of the *ACT* has a separate score ranging from "1" to "36," as well as an overall average composite score.

Exhibit 4.3.12 presents a comparison of district, state, and national composite scores on the *American College Test (ACT)* for 2013 through 2017.

Exhibit 4.3.12
District, State, and National Composite Scores on the American College Test (ACT)
Richmond County School System
2013-2017



The following can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.12:

- The 2017 district composite *ACT* score of 18.5 is higher than the district composite *ACT* score in 2013.
- In all five years depicted, district composite *ACT* scores have never outperformed those of the state or the nation.

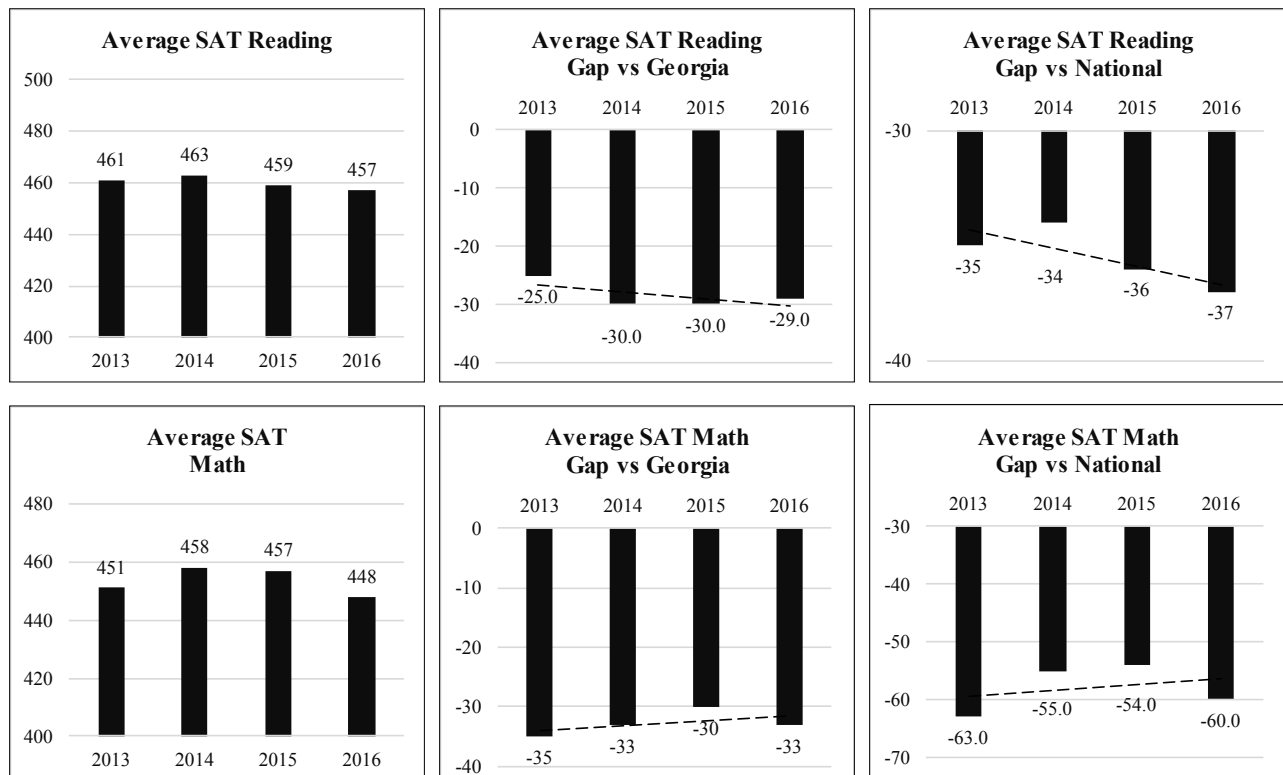
- The gap between state and district *ACT* scores has increased to -2.9 percentage points in 2017, compared to -2.6 percentage points in 2013.
- The gap between national and district *ACT* scores has decreased from -2.8 percentage points in 2013 to -2.5 percentage points in 2017.

Reviewers also examined student performance on the *Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)*. The *SAT* is an optional norm-referenced test that compares students to a national sample of college bound seniors. There are three parts to the test: critical reading, mathematics, and writing. Each section has a maximum of 800 points.

Exhibit 4.3.13 presents a comparison of district, state, and national *SAT* scores for reading and mathematics.

Exhibit 4.3.13

Comparison of National, State, and District SAT Reading and Math Scores Richmond County School System 2013-2016



The following can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.13:

- The district average *SAT* reading score was lower in 2016 (457) compared to 2013 (461).
- The district average *SAT* math score was lower in 2016 (448) compared to 2013 (451).
- The gap between state and district *SAT* scores has increased in reading from -25 points in 2013 to -29 points in 2016.
- The gap between state and district *SAT* scores has decreased in mathematics from -35 points in 2013 to -33 points in 2016.
- The gap between national and district *SAT* scores has increased in reading from -35 points in 2013 to -37 points in 2016.
- The gap between national and district *SAT* scores has decreased in mathematics from -63 points in 2013 to -60 points in 2016.

Overall, on *Advanced Placement*, *SAT*, and *ACT* exams, while there has been slight improvement in district test scores, the performance gap compared to the state of Georgia is increasing except for *SAT* math scores where the performance gap has closed slightly.

Comparison of Course Grades and Georgia Milestones Achievement Levels

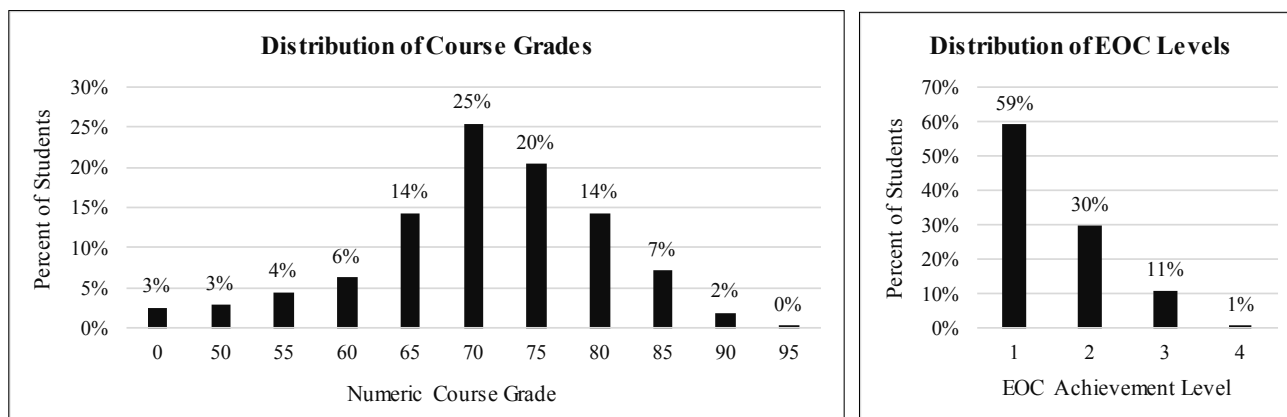
During interviews with district administrators and teachers, reviewers received a number of comments about the relationship between report card grades and student scores on the *Georgia Milestones* assessments. In 2017, the district implemented a policy of mandatory retention in grades 3, 5, and 8 based on the *Georgia Milestones End of Grade* assessment scores. Administrators reported having had conversations in which parents expressed surprise over their children's retention, because their classroom achievement had been graded as satisfactory throughout the school year. To determine if student report card grades are an accurate reflection of scores achieved on the *Georgia Milestones End of Grade* and *End of Course* assessments, reviews requested district-wide course grades and *Georgia Milestones End of Grade* and *End of Course* assessment results.

The district did not provide the requested course grades for grades 3 through 8. However, reviewers did receive course grades for high school courses, which they could compare to results on the *Georgia Milestones End of Course* assessments. From the data provided, reviewers were able to identify 3,628 matched sets of courses grades and End of Course assessment results. For the purpose of this analysis, reviewers limited their examination only to courses for which there were more than 100 matched, sets of course grades and End of Course assessment results.

Exhibit 4.3.14 displays the distribution of course grades and *Georgia Milestones End of Course* achievement levels for 878 matched data sets for Ninth Grade Literature and Composition, 649 matched data sets for American Literature and Composition, 1,300 matched data sets for Biology, and 687 matched data sets for United States History.

Exhibit 4.3.14

Distribution of Course Grades and EOC Achievement Levels Richmond County School System 2016-17



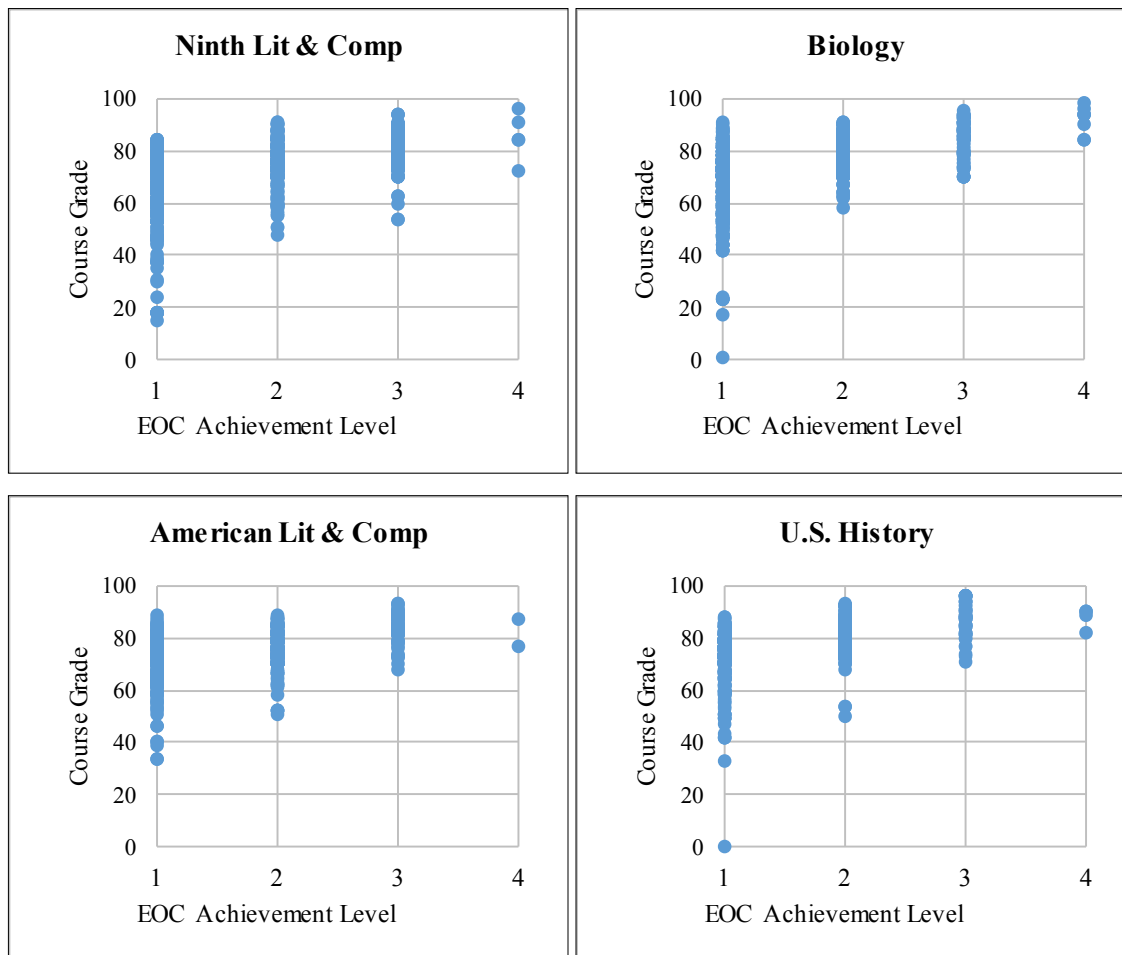
The following can be noted from [Exhibit 4.3.14](#):

- Most of the students (68%) received course grades of 70 or above.
- Most of the students (89%) scored below proficiency (levels 1 and 2) on *End of Course* assessments.

Exhibit 4.3.15 shows the distribution of course grades for each *End of Course* achievement levels for Ninth Grade Literature and Composition, American Literature and Composition, Biology, and U.S. History.

Exhibit 4.3.15

Distribution of Course Grades within EOC Achievement Levels Richmond County School System 2016-17



The following can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.15:

- In all four content areas, the spread of course grades within *End of Course* level 1 (beginning learner) covers the widest range of course grades.
- In all four content areas, there were students with a course grade at or near 90 who scored level 1 on the *Georgia Milestones End of Course* assessment.

The information shown in these two exhibits suggests that receiving a passing grade for any of these four courses does not necessarily imply that the student will demonstrate proficiency on the *Georgia Milestones End of Course* assessment at the end of the course. Exhibit 4.3.15 suggests that the disparity between course grades and End of Course scores is substantial. Since the *End of Course* assessment is the final exam for the course, it could be assumed that the course's curriculum was designed to prepare students for the *End of Course* assessment. Consequently, a passing grade for the course, in many cases, is providing misleading information to the student, subsequent teachers, employers, or colleges that the student has mastered the material in the course's curriculum.

The following comments made by administrators during interviews with reviewers are illustrative:

- “Our student grades need to be concrete and reflect our students’ *Milestones* scores.” (Building Administrator)
- “Augusta University is helping us to look at our grading policy and practices, and the disconnect between grades and standardized tests. There is a gap.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “The first two years, *Milestones* weren’t used for retention; this year it’s mandatory to use in third, fifth, and eighth grade.” (Central Office Administrator)

Summary

Students in the Richmond County School System on state and national assessments of achievement are consistently performing below state and national averages. While some improvements have been noted on the *Georgia Milestones* assessment results, the growth has not been sufficient to close achievement gaps that exist between district and state achievement levels. Trend analysis of *AP*, *ACT*, and *SAT* examination results also showed performance gaps between the state and nation, with performance gaps generally increasing. At the secondary level, students’ course grades are not an accurate predictor of how well students will perform on the *Georgia Milestones End of Course* assessment (see [Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7](#)).

Finding 4.4: The absence of a comprehensive program evaluation plan impedes the district’s ability to make rational decisions regarding the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction and decisions whether programs should be continued, modified, or eliminated based on accurate data. The use of data in decision making is evolving, but a systematic approach to the use of data in all district functions is not evident.

Districts typically invest substantial dollars and human resources in supporting programs to maintain, augment, or enhance the instructional program. Programmatic efforts have the potential to address diverse needs and provide unique opportunities for students to access learning. When programs are adopted to fulfill identified needs, designed to accomplish specific goals and objectives, implemented with fidelity to program design, monitored consistently during implementation, and evaluated annually, they can become a dynamic part of the educational design and delivery. However, when organizational procedures are not in place to assess the need and quality of programs before they are adopted, and when strategies for monitoring and evaluation are not used consistently, programs can consume district resources that could be allocated elsewhere to positively impact student achievement. Such lost opportunities for system improvement exist when program evaluation is infrequent, inadequate, or inappropriate.

In effective schools, program evaluation provides information that permits the staff to analyze and identify strengths and weaknesses at the district, school, and individual student levels. Administrators and teachers utilize evaluation data to assure quality educational programs that meet the individual needs. These data, when applied system-wide, inform decision makers in the identification of effective programs that should be maintained or expanded, termination of ineffective programs, and those differentiated instructional techniques that prove useful in promoting maximum student success.

Without carefully planned and implemented program evaluation leaves the board and district leaders with only anecdotal and random evidence concerning the effectiveness of programs and interventions. Additionally, without timely, objective program evaluation efforts increases the risk that vital program decisions will be made due to opinions, flawed assumptions, or anecdotal information rather than being based on program effectiveness data.

To determine the status of program evaluation taking place in the Richmond County School System, reviewers examined board policies, job descriptions, and other relevant documents provided for the review and interviewed administrators, teachers, and parents.

Reviewers found no evidence of a systematic approach in using data for decisions regarding the selection, implementation, monitoring, or termination of district programs. The district does not have a comprehensive program evaluation plan, and board policies and job descriptions do not have sufficient content to provide direction regarding program evaluations.

The reviewers examined board policies to determine the expectations for program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation in the district. Two board policies were found that make a generalized statement regarding program evaluation:

- *Board Policy EEE: Wellness Program* assigns to the superintendent responsibility for ensuring that schools comply with the wellness policy, that periodic assessments and evaluations are conducted in accordance with state and federal timelines and other requirements, and that appropriate updates or modifications are made as needed.
- *Board Policy IFBC: Media Programs* requires that a media committee be established at each school to provide input into various aspects of the media center operation, including making recommendations and decisions related to planning, operation, evaluation, and improvements of the media program.

Board policies do not have sufficient content to clearly establish the scope of program evaluation in the Richmond County School System. No policy expectation was found that required instructional programs to be modified, expanded, or terminated in response to analysis of program results in terms of improved student achievement.

Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to examining board policies, reviewers also analyzed district job descriptions to determine roles and responsibilities related to program evaluation:

- Superintendent – is responsible for overseeing the planning and evaluation of curriculum and instruction.
- Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Technology – responsibilities include providing leadership in the development, implementation, evaluation, and coordination of curriculum instruction and assessment; overseeing the district’s district student assessment system, curriculum development, professional development, and instructional material adoptions; and directing the design, implementation, and reporting of formal evaluations of school district programs.
- Assistant Superintendent (I, II, and III) – is assigned the responsibility to “develop and execute policies and procedures related to the improvement of programs under the direction of this assistant superintendent.” The job also required the individual to “conduct evaluations at the school of new and existing programs, and interpret the program to the professional staff, School Board, and the community.”
- Director of Curriculum and Instruction – duties include leading program monitoring and evaluation of the instructional program in assigned areas.
- High School Principal – is assigned the responsibility to “implement systematic procedures to assess program effectiveness.”
- Elementary School Principal – is responsible for implementing “systematic procedures to assess program effectiveness.”
- Middle School Principal – is assigned the responsibility to “ensure the implementation of systematic procedures to assess program effectiveness.”
- Coordinator of Support Services – is charged to “collect evaluative data to determine effectiveness of district and school programming for RTI.”
- Director of Professional Learning – has the task to “evaluate professional learning programs to determine effectiveness.”
- High School Graduation Coach – is responsible for conducting and analyzing “ongoing formative and summative evaluation data of program effectiveness.”
- Parent and Family Engagement Specialist – has the responsibility to “review annual reports to evaluate the effectiveness of the parent involvement programs.”

District job descriptions include some generic references to program evaluation. Job descriptions, however, do not have specificity regarding what programs are to be evaluated, reporting requirements, requirements for the use of program evaluation data, or the purpose for conducting program evaluations.

Program Evaluation

The use of program evaluation data is critical in helping the school system and school leaders craft a sound framework with measurable results for continuously improving schools so decisions are not based on incomplete or biased information. Since a program evaluation plan is not present in the Richmond County School System, and district leaders expressed an interest in developing a program evaluation plan, reviewers present Exhibit 4.4.1 listing the characteristics of a quality evaluation plan or process. District officials can use this list of characteristics as a reference in the design of their future approach to program evaluation. To meet review criteria, at least eight of the 12 characteristics listed below must be in place.

Exhibit 4.4.1

Characteristics of a Quality Program Evaluation Plan or Process

1. Describes board or administrative directives to have program evaluation procedures in place
2. Specifies procedures for program evaluation, including needs assessment and formative evaluation and summative evaluation methods
3. Specifies the proficiencies of persons responsible for conducting the evaluation, enhancing likelihood that findings achieve maximum credibility and acceptance
4. Expects multiple measures designed to obtain quality data about the goals and objectives of the program and to be accurate and reliable measures
5. Provides for multiple measures of data collection to be used, including both quantitative and qualitative data
6. Directs ongoing formative assessments for the first two years for any new program implementation and summative evaluation at the end of the third year
7. Directs that all existing programs undergo a program evaluation at least every three years
8. Expects procedures used in the evaluation process to be clearly described
9. Specifies that program evaluation reports clearly describe the program, including its context, purpose, and procedures
10. Expects program evaluation reports to be utilized to support timely decisions regarding program effectiveness, identify both strengths and weaknesses of the program, and include findings and recommendations for continuation as is, modification, or termination
11. Directs program evaluation designs to be practical, ethical, and cost effective, and to adequately address relevant political issues
12. Expects all proposals for the initiation of new program to include needs assessment data, a description of formative and summative evaluations, and data collection procedures

During interviews with district and building administrators, reviewers received a variety of comments regarding program evaluation in the Richmond County School System. Following is a representative sampling of comments received by reviewers:

- “There is no system-wide program evaluation mechanisms in place.” (District Administrator)
- “No program evaluation plan or policies exist.” (District Administrator)
- “We know program evaluation is an area that we need to work on, certainly, to determine how effective things are.” (District Administrator)
- “There is perception of evaluation, but no policy requiring program evaluation.” (District Administrator)
- “Program evaluation does not happen. More is just added on.” (Building Administrator)
- “Too many initiatives and no follow-through; thus, proficiency is lacking.” (Building Administrator)

Use of Data in the District

Administrators, board and community members, and teachers in effective school systems frequently ask:

- Is what we are doing working? – How do we know that?
- What’s not working? – How do we know that?
- How can we do it better?
- Should we be doing something else?

These questions can only be answered accurately by collecting data and using them as feedback to inform program improvement. This process is referred to as being “data driven.”

The use of data from a variety of sources is essential for sound curriculum management. Effective assessment resources include achievement test data, formative assessments, summative assessments, program evaluations, teacher evaluations, surveys, and follow-up studies. The resulting data need to be made available at all levels of the school system in formats that can be understood and effectively utilized in decision-making functions such as:

- District long-range planning;
- School improvement planning;
- Curriculum review, modification, or adoption;
- Classroom teaching decisions;
- Instructional materials selection;
- Formative, summative, and benchmark assessment development;
- District and school-based program selection and evaluation; and
- Human and financial resource allocation and budget development.

To ensure efficient “feedup,” “feedback,” and “feed forward” processes that can inform efforts to improve student performance, school systems must create and utilize viable system performance data from a variety of sources. Effective use of data includes disaggregating data consistently and in meaningful ways for district leaders to determine that all students from diverse demographic populations are attaining the instructional goals and objectives district-wide and within each school. Systems that do not consistently create and utilize these data sources do not have a basis for sound decisions involving curriculum, instruction, assessment, and other supporting operations. The importance of data is that they can highlight existing areas of strengths and weaknesses and guide direct improvement in a systematic and strategic manner.

To gauge where the district is in terms of data use, reviewers examined board policies, job descriptions, assessment data, and other relevant documents provided by district administrators. The reviewers also visited classrooms in each district school and conducted interviews. While the district gathers a variety of data from different sources, data are not used effectively for school improvement planning or program evaluation. Absent are clear and specific expectations for the use of data in decision making for all district operations.

The reviewers found no board policies that specifically addressed the collection and use of data to improve the design and delivery of curriculum or to enhance student achievement. The only references made were related to “instruction must focus on teaching that which is assessed and assessing that which is taught”; “provide a comprehensive K-12 curriculum, instruction, and assessment program to serve the educational needs of the System’s students”; and “assessment of the effectiveness of the curriculum shall be determined in part, by the performance of students on local, state, and national criterion referenced and norm referenced assessments.”

Next the reviewers examined various job descriptions to determine roles and responsibilities for data use. The following job descriptions referenced responsibilities for informing instructional decisions and use in school improvement plans:

- Assistant Superintendent (Area I, II, III) – duties include “collect and utilize data to inform instructional decisions and monitor plans for academic interventions.”
- Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Technology – is responsible for overseeing “data collection for reporting and management as required for federal, state, and local mandates.” The Associate Superintendent is also responsible for providing “schools with data for state and federal programs and school improvement teams.”
- Statistical Analyst and Research Coordinator – is charged with “gathering and compiling other data regarding student achievement (grade equivalents, percent scoring at or above state and/or national average.) Managing the operation of the student data management program.”
- Accountability and IE² Officer – is responsible for providing data analysis and reporting; designing data-collection strategies; collecting and/or assembling data; designing basic information services to facilitate the analysis of data; and producing graphical, tabular and narrative summaries of data and statistical analysis.
- Accountability Program Specialist – is tasked to “provide support to schools and departments in gathering reviewing, and analyzing data for improvement. Research best practices for school improvement and data analysis at the system and school levels.”
- High School, Middle School, Elementary Principals – are responsible for analyzing, sharing, and using school and student achievement data to develop and implement the school improvement academic achievement and management plan.
- Assistant Principal – is assigned to work with the principal to analyze, share, and use school and student achievement data to develop and implement the school improvement plan. Analyze and synthesize data and then prepare a variety of written reports and correspondence detailing their examination.
- System Data Coordinator – has the duty to “gather data from various system sources and compile into a usable format to analyze and present results to faculty and administration. Provide professional development and training for staff to achieve and maintain quality data systems with consistent data collection in compliance with district and state standards.”
- Title I Department Coordinator – has the assignment to “assist with data analysis to plan, design, and write school improvement plans.”
- Academic Support Specialist for Math, Science or Literacy – is charged to “utilize a variety of student data including work samples, screener data, and other formative and summative data to inform instructional decisions.”

In district documents and interview comments, reviewers noted references to the use of leading and lagging indicators. Leading (formative) and lagging (summative) indicators are two types of data that provide school organizations information about where they are going and whether they are on track. Leading and lagging indicators are using in answering three critical questions:

- How are we doing compared to the standards?
- How are we doing compared to ourselves?
- How are we doing compared to others?

In a 2015 report *Turning Around Lowest Achieving Schools in Georgia*, the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement describes the use of leading and lagging indicators in school reform:

“Leading indicators are metrics that help gauge whether a school is on track midstream, allowing for adjustments to be made. Examples of leading indicators include student attendance and student discipline rates. These metrics help determine the atmosphere for learning in the school. Changes in these kinds of metrics should be noticeable in the first year of reform efforts. Lagging indicators are student achievement metrics that often take two or more years

before measureable [sic] growth occurs. Examples of lagging indicators include standardized test scores and graduation rate. The theory of change for school turnarounds posits that if a school improves its leading indicators in the first two years of its funding work, then it will see improvements in lagging indicators by the third year.”

Leading indicators provide early benchmark of progress toward student achievement, enabling central office and building level administrators to make strategic and less reactive decisions about programs, services, and interventions to improve student learning. Leading indicators embrace the following three characteristics:

- They are timely and actionable (They are reported with enough time to change a course of action in order to improve lagging outcomes).
- They are benchmarked (Users understand what constitutes improvement on leading indicators, whether through longitudinal comparison of the same data or through research-based criteria).
- They are powerful and predictive (They can offer targets for improvement and show progress-or lack of progress-toward a desired outcome before that outcome can be expected to occur).

Based upon a review of district documents and interviews with district administrators and personnel, reviewers noted the district has relied heavily on lagging performance indicators to gauge the district’s effectiveness.

The reliance on lagging indicators by the Richmond County School System inhibits the ability of district leadership to respond through timely intervention if system performance is not trending in the intended or desired direction. Over reliance on the use of lagging indicators hinders the ability of an organization to identify anomalies or aberrations in student performance when interventions are still possible to achieve desired performance results. A comprehensive system of performance indicators will consist of a combination of leading and lagging indicators. Currently, the district is transitioning to a more balanced approach to leading and lagging data indicators by initiating the following three activities:

iReady®

iReady® is used in the district as a diagnostic tool to identify math and reading levels. This assessment is given three times a year and is mandated for all schools. It is also used as one criterion for admittance to a magnet school. The individual data in *iReady®* allow teachers to identify areas for improvement and develop an action plan. It further provides instructional strategies and teacher-led lessons to target students’ skill gaps. As indicated during interviews, this is an area that is not consistently used by teachers across the district and minimizes an important function of *iReady®* to enhance classroom instruction.

Quarterly Reports

Quarterly reports developed in the accountability department are provided to district personnel to track critical student and teacher indicators. These reports have been initiated for the first time during the 2015-16 school year. The data indicators included in the report are:

- Enrollment,
- Student attendance rate,
- Teacher attendance rate,
- Discipline incidents, and
- In-school and out-of-school suspensions.

Benchmark Assessments

The district has initiated benchmark assessments during the 2017-18 school year for mathematics and English language arts. Benchmark assessments will be administered quarterly in order to ensure educators are provided ongoing information about the progress students are making toward mastery of the Georgia Standards of Excellence. As noted in the *RC12 Benchmark Blueprint*, educators can use the data from standards-based Benchmark Assessments to:

- Evaluate student learning of specific Georgia Standards of Excellence;
- Analyze patterns of student need to inform changes to the mathematics and English language arts curriculum and instruction; and
- Synthesize student misconceptions to inform instructional strategies and interventions.

The Benchmark math and English language arts Blueprint includes a table of specifications noting the number of questions, question type, standard to be addressed, content, and level of cognitive demand. Included in the math blueprint is a worksheet for analyzing results from the benchmark assessment and for planning instructional grouping of students. Three guiding questions are provided for the analysis of data:

- Overall, on which standards have students demonstrated adequate understanding (80% to 89%) or thorough understanding (90% to 100%)?
- Overall, on which standards have students demonstrated partial understanding (60% to 79%) or minimal understanding (0% to 59%)?
- What students are in each group?

Finally, as part of the math blueprint, the following guiding questions are offered in planning instructional groups:

- What students are in each small group?
- What standards are being taught?
- What materials are needed to teach the standards?
- What strategies will be used to intervene, remediate, or accelerate learning?
- How often will groups change?

These three activities, if properly assessed, monitored, and implemented are intended to offer the system increased and enhanced data indicators useful in addressing the improvement in student achievement.

An expectation communicated within the Richmond County District Strategic Plan is for instructional staff to use data to drive instruction. To this end, district professional learning efforts have focused on data generation and concomitant data analysis. However, through interviews, classroom visits, document analysis, and general discussions with district personnel, reviewers found that data usage is not systematic or system-wide.

Data usage to drive instruction is evident in a few schools and even fewer classrooms. While a focus on data usage has increased in the Richmond County School System, current data use has been limited to data awareness, data generation, and basic data analysis. A need exists to advance the capacity of staff to employ data to directly impact student learning. For example, teachers need to be able to apply data to differentiated instruction, support effective interventions, and make important instructional decisions that result in improved student achievement.

The district is striving to increase the capacity of the professional staff to employ data use in all schools and classrooms. The involvement of faculty in benchmark assessments and *iReady*® initiatives, for example, represents efforts to this end. The goal is to bridge the gap between basic data awareness and use to analyzing and implementing data results to improve instructional practices and student performance.

Reviewers used an anonymous online survey to solicit responses from teachers and building administrators about teachers' use of assessment data to plan instruction. Exhibit 4.4.2 displays a comparison of teachers' reported frequency of use of assessment data to plan instruction and the perception of building principals regarding how frequently they believe their teachers are using assessment data to plan instruction.

Exhibit 4.4.2

**Frequency Teachers Use Assessment Results to Plan Instruction
Comparison of Teacher and Building Administrators Survey Responses
Richmond County School System
October 2017**

Response Choices	Teachers		Building Administrators	
	Percent	Total	Percent	Total
Monthly	7.6	34	12.0	6
Weekly	48.2	217	48.0	24
Several times per week	20.0	90	34.0	17
Daily	18.7	84	4.0	2
Rarely/Not at all	2.7	12	2.0	1
Not Applicable	2.9	13	0	0

As can be noted from Exhibit 4.4.2:

- A total of 450 teachers and 50 building administrators responded to a survey question asking how frequently teachers use the results of assessments to plan instruction.
- Nearly half of the teachers (48.2%) and nearly half of the building administrators (48.0%) responded that teachers are using the results of assessments to plan instruction on a weekly basis.
- Approximately 19% of teachers who responded to the survey question indicated they use assessment results daily to plan instruction, while 4% of building administrators indicated teachers are using assessment results on a daily basis to plan instruction.
- Twenty percent of teachers reported using assessment results to plan instruction several times per week, while 34% of building administrators indicated teachers used assessment results several times a week to plan instruction.
- Overall, teachers and building administrators, based on their responses to an online survey, are reporting frequent use of assessment data to plan instruction.

Reviewers also used an anonymous online survey to solicit responses from teachers and building administrators regarding how student assessment data are being used. [Exhibit 4.4.3](#) displays a comparison of teachers' reported use of student assessment data by frequency and the perception of building administrators regarding how they believe their teachers are using assessment data by frequency of responses.

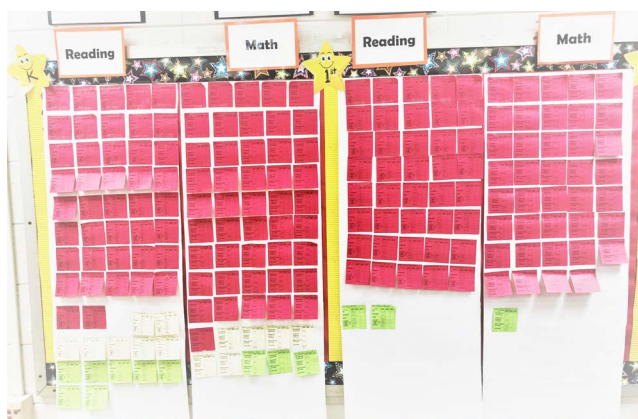
Exhibit 4.4.3

Reported Use of Student Assessment Data Comparison of Teacher and Building Administrator Survey Responses Richmond County School System October 2017

Response Choices	Teachers		Building Administrator	
	Percent	Total	Percent	Total
To give grades	61.1	270	16.0	8
To plan reteaching	89.1	394	26.0	13
To refer students to intervention	61.8	273	14.0	7
To place students in small groups for targeted instruction	79.1	351	40.0	20
To place students in the correct course or level	28.3	125	4.0	2

As can be noted from [Exhibit 4.4.3](#):

- A total of 442 teachers and 50 building administrators responded to a survey question asking how students assessment data are used by teachers. Teachers and building administrators could select as many of the response choices that applied to their practice.
- Eighty-nine percent of teachers indicated student assessment data are most frequently utilized to plan reteaching, while only 26% of principals indicated that student assessment data are used to plan for reteaching.
- Sixty-one percent of responding teachers reported using assessment data to give grades, while 16% of principals reported that teachers used assessment data to give grades.
- Sixty-two percent of teachers reported using assessment data to refer students to interventions, while only 14% of principals reported that teachers used assessment data to refer students to intervention.
- Seventy-nine percent of teachers noted using assessment data to place students in small groups for targeted instruction, while 40% of principals reported that teachers used assessment data to place students in small groups for targeted instruction.
- The lowest response from the teachers (28%) and principals' perception (4%) was using data to place students in the correct course or level.



Many schools have data walls like the ones observed at Meadowbrook Elementary School and McBean Elementary School.

During interviews with district and building administrators, reviewers received comments regarding the current status of data use in the Richmond County School System. Following is a representative sampling of comments received by reviewers:

- “Still building the road map to get where we want to be with data implementation.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Having the data and making strong decisions, we are at the beginning stages. It is a struggle.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Teachers are at the surface level with data. Need to be more deeper [sic] in use.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “There may be a data expectation, but the sense of urgency hasn’t got down to the school level.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “The major challenge is taking the data and making it come alive at the classroom level.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Gap is slowly closing on how to do it (data analysis) but still not there.” (Central Office Administrator)
- Benchmarks – “We are going to use the data to see where we are falling short.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Principals are probably a 2 out of 5 on their data skills.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Need to get our principals to a level of implementation and being able to analyze their own data.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “We need professional development in analyzing data.” (Building Administrator)
- “We use formative assessment every day. My students have electronic forms they fill in.” (Teacher)
- “Don’t want to enter data. Data gets people fired.” (Teacher)

Summary

Reviewers identified no evidence of a systematic approach to using data for decision making regarding the selection, implementation, monitoring, or termination of district programs. Board policies do not have sufficient content to communicate clear expectations requiring that instructional programs be modified, expanded, or terminated in response to analysis of program results in terms of improved student achievement. While district job descriptions include generic references to program evaluation, they do not have sufficient specificity to clearly communicate roles and responsibilities for the use of achievement data for the purpose of program evaluation (see [Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7](#)).

STANDARD 5: The School District Has Improved Productivity.

Productivity refers to the relationship between system input and output. A school system meeting this standard of the CMSi System Review is able to demonstrate consistently improved pupil outcomes, even in the face of diminishing resources. Improved productivity results when a school system is able to create a consistent level of congruence between major variables in achieving enhanced results and in controlling costs.

What the Reviewers Expected to Find in the Richmond County School System:

While the attainment of improved productivity in a school system is a complex process, caused in part by the not adequate of a tight organizational structure (referred to as “loosely coupled”), common indicators of a school system meeting this review standard are:

- Planned and actual congruence among curricular objectives, results, and financial allocations;
- A financial data base and network that can track costs to results, provide sufficient fiduciary control, and be used as a viable data base in making policy and operational decisions;
- Specific means that have been selected or modified and implemented to attain better results in the schools over a specified time period;
- A planned series of interventions that have raised pupil performance levels over time and maintained those levels within the same cost parameters as in the past;
- School facilities that are well-kept, sufficient, safe, orderly, and conducive to effective delivery of the instructional program; and
- Support systems that function in systemic ways.

Overview of What the Reviewers Found in the Richmond County School System:

This section is an overview of the findings that follow in the area of Standard Five. Details follow within separate findings.

Reviewers found a traditional approach to budget development in place with no clear linkages between district strategic goals and priorities and budgetary allocations. Financial allocations are not driven by program priorities, achievement needs, or cost-benefit analysis of educational program and services. District expenditures are exceeding revenues, and district leaders are relying on existing fund balances to balance the operating budget.

There are many programs in place in the Richmond County School System intended to support student learning and address gaps in student achievement. While the school system has a framework for problem solving in place, there is no evidence of a systematic process to improve student achievement by selecting, monitoring, and evaluating program interventions for long-term effectiveness.

Technology planning in the Richmond County School System is in place; however, the current technology plan was considered inadequate to effectively guide the deployment of technology as a teaching and learning tool. Observed use of available instructional technology was not consistent with district expectations. Observed use of available instructional technology was primarily to present information. Limited student use of available technology was observed.

Board policies are not adequate to provide direction for budget planning and aligning district financial resources with curricular and academic goals. Board policies do not provide direction regarding the development, implementation, integration, and evaluation of a district technology plan. Board policies are not adequate to direct the use of interventions to ensure students are performing on grade level and in providing expectations for the identification, implementation, assessment, and evaluation of intervention and enrichments efforts in the district.

Finding 5.1: The decision-making and budget development processes does not have a systemic cost-benefit analysis aligned to the district’s curricular goals and priorities.

Educational programs require adequate financial support to remain viable and support improved student achievement over time. A school district’s productivity is enhanced when clear linkages exist between the curriculum and the budget. The budget, therefore, is the major financial planning document for expressing in dollars the goals and priorities of the district. System-wide productivity is enhanced by budgetary decisions that allocate adequate resources to those programs that align with district goals and priorities and that demonstrate success in meeting those goals. Without this systemic linkage, district decision makers can spread fiscal resources too thin, stray from the district’s mission, continue to fund ineffective programs, or serve the students of the district ineffectively, inequitably, or inconsistently.

The Richmond County School System describes itself as one of the oldest public schools in the South, striving to move education forward and to provide students with opportunities for success. For the school system to maintain its focus on building a world-class school system, careful monitoring is required to ensure that budgeting and fiscal practices are aligned to the district’s mission and goals.

To determine the extent that a connection exists between the district’s curriculum and its operating budget, reviewers interviewed district administrators and staff. They also reviewed district policies, job descriptions, annual budgets, financial audit reports, planning documents, and other documents related to budgeting and the allocation of the school district’s financial resources.

The reviewers found that direct linkages between district strategic goals and priorities and district budget priorities were not present. No formal efforts have been made to link student achievement or program performance results to budgetary decisions. Board policies provide no direction requiring alignment of organizational goals and priorities with budgetary expenditures and revenues.

Strong financial management policies are critical in guiding the budget planning and decision-making process. In order to serve as an effective guide in the budget planning process, a school system’s policy framework needs to be specific so decisions can be made by referencing relevant policies. The reviewers noted the following policies that provide some reference to the district’s financial management system:

- *Board Policy DCD: Budget Preliminary Adoption Procedures* states that “The Board shall meet at least annually in a regular or special board meeting for the purposes of studying the annual operating budget. The Board may, at its discretion, give tentative approval of the budget pending final approval at a subsequent board meeting.”
- *Board Policy DCH: Budget Periodic Budget Reconciliation* states that “The Board may from time to time amend the annual operating budget. Such amendments shall be authorized only through official action of the Board and shall be in accordance with State Law and the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education.”
- *Board Policy DCK: Level of Budgetary Control* states, “The Board of Education shall ensure that the Superintendent and/or appropriate staff prepare an annual financial and budget report, which shall be approved by the Board and submitted to the State Department of Education in accordance with procedures and timeliness established by the State Department.”
- *Regulation DCC-R (1): Budget Preparation Procedures* states, “It is the policy of the Board of Education to provide guidance to the superintendent relative to the method, manner and substance of the initial planning of each proposed annual budget. The Board of Education, through its finance chairperson or president, may call and hold committee meetings... Principals, Department Heads, Supervisors and other employees may be requested or required to attend and give input as to appropriate budget items or concerns.”

In their examination of board policies associated with development of the district's budget, reviewers noted the current board policies do not have sufficient specificity and content to direct development of the district's annual operating budget. Specifically, reviewers found no policy expectations for the following:

- Budget recommendations described in terms of cost and benefit;
- Financial priorities based upon criticality of need;
- Budget priorities aligned or linked to district goals, educational plan, or curriculum priorities;
- Staff involved in planning and budget development;
- Development of a multi-year approach to budget development;
- Required descriptions of services, programs, or operations;
- Detailed cost-benefit analyses about each service, program, or operational area, and anticipated outcomes if funded;
- Ranked order prioritization of program components based on comparative work; or
- Criteria established for evaluating the efficacy of the results expected from each service, program, or operational areas.

In an examination of selected job descriptions that were made available to reviewers, reviewers noted the following direction pertaining to financial and budgetary responsibilities and related accountability:

- Superintendent – is responsible for assisting the board of education in developing, formulating, and revising guidance documents in school finance; overseeing the preparation of the budgets; ensuring that expenditures are within limits approved by the school board; and reporting to the school board on the financial condition of the school system.
- Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Assessment, and Technology – responsibilities include overseeing and coordinating the preparation and administration of the budgets for assigned areas in compliance with established local, state, and federal policies.
- Deputy Superintendent – duties include helping to develop and manage the annual budget in support of the internal business operation.
- Assistant Superintendent (Area I, II, and III) – responsibilities include allocating discretionary school/program resources and developing and managing the Richmond County School System budget within assigned areas.
- Chief Financial Officer – duties include planning, directing, coordinating, and maintaining and integrated financial services program for Richmond County School System; developing budget plans and controlling expenditures; providing leadership in developing and recommending to the superintendent budget and fiscal planning principles and practices.
- Director of Finance and Accounting – responsibilities include meeting with department directors and staff regarding budget needs and expenditures for state and federal grants, performing professional accounting work, and managing financial transactions and the budget for the fiscal year.
- Title I Budget Manager – duties include preparing the Title I budget for the district's comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan, coordinating all aspects of the budgetary operation for federal programs that fall under Title I, and overseeing the budget application to GaDOE and any subsequent amendments.
- Middle School Principal – duties include keeping a financial record of monies and directing expenditures through proper budget procedures and policies.

Of the job descriptions examined, reviewers noted they do not communicate an expectation for development of a performance-based (curriculum-driven) budget, or that district funds be allocated based on curriculum and program goals and priorities. Neither do they require evaluation of district programs to facilitate cost-benefit

analysis of the development of a multi-year approach to budgeting. In their review of the job description for the Chief Financial Officer, reviewers noted that the following essential duties and responsibilities were not included as related to developing and administering the district's operational budget:

- Providing leadership in the development of an continuous evaluation of short- and long-term strategic financial objectives;
- Assisting in district-wide planning to ensure alignment of financial and human resources to the district's goals and objectives;
- Periodically developing and disseminating forecasts of expenditures versus budgetary allocations;
- Ensuring that financial initiatives are results-oriented and aligned with the district's mission, beliefs, and strategic goals;
- Identifying discrepancies between goals and current status and providing support for continuous improvement objectives and strategies;
- Assisting in collecting and processing data to provide information for financial decision making, forecasting, and evaluation; or
- Evaluating and advising on the impact associated with the planning for the introduction of new programs and/or initiatives.

Financial Standing

The financial standing of a school system provides related data for any System Review. The following general financial information was extracted from the district's Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, adopted budgets, and information provided by district administrators. Financial analysis from the Georgia Department of Education for the year ending June 30, 2017, was utilized along with the school system-provided unaudited financial statement ending June 30, 2017, to closely match reported CFAR financial statements.

Georgia's K-12 education is financed through a mix of local, state and federal revenues. State and local governments provide the majority of funds for local school systems, and the federal government supplements these funds for targeted student populations or educational objectives, such as children in low-income families and special education. Funding is a foundation program based on weighted full-time equivalent (WFTE) students in various programs. State funds for elementary and secondary schools primarily come from state income and sales taxes.

Exhibit 5.1.1 presents a summary of changes in district revenues by source as presented in the district Certified Annual Financial Reports and adopted budgets.

Exhibit 5.1.1

Summary of Revenues by Source Richmond County School System FY2013 through FY2017

Funding Sources	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17*
Local	83,951,884	89,108,828	90,843,379	91,347,062	93,206,617
State	143,428,229	142,185,276	148,827,470	149,150,028	147,163,314
Federal	52,955,101	54,381,529	51,186,921	44,013,662	43,426,769
Miscellaneous	5,557,756	3,994,964	3,797,476	3,235,446	15,577
Total	\$285,892,970	\$289,670,596	\$294,655,246	\$287,746,198	\$283,812,277
Change		1.32%	1.72%	-2.3%	-1.4%
*Unaudited Funds 2017 may not include all federal accounts at the time of the review					
Source: Data extrapolated from the Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports and adopted budgets					

The following can be noted in Exhibit 5.1.1:

- Between fiscal year 2013 and fiscal year 2017, total district general operating revenues have remained relatively stagnant.
- Total fiscal year 2017 revenues were \$2,080,693 (0.7%) lower than fiscal 2013 revenues.
- Between fiscal years 2013 and fiscal year 2017, state revenues made up half (50%) of the annual general operating budget.
- Between fiscal years 2013 and fiscal year 2017, local revenues made up 31% of the annual general operating budget.
- Federal revenue has decreased over time from \$52,955,101 (18.5%) of revenues in fiscal year 2013 to \$43,426,769 (15.3%) in fiscal year 2017.

The decrease in overall funding is due primarily to declining enrollment for the past five years.

Exhibit 5.1.2 shows expenditures by category and total expenditures. These expenditures were published annually in the district's CAFR from FY2013 to FY2016, and unaudited financial statements for funding year 2017 that may not include all federal funds at the time of the review.

Exhibit 5.1.2
Summary of Expenditures by Area
Richmond County School System
FY2013 to FY2017

Expenditures	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	*FY17
Instruction	\$177,968,021	\$173,871,920	\$174,848,121	\$174,187,826	\$175,807,314
Pupil Services	9,115,395	9,257,531	9,763,776	10,495,308	7,990,305
Improvement of Instructional Services	17,141,492	15,395,059	14,304,435	14,209,910	5,008,234
Educational Media Services	5,877,535	5,859,416	6,066,964	4,835,391	5,508,034
General Administration	2,176,119	2,027,306	2,162,242	2,783,166	4,107,258
School Administration	16,807,327	17,012,398	17,841,798	21,188,994	24,958,093
Business Administration	1,606,781	1,579,999	1,772,698	2,168,344	2,272,333
Maintenance and Operation of Plant	25,698,651	26,928,319	27,138,091	26,821,310	30,614,101
Student Transportation Services	10,855,547	10,964,539	11,026,411	11,166,907	13,145,616
Central Support Services	2,944,117	3,197,303	2,871,935	4,122,415	4,785,687
Other Support Services	1,724,150	1,904,513	2,039,719	1,592,796	230,420
Community Services	102,459	141,498	179,681	20,043	87,288
Food Service Operation	17,886,995	18,154,921	18,619,322	19,228,666	23,365,516
Total	\$289,904,588	\$286,294,722	\$288,635,194	\$292,821,076	\$297,880,197
Change		-1.2%	0.8%	1.5%	1.7%
*Unaudited Funds 2017 may not include all federal accounts at the time of the review					
Source: Data extrapolated from the Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports and adopted budgets					

The following is noted in Exhibit 5.1.2:

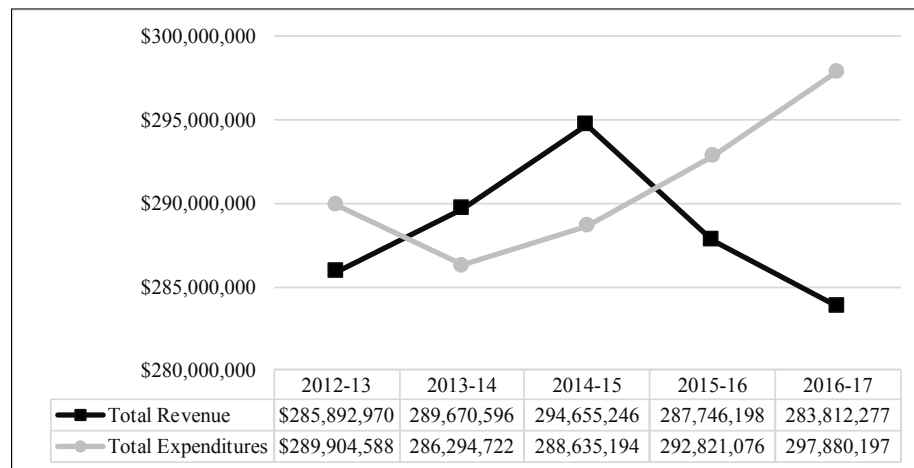
- Fiscal year 2017 expenditures were \$7,975,609 (2.8%) higher than fiscal year 2013.
- Fiscal year 2016 expenditures increased 1.5% (\$4,185,882) compared to fiscal year 2015.
- Fiscal year 2017 expenditures increased 1.7% (\$5,059,121) compared to fiscal year 2016.

- Expenditures for instruction in fiscal year 2017 are \$2,160,707 lower compared to fiscal year 2013 expenditures.
- Expenditures for maintenance and operation of plant increased between fiscal year 2013 and fiscal year 2017 by \$4,915,450.
- Expenditures for student transportation services increased between fiscal year 2013 to fiscal year 2017 in the amount of \$2,290,069.

Overall, expenditures have increased for the past five years.

Presented in [Exhibit 5.1.3](#) is a graphic comparison of actual district revenues and expenditures for fiscal years 2013 through estimated revenues and expenditures for fiscal year 2017.

Exhibit 5.1.3
Comparison: Revenues and Expenditures
Richmond County School System
FY2013 to FY2017

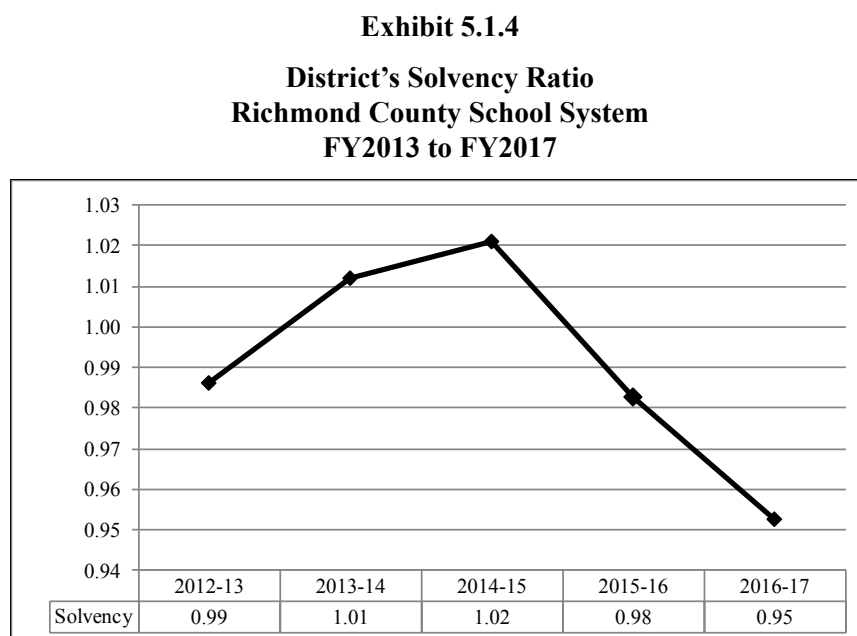


As can be noted in [Exhibit 5.1.3](#), district expenditures have exceeded district revenue for three out of the past five fiscal years.

During the review, the district's financial solvency was analyzed. To determine the district's solvency, reviewers compared the district's total general fund expenditures to their total general fund revenues. A solvency ratio is calculated by dividing the school system's total fund revenues by their total fund expenditures. A solvency ratio of 1.03 or greater is desirable.

The school system was not able to achieve a solvency ratio greater than 1.03 for the five-year period analyzed from FY2012-13 to FY2016-17.

Exhibit 5.1.4 displays a historical account of the district's total solvency ratio from fiscal year 2013 to fiscal 2017.



As can be noted in Exhibit 5.1.4:

- The district's total solvency ratio has remained below the recommended 1.03 ratio for all five fiscal years which falls short of acceptable financial solvency ratios.
- The district's total solvency ratio has declined from a 1.02 ratio in fiscal year 2015 to a .95 ratio in fiscal year 2017.
- The district's total solvency ratio for fiscal year 2017 (.05) is the lowest total solvency ratio noted over the past five fiscal years.

In addition to revenues and expenditures, reviewers examined the district's general operating fund balance over the past nine fiscal years. Exhibit 5.1.5 presents a multi-year summary of district general operating fund balances over a five-year period.

Exhibit 5.1.5
Summary of Operating Fund Balances
Richmond County School System
FY2013 to FY2017

Fiscal Year	Total Fund Balance	Expenditures	Fund Balance as Percent of Expenditures	Days of Operating Expense in Fund Balance	Cumulative Percent Change Since 2013
2013	\$33,093,414	\$289,904,588	11.42%	42	-10.73%
2014	36,720,476	286,294,722	12.83	47	-0.95
2015	43,087,419	288,635,194	14.93	54	16.23
2016	38,081,804	292,821,076	13.01	47	2.73
2017	24,013,884	297,880,197	8.06	29	-35.22

Source: CAFR from FY2012 - FY2016, Unaudited Funds 2017 may not include all federal accounts at the time of the review

As noted in Exhibit 5.1.5:

- The total fund balance decreased 35.22% from fiscal year 2013 to fiscal year 2017.

- For fiscal year 2015, the total fund balance was \$43,087,419, which is 14.93% of expenditures and represents 54 days of operating revenue.
- For fiscal year 2017, the total fund balance was \$ 24,013,884, which is 8.06% of expenditures and represents 29 days of operating revenue.
- Total fund balance has declined by 44% (\$19,073,535) from fiscal year 2015 to fiscal year 2017.

Overall, the financial standing of the Richmond County School System has declined since fiscal year 2015. While district revenues have declined primarily due to decreases in student enrollments, the district's expenditures have increased, utilizing fund balances to offset expenditures that exceed revenues. In Georgia, school districts with a deficit budget may use fund balances to balance their budgets. The *Financial Management for Georgia Units of Administration* sites the Government Finance Officers Association's recommendation that governments reserve at a minimum from 5% to 15% of the general fund revenues as an operating reserve. The Richmond County School System Board of Education has not established any policy expectations regarding deficit budgets or fund balances.

Budget Planning

In determining if the Richmond County School System budget development process was linked to the district's policies, mission, goals, and curriculum, the reviewers assessed the district's planning procedures using six CMSi components of a performance-based budget. District policies, annual budgets, and other district documents related to budgeting were reviewed. Interviews were conducted with central office administrators, building administrators, teachers, parents, and community members to determine the processes for budget development and implementation. Relevant survey data were also collected from parents, teachers, and building administrators.

Exhibit 5.1.6 lists the CMSi components of a performance-based budget along with the reviewers' assessment of the degree to which the budget development process and resulting budget were driven by and focused on curriculum. An "X" in the "Adequate" column indicates that the characteristic was met, and a score of one point was assigned. An "X" in the "Inadequate" column indicates that the characteristic was not met, and no points were assigned. A discussion of the reviewers' ratings follows the exhibit.

Exhibit 5.1.6

Components of Performance-based Budget And Adequacy of Use in the Budget Development Process Richmond County School System October 2017

Performance-based Budget Criteria	District Budget Efforts	Reviewers' Rating	
		Adequate	Inadequate
1. Tangible, demonstrable connections are evident between assessment of operational curriculum effectiveness and allocations of resources.	This criterion was not met. Reviewers were not presented data verifying the effectiveness of any district program in relationship to its cost.		X
2. Rank ordering of program components is provided to permit flexibility in budget expansion, reduction, or stabilization based on changing needs or priorities.	This criterion was not met. Reviewers were not provided documents showing a priority ordering of program expenditures in either district or campus level planning.		X
3. Each budget request or submittal shall be described so as to permit evaluation of consequences of funding or non-funding in terms of performance or results.	This criterion was not met. Decisions to fund or strategically abandon specific programs were made independently at the district and campus levels based more on placing the need in the campus or district improvement plan.		X

Exhibit 5.1.6 (continued) Components of Performance-based Budget And Adequacy of Use in the Budget Development Process Richmond County School System October 2017			
Performance-based Budget Criteria	District Budget Efforts	Reviewers' Rating	
		Adequate	Inadequate
4. Cost benefits of components in curriculum programming are delineated in budget decision making.	This criterion was not met. No district-wide formal cost-benefit analysis or evaluation procedures were found within the district.		X
5. Budget requests compete for funding based upon evaluation of criticality of need and relationship to achievement of curriculum effectiveness.	This criterion was not met. The district uses a general revenue allocation process, which is a formula based on student FTEs. However, for this criterion to be met, all expenditures within both school and district budgets must compete for funding based upon the evaluation of critical needs and relationships to student achievement.		X
6. Priorities in the budget are set by participation of key educational staff in the allocation and decision-making process. Teacher and principal suggestions and ideas for budget priorities are reflected and incorporated in budgeting decisions.	This criterion was not met. Teachers and principals had little input into the overall budgeting process.		X
Total		0	6
Percentage of Adequacy		0%	

As can be noted in Exhibit 5.1.6, the characteristics of program-based budgeting were not evident in the budgeting process used within the Richmond County School System. The expectation of the review is that five out of the six criteria must be evident to ensure a curriculum-focused budgeting planning process and budget. A discussion of the reviewers' ratings follows:

Criterion 1: Connections

This criterion was rated inadequate. Reviewers were not presented with data verifying the effectiveness of any district programs in relationship to cost. Board policy does not address program effectiveness related to budgeting. While a concise formula is used for distributing district revenues throughout the district, through staffing and Title I allocations, reviewers found no process in place for linking evidence or program effectiveness, in terms of student achievement, to budgetary decisions at the district or school level. A variety of programs and interventions are evident in the district and vary from school to school. Reviewers also noted no formal or informal linkages that had been made between budget considerations and the district's strategic plan.

Criterion 2: Rank Ordering

This criterion was rated inadequate. Reviewers found no formal rank ordering of budget priorities, or a fund allocation process that was explicitly aligned to supporting student achievement.

Criterion 3: Description for Evaluation of Funding Consequence

This criterion was rated inadequate. Decisions to fund or not fund specific programs were made independently at the district level.

Criterion 4: Cost-benefit Analysis

This criterion was rated inadequate. Reviewers found no documents that would indicate cost-to-benefit analysis was used as an essential component of the budget decision-making process. To be considered adequate, there

must be a process in place that links budget allocations to program goals and objectives and allows for the regular and systematic collection, analysis, and reporting of data that track resources used, work completed, and outcomes achieved.

Criterion 5: Competition on Basis of Need and Effectiveness

This criterion was rated inadequate. Reviewers did not identify a consistent approach for establishing a linkage between program funding and demonstrations of program effectiveness. For this criterion to be met, all expenditures within both school and district budgets must formally compete for funding based upon the evaluation of criticality of need and relationship to student achievement.

Criterion 6: Decision-making Process

This criterion was rated inadequate. To be considered adequate on this criterion, teachers and principals must participate in developing and recommending budget priorities for the school district. Interviews with district administrators indicate that district-level budget decisions are primarily formula-driven and any priorities are driven by the superintendent, Chief Financial Officer, Budget Director, Deputy Superintendent, and Assistant Superintendents. Reviewers found no clear documentation indicating how the board of education has been involved in establishing budget priorities for the school system.

Reviewers conducted interviews with district administrators, building administrators, teachers, and parents to obtain data regarding the budget development process, the involvement of stakeholders in the process, the method and procedures for disbursing the district's financial resources, and the impact of budget decisions on planning and operations. The following are representative of the comments noted in the interviews:

- “We base their school allocations on their student FTE by campus.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Nothing has really been written down for the school level for a budget process.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Principals aren’t part of the process to develop the allocation of the budget; they are given their amounts.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “We need to make sure that whatever the money is allocated for that we are truly seeing a growth because that’s the whole purpose of the funds.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “It’s a matter of the bottom line and not what the program is.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “Everything you budget is supposed to be aligned with what your school improvement plan is. If you want software, you have to put it in your Title I budget, but then the county has to approve it.” (Building Administrator)
- “With budget, the central office handles allocations based on our FTEs for positions.” (Building Administrator)
- “I have a good fundraising PTA that supplements our school budget.” (Building Administrator)

Summary

The Richmond County School System has an emerging financial issue related to revenues, expenditures, and fund balance. Expenditures are exceeding revenues, resulting in inadequate solvency ratios. District leadership is relying on existing fund balances to balance the operating budget, diminishing the district capacity to respond to unforeseen needs. Board policies do not provide sufficient direction requiring alignment of district goals, priorities, and student achievement in relationship to budget planning and use of district dollars. Budget allocations are not driven by curricular goals, achievement, needs, or cost-benefit analyses or programs and services (see [Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8](#)).

Finding 5.2: The district's APIM Framework does not meet the criteria for selecting, planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the abundance of interventions.

Effective school systems strive to ensure all students develop a deep understanding of the knowledge and skills essential for continuing their education and becoming productive members of society. Effective school systems accomplish this through a curriculum that develops students' knowledge and skills sequentially over time and prepares them to apply their knowledge and skills in multiple contexts. When students struggle in acquiring and applying new knowledge or skills, strategies are systematically employed to aid students in acquiring missing knowledge that will allow them to continue progressing through the curriculum successfully. When such strategies are employed, they provide students with benefits of re-teaching, using strategies and/or modalities that differ from the initial instruction, or providing for additional intensification with supports outside the classroom.

A school system requires a systemic method for identifying when student learning supports are needed and addressing them in such a way as to improve the overall capacity of the organization to achieve instructional goals for all students. The review defines this process as intervention. An intervention is a purposeful system response to the data received from various feedback sources. Interventions contribute to improved productivity by effectively developing specific actions to improve student performance.

Effective intervention design will positively affect student achievement and will address planning, implementation, and evaluation. The intervention will increase the productivity of teachers as well as the performance of students. Effective interventions are connected to the school system's needs, well planned, adequately funded, and fully implemented. The process of designing and implementing an effective intervention includes the following steps:

- Assess the current situation;
- Diagnose data collected;
- Propose and examine alternatives;
- Select an alternative that best addresses the problem;
- Develop a formal plan with goals, measurable objectives to address the problem;
- Provide the fiscal and human resources needed;
- Implement the plan with well-defined mechanisms for monitoring progress;
- Evaluate the plan with sound and appropriate techniques;
- Adjust the program as needed based on the data gathered through the evaluation process;
- Implement the program based on adjustments needed; and
- Reassess and repeat the process for continual improvement. Effective intervention programs, implemented and monitored with fidelity, can impact educator and learner performance in a positive manner.

Interventions that do not follow this process often do not address system needs, priorities, and goals, and do not sustain productivity. The implementation of interventions is a complex process that enables staff to address the changing needs and requirements of the system to improve student performance.

The reviewers examined board policies, district- and school-level planning documents, district program documents, and other documents related to district interventions. Reviewers also gathered information from campuses regarding the number and types of program interventions offered. In addition, reviewers interviewed district administrators, building administrators, teachers, and parents about the adequacy and effectiveness of the district's program interventions targeted at improving student achievement.

The reviewers found many programs in place in the Richmond County School System intended to support learning and address gaps in student achievement. A majority of these programs are focused on supporting

student attainment of the language arts curriculum. No board policies are in place that require interventions or establish an expectation for a planned systematic approach to the selection, implementation, and evaluation of interventions. While the school system has a framework for problem solving, reviewers did not find evidence of a systematic process to improve student achievement by selecting, monitoring, and evaluating program interventions for long-term effectiveness.

The reviewers examined board policies that may be relevant to the implementation and evaluation of program interventions. The following policies were identified by reviewers as containing references to program interventions:

- *Board Policy IDDD: Gifted Student Programs* requires the district to provide programs for gifted students and opportunities to extend competencies in the areas of cognitive skills, learning skills, research skills, communication skills, and metacognitive skills beyond the regular classroom.
- *Board Policy IHE: Promotion and Retention* states that placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class, or program should be based on an assessment of the academic achievement of the student and a determination of the educational setting in which the student is most likely to receive instruction and other services needed in order to succeed and to progress to the next higher level of academic achievement.

The Richmond County School System board policies provide no direction concerning responses to the needs of students struggling to attain mastery of the adopted curriculum. Board policies did not have sufficient content requiring a planned process for implementing interventions, identifying and allocating necessary resources, and requiring evaluation criteria based on district and program goals (see [Finding 1.3](#)).

In an examination of selected job descriptions made available to reviewers, reviewers noted the following direction pertaining to planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating program interventions:

- Assistant Superintendent (Area I, II, and III) – is responsible in part for partnering with the appropriate departments to review, evaluate, and approve school/program plans; makes recommendations for improved student/program achievements reviews proposals for new educational or administrative programs; and supports the implementation of approved programs. The Assistant Superintendent is also responsible for monitoring the implementation of school improvement plans, curriculum, and instructional strategies, and maintaining a focus on academic achievement and ongoing modification of improvement plans. The Assistant Superintendent is responsible for providing leadership in designing and developing new programs and initiatives to meet identified needs of schools.
- Accountability and IE² Officer – This position is responsible for providing leadership and strategic direction for accountability planning, implementation of performance measurement, and reporting practices for the district. This position is also responsible for implementing mandated intervention/corrective action programs and conducting statistical analysis of academic initiatives with a focus on improving student achievement.
- Accountability Program Specialist – “The APS serves as a resource to schools with the development of School Improvement Plans, program reviews, and accreditation through data collection and analysis. The APS monitors and recommends policy updates when needed to the Chief Accountability Officer.”
- District School Improvement Specialist – “Under the direction of Accountability, plans, coordinates, directs and monitors the implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (authorized as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) and specifically supports schools in the process of continuous school improvement.” This position also “Assists Title I principals with the implementation of effective reading/math instructional programs based on research-based strategies.”
- Director of Curriculum – roles and responsibilities include assisting in the formulation of policies relating to the improvement of the curriculum and the instructional program, assisting in the development of proposals addressing instructional needs, directing and evaluating the progress of the proposed

projects and pilot programs, and providing statistical data from Richmond County schools relative to instructional programs.

- Curriculum Coordinator – is responsible for providing leadership for designing, planning, development, implementation, and monitoring district-wide of curriculum, instruction, and school improvement programs.

Overall, district job descriptions are considered weak in assigning job-specific responsibilities for a planned approach for selecting, implementing interventions, identifying and allocating necessary resources, and requiring evaluation criteria based on district and program goals. No references to program interventions were noted in job descriptions for building principals and teachers.

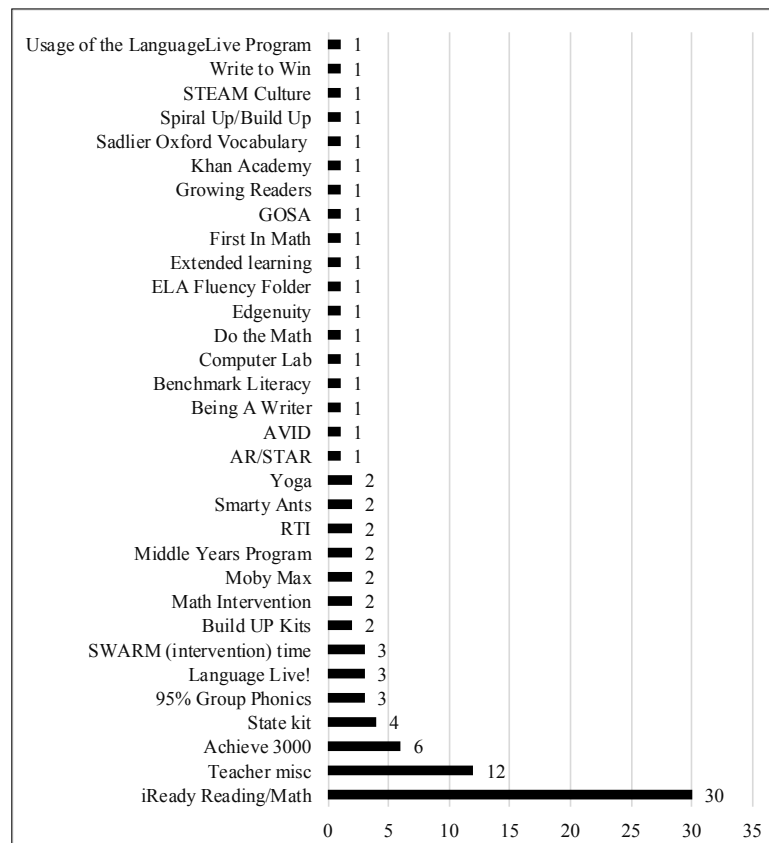
Scope of Interventions

Many different programs and interventions have been implemented in the Richmond County School System. In order to determine the scope and type of district interventions, building administrators were asked to completed an online inventory survey. This survey asked building administrators to identify by name programs they were implementing at their schools for the purpose of helping students develop new skills and knowledge or building fluency in acquired skills. Building administrators were also asked to identify the primary area of focus, a brief description of the intervention, if it is a building- or district-level program, and the current stage of implementation: “Initial Planning,” “Early Implementation,” or “Fully Implemented.”

Exhibit 5.2.1 displays a listing of all programs identified and shows the name and type of program interventions implemented across campuses.

Exhibit 5.2.1

Interventions Program Inventory Richmond County School System October 2017



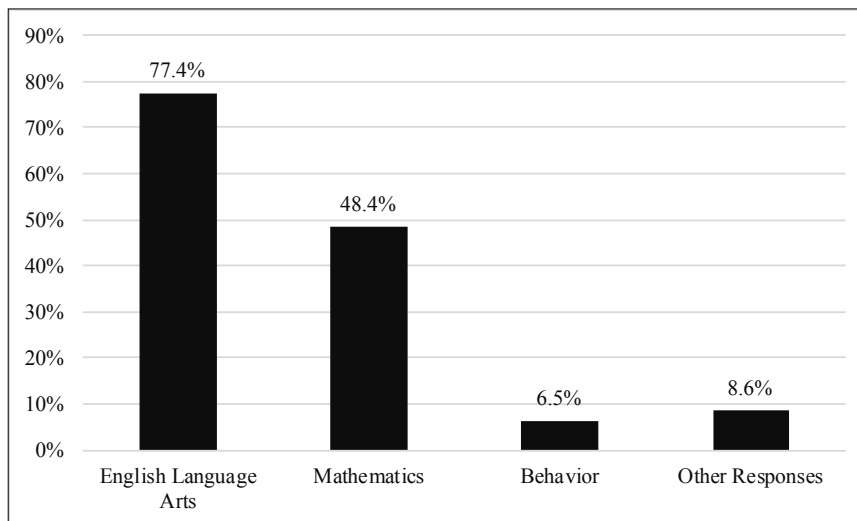
As can be noted from [Exhibit 5.2.1](#):

- Thirty-two different programs were identified that are being implemented as interventions strategies.
- *iReady*® was identified in use at 30 schools. *iReady*® is an adaptive diagnostic tool that identifies students' strengths and weaknesses in reading and mathematics, the results of which are used to provide customized and differentiated instruction to meet student learning needs.
- Teacher-designed interventions were identified in use at 12 schools.
- Achieve 3000® was identified in use at six schools. Achieve 3000® is intended to build the skills for reading of informational text with the purpose of finding evidence necessary to respond to a written prompt.
- Twenty-nine other interventions were identified that are being implemented in one or more schools.

Through the online survey, building administrators were asked to identify the primary area of focus for each program intervention they reported.

[Exhibit 5.2.2](#) displays the primary focus of interventions reported in use in schools in the Richmond County School System.

Exhibit 5.2.2
Intervention Reported by Primary Area of Focus
Richmond County School System
October 2017



As can be noted in [Exhibit 5.2.2](#):

- Building administrators reported that English language arts was the focus for the interventions they reported in use in their schools 77.4% of the time.
- Mathematics was reported by building administrators as the primary focus of the interventions they reported in use in their schools 48.4% of the time.
- Behavior was reported 6.5% of the time as the primary focus for implementing identified interventions.
- In 8.6% of the responses, the focus of interventions, as reported by building administrators, varied to include writing, science, social studies, goal setting, and global education.

When queried whether the interventions listed in [Exhibit 5.2.1](#) were district-initiated or building-initiated, building administrators responded 56% of the time that the interventions they had implemented in their schools were chosen and implemented at the district level.

Overall, a wide variety of program interventions were in use in the Richmond County School System. The majority of the intervention were focused improving student achievement in the area of English language arts.

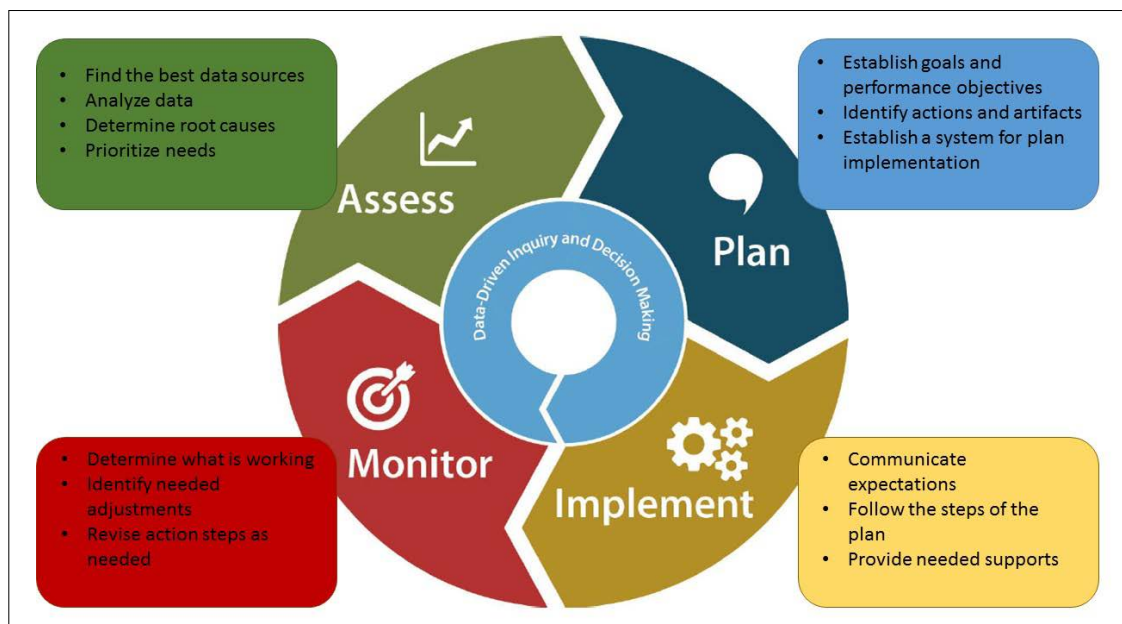
Intervention Design

An academic intervention is a well-planned deliberate approach focused on helping students develop new skills and knowledge or build fluency in acquiring skills. Interventions are focused, intentional, explicit, and structured in such a way that they engage students. The effectiveness of an academic intervention is based on how well the intervention is tailored to individual student learning needs, how quickly the intervention is provided, how effective the intervention is in meeting student immediate needs, and at what cost.

During site visits and interviews with district administrators and building administrators, it was noted that district leadership has in place a formal problem solving framework referred to as APIM. APIM, which stands for “Assess,” “Plan,” “Implement,” and “Monitor,” has been described as a step-by-step for approaching a problem and developing strategies to obtain different results. The APIM framework is referenced on the school system’s website, in the district’s *Accountability Manual*, and communicated through professional learning provided district administrators. District administrators indicated during interviews that the APIM framework has been used to address issues such as attendance, discipline, and the selection of iReady® as an intervention. Exhibit 5.2.3 is a graphic representation of the RCSS Problem Solving Framework – APIM as presented on the district website and in various district documents.

Exhibit 5.2.3

RCSS Problem Solving Framework - APIM Richmond County School System October 2017



The APIM framework, as presented in Exhibit 5.2.3, was the process used by district administrators in the selection of iReady® as an intervention program for implementation in the Richmond County School System. As shown in Exhibit 5.2.1, iReady® has been implemented in 30 schools across the school system as an intervention, was included as an initiative in many school improvement plans, and was mentioned frequently by administrators and teachers during interviews. The *RCK12 Instruction Manual* lists iReady® print lessons interventions for Tier 2 and Tier 3 of the Pyramid of Interventions for English Language Arts and Mathematics. Reviewers observed students using iReady® resources during classroom visits. On school websites, iReady® is described as “...an online, interactive learning environment designed to assess students and then provide individualized instruction based on each student’s unique needs. The iReady® experience builds students’ investment in their learning by giving them real-time feedback on their progress in each skill.”

To determine the adequacy of intervention design in the Richmond County School System, reviewers selected iReady® for review to determine if the intervention design was sufficient for improving student performance. iReady® was selected because it was the most frequently identified program being implemented in schools across the Richmond County School System, with 30 school reporting the program in use.

Reviewers used seven CMSi criteria for intervention design to determine whether iReady®, as implemented in the Richmond County School System, had a high likelihood of successful implementation. Exhibit 5.2.4 lists the seven review criteria along with reviewers' assessment of the iReady® program with regard to each of the criteria. In order for an intervention design to be considered adequate, it must meet five (70%) of the review criteria. A detailed discussion of the ratings follows the exhibit.

Exhibit 5.2.4

Comparison of iReady® To Review Intervention Design Criteria Richmond County School System October 2017

Intervention Design Review Criteria	Reviewers' Rating		
	Evident	Partially Evident*	Not Evident
1. The intervention relates to a documented district need—current situation had been assessed, diagnosed, and analysis data collected and considered in the selection of the intervention.		X	
2. There is evidence that a problem has been identified from data analyses, several alternatives proposed and examined, and one of the better alternatives to address the problem selected.		X	
3. A formal plan with goals and measurable objectives is in place to address the identified problem. Documentation exists to define the purpose of the intervention, why it addresses the system need/problem, and how it will impact student achievement. A plan for design, deployment, and implementation of the intervention is in place.			X
4. Evidence exists that a strong deployment approach was designed, including identification of staff proficiencies needed to implement the intervention, appropriate staff development around the proficiencies, and a clear communication plan for appropriate audiences.		X	
5. Human, material, and fiscal resources needed to initiate the intervention (short-term) and to sustain the intervention (long-term) are identified and in place.		X	
6. Formative feedback and summative evaluation criteria are identified and are tied to intervention goals, objectives, and expectations.			X
7. A plan for monitoring the ongoing deployment and implementation of the intervention is in place and involves appropriate individuals to carry out this plan.			X
Total	0	4	3
Percent Evident	0%		
*Partial ratings are tallied as not evident.			
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Exhibit 5.2.4 shows that none of the seven intervention design criteria were rated adequate by the reviewers. The following is a discussion of what reviewers found regarding the review criteria as they related to the iReady® program implemented in the Richmond County School System.

Criterion One: Establishment of Need

This criterion was partially met. To meet this criterion, there must be evidence that the intervention relates to a documented district need that has been assessed, diagnosed, and analyzed. Reviewers were provided with no documentation that would indicate how iReady® was selected in response to a specific documented need within the school system. During interviews with district and building administrators, reviewers received many comments that indicated that iReady® initially was selected for use as a reliable assessment screener and progress monitoring tool. At the time of review, iReady® was clearly being used as an intervention, with students spending time working on prescriptive iReady® assignments. Reviewers noted in a *Richmond Evaluation Report 2014* some evidence of problem identification using the APIM Framework, but the report did not provide a clear delineation of the problem. Reviewers were provided with copies of correlation studies that matched the iReady Diagnostic to the *Georgia Milestones* for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years. The correlation studies were completed after the implementation of iReady®.

Criterion Two: Selection Alternative

This criterion was partially met. To meet this criterion, reviewers looked for evidence of a defined problem, alternative responses proposed and examined, and an alternative selected based on a set of criteria. Reviewers were provided with a rubric that was reportedly used in screening different products, including iReady®, for consideration and possible selection. However, reviewers were provided no documentation indicating what products were reviewed, that the rubric was actually used, or what were the results of the product evaluation that led to the final selection of iReady® for implementation.

Criterion Three: Measurable Objectives

This criterion was not met. To meet this criterion, a formal plan must be present that contains goals and measurable objectives for addressing the identified problem. Reviewers found no formal plan for the implementation of iReady® as a planned intervention. No documentation was provided reviewers indicating the purpose for implementing iReady®, the desired student outcomes, or the goals against which the program's effectiveness would be measured.

Criterion Four: Deployment Design

This criterion was partially met. Meeting this criterion requires design of a strong deployment approach, including identification of staff proficiencies needed to implement the intervention, appropriate staff development around the proficiencies, and a clear communication plan for appropriate audiences. Reviewers found evidence of staff training at various levels. Training provided included professional development in the use of iReady® and related expectations for use as a screening tool and progress monitoring tool. Outside the evidence of staff training, reviewers found no evidence to demonstrate a designed approach to deployment.

Criterion Five: Provision of Resources

This criterion was partially met. To meet this criterion, human, material, and fiscal resources needed to initiate the intervention (short-term) and to sustain the intervention (long-term) must be identified and in place. Reviewers were provided with budgeted information for district-level support to maintain the iReady® software program. The school system's APIM framework does not have any references to resources that may be necessary to support implementation of an action plan. Although fiscal resources are being allocated to sustain the iReady® software, no long-term resource plan was available identifying the human and financial resources that will be necessary to sustain implementation into the near future.

Criterion Six: Feedback and Evaluation

This criterion was not met. To meet this criterion, formative feedback and summative evaluation criteria must be identified and tied to intervention goals, objectives, and expectations. Some iReady® diagnostic data were made available to the reviewers. However, diagnostic data have not been linked to any specific criteria at either the district or school level to inform an assessment of the program's effectiveness.

Criterion Seven: Monitoring

This criterion was not met. To meet this criterion, a plan for monitoring the ongoing deployment and implementation of the intervention must be in place and must identify and involve appropriate individuals to carry out the plan. No plan was provided reviewers indicating how the iReady® program would continue to be implemented into the future, how the use of the program would be monitored for effectiveness, or how use of the program would be modified in response to student achievement results.

Overall, the approach to intervention design in the Richmond County School System did not meet review criteria. No documentation was provided that would indicate iReady® had been purposefully selected as an intervention based upon any specific analysis of district student learning needs, or that specific goals had been established against which effectiveness of the district's approach to implementing iReady® could be measured.

Intervention Implementation

The next area examined by reviewers was intervention delivery. Reviewers selected that iReady® program to examine against six specific deployment and implementation criteria. For an intervention to receive an adequate delivery rating, at least four of the six criteria must be met with full evidence. [Exhibit 5.2.5](#) lists the criteria and the reviewers' rating of the district's approach. A detailed discussion of the ratings follows the exhibit.

Exhibit 5.2.5

Comparison of iReady® to Review Implementation Criteria Richmond County School System October 2017

Review Criteria for Intervention Implementation	Reviewers' Rating		
	Met	Partially Met*	Not Met
1. The formal plan, with goals, measurable objectives, and processes, is in place and is being implemented.			X
2. Implementation of the intervention is both strategic and purposeful. The staff proficiencies needed to implement the intervention are clearly defined. Appropriate staff development based on these proficiencies takes place every year as new personnel are hired and as additional needs are identified. Continued goals for implementing the intervention and frequent progress reports are clearly communicated to all appropriate personnel.			X
3. The human, material, and fiscal resources needed to initiate and sustain the intervention are identified and allocated.		X	
4. Feedback from formative and summative evaluations that are tied to intervention goals, objectives, and expectations are systematically administered.	X		
5. Monitoring implementation of the intervention is taking place; responsibilities and procedures for monitoring are clearly defined and assigned to the appropriate individuals to carry out this plan.	X		
6. The intervention is being modified and adjusted as needed, based upon monitoring of formative and summative evaluation data, to ensure continued quality control.			X
Total	2	1	3
Percent Evident	33.3%		
*Partial ratings are tallied as not met.			
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As can be noted in Exhibit 5.2.5, implementation of iReady® as an intervention strategy met two of the six criteria for implementation. To be rated adequate, four of the six criteria must be met. The following is a discussion of what the reviewers found regarding each of the delivery criteria.

Criterion 1: Plan Implementation

This criterion was not met. There is no evidence of a formal plan with goals, measurable objectives, and processes in place for the implementation of iReady® as an intervention.

Criterion 2: Staff Development and Communication

This criterion was not met. Although iReady® was identified in many school improvement plans as an initiative, there is no specific district strategy association with its implementation. While there is evidence of some professional learning around the use of iReady® as a diagnostic tool, there is no professional learning plan in place to systematically address ongoing training needs associated with the deployment of iReady®, including the training of new staff, or providing additional training based on identified implementation issues.

Criterion 3: Resource Adequacy

This criterion was partially met. There is evidence that district financial resources have been allocated to support use of the iReady® program and provide sufficient number of computers in schools for student access to the program. However, a plan for sustaining the resources needed to continue the use of iReady® was not evident.

Criterion 4: Assessment Data Availability

This criterion was met. iReady® is capable of providing district and school level administrators and teachers with a significant amount of student performance data, which, based on correlation studies conducted by district leaders, are a strong predictor of possible student results on the *Georgia Milestones*. During campus visits, reviewers noted evidence of iReady® data displaying student progress based on specific skills posted in data rooms.

Criterion 5: Monitoring

This criterion was met. There is a mechanism for regularly monitoring the progress of iReady® interventions within the program. Students are regularly assessed on each skill from practiced intervention assignments.

Criterion 6: Program Modification Based On Data

This criterion was not met. There was no evidence that feedback in terms of gains in student learning has been used in adjusting the district's approach to implementing the iReady® program.

Overall, the deployment and implementation of the iReady® program as an intervention did not meet enough criteria to be considered adequate.

During interviews with district and building administrators, reviewers received comments regarding the implementation of iReady® as an intervention strategy in the Richmond County School System. The following comments are representative of those received by reviewers:

- “iReady, the district gives it to the schools and Title I funds are used for supplemental materials for the iReady program.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “We’re starting to see some benefits in our data. We’re seeing gains in [iReady].” (Central Office Administrator)
- “We have a daily intervention time built into the schedule. 45 minutes per day using iReady and Milestone to track progress.” (Building Administrator)
- “We have iReady. Why are we doing benchmarks? Aren’t their purposes the same?” (Building Administrator)
- “We’re all on the same page with iReady.” (Building Administrator)

- “Teachers have tracking sheet and do the growth monitoring with iReady.” (Building Administrator)
- All of our computers are tied up with iReady.” (Building Administrator)
- “iReady Program that district purchased two years ago. It embeds reading, math remediation, and acceleration. Individualized computer based. If there is a concept they did not master they keep working until they master the skill.” (Building Administrator)
- School-wide intervention, we have a block of 45 minutes daily based on the iReady data customized for students.” (Building Administrator)
- “We have a good bit of autonomy when it comes to implementing and intervention, but the price tag holds us up a bit.” (Building Administrator)

Summary

School administrators and teachers are aware that not all students learn at the same rate. Because of this programs are adopted to aid those students who are struggling. In the Richmond County School System, reviewers found 31 programs implemented at one or more schools for the purpose of supporting students who are struggling to master the curriculum, including iReady®, which is implemented in 30 schools. An effective approach to interventions ensures that students are directly benefiting from the design and implementation of selection interventions. Board policies do not have sufficient content to provide expectations for the identification, implementation, assessment, and evaluation of interventions intended to improve student achievement. Reviewers examined the design and implementation of iReady® used in many schools in the district as an approach for identifying gaps in student learning and delivering targeted instruction. The intervention did not meet enough review criteria to be considered adequate (see [Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8](#)).



The use of iReady software to practice math skills was observed in many classrooms, including students at Roy E Rollins Elementary School

Finding 5.3: Efforts to increase student and teacher technology usage do not have clear direction and oversight. The district’s technology plan is not adequate to guide the integration of technology as a teaching and learning tool to increase student achievement.

As technology continues to advance in capability, so have the expectations in school for the use of technology as a teaching and learning tool. The widespread adoption of technology changes how teachers and students access information, communicate, and collaborate; no longer are teachers expected to simply use interactive white boards to display slide presentations or students limited to using the Internet to conduct research. Rather, the expectation is that teachers will use emerging technologies to aid in the delivery of instruction and engage students in their use of technology to enhance understanding and create knowledge. However, the proliferation of instructional technology creates challenges for school districts and teachers. School districts are confronted with the challenges associated with security, equitable access, financial capacity, effectiveness,

and sustainability. Teachers are confronted with the challenges associated with adapting their instructional pedagogy to take advantage of the potential instructional technologies have to customize instruction for the needs of individual learners.

A school system aspiring to deliver a world-class education integrates technology into all aspects of the day-to-day operation of the district, including teaching and learning. Funding and directing the integration of technology in a school system are essential parts of effective management and control. A current and up-to-date written plan that outlines expectations, goals, and guidelines for the use and integration of technology across the school system functions as an effective means of ensuring consistent implementation of curriculum across the school system. A quality plan that is effectively implemented provides stakeholders not only with a clear framework for the design of a technology program, but also how program results will be evaluated.

To determine the quality of technology planning and implementation in the Richmond County School System, reviewers examined board policies, job descriptions, district- and school-level improvement plans, technology plans, and technology inventories. Reviewers also visited all school sites including 392 classrooms; interviewed teachers, building administrators, and central office administrators; and surveyed staff regarding technology planning and the use of technology in the school district.

Reviewers found a variety of technology tools available for use by teachers and students. While the necessary technology tools were available, the use of technology for instruction do not have clear direction and purpose. The technology plan in place is not sufficient to guide the implementation and use of technology across the school system.

Reviewers examined board policies to determine the direction they provide for technology planning, financing, and implementation. Reviewers noted the following policy references relating to the use of technology:

- *Board Policy IFBG: Internet Acceptable Use* states, “It is the policy of the Richmond County Board of Education that employees and students should be furnished educational opportunities and resources to have access to Internet –based instructional programs and administrative services.”
- *Board Policy IFBGB: Web Pages and Social Media* states, “It is the policy of the Richmond County Board of Education to utilize electronic communication and web tools, including web pages and social media platforms, for the purpose of maintaining an online presence, as well as communicating and collaborating with students, parents, employees and members of the community.”
- *Administration Regulation IFBG-R (1): Procedures Internet Acceptable Use* states, “Access to the District’s technology resources, including the Internet, shall be made available to students and employees primarily for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations.”

Board policies are not comprehensive or specific enough to direct the development, implementation, integration, and evaluation of a district technology plan for the improvement of student achievement or increased efficiency of business and management functions (see [Finding 1.3](#)).

Reviewers also examined district job descriptions as possible sources of direction for responsibilities associated with planning, acquisition, and implementation of instructional technology, and assessing the impact on student achievement. Following is a listing of instructional, supervisory, and technology related job descriptions that referenced technology, along with a listing of essential duties:

- Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Technology – job responsibilities include ensuring the utilization of technology innovations that improve student achievement.
- Director of Information Technology – “The director of IT is responsible for all aspects of information technology management and control, including supervision of IT employees; budget preparation and management; recommendations for technical acquisitions; and development of guidelines, standards and procedures. The director is charged with strategic planning, tactical action, and operational decision-making to help fulfill the mission of the RCSS.”

- Director of Instructional Technology – duties include providing leadership, guidance, and supervision in the areas of media services and educational technology; coordinating the development of media and technology policies and procedures; and assessing plans and evaluating media and technology needs.
- Coordinator of Instructional Technology – major responsibilities include providing leadership and guidance in the development, implementation, and coordination of the district’s technology curriculum; enhancing integration of technology throughout the curriculum; promoting the effective use of instructional technology; and providing staff with professional development opportunities.
- Professional Learning Instructional Technology Specialist – a summary of job responsibilities includes facilitating the implementation of the instructional technology initiative in order to enhance the teaching and learning process at the school level. Also the Professional Learning Instructional Technology Specialist is responsible for assisting teachers in developing curriculum materials and lesson plans that facilitate the implementation of the school technology plan and integration with curriculum; reviewing and evaluating the applications of educational technology and software prior to purchase and/or installation into school classrooms; and advising on the purchase of software and technological equipment.
- Director of Professional Learning – individuals in this position are required to have knowledge of effective use of technology in the delivery of staff/professional learning programs.
- Media Specialist – duties include coordinating the building’s media/technology committee, utilizing current research and methods in the areas of technology and library and information sources, and maintaining and enhancing professional knowledge in technology and trends in information literacy.
- Teachers – are required to have the ability to infuse technology into the curriculum.

Based on their review of district job descriptions, reviewers found no position that has been clearly assigned the responsibility for maintaining a district technology plan to guide the acquisition and deployment of evolving instructional technologies. Instruction-related job descriptions made no reference to the use of instructional technologies as a teaching/learning tool. Leadership job descriptions, such as the Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Technology, do not include expectations for the support of the effective use of technology to deliver instruction and engage students. Overall, reviewers found district job descriptions did not have sufficient content and specificity to clearly communicate district expectations associated with directing and managing a comprehensive technology system and the use of technology as a teaching-learning tool.

Technology Planning

In determining the adequacy of the district’s technology plan, reviewers examined the *Richmond County Comprehensive Technology Improvement Plan for 2014-2017* along with other documents related to technology. Board presentations and annual technology budgets were reviewed. Utilizing the information gathered from the district’s technology plan, and other district documents, the reviewers compared the district’s technology plan against 14 CMSi quality criteria for technology planning. Exhibit 5.3.1 presents the technology plan quality criteria and the reviewers’ rating and assessment as to adequacy. An “X” in the “Adequate” column indicates that the characteristic was met, and a score of 1 point was assigned. “Partial” indicates that not all parts of a characteristic were present and no points were assigned. An “X” in the “Inadequate” column indicates that the characteristic was not met and no points were assigned. To be considered adequate, 70% of the quality criteria must be determined to be adequate.

Exhibit 5.3.1

Quality Criteria for Instructional Technology Programs and Reviewers' Assessment Richmond County School System October 2017

Criteria	Reviewers' Rating	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Board policy or administrative regulation for instructional technology		X
2. Clear statement of program philosophy/vision	X	
3. Comprehensive view of technology	X	
4. A needs assessment has been completed and evaluated	X	
5. Measurable student goals and objectives exist		X
6. An ongoing student assessment component exists		X
7. An ongoing program assessment component exists	Partial*	
8. There are comprehensive staff trainings related to existing standards and objectives		X
9. Standards for hardware exist		X
10. Internet access standards exist	Partial*	
11. The role of the school library/media center is stated		X
12. A budget for program implementation/roll-out has been identified	Partial*	
13. A budget for program maintenance has been identified	Partial*	
14. Technology site plans are aligned with district plans		X
Total	3	11
Percent of Adequacy	21.4%	
*Partial ratings are tallied as inadequate.		
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As can be noted in [Exhibit 5.3.1](#), the district's technology plan was rated adequate on 3 (21.4%) of the 14 review criteria. In order to be judged as "adequate," at least 10 (70%) of the planning criteria needed to be present and rated adequate. Therefore, the Richmond County School System's 2014-17 technology plan did not meet enough criteria to be considered adequate. The following summarizes what the reviewers found with respect to each of the characteristics.

Criterion 1: Board Policy or Administrative Regulation for Instructional Technology

This criterion was rated inadequate. Richmond County School System board policies do not have sufficient direction for the use of instructional technology to increase the effectiveness of student learning, instructional management, staff development, and administration. No board policies were found that establish a clear expectation for a technology plan or the content of such a plan that would include instructional technology development, implementation, and evaluation.

Criterion 2: Clear Statement of Program Philosophy/Vision

This criterion was rated adequate. The *Richmond County Comprehensive Technology Improvement Plan for 2014-2017* contained statements of philosophies supporting a vision for instructional technology. The role of technology, within the context of the district's mission statement, is to provide quality programs and activities along with support and services to RCSS for the purposes of improving student learning and enhancing instructional and administrative effectiveness. Students will be prepared for the future through the instructional use of interactive computer-based technologies and Internet resources.

Criterion 3: Comprehensive View of Technology

This criterion was rated adequate. The *Richmond County Comprehensive Technology Improvement Plan for 2014-2017* provides a comprehensive view for incorporating technology in the teaching and learning

environment. This technology established that through technology, the school system strives to support or improve:

- Providing a wired and wireless network infrastructure to assure access for administrators, faculty, staff, and students.
- Integrating 21st Century technology for alternative means of remediation, enrichment, instruction, and obtaining student performance goals.
- Providing students with the technological skills essential for college and the job market.
- Improving student achievement on standardized tests through a systematic process of continuous data evaluation.
- Streamlining data collection by providing access to data repositories for all employees.
- Using technology to create interactive partnerships between the schools and community.
- Assisting teachers in the integration of technology into the curriculum.
- Using technology to support professional growth for administrators and faculty.

Criterion 4: Needs Assessment

This criterion was rated adequate. An assessment of current reality is included in the *Richmond County Comprehensive Technology Improvement Plan for 2014-2017*. The scope of the needs and gap analysis included access to technology, instructional and administrative uses of technology, and system capacity to support technology integration.

Criterion 5: Measurable Goals

This criterion was rated inadequate. The technology plan contained multiple goal statements that are written as broad action statements to address identified gaps, but with no clearly measurable outcomes. The following is an example of a goal statement found in the district's technology plan:

“Provide technology training for administrators, faculty, and staff so they can act as role models in the use of technology through a full range of technology tools and resources. The technology plan includes general student goals to close technology gaps across the district. However, no real format exists to measure those goals.”

Some of the broad goal statements are linked to strategies, benchmarks, and evaluation methods. The benchmarks did not include a numeric statement of the current status but rather were statements of desired incremental improvements, such as the following benchmark from the district's technology plan:

“Review software/materials annually to determine instructional benefits. Increase the % scoring at or above the standard in all content areas annually by 5%.”

Criterion 6: Ongoing Student Assessment

This criterion was rated inadequate. The *Richmond County Comprehensive Technology Improvement Plan for 2014-2017* contained some general references to student assessments, such as student projects, an annual computer literacy skills competency test, and the *Georgia High School Graduation Test*. The plan did not have specific measurable goals, objectives, or strategies for ongoing student assessment.

Criterion 7: Ongoing Program Assessment

This criterion was partially adequate. The technology plan contains goals, strategies, benchmarks, evaluation methods, and general timelines. However, the technology plan does not clearly describe how, if all the strategies are implemented, benchmarks are met and goals achieved, collectively the technology plan addresses identified system gaps and enhances instructional and administrative effectiveness. The plan provides some direction for program evaluation by conducting needs assessments and including stakeholder input, but does not clearly specify outcomes desired through the evaluation process.

Criterion 8: Staff Training and Measurable Standards

This criterion was rated inadequate. Although professional development is included as part of a subheading within the technology plan, there are no specific pedagogical areas of focus identified. The technology plan identifies training in research-based strategies in each curriculum areas, providing technology integration training, and training teachers on instructional components of online resources. However, the plan does not have specifics regarding the acquisition of any specific skills, competencies, or knowledge. There are references to sources of evidence to evaluate the attainment of benchmarks and goals such as conducting classroom observations, reviewing software usage reports, and examining teacher lesson plans. No references were found, however, regarding the criteria that will be used to determine if staff are actually demonstrating the acquisition of new skills, knowledge, or competencies.

Criterion 9: Hardware and Software Standards

This criterion was rated inadequate. No hardware or software standards were included in the *Richmond County Comprehensive Technology Improvement Plan for 2014-2017*.

Criterion 10: Internet Access Standards

This criterion was rated partially adequate. The technology plan lists as an area of impact and/or improvement upgrading, maintaining, and supporting the wired and wireless network infrastructure to ensure access for administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The plan lists several strategies referencing maintaining sufficient network infrastructure and internet access bandwidth throughout the school system. While the technology plan did not include any specifics regarding network support, reviewers were provided with other documents that provided more detail regarding the district's approach to maintaining and enhancing internet access throughout the district.

Criteria 11: Role of School Library

This criterion was rated inadequate. No specific references to the role of school libraries were noted in the district's technology plan. Reviewers found no district documents that articulated the role of the school library in response to technology changing how information is accessed or how the learning environment of school libraries needs to change in response to how students access and use information. The job description for the Media Specialist does not clearly articulate expectations for how the role of the librarian/media specialist is to evolve from that of managing content to curating access to content in support of a technology-infused curriculum.

Criterion 12: Implementation Budget

This criterion was partially adequate. The technology plan provides a listing of costs and revenue sources associated with the plan strategies, but references to needed financial resources are not comprehensive or specific enough to clearly understand how much was needed for hardware, software, training, maintenance, and contingencies.

Criterion 13: Maintenance Budget

This criterion was rated partially adequate. The technology budget contained budgeted amounts for equipment and maintenance; however, no refresher or replacement plan exists to accommodate the replacement of aging technologies. Reviewers were told that a refresher plan is being developed.

Criterion 14: Site/District Plan Alignment

This criterion was rated inadequate. The *Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016* includes no specific references to the access to technology, the instructional use of technology, administrator use of technology, community use of technology, or system readiness for technology, which are goal areas within the district's technology plan.

The district's technology plan makes no specific references to the district's strategic plan. A review of individual school improvement plans found a few technology initiatives, primarily the use of computer-based interventions, that are not referenced within the technology plan. As it is currently presented, the *Richmond*

County Comprehensive Technology Improvement Plan for 2014-2017 is a stand-alone document with no specific alignment with other planning documents in the district.

Technology Availability

As school districts work to meet the learning needs of students, technology can be an effective means of meeting those needs if there is sufficient availability in the classrooms through the district. Reviewers examined computer inventories to determine the availability of instructional technology from campus to campus.

The Richmond County School System's computer inventory available at each school is presented in [Exhibits 5.3.2](#) through [5.3.4](#).

Exhibit 5.3.2

Elementary School Computer Inventory Richmond County School System October 2017

Elementary School	Number of Students	Number of Computers	Ratio Students Per Computer
Terrace Manor	522	166	3.1
Glenn Hills	486	162	3.0
Goshen	555	189	2.9
Reynolds	957	330	2.9
Gracewood	477	168	2.8
Lake Forest Hills	710	255	2.8
Warren Road	619	242	2.6
Monte Sano	376	155	2.4
Freedom Park	716	312	2.9
Hains	614	276	2.2
Diamond Lakes	566	262	2.2
Barton Chapel	495	258	1.9
Deer Chase	548	321	1.7
Hephzibah	392	234	1.7
Wilkinson Gardens	580	349	1.7
Copeland	503	319	1.6
Merry	365	234	1.6
Walker	792	515	1.5
Craig Houghton	375	245	1.5
Hornsby K-5	294	197	1.5
Southside	408	308	1.3
Windsor Spring	482	364	1.3
Tobacco Road	439	336	1.3
Bayvale	474	367	1.3
Garrett	466	373	1.2
Lamar-Milledge	432	347	1.2
Jenkins White	386	321	1.2
Rollins	361	302	1.2
Willis Foreman	333	295	1.1
Blythe	296	284	1.0
Jamestown	304	315	1.0
Meadowbrook	390	504	0.8
McBean	411	541	0.8
Total	16,124	9,846	1.6

As can be noted from Exhibit 5.3.2:

- There are 9,846 computers allocated to the district's elementary classrooms.
- The overall, district-wide ratio of elementary students per computer is 1.6 students per computer.
- Terrace Manor Elementary School had the highest student to computer ratio of 3.1 students per computer.
- McBean and Meadowbrook Elementary Schools had the lowest student to computer ratios of 0.8 students per computer.

Exhibit 5.3.3

**Middle School Computer Inventory
Richmond County School System
October 2017**

Middle School	Number of Students	Number of Computers	Ratio Students Per Computer
Langford	821	539	1.5
Morgan Road	665	454	1.5
Hornsby 6-8	332	251	1.3
Glenn Hills	600	471	1.3
Pine Hill	608	549	1.1
Murphey	673	631	1.1
Spirit Creek	560	629	0.9
Tutt	481	576	0.8
Hephzibah	433	530	0.8
Total	5,173	4,630	1.1

As can be noted from Exhibit 5.3.3:

- There are 4,630 computers allocated to the district's middle schools.
- The overall, district-wide ratio of middle school students per computer is 1.1 students per computer.
- Langford and Morgan Road Middle Schools had the highest student to computer ratios of 1.5 students per computer.
- Hephzibah and Tutt Middle Schools had the lowest student to computer ratios of 0.8 students per computer.

Exhibit 5.3.4

High School Computer Inventory Richmond County School System October 2017

High School	Number of Students	Number of Computers	Ratio Students Per Computer
ARC	1301	511	2.5
Davidson	809	370	2.2
Johnson	690	337	2.0
Butler	921	487	1.9
Cross Creek	1263	670	1.9
Hephzibah	982	526	1.9
Westside	746	427	1.7
TCM	403	272	1.5
Laney	645	590	1.1
Glenn Hills	678	691	1.0
Josey	517	540	1.0
Total	8,955	5,421	1.7

As can be noted from [Exhibit 5.3.4](#):

- There are 5,421 computers allocated to the district's high schools.
- The overall district-wide ratio of high school students to computers is 1.7 students per computer.
- ARC High School had the highest student to computer ratio of 2.5 students per computer.
- Glenn Hills and Josey High Schools had the lowest student to computer ratios of 1.0 students per computer.

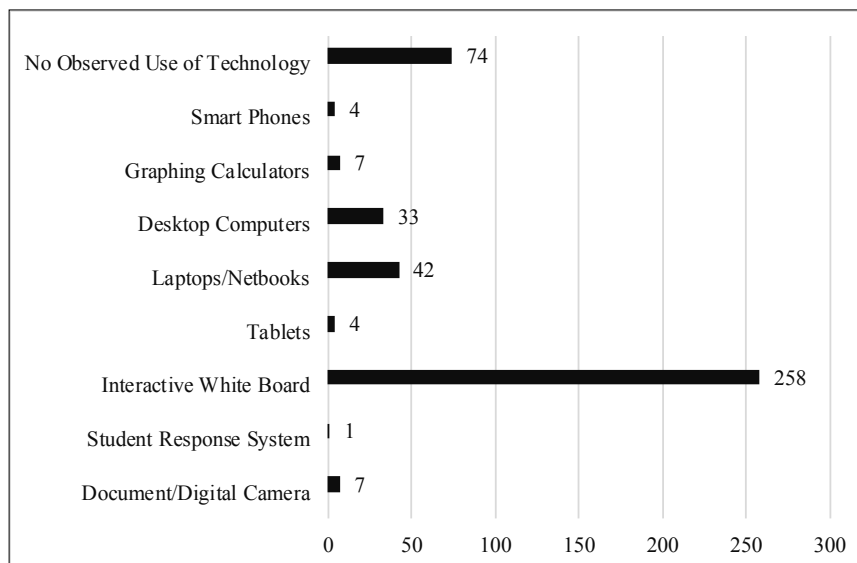
Reviewers noticed a wide range of computers distributed across the district , ranging from schools with one-to-one student computer ration to schools with three students per computer.

Integration of Instructional Technology in the Classroom

Instructional and personal technologies have the potential to enhance student engagement with their learning and expand opportunities to tailor instruction to the unique and individual needs of students. Just as important as the ability of students to use technology to facilitate their learning is the ability of classroom teachers to design instruction that utilizes the potential of available technology and effectively models the integrated use of technology during classroom instructional delivery. The Richmond County School System is in the early stages of ramping up investments in classroom technology with a preliminary plan to make all schools one-to-one technology schools. The *Richmond County Comprehensive Technology Improvement Plan for 2014-2017* includes as part of the district's vision for technology, "Making the use of technology second nature to students at all levels with curriculum integration strategies and 21st Century equipment and resources for alternative means of remediation, enrichment, instruction, and achieving system-wide goals for student performance."

During site visits to district schools, reviewers visited 392 classrooms. During these brief, snapshot visits to district classrooms, reviewers noted and categorized the types of technology observed in use. If students were observed using technology, this was noted and categorized by the reviewers. [Exhibit 5.3.5](#) displays the frequency of use of various types of technology observed in district classrooms.

Exhibit 5.3.5
Identified Use of Technology in District Classrooms
Richmond County School System
October 2017



As can be noted from [Exhibit 5.3.5](#):

- Reviewers observed technology used in 318 (81%) of classrooms visited during school site visits.
- Interactive white boards were observed in use in 258 (65.8%) classrooms. In most observed classrooms, interactive white boards were used as projection screens. Reviewers observed only a few examples of the white boards' interactive capabilities in use.
- Laptop computers were observed in use in 42 (10.7%) classrooms.
- Desktop computers were observed in use in 33 (8.4%) classrooms.
- Reviewers also noted the use of document cameras, student response systems, graphing calculators, and tablets in a few classrooms.

During interviews, district administrators indicated they were using the SAMR Model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) as a means for showing the progression that adopters of educational technology often follow as they progress through teaching and learning with technology toward the implementation of technology in the teaching and learning environment. Towards this end, some professional learning has been provided to support teachers in understanding the implementation of technology as it relates to the SAMR model. The SAMR model was developed by Dr. Ruben Puentedura to illustrate how technology can become more prevalent and intertwined into good teaching and learning.

Exhibit 5.3.6 provides a brief overview of the SAMR model:

Exhibit 5.3.6

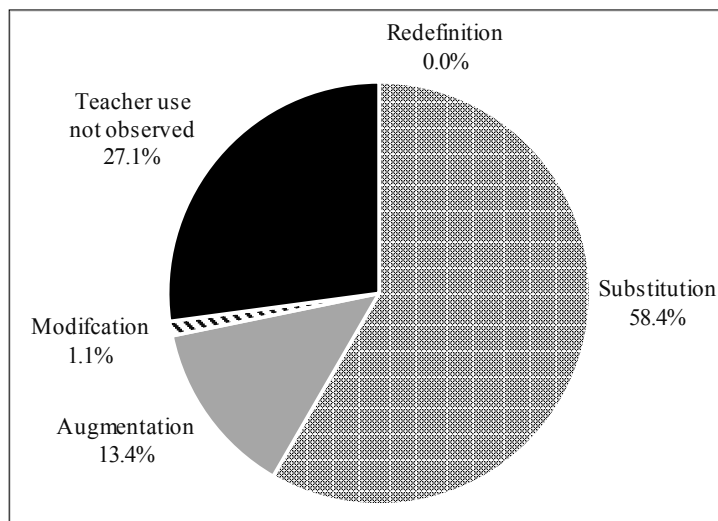
Explanation of the SAMR Model of Technology Use

Level	Definition	Examples	Functional Change
Substitution	Computer technology is used to perform the same task as was done before the use of computers.	Students print out worksheet, finish it, pass it in. Teachers use an interactive white board as an overhead projector.	No functional change in teaching and learning. There may well be times when this is the appropriate level of work as there is no real gain to be had from computer technology. One needs to decide computer use based on any other possible benefits. This area tends to be teacher centric where the instructor is guiding all aspects of a lesson.
Augmentation	Computer technology offers an effective tool to perform common tasks.	Students take a quiz using a Google Form instead of using pencil and paper. Teachers use an interactive white board interactively during the lesson.	There is some functional benefit here in that paper is being saved, students and teacher can receive almost immediate feedback on student level of understanding of material. This level starts to move along the teacher/student centric continuum. The impact of immediate feedback is that students may begin to become more engaged in learning.
Modification	This is the first step over the line between enhancing the traditional goings-on of the classroom and transforming the classroom. Common classroom tasks are being accomplished through the use of computer technology.	Students are asked to write an essay around the theme “And This I Believe...”. An audio recording of the essay is made along with an original musical soundtrack. The recording will be played in front of an authentic audience such as parents, or college admission counselors. Students use an interactive white board to interact with content.	There is significant functional change in the classroom. While all students are learning similar writing skills, the reality of an authentic audience gives each student has a personal stake in the quality of the work. Computer technology is necessary for this classroom to function, allowing peer and teacher feedback, easy rewriting, and audio recording. Questions about writing skills increasingly come from the students themselves.
Redefinition	Computer technology allows for new tasks that were previously inconceivable.	A classroom is asked to create a documentary video answering an essential question related to important concepts. Teams of students take on different subtopics and collaborate to create one final product. Teams are expected to contact outside sources for information.	At this level, common classroom tasks and computer technology exist not as ends but as supports for student centered learning. Students learn content and skills in support of important concepts as they pursue the challenge of creating a professional quality video. Collaboration becomes necessary and technology allows such communications to occur. Questions and discussion are increasingly student generated.

Source: Dr. Ruben Puentedura (<http://www.hippasus.com>)

During classroom visits, reviewers recorded data on how teachers were observed integrating the use of technology. They observed use of technology by teachers and students and categorized the observation data using the SAMR model. [Exhibit 5.3.7](#) displays the levels of technology integration observed in classrooms categorized using the SAMR Model.

Exhibit 5.3.7
Identified SAMR Model Levels of Technology Use by Teachers
Richmond County School System
October 2017



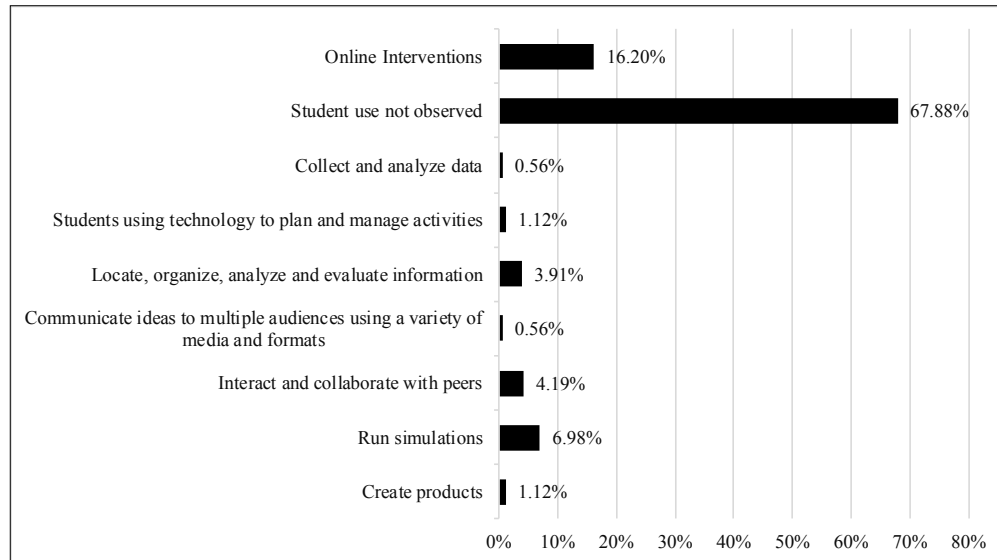
As can be noted in [Exhibit 5.3.7](#):

- Substitution was the most frequent level of technology integration by teachers, observed in 213 (58.4%) of observed classrooms. A majority of what reviewers observed was teachers using interactive white boards as a substitute for overhead projectors.
- Augmentation, where technology was being used to accomplish common tasks, was observed in 49 (13.4%) of classrooms. Examples of augmentation observed included students using the interactive white board to sort words as nouns or verbs, students using technology to present a step-by-step solution to a problem, and teachers using technology to check for whole class understanding of key concepts.
- Modification, where classroom tasks are transformed through the use of computer technology, was observed in four (1.1%) classrooms. In one example observed, students were collaboratively using an interactive white board to solve multiplication problems by breaking the problems into partial products.
- Redefinition, creating new instructional approaches through the use of technology, was not observed in any classrooms.
- In 99 (27.1%) classrooms, no teacher use of technology was observed or noted.

Overall, teacher approach to the use of available of classroom technology was observed to be primarily at the substitution level of the SAMR model.

During classroom visits, reviewers also observed the use of technology by students and categorized the observation data. [Exhibit 5.3.8](#) displays the frequency of use of technology by students and the types of learning activities in which they were engaged.

Exhibit 5.3.8
Identified Use of Technology by Students
Richmond County School System
October 2017



As can be noted from [Exhibit 5.3.8](#):

- Students were not observed using any available technology in 243 (67.9%) classrooms.
- Students were observed running simulations in 25 (7%) classrooms.
- Students were observed using available technology to interact and collaborate with their peers in 15 (4.2%) classrooms.
- In .56% of the classrooms visited, students were collecting and analyzing data or communicating ideas to audiences using a variety of media and formats.
- Students were observed engaged with an online intervention like iReady® in 58 (16.2%) classrooms.

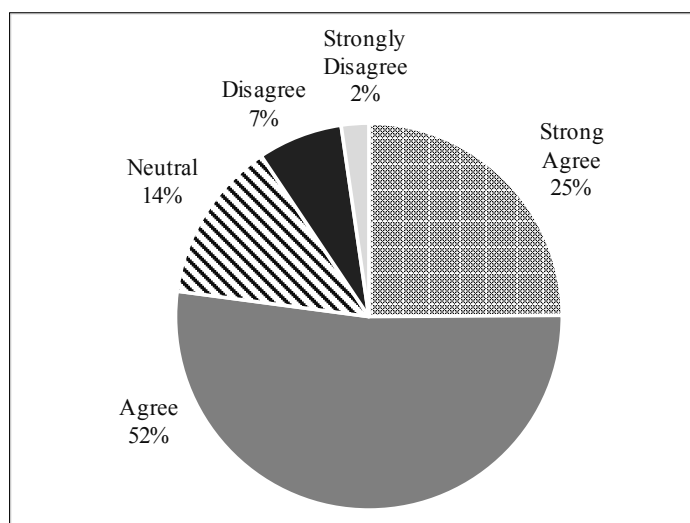
Overall, the primary use of technology observed in district classrooms was to present or display information to students using interactive white boards in the place of overhead projectors.

To determine the perception of Richmond County School System teachers regarding their sense of being prepared to integrate technology at various levels in their classrooms and into student assignments, reviewers conducted an online survey. The online survey asked teachers if they have had adequate training in the use of technology while delivering instruction and if they have had adequate training in integrating the use of technology into student assignments and projects. A summary of the teacher survey responses is presented in [Exhibits 5.3.9](#) and [5.3.10](#).

Exhibit 5.3.9 displays the response of 437 district teachers to the question “I have had adequate training in the use of technology while delivering instruction.”

Exhibit 5.3.9

Response to Survey Question on Adequacy of Training Use of Technology While Delivering Instruction Richmond County School System October 2017



As can be noted in Exhibit 5.3.9:

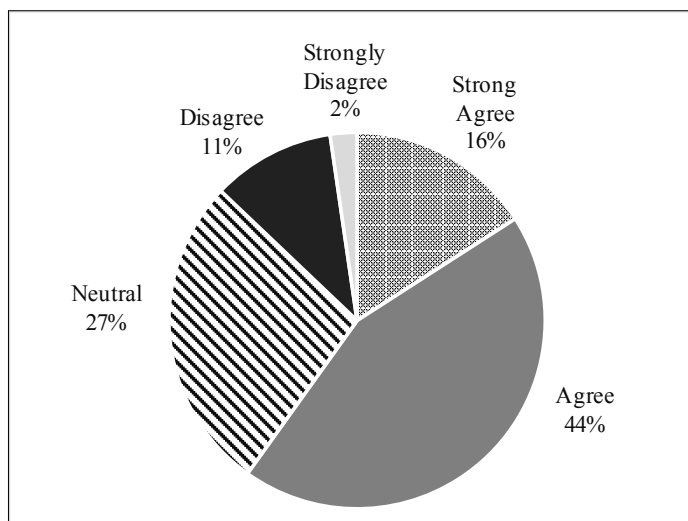
- A majority of teachers (77.1%) responded to an online survey indicating they have had adequate training in the use of technology while delivering instruction.
- Forty-one (9.4%) teachers responded to an online survey indicating they had not been adequately trained in the use of technology for delivering instruction.

A variety of written comments were provided by some of the survey respondents. Following is a sampling of the comments submitted in response to this survey question:

- “Not in this district.”
- “Currently I do not have any technology in my classroom to implement technology driven instruction.”
- “I could use more in-depth training, deeper than just the basics, so that I can try to go paperless in my classroom.”
- “I basically train myself.”
- “The training I have received is too basic to be beneficial to me. I am sick of going to training where our learning objective is to log into a website.”
- “We need technology that actually works in our classrooms.”

Exhibit 5.3.10 displays the response of 434 district teachers to the question “I have had adequate training in integrating the use of technology into student assignments and projects.”

Exhibit 5.3.10
Response to Survey Question on Adequacy of Training
Integration of Technology into Student Assignments and Projects
Richmond County School System
October 2017



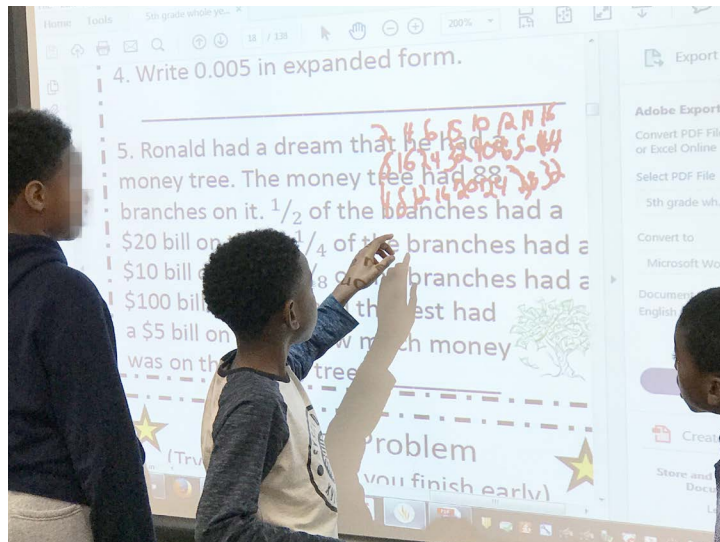
As can be noted in Exhibit 5.3.10:

- A majority of teachers (59.9%) responded to an online survey indicating they have had adequate training in integrating the use of technology into student assignments and projects.
- Fifty-six (12.9%) teachers responded to an online survey indicating they had not been adequately trained in the integration of technology into student assignments and projects.
- One hundred eighteen teachers gave a neutral response to this online survey question.

A variety of written comments were provided by some of the survey respondents. Following is a sample of the writing comments submitted in response to this survey question from teachers:

- “I have been trained on some WONDERFUL programs that I would love to use with my students. Again, we don’t have that technology for use.”
- “I would like to have more training on this topic!”
- “Not from the district.”
- “I have the skills, but have not been trained by the district.”
- “Some new programs are not working properly.”
- “I am adequately able to integrate technology into student assignments and projects, but not because the training was adequate.”

Overall, the reviewers found that the Richmond County School System has a wide variety of technology available for use by teachers and students, but its observed use as a teaching and learning tool was limited. Although many teachers reported they believed they are adequately trained in the use of technology to delivery instruction and to integrate the use of technology into student assignments, the primary use of technology observed was to present or display information to students using interactive white boards in place of overhead projectors.



Fifth grade students at Tobacco Road Elementary School collaborating on solving a math problem using an interactive white board



Jamestown Middle School sixth grade students logging into Performance Matters for English benchmarking

During interviews with district administrators, building administrators, and teachers, reviewers received many comments about the use of technology in district classrooms. Following is a representative sample of interview comments received:

- “We are moving towards the 21st century as far as tech [technology]. We are moving in the right direction by making sure that tech [technology] is in the classroom.” (Central Office Staff)
- “We invest quite a bit in instructional technology.” (Central Office Administrator)
- “We lack technology. The white boards in my classrooms are the same ones that were here when I taught here many years ago.” (Building Administrator)
- “We are a technology rich school. We used to spend a lot of our Title I money on carts and labs.” (Building Administrator)
- “Teachers are pretty comfortable with technology, but they don’t know how to let students use it.” (Building Administrator)
- “Technology can be an amazing resource, but the best technology is not evenly distributed.” (Teacher)

- “Some of the Richmond County School System’s strengths include having adequate technology for teachers and staff.” (Teacher)
- “They [RCSS] also are aggressively preparing students and staff at all levels to become technology literate.” (Teacher)

Summary

In the Richmond County School System there are a variety of technology devices available for use by teachers and students. Access to available technology, however, is not consistently distributed across the school system. Board policies are insufficient in content to direct planned deployment of instructional technology. There is a technology plan in place; however, the plan is not aligned with the district’s strategic plan and does not have measurable goals, a process for assessing plan effectiveness, hardware and software standards, and sufficient direction for staff technology training. Although teachers express confidence in their training to integrate the use of technology in the delivery of the curriculum, limited use of instructional technology was observed in district classrooms. Teachers were observed using available technology primarily to present information and were not utilizing the full potential of technology to engage and enhance student learning (see Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8).

V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CMSI SYSTEM REVIEW TEAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE RICHMOND COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Based on the three streams of data derived from interviews, documents, and site visits, the CMSi System Review Team has developed a set of recommendations to address its findings shown under each of the standards of the review.

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

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

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

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

Recommendation 1: Develop a comprehensive, multi-year plan to address the findings and recommendations contained in the System Review report; identify a shared vision for the district that will be compelling and guide the alignment of district decisions, actions, and improvement initiatives to close the gaps in student achievement.

A school district served by district leaders who are committed to academic excellence and have high expectations for the achievement of all students develops a shared vision that is consistently communicated through the actions and practices of the organization and through the results achieved. Effective planning is essential for focusing and organizing district efforts toward achieving its goals. Comprehensive planning benefits students by increasing the probability that effective programs, practices, and resources will be available at every level of the school system. A school district committed to academic excellence systematically collects and analyzes student achievement data at the classroom, grade, department, building, and district level; identifies gaps between current and desired performance; identifies possible strategies to enhance teaching practices; and then organizes interventions to close any performance gaps. While many innovations work for some groups of students, and may be preferred by teachers, ultimately, district staff and leadership must determine if the instruction, programs, and services of the school district are making a difference. Ensuring that all students are provided appropriate opportunities to learn and are achieving at desired levels is critical and requires school districts to be thoughtful about how they engage students and the expectations held for their success. Responsibility within a successful school district is discharged through numerous short- and long-term plans and actions, including curriculum development, professional development, instruction, and student assessment.

The mission statement developed by district leadership speaks to building a world-class school system through education, collaboration, and innovation. The district's policies, job descriptions, plans, programs, and interventions are inadequate in design and implementation to ensure alignment of district decisions and establish a system-wide focus on improving student achievement over time. Approaches to curriculum design, students assessment, program evaluation, professional development, and budgeting do not have many of the components necessary to ensure that student achievement is predicated on appropriate opportunities for all students to learn (see Findings 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3).

The leadership of the Richmond County School System has commissioned and received a System Review. The review report represents a detailed examination of the design and delivery of the K-12 curriculum and the results achieved in terms of student achievement. The review report contains specific recommendations for actions that district leadership can take to ameliorate conditions outlined in the findings and to improve curriculum design and delivery. Putting a plan in place to synthesize the review findings and recommendations into a coherent action plan will increase the likelihood of a successful implementation and a purposeful and effective use of limited resources. It is recommended that within six months of receiving this System Review report, the superintendent of the Richmond County School System takes steps to ensure development of a cohesive set of multi-year plans aligned with board goals and coordinated to focus the resources of the district in accomplishing identified priorities.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Richmond County School System Board of Education:

G.1.1: Direct the superintendent to develop a five-year plan that addresses the findings and recommendations in the System Review and that focuses and aligns organizational efforts at all levels, including classrooms, department, grade level, school, and district, toward achieving learning goals that have been established by the board. The review findings and recommendations represent significant organizational change that will require time to implement and incorporate into the school system's organizational culture.

G.1.2: Direct the superintendent to present to the board annually an operational budget that includes the resources necessary to implement the five-year plan directed in Action **G.1.1**.

G.1.3: Appropriate the resources necessary for the superintendent to carry out the five-year implementation plan. If the board is unable to appropriate the resources requested, direct the superintendent to modify the implementation plan by extending the timelines so the plan can be accomplished within available resources.

G.1.4: Assess board governance policies (Section G: School Board Operations) to ensure they clearly define the role and responsibilities of the board regarding district governance, policy development, operational oversight, relations with the superintendent, public engagement, community relations, and advocacy for public education.

G.1.5: Review the current *Richmond County School System Strategic Plan: A Roadmap to Success 2016-2019* to ensure the stated mission (purpose), vision (short-term desired results), core values (drivers of action), and strategic direction (focus of time and resources) present a compelling direction for the Richmond County School System to guide decision making, resource allocation, and the collective energy of the organization to ameliorate discrepancies between current and desired results. Based on an analysis of the district's internal strengths and limitations, as well as external challenges, opportunities, influences, and future trends, update the vision statement so that it clearly articulates what the board desires the district and its schools to be like in five years. Before finalizing any revisions to the Strategic Plan, direct the superintendent to connect strategic directions and initiatives with current research regarding student learning and equity in educational outcomes and describe what each transformation principle and goal would look like when operationalized in individual classrooms, schools, and the district.

G.1.6: Incorporate into the board's annual goals, goals directly related to the implementation of the superintendent's multi-year plan for addressing the findings and recommendations contained in the System Review report. Require the superintendent to report every four months on the progress made in addressing the review findings and recommendations, specifically in terms of changes in organizational and professional practices.

G.1.7: Direct the superintendent to assist the board in developing a clear, concise, comprehensive policy framework that includes the following:

- Policies that delegate through the superintendent the operation of the school district and describe desired results. Policies should not be so prescriptive or detailed that they invite micromanagement or blur the lines between the roles of the board and the superintendent.

- Policies that define the board’s expectations in terms of organizational design, planning, curriculum design and content, system accountability, and program interventions.
- Policies that describe the procedures the board expects to be used in the operations of the school district. These policies may also define the limits of authority granted to the superintendent.
- A requirement that all key district functions, programs, and interventions be evaluated at designed intervals to ensure that the school district is achieving the results desired by the board.

G.1.8: Direct the superintendent to develop administrative regulations or guidelines that provide detailed directions for how board policies will be carried out and implemented.

G.1.9: Direct the superintendent to draft for consideration by the board a policy that specifically guides planning functions within the district. Ensure that the policy language adheres to review criteria and requires the development of a comprehensive, district-wide, long-range plan with annual renewal provisions and linkages among plans (school level plans, curriculum management plans, professional learning plans, students assessment and program evaluation plans, technology plans, budget plans, facilities plans, etc.). All plans should be aligned with the district’s strategic directions.

G.1.10: Adopt a board policy for comprehensive district-wide long-range planning that focuses district efforts toward improved student achievement. Require that planning be designed to ensure that the long-range strategic plan drives all other plans, that there is collective planning among schools and functions, and that the budget development procedures outlined in Recommendation 8 are timed in coordination with annual strategic planning activities.

G.1.11: Direct the superintendent to prepare and present for review and adoption a draft Change Management Policy that:

- States the goal of change management is to increase awareness and understanding of proposed changes across the school district, and ensure that all changes are made in a thoughtful and planned manner in order to minimize negative impact on students and stakeholders.
- Requires change management planning to be developed from a “total” organizational view of the school system and considers the effect any proposed changes will have on various district functions, departments, schools, and resources.
- Requires, before implementation of any organizational change, that adequate resources are identified and allocated to implement change strategies and achieve intended results.
- Requires the development of written change management documents to clearly communicate the need for change and desired results, the capacity of the organization to implement change, and the implementation strategies that are unacceptable.
- Requires all functions, departments, and schools within the school system to align their respective plans, strategies, budgets, and goals with the district’s goals, strategies, and intended results.
- Requires that the implementation of any organizational change be monitored against measurable benchmarks and that adjustments and modifications be made to the implementation plan as necessary to address unforeseen issues and ensure that intended results are attained.
- Requires the superintendent, through administrative regulations, to develop processes for creating comprehensive implementation plans that are used to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of change strategies.
- Clearly delineates for each change initiative the roles and responsibilities of the board, superintendent, central office administrators, building administrators, and other school staff in the coordination, monitoring, and support of the design, implementation, and monitoring of change.

G.1.12: Direct the superintendent to assist the governing board in identifying specific strategic directions that articulate broad courses of action that will be taken to bring the district from its current state to the future state described by the vision.

G.1.13: Direct the superintendent to prepare an annual written report on progress toward the goals of the *Richmond County School System Strategic Plan*, based on levels of student achievement, and use annual evaluation data to review and revise the plan.

G.1.14: Annually review the *Richmond County School System Strategic Plan* as part of an annual goal-setting process for the board of education, ensuring the plan is a living document responding to the conditions and needs of the school district.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of the Richmond County School System.

A.1.1: Assist the board of education in developing policy language that guides planning functions as outlined in Action **G.1.7**. Policy language should address the following:

- Assign to the superintendent responsibility for providing overall direction for all short- and long-range planning that is designed to achieve the mission, vision, and strategic directions established by the board of education.
- Require planning to be based on an analysis of current system results and desired system results.
- Require all district plans to be clearly aligned with system priorities.
- Require the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of district, school, and department plans that incorporate system-wide student achievement targets.
- Require plans to be reviewed and updated annually.
- Require district plans to be evaluated using both formative and summative measures of student academic achievement.
- Require planning timelines to be coordinated with budget development timelines.
- Require that plan implementation and results become a component of administrator evaluations.
- Require regular reports to the board on the status of all district plans.

A.1.2: Develop administrative regulations for the implementation of a board policy addressing district strategic, long-range planning. Specifically address how plan development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation will be operationalized across departments and schools in the district.

A.1.3: Develop for board consideration a draft Change Management policy that provides clear direction for considering, planning, and implementing change initiatives in the Richmond County School System.

A.1.4: Develop and implement an administrative regulation to guide the implementation of a change management process to increase the likelihood that major change initiatives will be implemented with fidelity and consistently across the school system to attain desired results. Include in the administrative regulation directing change:

- A change management template for use by the board and district leaders in communicating the rationale and need for organizational change. Include on the template space for:
 - An executive statement that clearly and succinctly communicates the rationale and need for change;
 - A description of current conditions that have prompted the need for change;
 - A description of the results if the change is successful in ameliorating the current conditions and how the results will be assessed and reported;
 - A listing of change strategies, methods, or options that would be considered unacceptable;

- Identification of who will be responsible for making a decision regarding the final selection of a change option; and
- A target date on which change options will be presented to those who will be making the decision.
- A change options planning document template that includes space for:
 - A listing of individuals who, working as a team, will be responsible for researching and developing change options for consideration by the identified decision makers.
 - A list of stakeholders who will be consulted in developing and scrutinizing various change options. Stakeholders should include those who will be directly responsible for implementing any proposed changes as well as other stakeholders in the school district.
 - A listing of identified change options along with a summary of challenges, opportunities, organizational capacity, and budgetary requirement.
 - Require the working team responsible for researching and developing change options to present options to decision makers in rank order of recommendation along with all supporting data.
- A change implementation planning template that includes space for:
 - A listing of all action steps that will be necessary to implement the desired change;
 - Who will be responsible for completing and/or supervising each action step;
 - Obstacles that will need to be addressed in order to complete or implement each action step;
 - The resources that will be needed to implement each step;
 - Milestone measures that will indicate progress toward completing and/or implementing each action step; and
 - The desired completion date for each action step.
- A multi-year impact analysis in designing and implementing any significant change.
- A communication plan to assist the board, staff, and community in understanding the need for change and the change implementation process. Ensure that the design and implementation of change is transparent, including the process for developing change options and implementing desired changes.

A.1.5: Develop a five-year plan (as referenced in **G.1.1**) that addresses the findings and recommendations included in the System Review report. The five-year implementation plan should describe desired results, contain explicit statements of action, establish specific timelines, assign roles and responsibilities, and include a detailed listing of the resources that will be required to accomplish each action step.

A.1.6: Assist the board in reviewing and, if necessary, revising the *Richmond County School System Strategic Plan* to ensure that the stated mission, vision, core values, and strategic direction present a compelling direction for the Richmond County School System. Assist the board in connecting strategic directions and initiatives with current educational research regarding student learning and equity in educational outcomes, and describe what each initiative would look like when operational in individual classrooms, schools, and the district (see **Recommendation 2**).

A.1.7: Expand the *Richmond County School System Strategic Plan* into a comprehensive long-range plan to guide the district for at least five years. In developing the long-range plan:

- Review all state and federal planning, goal setting, and reporting requirements for consolidation into a comprehensive long-range plan that supports district student learning goals.
- Use all currently available district data, include the System Review report, district surveys, disaggregated student achievement data, and other district data sources, to inform long-range planning.

- Refine all district planning goals, strategies, and action steps to ensure alignment with the *Richmond County School System Strategic Plan* and clarity in the language used to describe goals, strategies, and actions.
- Ensure that the *Richmond County School System Strategic Plan* and other district plans contain a doable number of action steps based on review recommendations and within the context of available system human and financial resources.
- Develop specific measurable goals and objectives, based on student expectations and professional practices of staff, which will move the district toward attainment of the vision expressed in the *Richmond County School System Strategic Plan*.
- Review and revise action plans to ensure that activities integrate professional learning needs, data collection, support resources, and support costs.
- Assign responsibility to district staff.
- Establish measurable evaluation components for each goal, strategy, and action step.

A.1.8: Refine for district, department, and school improvement plans a consistent format that includes the following components:

- Multi-year action plans that are aligned with the district’s mission, vision, and strategic goals;
- Goals based on the analysis of student achievement data and other data;
- Clearly established and measurable goals;
- Strategies that are research-based within the context of similar systems and that address the goals to be accomplished;
- Resources and funding for each strategy/initiative;
- Methods for monitoring and evaluation included in plan design;
- Evaluation based on formative and summative measurable data;
- Identification of persons responsible for implementing strategies;
- Professional learning linked to achievement of district goals; and
- A focus on changing professional practices and measuring the change.

A.1.9: Assist the board in developing a clear, concise, comprehensive policy framework using the review findings as a guide (see [Recommendation 3](#)).

A.1.10: For critical policies, develop comprehensive administrative regulations that clearly describe how board policies will be implemented. Incorporate into administrative regulations all of the characteristics displayed in [Exhibits 1.3.2](#) through [1.3.6](#) of the System Review report to ensure administrative regulations are capable of clearly communicating district operational procedures and practices.

A.1.11: Develop and implement a comprehensive curriculum and assessment plan to ensure maximum student achievement. The purpose of a cohesive and comprehensive curriculum management plan is to establish a systematic process for curriculum development in all areas, to coordinate supporting functions for overall efficiency and effectiveness, and to devise a process to monitor and ensure revisions of the curriculum that will lead to improved student achievement. Such a plan brings order to the development of a comprehensive aligned curriculum and provides the district with a framework to manage the design and delivery of the curriculum. A comprehensive plan is critical to the effectiveness of a learning organization and to the quality of the teaching-learning process (see [Recommendations 5](#) and [6](#)).

A.1.12: Develop and implement a comprehensive professional learning plan that is designed on the basis of clearly identified curriculum, assessment, student achievement, and job performance needs. A professional learning plan should establish a clear focus on student learning and the improvement of student achievement.

A comprehensive professional development plan and a related action plan are necessary if the school district is to eliminate student achievement gaps and improve academic achievement for all students. It is imperative that the professional learning plan build the capacity of teachers to effectively teach students representing a variety of cultures, races, and economic conditions. The professional learning plan should help teachers examine their own cultural values, develop an understanding of the values of others, and apply what they learn about cultural differences to the improvement of classroom practices. The professional learning plan also must anticipate and take into account the needs of teachers as they move to integrate different practices and innovations within their individual classrooms (see [Recommendation 7](#)).

A.1.13: Develop and implement a comprehensive set of job descriptions that ensure the work of key positions is aligned with the design, delivery, and monitoring of curriculum. Revise the job descriptions for building administrators, clearly establishing their role as instructional leaders (see [Recommendation 4](#)). Include in the listing of job responsibilities the following:

- Define and articulate for teachers, staff, students, and the community the school system's educational philosophy, mission, values, core beliefs, and goals.
- Through participation in district curriculum development training, develop a thorough understanding of the district's curriculum. Systematically monitor the delivery of the written curriculum, and engage teachers in ongoing discussions about instructional decisions and their impact on student achievement.
- Systematically assess and monitor student progress using a variety of formative and summative measures. Use student assessment data to identify performance gaps and to inform decisions regarding the design and implementation of instructional interventions.
- Develop building level professional learning plans that address specific building level needs and are aligned and coordinated with the district's professional development plans and goals. Monitor individual professional development plans, and monitor the demonstration of successful instructional strategies in the classroom.
- In conjunction with teachers, and based on student achievement data, develop school improvement plans that are research-based, aligned with district goals, and focus building resources toward ensuring all students achieve at high levels. Monitor school improvement plans based on the impact on student achievement.

A.1.14: Provide building administrators, key central office administrators, curriculum coordinators, facilitators, specialists, and improvement specialists with training, coaching, and support in their roles as instructional leaders. Include in their training the following content:

- Curriculum alignment,
- Deep curriculum alignment,
- Curriculum management,
- Data disaggregation,
- Textbook/resource/student artifact calibration,
- Curriculum monitoring,
- Cognitive coaching,
- Increasing academic learning time,
- Effective instructional methods,
- School planning for change interventions, and
- Increasing teacher and student engagement rates.

A.1.15: Examine the effectiveness of district interventions that have been implemented to improve student achievement. Terminate those interventions that, within a three-year period, have not achieved their original goals. Identify interventions that will most likely close the achievement gaps. The number of innovations is not so important as the targeted linkage between the intervention and system goals.

A.1.16: Develop and implement a plan for providing parents with the support they need in order to effectively support their children in acquiring the district's curriculum. Include the following components in a plan for parent involvement:

- Draft a policy that requires the development of purposeful parental involvement.
- Make parent involvement a district-wide and school-wide priority by assigning at least one person in each school with the responsibility for coordinating and supporting parental involvement efforts.
- Identify and address barriers to effective parental involvement.
- Work with community agencies and businesses to provide services and supports to families.
- Provide a range of organizations and opportunities for parents to participate actively in school decisions.
- Provide training and a variety of opportunities for parents to support student and school progress.
- Establish effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.
- Assist families in understanding child development, and assist schools in understanding families.

A.1.17: Develop a communications plan for communicating school system program and results in addressing the findings and recommendations of the System Review report. Address in the communications plan:

- Strategies for translating the district's vision and strategic direction to all audiences.
- Strategies for directly involving board members, district leaders, and building administrators in communicating about the district's vision, strategic direction, and change initiatives up, down, and across the organization.
- Strategies for targeting information that is relevant and meaningful to the intended audience while being consistent across all audiences.
- Strategies for using multiple modes of communications, include use of the district website, social media, face-to-face, and print.
- Strategies for involving key communication staff in all strategic and planning processes, as well as critical decision making.
- Strategies for assessing the effectiveness of district communications against clearly defined goals on an ongoing basis.
- Formation of a strategic communications team that will assist with assessing the district's current communications practices, address gaps in communications, and design and implement communications around changes.

A.1.18: Designate in the annual operating budget the resources needed to implement the priorities of the long-range strategic plan.

A.1.19: Design a monitoring system and an evaluation component to determine effectiveness of the long-range strategic plan and department and school improvement plans in terms of improved student achievement rather than activities completed.

A.1.20: Provide extensive and ongoing training for board members, administrators, teachers, and staff on the use of data for decision making, program interventions, and planning. Provide training in understanding and adhering to the critical components of an effective planning process, building the capacity of district staff to address components of the planning process as they assess school and department needs, and setting realistic goals and performance-based activities.

These recommendations, if implemented, should provide district staff with the means to address the findings contained in the System Review report while focusing all district efforts toward improving overall student achievement and eliminating existing gaps in achievement among student groups.

Recommendation 2: Provide equal access to comparable programs, services, and opportunities to impact student achievement. Eliminate the achievement gap between ethnic and socioeconomic student groups. Take steps to allocate equitable resources based on student needs.

A well-managed school system provides all students equal access to the programs, services, and opportunities provided by the district. Fairness to all students is apparent in access to resources, effective teachers, and the distribution of financial resources. School districts that serve heterogeneous communities, especially districts that serve a majority-minority student body, have students that require differentiated resources if all learners are to be given an equal opportunity to experience success in the educational program. Ensuring academic success means providing instruction and resources to students based on their individual needs, not based on what works for the majority of students or even a formula or standardized procedure. Equity requires a comprehensive shift in priority: Prioritizing individual students and their needs, rather than system-level priorities and needs. Such a shift in focus must take place at every level if the system is to realize improvement in every student's academic achievement – system level, building level, and classroom level.

At the system level, areas of inequity must be monitored and addressed through district-wide efforts such as new policy directives, coordinated district and division level planning, professional development initiatives, and sometimes staffing changes. Identifying areas of inequity is achieved through data analysis and anecdotal evidence collected from district stakeholders focused on how various components of the district function as an integrated, coherent system. Areas of inequity must also be identified, monitored, and addressed at each campus through data analysis, monitoring of classroom instruction (walk-throughs), teacher evaluations, and the campus improvement plan. In the classroom, teachers monitor equity in similar ways but with a much smaller population, looking at test data for different subgroups, monitoring the effectiveness of their own instructional strategies and behaviors, and ultimately evaluating whether students are making appropriate gains in achievement despite any demographic factors that might predict failure. What is fair for one student might, in fact, be unfair for another; being equitable many times means one must treat students differently according to their unique needs.

Reviewers found that some inequalities existed throughout the Richmond County School System with no intentional plan in place to address inequities. Richmond County School System is a very diverse urban district. The district is a majority-minority district serving slightly over 30,000 students. Board policies were insufficient in requirements for annual review of equity data and the use of such data to develop a plan to correct equity issues (see [Finding 1.3](#)). Planning documents contained few measurable goals and strategies for addressing inequalities and inequities, and connections between and among district, department, and campus improvement plans (see [Findings 1.2](#) and [3.2](#)).

Reviewers found inequities in the distribution of waiver teachers and Title I funds. There were also disproportionately low numbers of gifted and talented students identified in schools that served the highest percentages of students receiving free and reduced lunches. Finally, access to basic resources such as computers/technology and library books was inequitable depending on the school attended.

In order not to perpetuate but overcome the relative disadvantages that some students face when they enter the education system, the following recommendations are presented to the board and superintendent. These recommendations should be put into place and implemented over a 6- to 18-month period.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Richmond County School Systems Board of Education:

G.2.1: Direct the superintendent to prepare for board adoption a policy framework to address the issue of equity and prioritize it district-wide. The policy needs to accomplish the following:

- Define equity specifically in terms that clearly contrast it with equality. Specify when things are to be equal (such as access to resources, materials, and courses) and when they are to be equitable (fair, just, and different to level the playing field).
- Direct the methods to be used in collecting data on equity across the district. Specify the instruments, measures, and procedures to be used to identify equity problems and to determine probable causes.
- Require the disaggregation of all centrally collected assessment and program participation data by subgroups (including gender, ethnicity, language, and program participation status, even when the state may not require such disaggregations), and monitor their performance. Direct district leaders to pay close attention to achievement gaps that do not narrow over a reasonable amount of time, such as two years.
- Require, when problems with equity are evident, multiple measures to evaluate reasons for achievement gaps; identify the key factors that contribute to maintain the gaps. Determine the suitability of current efforts to ameliorate the gap based on new data.
- Require that the factors contributing to inequities, when they are within the scope of the district's control, be targeted and eradicated, using whatever means necessary to make changes that will result in their amelioration.
- Establish the importance of high quality, student-centered instruction for all students. Describe specifically what such instruction looks like in the classroom; require teachers to adhere to the district's instructional model; and hold their supervisors responsible for coaching, monitoring, and evaluating them on implementation of the model.
- Institutionalize the importance of equity in all curriculum management functions throughout the district—all planning, monitoring, curriculum revisions, curriculum delivery, and program development and implementation—and require that departments and divisions collaborate to address equity issues from a systems perspective.
- Identify professional development initiatives that are necessary to address equity issues, create a plan that outlines their accomplishments, and ensure the plan's integration with the district professional development plan.
- Establish high expectations for all students, regardless of race, income level, language proficiency, gender, or special needs status. Specifically describe how those expectations are to be actualized in the classroom.

G.2.2: Direct the superintendent to develop, with principals and other administrators, strategies to help students experience success in the district's educational program and to incorporate such strategies into the multi-year strategic plan, campus improvement plans, and department plans.

G.2.3: Direct the superintendent to review all programs and interventions to determine equality of access and equitable distribution of resources using achievement data.

G.2.4: Require congruity of board policy intent with administrative and school-based decisions and actions. Direct the superintendent to systematically monitor all reports, the budget, planning documents, assessment data, and programming plans to ascertain the equitable treatment of all school sites and all students.

G.2.5: Direct the superintendent to review all curriculum areas, programs, and facilities to determine equality of access and equitable distribution of resources using achievement gap data and cost-benefit analyses.

G.2.6: Direct the superintendent to provide frequent and annual updates regarding efforts and progress in eliminating inequalities and inequities within the district, using measures congruent with methods for equity data collection defined by policy.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Richmond County School Systems Superintendent:

A.2.1: Prepare, for board review and approval, a policy framework to prioritize equity across the school district.

A.2.2: Establish administrative regulations clarifying, interpreting, and expanding the board policies addressed in G.2.1. Share the administrative regulations with the board, and ensure all district and campus administrators are appropriately informed and trained.

A.2.3: Include in the development of a multi-year strategic plan a focus on equity and implementation of research-based strategies demonstrated to have the most powerful impact on closing achievement gaps. Include measurable objectives and evaluation components to clearly demonstrate changes in professional practice that link directly to leveling the playing field and improving student performance. Require all campus improvement plans and department plans to be similarly constructed and aligned with the district's strategic plan to create a cohesive system of support for all efforts to achieve equity across the district (see Recommendation 1).

A.2.4: Monitor achievement by student subgroups at all levels through state assessments, district curriculum-based assessments, and formalized formative assessments, as well as national exams such as *Advanced Placement*, *International Baccalaureate*, *SAT*, and *ACT*.

A.2.5: Require an instructional model that is centered on the individual student. The instructional model should reflect the latest research concerning effective approaches and activities for culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students. Such approaches are typically characterized by individualized instruction at the appropriate level for each child. The adopted instructional model should reflect the district's mission and goals; teacher appraisal instruments and procedures should be congruent with the district's instructional model.

A.2.6: Develop and align a classroom observational protocol and the teacher appraisal system with the district's instructional model. Train all campus administrators in using classroom observation protocols and the appraisal system to monitor instruction and provide growth-producing feedback to teachers. Monitor site administrators' use of monitoring and teacher appraisal as tools to increase productivity and improve outcomes for students in the school district as a whole, as well as to improve the performance of teachers who are struggling with differentiation and using diagnostic assessment data to drive their planning and instruction.

A.2.7: The Richmond County School System leadership utilizes the eleot® observational protocol from AdvancED for classroom observations. This protocol is used for AdvancED accreditation. In addition to this classroom observation protocol, develop a classroom observation protocol that can be utilized along with the eleot® to collect observational trend data to determine whether professional development is having the desired impact on instructional practices and strategies. Observational data collected and analyzed should include:

- Dominant student activities observed;
- Dominant teacher activities observed;
- Evidence of student work that shows adherence to the district-adopted instructional model;
- Evidence of powerful instructional strategies;
- Evidence of cultural and linguistic responsiveness;
- Evidence of cognitive rigor in materials/resources used, as well as in the student activities; and
- Evidence of student use of technology as specified in district goals.

A.2.8: Regularly review site-based decision making for equity, particularly the decisions that impact the delivery of the educational program and equitable access to learning opportunities. For example, analyze minutes of instructional time, access to the educational programs in the classroom through appropriate differentiation, sheltering of content, accommodations, identification of and access to programs and services for the gifted and talented, patterns of suspensions and expulsions, etc.

A.2.9: Develop a comprehensive program for the identification and support of Gifted and Talented students that addresses the following:

- Establish a philosophical approach to gifted education that is based on research of effective program models and fully applied in the design of the district's gifted education program.
- Establish a screening process that includes multiple criteria (three or more), sensitive to the inclusion of minority, low socioeconomic, and disabled students. Provide for different approaches at the elementary and secondary level.
- Articulate clear and measurable objectives for the gifted education program that target student attainment of basic academic standards, ensure continued student progress and learning, and gauge student response to curriculum acceleration and/or compacting.
- Direct how curriculum will be designed to provide mastery of basic content at a pace and depth appropriate to the capacity of able learners, promote critical thinking and reasoning skills, develop research skills and methods, and foster independent and self-directed learning.
- Establish transition plans for students identified as gifted as they move from elementary to middle school to high school.
- Establish procedures that maintain robust Gifted and Talented programs at elementary, middle, and high schools as students leave their home schools to attend magnet schools.
- Provide ongoing training for all teachers in serving the needs of gifted students, including accelerated learning, curriculum compacting, advanced intellectual processes, flexible groups, social skills development, underachievement, and perfectionism.
- Hold building and district administrators accountable for ensuring that gifted students at all schools, especially non-magnet schools, are receiving equitable and quality services.

A.2.10: Oversee all reports, budgets, planning documents, assessments, programs, and interventions to ascertain the equitable treatment of all students at all school sites and alignment with district direction.

- Continue to disaggregate data pertaining to the needs of students to serve as background information in all reports, planning documents, and programming plans.
- Require that budgets reflect the equitable distribution of resources.
- Require regular analysis of disaggregated data pertaining to all district practices, including program enrollment, course offerings, disciplinary actions, and academic interventions, to determine disparities and inequities.

The policy requirements of this recommendation should be completed within the next six months. The related service model should be implemented district-wide within the next 12 to 18 months.

Recommendation 3: Develop and implement a comprehensive policy manual that directs a sound system of curriculum management and control. Develop and implement administrative guidelines that establish a framework for consistent decision making.

A comprehensive set of school board policies is necessary to guide management of a school system and express the expectations and intentions of the elected body legally charged with governance of the school district. Current, sound board policies provide an updated legal framework for school district operations and help create an educational focus for ongoing decision making at the district and building levels. Policies are a reliable reference for district administrators in responding to recurring issues and making operational decisions to promote the consistency of administrative practices and cohesion of organizational functions.

The current governing board policies of the Richmond County School System are not sufficient in scope and quality to guide curriculum management and the district's educational program (see [Finding 1.3](#)). Policies that direct planning, curriculum management, professional learning, student assessment and program evaluation,

resource allocation, and change management were absent or considered weak (see [Findings 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3](#)).

The reviewers' recommended actions address the primary needs in the area of policy as identified through the review analysis. Additional recommendations in the review report identify specific areas of policy weakness, as well. Actions need to be addressed during the next 36 months in order to establish clear parameters for operations, job performance, and philosophical direction, and to communicate expectations for follow-up.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Richmond County School System Board of Education.

G.3.1: Establish a timeline for the development and adoption of a comprehensive set of board policies that will provide a unifying, clear philosophical framework for the district's approach to curriculum development and delivery. Key policies that meet the criteria outlined in [Exhibits 1.3.2 through 1.3.6](#) should be developed and adopted within the next 12 months.

G.3.2: Establish a board policy committee that will oversee the review of all policies adopted by the board; review recommended board action on policies under consideration or review; evaluate suggestions for board policy that come from board members, administrators, teachers, and the public; establish priorities in policy review and adoption, in consultation with the superintendent and the administration; and set review goals and schedules.

G.3.3: Establish a clear distinction between what constitutes a board policy and an administrative regulation.

- *Board Policy* establishes what the board considers the general goals and acceptable practices for the school system. Through its policies, the board exercises its statutory duties and powers to govern, control, and manage the affairs of the school district, including strategic direction, organizational structure, curriculum, assessments, finances, facilities, and performance standards. In addition, through policy, the board delegates authority to and through the superintendent to administer the school district. The superintendent and district employees are responsible for implementing the policies of the board. Policies are generally written in clear, succinct terms; generally are legally binding; and, once adopted, provide a system of accountability for the board and superintendent. Policies are formally adopted by the board.
- *Administrative Regulation* is the superintendent's direction to school district employees on how to implement board policy, laws, and regulations in the day-to-day operation of the school system. Regulations provide the details of policy implementation, assign responsibility and accountability, and establish standards of performance. They are developed and implemented by the superintendent in partnership with district administrators, teachers, and staff. Administrative regulations are generally not adopted by board action.

G.3.4: Direct the superintendent to assist the board in developing a local policy that synthesizes the board's statutory responsibilities into six key areas. Adopt a board policy under *Section B: School Board Operations* to communicate the board's six key areas of responsibility, including:

- *Policy Governance* – The board will exercise its legislative responsibility to govern through the adoption of explicit policies that clearly communicate the values, priorities, desired results, and the scope of authority granted the superintendent to act on behalf of the board. Through its policies, the board will determine district priorities, establish direction, assign responsibilities, establish commitments, demonstrate public accountability, and ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.
- *District Oversight* – The board will commit to establishing high expectations for student achievement and the delivery of high quality instruction. The board will communicate a strategic vision, mission, and direction for the school district, and through the superintendent hold all district employees accountable for attaining desired outcomes with the resources available. The board will constantly monitor key performance indicators, benchmarking results with the country's highest performing school districts, as well as among individual schools with the district, and use the data to drive continuous improvement.

- *Superintendent Relations* – The board will govern in consultation and partnership with the superintendent. The board will create and maintain the conditions that allow the superintendent to function as the chief executive officer and instructional leader of the school district. The superintendent is the board’s chief consultant, providing the board with professional expertise and ideas and assisting the board in their governance role. The board will evaluate the superintendent according to mutually agreed upon performance criteria and procedures.
- *Public Engagement* – The board, in consultation and partnership with the superintendent, will establish communication structures to, with transparency, inform and create engagement with internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
- *Resource Alignment* – The board will align and sustain resources to support the attainment of district goals even during times of fiscal uncertainty.
- *Board Development* – The board will take part in board development and training in order to build shared knowledge, values, and commitment to improved student achievement. The board will evaluate their effectiveness based, in part, on board-superintendent relationships, board and stakeholder engagement, and congruence of their practices and organizational outcomes.

G.3.5: Direct the superintendent to prepare an administrative regulation outlining a process for board policy development that includes the following components and considerations:

- A policy format that includes the following:
 - Purpose: Background information explaining the need for the policy.
 - Score: People or situation(s) covered by the policy.
 - Definitions: Unique terms that by being defined add to the reader’s understanding of the policy.
 - Policy Statement: A well articulated, authoritative expression of philosophy and direction.
 - Responsibilities: Individual areas of responsibility followed by the function to be performed.
 - Exclusions: Groups, individuals, budgets, etc., that are excluded from the provisions of the policy.
 - Contacts: Offices that can be contacted regarding the policy.
 - Legal References: Listing of relevant state statutes and United States Code.
 - Establish how the need for a board policy is identified. The need for a new policy may be identified by:
 - The board,
 - The superintendent,
 - Staff, or
 - A stakeholder.
 - Identify triggers that would require the development of a new board policy or revision to an existing board policy, including:
 - Changes in the external operating environment,
 - Changes in government statutes or regulations,
 - Review of the district’s strategic directions,
 - New initiatives within the district, or
 - Need for consistency across the district.

- The board will authorize the superintendent to draft a new policy or revise an existing policy. In its authorization, the board will clearly define the desired purpose and outcome for the policy and make a preliminary determination of the scope of the policy (to whom the policy would apply).
- A board policy committee will review draft policies submitted by the superintendent for the following considerations:
 - Is the content of the policy within the scope of the board's statutory authority?
 - Does the policy support the district's mission, vision, core values, and strategic direction?
 - Is the policy reasonable?
- Initial Reading: Based on the recommendation from the board policy committee, the draft policy is placed on the board's agenda for initial reading. At this time, the full board has the opportunity to discuss the policy or redirect the policy back to the board policy committee for additional refinement based on the questions, comments, and suggestions obtained during the initial reading. The policy will be re-presented to the board for an initial reading.
- Final Reading: The period between the initial and final reading allows time for concerned persons to ask questions, make comments, and offer suggestions for changes and improvements to the policy. At this time, the full board has the opportunity to discuss the policy and redirect the policy back to the board policy committee for additional refinement based on the questions, comments, and suggestions obtained after the initial reading. If revised, the policy will be re-presented to the board for an initial reading.
- Adoption: Upon adoption the policy will be posed to the district's web-based archive and staff will be notified.

G.3.6: Direct the superintendent to prepare and present for review and adoption drafts of new and/or revised policies that will meet the criteria outlined in Exhibits 1.3.2 through 1.3.6 and address policy deficiencies identified in the findings included in this report. Specifically:

- *School District Instructional Organization* – Draft and adopt policies that require:
 - The superintendent to develop and maintain an organizational chart that accurately depicts the structure of the school organization in terms of relationships among department and line of authority and responsibility. Require the superintendent to update the organizational chart annually.
 - Job descriptions to include clear and concise statements of qualifications; links to chain of command; functions, duties, and responsibilities; and, where appropriate, the relationship to curriculum design and delivery.
 - Performance appraisal to be linked to critical job functions.
 - Training for all building administrators in implementing teacher appraisals effectively, accurately, and with interrater reliability.
- *School District Planning* – Draft and adopt policies that require:
 - The superintendent to be responsible for providing direction for all short- and long-range planning that is designed to achieve the mission, vision, core values, and strategic direction established by the board.
 - Planning to be based on an analysis of current system results and desired system results.
 - All district plans to be clearly aligned with system priorities.
 - The development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the district, school, and department plans that incorporate system-wide student achievement targets.
 - Plans to be reviewed and updated annually.

- District plans to be evaluated using both formative and summative measures of student academic achievement.
- Planning timelines to be coordinated with budget development timelines.
- Plan implementation and results to become a component of administrator evaluations.
- Quarterly reports to the board on the status of all district plans.
- Written plans in the areas of curriculum, student assessment, program evaluation, professional learning, school improvement planning, technology, and facilities planning.
- *Curriculum Development* – Draft and adopt policies that explicitly require:
 - Board adoptions of the written curriculum.
 - A planned curriculum review process that includes review of instructional resources and assessments.
 - A district curriculum that is not only aligned with national standards and high stakes assessments but is also more rigorous than state and national standards.
 - District assessments to be aligned with the board-adopted curriculum.
 - Alignment of all textbooks, instructional resources, and online and software applications with the board-adopted curriculum.
 - Curriculum guides that include clearly stated learning objectives, a statement of prerequisite skills or knowledge, suggested instructional strategies, and strategies to assess learning. Require a feasible number of learning targets to ensure mastery of essential learning with allocated instructional time.
 - Expectations concerning instructional rigor and the preferred types of instructional engagement and activity in the classroom. These expectations should derive from philosophical statements concerning the educational program, system mission, and goals.
 - The vertical articulation and horizontal coordination of the curriculum within schools, across grade levels, among schools, and with post-secondary institutions.
- *Monitoring Curriculum and Instruction* – Draft and adopt policies that require:
 - Teachers to be responsible for delivery of the board-adopted curriculum.
 - Mastery learning practices to be employed at all grade levels and for all content areas, including electives.
 - Campus administrators to be responsible for monitoring the delivery of the adopted curriculum on a weekly basis and ensuring gains in student achievement.
- *Assessment and Testing* – Draft and adopt policies that require:
 - The entire taught curriculum is measured for effectiveness.
 - The use of student achievement data to identify subject areas that require additional emphasis and budgetary support.
 - District assessments that go beyond that required for state accountability and are more rigorous than external high stakes assessments – particularly those assessments that are district-developed, authentic, and are intended to be integrated with everyday instruction.
 - The use of formative assessments to inform the effectiveness of curriculum delivery and to guide teachers' monitoring of student progress.
 - The use of summative assessments to evaluate curriculum design and appropriateness for the district population.

- The required use of assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of existing programs and services at all levels of the system on a cyclical basis to ascertain cost-benefit.
- *Professional Learning* – Draft and adopt policies that require:
 - The superintendent to establish, implement, and maintain a multi-year professional learning plan that is aligned with district goals, priorities, and adopted curriculum and that supports improved student learning.
 - Professional learning plans to be linked to district long-range plans and annual district goal priorities.
 - Professional learning that is identified, prioritized, and coordinated at the district, school site, and individual level.
 - Professional learning that is based on careful analysis of student achievement results, classroom walk-through data, and aggregated professional summative evaluation ratings.
 - Professional learning plans that are evaluated based on the improvement in instructional practices and impact on increased student achievement.
 - Professional learning plans that provide professional staff learning opportunities that are research-based approaches in both content and delivery.
 - Professional learning plans that provide organizational, collegial, and individual development, including follow-up, monitoring, and on-the-job application to support the acquisition and application of instructional strategies.
 - Professional learning plans to be funded sufficiently to obtain desired professional learning goals.
- *Budget* – Draft and adopt policies that require:
 - Adherence to a program-centered budgeting process that includes incremental budgeting and funding possibilities.
 - A multi-year budget process that provides ongoing support for curriculum and program priorities and connects cost with program expectations and data-based needs.
 - Program evaluation and identification of specific measurable program goals before the budget process begins.
 - Documentation of costs to ensure that expenditures are aligned with revenues and cost-benefit analysis is facilitated.
 - The allocation of resources according to documented needs, assessment data, and established district curriculum and program goals and priorities.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Richmond County School System Superintendent of Schools:

A.3.1: Assist the governing board in implementing **G.3.1** through **G.3.4** and **G.3.6** listed above.

A.3.2: Prepare an administrative regulation outlining a process for the development of regulations, which includes:

- Establishing the needs for an administrative regulation may be identified by:
 - The superintendent,
 - District administrators, or
 - District staff.

- Triggers for a new or revised administrative regulation may include:
 - Additions or changes to board policies,
 - Additions or changes to governmental statutes or regulations,
 - Changes in the internal and/or external operating environment,
 - New initiatives within the district, or
 - Need for consistent policy implementation across the district.
- In developing administrative regulations, consultations with those directly responsible for implementing the guiding board policy.
- A review of draft administrative regulations by the superintendent's leadership team, with a focus on the following considerations:
 - Is the regulation consistent with the guiding board policy?
 - Is the regulation consistent with local, state, and federal laws?
 - Is the regulation sufficient to guide consistent implementation of the guiding policy?
 - Can the regulation be reasonably implemented?
- Upon final approval by the superintendent, distribute the administrative regulation to the board policy committee, all administrators, and staff. Post the regulation to the district's web-based policy archive.

A.3.3: Provide draft policy language that offers clarity of expectations where needed to meet the review criteria in Exhibits 1.3.2 through 1.3.6 and address other findings contained within the System Review report.

A.3.4: Disseminate adopted board policies to all administrators. Publish board policies and administrative regulations on the district's website in a policy archive as soon as feasible to enable easy internal and external access to the most current policies and regulations.

A.3.5: Include discussions of adopted policies and regulations in executive leadership meetings and other administrative meetings as adoptions are completed. Monitor for consistent implementation.

A.3.6: Establish a system to maintain policy congruence with state and federal laws, regulations, and other requirements.

Recommendation 4: Revise, adopt and implement a table of organization and job descriptions that provide for control of district functions, support campuses in their delivery of curriculum, and lead to improved student learning.

A table of organization (organizational chart) and job descriptions provide information to help organizations structure their workforce to accomplish the organization's mission. The organizational chart shows how each part is related to the others and allows leaders to determine if the organization is logically and efficiently focused. Well-written job descriptions provide assurance that every position makes a unique and necessary contribution. Job descriptions also guide the hiring process by providing a basis for selecting the candidate with the greatest capacity to carry out their responsibilities.

Reviewers found that the organizational chart did not reflect sound general management of the school system when compared to the review criteria in Finding 1.4. The current organizational chart does not meet any of the six characteristics used by reviewers to identify effective management depictions. Job descriptions did not communicate clear linkages to roles and responsibilities associated with the design and delivery of curriculum. There is no definitive set of current job descriptions, and there are numerous examples of outdated or inconsistent information.

The reviewers recommend a set of changes to the organizational chart that will help ameliorate the problems identified in Finding 1.4. The suggestions include implications for deletion, reorganization, or the expansion of some job descriptions. These recommendations are designed to conform to the principles of organizational management prescribed by the Curriculum Management Improvement Model and used in the evaluation of the organizational chart and job descriptions.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Board of Education of the Richmond County School System.

G.4.1: Direct the superintendent to draft, for board consideration and adoption, a policy that requires the development of an annually updated organizational chart that represents a functional and accurate graphical depiction of administrative relationships.

G.4.2: Direct the superintendent to develop a revised organizational chart in order to illustrate modifications in line and staff functions, logical grouping of functions, and scalar relationships. The organizational chart is to focus on supporting the organization's primary mission of ensuring all students have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their potential.

G.4.3: Direct the superintendent to draft, for board consideration and adoption, a policy that requires all job descriptions to include clear and concise statements of qualifications; links to the chain of command that match the organizational chart; functions, duties, and responsibilities; and, where appropriate, relationship to curriculum design and delivery.

G.4.4: Direct the superintendent to review, revise, and prepare a comprehensive set of current job descriptions to ensure that all employees are covered by a current and complete statement of job qualifications and responsibilities.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of the Richmond County School System.

A.4.1: Develop, for consideration by the board, a draft policy that requires the development of an organizational chart that represents a functional and accurate graphical depiction of administrative relationships and that incorporates review criteria for span of control, chain of command, logical groupings of functions, separation of line and staff functions, scalar relationships, and full inclusion. Require that the organizational chart be reviewed annually, and revise as necessary.

A.4.2: Develop, for consideration by the board, a draft policy that requires all job descriptions include clear and concise statements of qualifications; establish links to the chain of command; define essential functions, and duties, and responsibilities; and, where appropriate, delineate the relationship to curriculum design and delivery. Require job descriptions for all employees, and require a periodic review of those documents to ensure they are accurate, complete, and consistent with the district's current organizational structure. At a minimum, job descriptions should include the following elements:

- Date approved/most recently revised.
- A singular title that is descriptive of the duties associated with the position.
- Minimum and desired qualifications consistent with the duties and responsibilities of the position.
- Immediate links to the change of command.
- A statement identifying the supervisor and a statement identifying all positions supervised by the incumbent or that the incumbent has no supervisees. No employee should have more than one supervisor.
- A detailed explanation of the functions, duties, and responsibilities of the position.
- Relationship to the curriculum (where relevant), i.e., expectations regarding design and delivery of the curriculum.
- Physical demands of each position.

A.4.3: Revise the organizational chart, which illustrates appropriate grouping of functions and appropriate scalar relationships and follows the principles of sound organization management outlined in Exhibit 1.4.1 (see Appendix D, Recommended Table of Organization). In revising the organizational chart, consider the following suggestions to increase the focus and alignment of the work of the organization on instruction and improving student achievement:

1. Reduce the span of control for the Superintendent by consolidating all departments under two deputy superintendents, one for academic services and one for operations and administrative services.
2. Reduce the span of control for Area Superintendents by adding at least one, and preferably two, additional Area Superintendents.
3. Improve logical grouping of functions by the following actions:
 - Move the CFO and the Budget and Finance office to the operations and administrative services division.
 - Move technology from the academic division to the operations and administrative services division.
 - Move production printing to the operations and administrative services division.
 - Move the GNETS program to the Special Education Department.
 - Move the Director of Internal Auditing to report directly to the Board of Education to reduce conflicts of interest.
4. Improve scalar relationships by developing a set of criteria for job title classes (Director, Coordinator, Facilitator, Manager, Specialist, etc.) so that positions with similar levels of authority and similar pay scales have comparable job titles, recognizing that academic functions and operations/administrative functions may require different sets of title classes. On the organizational chart, position comparable job title classes on the same horizontal level.
5. Develop a plan for moving toward consistency of job title classes across the district.
6. Improve full inclusion on the organizational chart by including principals, assistant principals/ administrative interns, and teachers.
7. Improve separation of line and staff functions on the organizational chart by positioning in the center of the chart the line of direct authority from the Board of Education to teachers.

A.4.4: Develop comprehensive job descriptions for all district positions that meet review criteria. Ensure that all job descriptions contain a clear statement of qualifications and that the chain of command identifies only one direct report. Ensure the listing job responsibilities contain clear statements about the position's linkage and responsibility to curriculum and instruction. Eliminate job descriptions for positions that are no longer included in the district's organizational structure.

A.4.5: Create a system for managing job descriptions and update all current job descriptions to assure that they meet review criteria for clear and accurate specifications of relationships in the district.

1. Develop a system of procedures and controls managing job descriptions:
 - Create a numbering system for positions so that changes to a position can be tracked over time, including changes to the job title.
 - Develop a filename protocol for electronic job description files.
 - Develop a file folder protocol for electronic storage of job descriptions.
 - Maintain a hard copy reference binder of the most recent versions of all current job descriptions. Develop a maintenance protocol for keeping the binder current.

- Develop a protocol to assure that changes to the title or reporting relationships of a position are accurately reflected in the job descriptions of the position's supervisor and subordinates and in any other job description that refers to the changed element.
 - Develop a system for tracking the dates of changes, board submissions, and approvals of job descriptions. Develop a maintenance protocol for keeping the system current.
 - Develop a protocol for archiving job descriptions that are no longer included in the district's organizational structure.
 - Develop a protocol for making improvements to the above protocols.
2. Assign one Human Resources clerical staff member the exclusive responsibility for carrying out the protocols described above. Cross-train one clerical staff member as a backup.
 3. Establish a definitive set of current job descriptions and bring their records into compliance with the above protocols within six months.
 4. Develop guidelines for creating job titles that are descriptive of the duties and that distinguish the position from similar positions.
 5. Add a "Subordinates" section to the job description template.
 6. Review and update all current job descriptions:
 - Assure that the supervisor and subordinates are listed with current job titles and that the reporting relationships match the organizational chart.
 - Assure that no position reports to more than one supervisor and that itinerant staff report to the correct central office supervisor.
 - Assure that the duties listed do not refer to obsolete positions, department names, programs, grants, etc.
 - Assure that the duties listed are appropriate for the job title and that the distinctive responsibilities of the job title are included, recognizing that boilerplate text needs to be modified to show distinctions among the duties for similar positions.
 - Assure that minimum essential requirements and desired requirements are specified and that they are labeled as such.
 - Assure that the qualifications listed are adequate for the position, recognizing that boilerplate text needs to be modified to show distinctions among the requirements for similar positions.
 - Assure that the three different headings in the qualifications section—"Knowledge, Abilities, and Skills"; "Education, Training, and Experience"; and "Certificate and License Requirements"—are correctly populated.
 - Assure that the position's functions with regard to the design or delivery of curriculum, if any, are stated explicitly and completely.

Restructuring the overall work of an organization is a complex task that requires careful planning, clear job descriptions, professional development, and support. It is recommended that these changes be in place within two years of receiving the System Review report.

Recommendation 5: Develop and implement a comprehensive curriculum management system that coordinates and focuses all curriculum management functions and tasks across and within departments and schools. Deeply align in content, context, and cognitive rigor current benchmark assessments and district-adopted resources to the Georgia Standards of Excellence; redesign and revise district curriculum to ensure guidance documents are of the highest quality and readily accessible through the Rubicon Atlas system.

A school district can improve curriculum design and delivery through a planned approach to change management. The change begins with development of comprehensive curriculum management processes and a sound plan to implement that system. The purpose of a comprehensive curriculum management process is to establish a systematic process for curriculum development in all areas, to coordinate supporting functions for overall efficiency and effectiveness, and to devise a process to monitor and increase the likelihood for the delivery of the planned curriculum. Essential for the improvement of student achievement scores is the implementation of a comprehensive curriculum management process that is guided by board policy and includes procedures to direct the design and delivery of curriculum. This process should ensure that a set of cohesive, vertically articulated learning objectives and student assessments constructed to reflect students' achievement of those objectives is in place.

Through curriculum management planning, a school district can achieve and maintain a quality, aligned curriculum that produces desired results. When the plan and its timelines are adhered to, the district is able to place quality curriculum in the hands of all teachers well in advance of state standards and assessment changes. Therefore, improved student performance is more likely to occur despite state changes. This planning must address not only technology integration but also issues related to students who are not demonstrating improved performance.

Once curriculum and assessments are designed, delivery occurs through classroom instruction that focuses on mastery by all students of the district's learning objectives. Alignment of all three ingredients—written, taught, and tested curriculum—is essential if district personnel are to be successful in raising student achievement to higher levels.

Richmond County School System board policy provides little guidance concerning curriculum management functions. There is no well-delineated policy requiring a comprehensive plan for curriculum development. There is evidence of curriculum planning, but the district lacks a comprehensive curriculum management plan (see [Finding 2.1](#)). The scope of the K-12 written curricula is not adequate: courses and content areas are not supported by board adopted curriculum documents to the degree necessary to ensure the clear direction of instructional planning (see [Finding 2.2](#)). The quality of Richmond County School System curriculum documents, on average, is not sufficient to provide information to teachers for effective delivery of the curriculum (see [Finding 2.3](#)). Internal consistency, which measures the congruence among design elements in a written curriculum and the degree of cognitive complexity of the district objectives, assessments, and resources, is not adequate to direct teaching of the written curriculum (see [Finding 2.4](#)). The Gifted and Talented and Special Education programs have seen an increase in student eligibility and must remain resilient to meet increasing demands and to support student success in the regular and specialized curriculum (see [Finding 2.5](#)).

Reviewers found that there is no comprehensive district assessment plan and that the scope of assessment is not adequate. Reviewers did not find a consistent approach and focus on utilizing student achievement data at all levels of the organization (see [Recommendation 6](#)).

Richmond County School System does not have sufficient planning for professional learning. Classroom observation data does not reflect the expectations expressed by district administrators for student-centered instruction. A full range of cognitive types and differentiation of instruction was not observed by the reviewers. Monitoring of delivery of the curriculum focuses on sequence rather than strategies (see [Recommendation 7](#)).

I. Curriculum Management Planning

The district needs a cohesive and comprehensive plan that directs the management of a quality, deeply aligned curriculum and its effective implementation in every classroom. Such management includes monitoring

its delivery to maintain equity and the district's philosophical and instructional priorities, and evaluating its effectiveness, using the deeply aligned formative, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessment tools. This plan should be developed in congruence with the Strategic Plan and should assure that the complex interworking of departments within the district is both efficient and effective in achieving district goals. This plan must also integrate and coordinate professional learning across the schools, specify and support identified methods (and purposes) for monitoring curriculum delivery, and reinforce the model for instructional delivery. These processes and procedures must be formalized and institutionalized in policy to ensure smooth transitions in the event of staff turnover and to facilitate orientation of new staff during future years of growth and expansion in the communities served.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Richmond County School System Board of Education for immediate consideration in refining curriculum management planning:

G.5.1: Direct the superintendent to draft a curriculum management planning policy for board review, revision, and adoption that provides direction for the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of curriculum. Require regular reporting to the board on curriculum effectiveness and include the following:

- A requirement for the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum.
- A requirement that all courses offered at every grade level, beginning with the four basic core courses, be supported by quality written curriculum, including:
 - The expectation of K-12 articulation of learning goals and objectives,
 - A consistent format for the design of quality curriculum documents, and
 - A process for integration of technology with the design and delivery of curriculum.
- A requirement for differentiation and program integration and alignment in the written curriculum.
- A requirement of equitable curriculum access and delivery to all students.
- Requirements that all courses offered at every grade level, beginning with the four basic core courses, are assessed by the district for student learning.
- A requirement for a curriculum management plan that includes procedures for the design and delivery of the curriculum, a periodic review of the curriculum, professional learning needs, timelines, responsibilities, monitoring, evaluation, and budgeting.
- Responsibilities for roles and oversight of the design and delivery of district curriculum clearly assigned and delineated in current job descriptions.
- The expectation of Pre-K-12 articulation of learning goals and objectives.
- The expectation that all courses offered be supported by written curriculum guides.
- Formal board adoption of all curricula prior to implementation.

G.5.2: Require that planning, particularly timelines, within and among departments be aligned to the curriculum management plan.

G.5.3: Require that school-level planning be linked to the implementation of the district's curriculum management plan and district goals.

G.5.4: Establish through policy that the district-adopted written curriculum and assessments are system-wide decisions to be tightly held and delivery of the written curriculum is to be loosely held.

G.5.5: Direct the superintendent to establish systematic procedures requiring central office staff members to monitor curriculum implementation in schools.

G.5.6: Approve funding for any program only as part of the budgeting process and after assurances that the program is based on identified student needs, is aligned with the district curriculum, and will be evaluated for positive effects on student achievement.

G.5.7: Commit sufficient financial resources to support the curriculum development cycle and the training needed to assist staff in designing and delivering high quality curriculum.

Administrative Functions: The following actions concerning curriculum management planning are recommended for completion within the next 12 months by the Richmond County School System Superintendent:

A.5.1: Assist the board of education in developing policies that define the roles of the board, district administrators, and teachers regarding curriculum. For example, the board is primarily responsible for adopting curriculum; administrators are responsible for attending to its development, evaluation, and revision, as well as for overseeing and supporting its implementation; teachers are responsible for delivering the adopted curriculum and sometimes assisting in the writing or reviewing of the curriculum, with support from campus personnel, outside consultants, or district administrators.

A.5.2: Develop a curriculum management plan for directing the design, delivery, monitoring, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. The plan should address the following areas (see Exhibit 2.1.2):

- **A philosophical framework for the design of the curriculum:** Identify what the underlying beliefs of district leadership are regarding how children learn, what constitutes effective teaching, what is the teacher's role, what is the student's role, and what is a district's role in assuring a student's learning? Is education a process, a goal, or both? Use this process to specifically identify what the district's and schools' respective roles are in providing each child with an education, and establish a picture of what an effective, engaging classroom should look like. The framework should include such directives as standards-based; results-based; competency-based; alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum; as well as the approaches that are expected in delivering the curriculum. Use the philosophical framework as the guiding force behind making decisions regarding curriculum and assessment design and instructional delivery.
- **A periodic cycle of review:** Ensure that every content area is addressed and has a written curriculum guide that facilitates effective, rigorous instruction; and that curriculum is kept up-to-date, particularly with changes in state standards or requirements, as well as testing modifications or changes. Establish and implement a four-year curriculum review cycle that includes the design of curriculum guides. Such a cycle should also establish the timeline for reviewing the alignment, quality, and rigor of adopted resources and materials, and direct their revision or replacement where and when they are inadequate. ALL resources that are referenced by the curriculum should be screened for rigor, relevance, availability to all campuses, and alignment to the expected content standards and formative and summative assessments.
- **Stages of curriculum development:** The stages of curriculum development and revision should be defined and clearly communicated. Stages might include: backloading and released item analysis; review for alignment with external/target assessments in all three dimensions (content, context, cognition); assessing the complexity, rigor, and measurability of objectives; placing objectives in an articulated, K-12 (Pre-K-12 if district offers preschool) sequence that expects mastery of content six to nine months before it is encountered on the state test or other high stakes tests; developing mastery-level projects and activities (such as any existing formative assessment tools) with accompanying rubrics; validating the existing learning targets, materials, and resources against multiple external sources, such as IB standards, AP standards, etc., or for rigor, cultural proficiency/inclusivity, technology integration, and student-centered, active learning; and creating a bank of high quality assessment items and formative/progress monitoring assessment instruments to support differentiated, individualized instruction. See *50 Ways to Close the Achievement Gap*¹ for more specific suggestions and information. The stages defined in the plan must particularly address the way student achievement data, teacher input, and monitoring data are used to evaluate the quality of the written curriculum. Revise the curriculum, accordingly.

¹ Downey, English, Poston, Steffy (2009). Corwin Press.

- **Roles and responsibilities:** Who is responsible for what task? How do departments with overlapping responsibilities (such as Professional Learning offices and the various Curriculum and Instruction divisions) work in concert to effect improvements in the written curriculum and to better support classroom instruction? This aspect of the plan delineates which tasks are housed where and at what level: which are classroom-based, which are school-based, which are department-based, and which are board-based. For example, it is the board's responsibility to determine the content of the educational program, in congruence with state law, and to approve and adopt the written curriculum. It is the teacher's role to deliver the curriculum, and the instructional coach's and principal's role to support teachers in delivering the curriculum, etc. Curriculum development and oversight should be the sole responsibility of the department of Curriculum and Instruction (staff).
- **Monitoring of classroom activities:** It should be the primary responsibility of the principals, with support from other designated positions (such as instructional coaches) to identify and promote productive practices that support learning, correct or eliminate practices that do not, identify weaknesses or gaps in the written curriculum, and determine professional learning needs. Clarify how monitoring and curriculum support responsibilities of any school-based personnel complement one another to prevent duplication of effort or possible conflicts in carrying out these supportive responsibilities.
- **Format components of curriculum documents:** For consistency in every content area, specify the components to be included in the curriculum that are nonnegotiable (tightly held) and the other aspects that are "fluid" (loosely held). The curriculum includes the criteria presented in Exhibit 2.3.3, and should include additional supports such as assessments and tools to enable differentiation and implementation of the district's instructional model in the classroom.
- **Curriculum approach:** Decide whether or not to use a backloaded approach, in which the curriculum is derived from high-stakes tested learnings (topological and/or deep alignment), and/or a frontloaded approach, which derives the curriculum from the state test (but in a refined, more specific format). Of critical importance is the emphasis on condensing and streamlining the standards for feasibility and clarity of focus.
- **Dimensions of content, context, and cognition:** Student objectives and student expectations should be available for every course offered in the district. Curriculum is designed and delivered based on what students should know and be able to do. Standards and learning targets should be derived from the Georgia Standards of Excellence, be reasonable in number so the student has enough time to master the content and practice it in authentic, rigorous contexts, be very specific so teachers clearly understand what mastery of these objectives look like and what the standard of performance is, and should be measurable (written in measurable terms).
- The curriculum should not only specify the content of the learning targets/student expectations, but also include multiple contexts and suggestions for activities and approaches that engage students in critical thinking and analytical cognitive types.
- **Assessment of curriculum effectiveness:** What are all the instruments that will be used to measure progress toward meeting goals, including the goal of students mastering curriculum objectives? How will the data be used, who will use them, and how will they be collected, analyzed, and disseminated to teachers, administrators, and concerned stakeholders? There must be an expectation for formative assessments that teachers can use whenever needed to evaluate student progress in mastering learning targets (or to determine whether students already know content about to be taught).
- **Differentiation of instructional approaches:** Curriculum guides should be revised so that they explicitly support, in an integrated fashion, district expectations for student use of technology and cognitive rigor. The curriculum (in a vertical alignment of the district-refined learning targets) must also support teachers' ability to select student learning targets at the right level of difficulty or for preteaching and reteaching needs. This ensures that those students who need prerequisite concepts, knowledge, and skills are moved ahead at an accelerated pace, so they don't fall further and further behind, and that students who have already mastered the objectives are also moved ahead at a challenging pace.

Whole group, one-size-fits-all approaches and reliance on test-like contexts cannot meet the majority of students' academic needs. District curriculum leaders must define what true academic differentiation and rigor looks like and how teachers can manage so many different skill levels and varying content knowledge in the classroom without holding certain students back or leaving other students behind. This is critical to meeting the needs of academically at-risk populations and must be addressed by the design of the curriculum in addition to all district documents that describe expectations for delivery.

- **Formative and summative evaluation of programs:** District administrators must provide the procedures they are expecting teachers and other administrators to follow when they use data to make instructional decisions and to strengthen the written curriculum. In the same way, district administrators must provide procedures for conducting evaluation of programs and their corresponding curriculum content. Both formative and summative evaluation of programs must be included in the procedures (see [Recommendation 6](#)).
- **Professional learning program:** Professional learning that trains teachers in the curriculum, its design, and how to deliver the curriculum in accordance with the board's performance expectations is absolutely critical. This includes support in the classroom to ensure that training and curriculum materials are properly used (see [Recommendation 7](#)).
- **Monitoring the delivery of curriculum:** Delineate the procedures, philosophy, and intent for supporting and monitoring the delivery of curriculum. Outline how specialists or coaches will work in concert with principals and academic content coordinators to support effective delivery of the curriculum. Multiple means of monitoring are suggested.
- **Communication plan:** Establish a plan for communicating among and across departments regarding the mandates of the curriculum management plan, process, goals, and products associated with curriculum design and delivery (which also includes professional learning and assessment) to maintain constancy of effort, focus, and continuity.

A.5.3: Make periodic reports to the board of education regarding the progress in managing curriculum district-wide, using data from formative and summative assessments, as well as from monitoring practices. The importance of quality, deeply-aligned written curriculum that raises expectations for student performance and supports those expectations with critical resources for teachers cannot be overstated; curriculum is a key component in ensuring better teaching and higher achievement. Planning for its development, implementation, and revision is essential for impact on student learning in every classroom.

II. Curriculum Design

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended for completion within the next five years by the Richmond County School System Superintendent:

A.5.4: Require that efforts to revise and refine the written curriculum begin immediately.

A.5.5: Assist the board of education in developing policy requiring that the curriculum reflect the principles and concepts of Deep Curriculum Alignment (see [Findings 2.3](#) and [2.4](#)).

A.5.6: Define what the curriculum still needs to be considered a “model” curriculum. Examine the weaknesses in the format and components identified in [Findings 2.3](#). The following components are minimum requirements:

1. **Objectives:** The current standards used in the district curriculum documents are the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE). District personnel must direct efforts to establish essential standards as “refinements” of the GSEs: a specific restatement of the intended skill or knowledge to be learned that is measurable, and at the mastery level, connected to the contexts in which it is to be learned and demonstrated, and the standard of performance by which a teacher knows mastery of that skill or knowledge has been achieved. Sub-objectives necessary to equip students for mastery of the essential standards/GSEs are coded currently by Richmond County School System staff as learning targets (“I Can” Statements).

The refined essential standards and learning targets in the vertical alignment (a scope and sequence where ALL levels are displayed) should link back to specific student expectations in the GSEs, but these specific essential standards and learning targets give the teacher more precise information of what mastery looks like and clearly define which essential standards and learning targets are assigned to which grade or instructional level (because the first grade learnings are clearly different from the second, and so on).

Within discrete units of study, the essential standards and learning targets included must be presented with priority designated. This allows teachers to know which skills, concepts, and knowledge within that chunk of time (unit, etc.) are the most critical—and assessed. This makes the curriculum manageable for teachers. It is better to focus on fewer learnings and address them more “deeply” than include an entire battery of essential standards and learning targets that teachers “might” touch on or cover. Teacher must also receive information on the time to be spent teaching each standard and learning target to mastery.

Review all essential standards and learning targets for evidence of rigor (see Depth of Knowledge in Exhibit 2.4.2); assure that all suggested assessment activities support the highest level of rigor.

Giving teachers a clear continuum of student learning from kindergarten through grade 12 also allows them to move students who are ready ahead at a more appropriate pace (beyond their grade level), since they know exactly what is next, just as they know what students have mastered when they come into their classroom. It also informs them where there may be gaps in a student’s learning so they can access the curriculum materials for that skill at the prior grade level.

2. **Assessment:** District pre- and post-tests, unit tests, and performance tasks are available throughout the curriculum documents. However, none are currently required across the district or collected systematically and district-wide for accountability or monitoring purposes.

The district administered new mandated language arts and mathematics benchmark assessments for the first time during the reviewers’ site visit. Science and social studies benchmark assessments are in the process of being created, with the goal of administering them in 2018-19. The alignment of these benchmark assessments to the standards that teachers are expected to teach to mastery must be indicated clearly in the curriculum documents. Additional progress monitoring and diagnostic assessments are needed to supplement the benchmark assessments, which are meant to be summative, so teachers have tools with which to continuously evaluate students’ progress and move them at the appropriate, individualized pace.

3. **Prerequisites/Scope and Sequence:** Place the essential standards and learning targets (K-12) within a scope and sequence document to allow teachers to easily discern what content and skills students come in with, and what content and skills they are responsible for seeing students leave with. Such a document helps distribute accountability and eliminates gaps and overlaps in student learning—an important factor in an educational environment that must make the most of the time allowed with students. This will also facilitate greater articulation of the curriculum from one level to the next and assure greater coordination across a single level or course, as the mapping out of objectives is already completed, and any “misinterpretation” of the nonspecific state standards/student expectations is avoided.
4. **Resources and Materials:** Every book, recommended professional resource, audiovisual aid, technological enhancement or program, and other resource should be linked (after ensuring alignment to the standards and that teachers have all that are necessary) to a specific objective or lesson within a unit. Currently, with the exception of the mathematics curriculum documents, the many resources provided are offered as potential resources, but teachers must sift through them to determine what is appropriate, and in some cases that requires too much time. Reviewers found that some of the district-adopted textbooks are not linked specifically to the Georgia Standards of Excellence. The number of resources provided is less of an issue than the fact that what they are suitable for is not clearly specified

nor linked to a discrete skill or objective. This is especially important if these resources are appropriate for differentiating content, products, or processes.

5. Suggested Strategies and Approaches: This is a critical part of achieving deep alignment and providing teachers, particularly inexperienced teachers, with support in deciding ways to teach the assigned objectives. Flexibility is always allowed in how teachers approach a given essential standard learning target, but this component provides teachers with invaluable, research-proven suggestions if they want or need them. The suggested lessons are a good foundation; however, additional support for how a classroom should be set up and how the block of time for each content area can be used will assist teachers with implementing such efforts as:

- Balanced literacy: components (rationale for each), gradual release of responsibility model, sample schedule for it within the literacy block, etc.;
- How to determine group members, what to teach, how to assess, typical activities/areas of focus; and
- Centers and student activities (all content areas) to facilitate and manage flexible learning arrangements (paired work, small group activities, etc.).

All suggested student activities should be reviewed to ensure they incorporate those *contexts* and *cognitive* types known to meet and exceed the tests in use (especially exceed those that are multiple choice in nature), and these strategies and suggested student activities and projects allow students to become familiar with the context and cognitive type before encountering them on the high stakes tests. This is the main tenet of the “doctrine of no surprises.”

A wide variety of authentic, student-centered contexts is recommended to ensure a broad-based, real life application of the concepts, skills, and knowledge so that students can connect personally with the learning, be more actively and cognitively engaged, and see the overall value of their learning.

Current suggested lessons are of varying quality. Classroom-based activities and strategies should always meet and exceed the rigor found on assessments. Students should be challenged and encouraged to take risks in the classroom, not on a high stakes assessment.

A.5.7: Make changes to the Rubicon Atlas curriculum management system and revise the primary documents that teachers use to plan their lessons. The Rubicon Atlas management system houses the district’s curriculum documents. As noted in Finding 2.3, Richmond County School System teachers expressed frustrations with navigating Rubicon Atlas. The system is not clearly and efficiently laid out so that teachers can easily access what they need in order to plan their lessons around the standards and learning targets they are expected to teach to mastery. Consider the following suggested formatting and content changes to the Rubicon system and to curriculum documents key to directing teaching and learning:

- Within Rubicon Atlas, house the District (D) curriculum in a separate location from the Individual (I) teacher curriculum. If possible, change the “Browse” tab to be labeled “Units of Study.” Eliminate all other choices listed currently under “Browse.”
- Design the Units of Study for each course as the primary documents that teachers use to plan their lessons. All other supporting documents will be linked in the Units of Study. The suggested format below is designed so teachers may see at one glance the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. For each Unit of Study document, organize key information in select columns (limit the number of columns so that they may be wider) as follows:

Column 1 List the tightly held Priority and Supporting standards and learning targets to be taught in the unit (revise current learning targets, “I Can” statements, to be more reasonable in number given instructional time allotted).

Column 2 Display the tightly held new required benchmark assessment and state/federal assessments and show alignment to each standard to be taught in the unit (Links to sample assessment

items aligned in content, context, and cognition to the GSEs could be included here). Remove other assessments currently in Rubicon and no longer required such as pre- and post-tests, unit tests, and performance tasks. Links to these tests may be included here but labeled as “optional.”

Column 3 Display specific district-adopted textbook (cite page numbers) and supplementary resources aligned with each standard to be taught in the unit. The current RCSS mathematics Curriculum Overview Instructional Resources and Materials column may be utilized as a model for this effort. Links to vocabulary for the unit may be inserted here as well.

Column 4 Include clearly labeled links to suggested teacher instructional strategies for key concepts to be taught in the unit, including links to any sample lesson plans that are aligned to the standards for the unit and that include ways to differentiate the learning for students who need more assistance and extend the learning for students who are ready.

Column 5 Include clearly labeled links to:

- The Pacing Guide/Curriculum Map for the school year (showing the days for each unit of study including the buffer days). These documents should clearly link to district-required assessments.
 - The K-12 scope and sequence for the subject (currently found in “References” under “Standards”). Teachers use this to see what students should have learned in prior grades/courses and what they will learn in the following grade/course. If there is no scope and sequence, skills prerequisite to the first Unit of Study must be stated in Column 1.
 - Other links to resources/strategies labeled as “Optional” or “Additional.”
- Eliminate all other documents currently on Rubicon Atlas that contain duplications of the content of the Units of Study curriculum documents and/or are not specifically aligned to the standards and learning targets students are expected to master.
 - Clearly label any links included in the Unit of Study document.
 - Design and deliver comprehensive and mandatory professional learning and on-the-job follow-up training for all teachers and administrators on the use of the revised Rubicon Atlas system and Units of Study.
 - Monitor use of the Rubicon Atlas management system regularly through teacher and administrator feedback and make adjustments to format and contents based on data collected.

A.5.8: Direct the staff to revise/prepare written curricula in alignment with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in content, cognition, and context for all taught subjects and courses, starting with core subjects/courses and expanding to non-core subjects/courses. Existing curriculum documents have a common format across subjects and grade levels. Key structures such as that of the current Curriculum Overview have the potential for refinement to attain deeper alignment (see [A.5.7](#) for format refinement suggestions).

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

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

A.5.9: Engage in a deep alignment analysis (considering the dimensions of content, cognition, and context) to ensure the objectives, resources, and strategies included in curriculum guides are deeply aligned to the tests in use. Research the methods and ideas presented in the book *Deep Curriculum Alignment*, by English and Steffy

(2001), or consider contracting for a deep curriculum alignment training (contact CMSi for more information) to gain the skills necessary to analyze and deconstruct released test items, prepare for current and future tests in use, and more successfully anticipate the direction in which the test is moving. This will assist the district in predicting where the state assessments and other external assessments are going and increase student success on current and future forms of the tests in use, by ensuring that the content, context, and cognitive types encountered on any tests are an integral part of daily instruction without compromising rigor, active student engagement, and hands-on problem solving.

A.5.10: Link/reference formative assessments (diagnostic, progress-monitoring, pre- and post-tests) to the evidence of assessment section of the curriculum guides. For each assessment instrument, specify when it is appropriate/desirable to be used, its main purpose, and how to use the data it yields. For performance-based measures (projects, essays, etc.), include specific rubrics with exemplars that teachers can use to quantify students' learning. Identify those assessments for which the data will be entered electronically and monitored at the system and/or building level. Some of them should be open for teacher selection, but ALL should be rigorous and incorporate a wide variety of contexts—not just multiple choice. Emphasis should be given to assessments that engage students in writing and demand evidence of thinking.

Certain assessments must provide teachers with specific data on what skills, concepts, and knowledge students have mastered and where there are gaps, so that instructional decisions may be made that target those deficiencies and to ensure teaching is never redundant. The assessments should be concise and yield the needed information in a very brief span of time—a few days, at the most. Ideally, all assessments could be quickly scored at each campus, so teachers receive the data immediately and can adjust instruction accordingly. In addition, return data from district-wide formative assessments to teachers in a timely manner. The battery of assessments will allow teachers to monitor every individual student's progress toward mastering the intended curriculum, so each student's performance on the state tests will no longer be a surprise or a guessing game.

A.5.11: Establish a process to ensure that all texts, instructional materials, and ancillary resources for all courses that are suggested through the curriculum guides and provided to teachers by district personnel, including interventions and adopted programs, are screened for quality, rigor, and alignment (in all three dimensions) to the curriculum and with district expectations, prior to presenting to the board for adoption.

A.5.12: Prepare for curriculum implementation. At least six months to one year prior to rolling out any new or comprehensively revised curriculum, do the following:

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

III. Curriculum Delivery

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended for completion within the next five to seven years by the Richmond County School System Superintendent:

A.5.13: Work in concert with professional learning personnel to prepare trainings for teachers in using and effectively implementing the curriculum (see [A.5.7](#)). Issue a directive that planning within and across departments and schools will be in concert with the curriculum management plan, especially in the area of providing timely professional learning necessary for effective curriculum delivery.

A.5.14: Establish a committee comprised of key district instructional leaders to develop a district-adopted instructional model for delivering the curriculum. Provide teachers and administrators comprehensive and job-embedded professional learning on implementation of the instructional model (see [Recommendation 7](#)).

A.5.15: Define purposes for monitoring delivery of curriculum. Specify what type of data is to be collected for each purpose, and with what methods. Indicate which data are intended to be collected district-wide for district-level feedback (such as for determining the effectiveness of a professional learning initiative), and which data

are to be used for teacher evaluation, coaching, and instructional improvement within the building. Establish routine procedures requiring central office staff to monitor proper implementation of curriculum.

Consider classroom trend data collection and the systematic collection of student work for purposes of calibrating the work. Classroom trend data collection is simply collecting observed data frequently over time to see if dominant teacher and student activities, the objectives taught, and the student work displayed reflect the district's instructional model and expectations for rigor. Systematic collection of student work is a method for collecting student work to calibrate it against district and state standards and benchmarks to check alignment and determine whether the work is on, above, or below level. Both sets of data can provide valuable district-level feedback for district decision-making processes (see [Recommendations 6](#) and [7](#)).

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

Recommendation 6: Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for student assessment and program evaluation that will provide meaningful data for decision making and support improved student achievement. Require systematic evaluation of major programs and interventions linked with evidence of student learning to provide feedback for decisions regarding program selection, continuation, expansion, modification, or termination.

It is imperative that school districts develop a written comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan to support effective implementation of a guaranteed and viable curriculum. This comprehensive plan will help to facilitate test analysis and interpretation and will formalize a process that will serve to eliminate fragmentation and program information gaps. Informed curriculum decisions become possible when data from student assessment can be analyzed and considered for identifying strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. Without extensive and reliable information, curriculum decisions are left to opinion or speculation of the personnel involved in decision making. School districts that are successful in raising student achievement have a clear direction and focused strategies that provide all staff with the knowledge and skills on how to analyze data results and use those results in making sound instructional decisions.

The reviewers determined that Richmond County School System does not have a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan to provide the feedback necessary to support sound decisions regarding the design and delivery of the curriculum. The scope of student assessment was not sufficient to evaluate the taught curriculum in core and non-core courses and to provide teachers with sufficient formative data to guide day-to-day lesson planning (see [Findings 4.1](#) and [4.2](#)). Assessment trends indicate that students' overall performance is below state and national averages. Student performance on the *SAT*, *ACT*, and *AP* exams is below state and national averages (see [Finding 4.3](#)). The reviewers did not find any plans for, or expectations, that programs and interventions be selected for implementation based on a careful analysis of available research and the relationship to the adopted curriculum. Programs and interventions to improve student achievement have not been monitored or evaluated for long-term effectiveness in terms of student achievement. Without an established plan for evaluation programs, district leadership does not have a framework for the development of new initiatives or the elimination of unsuccessful programs (see [Findings 4.4](#) and [5.2](#)).

In order to strengthen a comprehensive plan for student assessment and program evaluation in Richmond County School System, the following actions are recommended to the board and superintendent.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Board of Education for the Richmond County School System:

G.6.1: Direct the superintendent to prepare for review a policy requiring the development of a comprehensive student assessment plan. The policy should include the following:

- Description of the philosophical framework for the design of the student assessment program and direction for both formative and summative assessment of the curriculum by course and grade.
- Requirement that formative, diagnostic assessment instruments are aligned to the district curriculum and are administered to students frequently to give teachers information for instructional decision making.
- Requirement that curriculum documents model types of assessment approaches to be used on an ongoing basis to monitor learning.
- Requirement that a pool of quality assessment items and tasks be available to teachers of all core courses (at a minimum) and all non-core courses to use diagnostically during instruction.
- Requirement that district staff provide secure formative assessment tools that are aligned with curriculum and used to measure mastery of key content after adequate opportunity to learn.
- Direction for use of data to analyze group, school, program, and system student trends. Include an expectation that when achievement gaps are evident in the data, aggressive action must be taken to intervene.
- An expectation for ongoing formative and summative program evaluation with an explicit set of formative and summative procedures to carry out this expectation, and provisions for regular formative and summative assessment of all levels of the system (organization, program, and student).

G.6.2: Direct the superintendent to address the reviewers' analysis of the Characteristics of a Comprehensive Student Assessment and Program Evaluation Plan as described in **G.6.1**.

G.6.3: Direct the superintendent to develop a board policy that provides a framework for program evaluation. This policy should include the following:

- Directives to have program evaluation procedures in place.
- Procedures for program evaluation.
- Use of multiple measures.
- Frequency of program evaluation.
- Clarity of evaluation procedures.
- Expectations for program reports.
- Use of program reports/evaluations to support timely decisions regarding program effectiveness.

G.6.4: Direct the superintendent to prepare for board review a comprehensive program evaluation plan as described in policy under Action **G.6.3**.

G.6.5: Require the superintendent to make regular reports to the board regarding the status of student performance on state and local assessments. Such reports must identify growth patterns, persistent gaps, and a formal evaluation of actions implemented to close achievement gaps.

G.6.6: Require the superintendent to make regular reports to the board regarding the status of district programs in terms of impact on student achievement.

G.6.7: Direct that all job descriptions related to assessment be reviewed for congruence with the student and program assessment plan.

G.6.8: Commit adequate resources to support the implementation of comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation planning and intervention.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the superintendent of the Richmond County School System:

A.6.1: Assist the school board in developing a policy that provides direction for development and implementation of a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan as described in governance action **G.6.1**.

A.6.2: As directed by the board, draft a new comprehensive plan for student assessment and program evaluation. This plan should include the Characteristics of a Comprehensive Student Assessment and Program Evaluation Plan that are listed and discussed in **Exhibit 4.1.1**, which are also listed below:

- Describes the philosophical framework for the design of the student assessment plan and directs both formative and summative assessment of the curriculum by course and grade in congruence with board policy. Expects ongoing formative and summative program evaluation; directs use of data to analyze group, school, program, and system student trends.
- Includes an explicit set of formative and summative assessment procedures to carry out the expectations outlined in the plan and in board policy. Provides for regular formative and summative assessment at all levels of the system (organization, program, student).
- Requires that formative, diagnostic assessment instruments that align to the district curriculum be administered to students frequently to give teachers information for instructional decision making. This includes information regarding which students need which learner objectives to be at the appropriate level of difficulty (e.g., provides data for differentiated instruction).
- Provides a list of student assessment and program evaluation tools, purposes, subjects, type of student tested, timelines, etc.
- Identifies and provides direction on the use of diverse assessment strategies for multiple purposes at all levels—district, program, school, and classroom—that are both formative and summative.
- Specifies the roles and responsibilities of the central office staff and school-based staff for assessing all students using designated assessment measures, and for analyzing test data.
- Specifies the connection(s) among district, state, and national assessments.
- Specifies the overall assessment and analysis procedures used to determine curriculum effectiveness.
- Requires aligned student assessment examples and tools to be placed in curriculum and assessment documents.
- Specifies how equity issues will be identified and addressed using data sources; controls for possible bias.
- Identifies the component of the student assessment system that will be included in program evaluation efforts and specifies how these data will be used to determine continuation, modification, or termination of a given program.
- Provides for appropriate trainings for various audiences on assessment and the instructional use of assessment results.
- Delineates responsibilities and procedures for monitoring the administration of the comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan and/or procedures.
- Establishes a process for communicating and training staff in the interpretation of results, changes in state and local student achievement tests, and new trends in the student assessment field.
- Specifies creation of an assessment data system that allows for the attribution of costs by program, permitting program evaluations to support program-based cost-benefit analyses.

A.6.3: Assist the school board in developing a policy that provides direction for development and implementation of a comprehensive program evaluation plan as described in Action **G.6.3**.

A.6.4: As directed by the board, draft a comprehensive plan for program evaluation. This plan/process should include the Characteristics of a Quality Program Evaluation Plan that are listed and discussed in Exhibit 4.4.1:

- Specifies procedures for program evaluation, including needs assessment and formative and summative evaluation methods.
- Expects multiple measures designed to obtain quality data about the goals and objectives of the program and for the measures to be accurate and reliable.
- Provides for multiple measures of data collection, resulting in both quantitative and qualitative data.
- Directs ongoing formative assessments for the first two years for any new program implementation and summative evaluation at the end of the third year.
- Directs that all existing programs undergo a program evaluation at least every three years and an assessment of both the quality of implementation (fidelity) and program impact (learner outcomes).
- Expects procedures used in the evaluation process to be clearly described.
- Specifies that program evaluation reports clearly describe the program, including its context, purposes, and procedures.
- Expect that reports be provided in an expedient manner which identify program strengths and weaknesses, include findings and recommendations for the continuation, modification, or termination of programs so timely decisions regarding program effectiveness can be made.
- Expects that all proposals for all program initiatives include needs assessment data, a description of formative and summative evaluations, and data collection procedures.
- Directs that program evaluation designs are practical, ethical, cost-effective, and adequately address relevant political issues.

A.6.5: Continue to emphasize the data-driven decision-making philosophy that is currently evolving, and model this philosophy in the day-to-day operations of the system. Consider incorporating the following factors in your data work:

- Data quality (e.g., using multiple measures and accurate data).
- Data capacity (e.g., data accessibility and analysis skills).
- Data culture (e.g., belief about the value of data in enhancing teaching and learning and an emphasis on collaboration).

These three factors all need to work in tandem.

A.6.6: Establish clear expectations for administrators and teachers in board policies, job descriptions, and personnel appraisal systems for the use of assessment data for diagnosing student needs, evaluating student progress, intervening to close achievement gaps, determining curriculum and program effectiveness, and making decisions in all district operations in order to demonstrate equal progress and success for all students.

A.6.7: Establish criteria for needs assessment and curriculum alignment in program adoption processes. Expect all program evaluations (prior to adoption, and during implementation) to provide a cost-benefit analysis and recommendations for continuation, expansion, modification, or termination. Expect all program evaluations to include evidence of benefit to student academic achievement.

A.6.8: Hold district office administrators, principals, and teachers accountable for using student assessment data and program evaluation findings when making budget and other programmatic recommendations and decisions.

A.6.9: Continue data training sessions and establish short-term and long-term goals to train administrators and teachers to access student data, analyze data, and utilize data to impact teaching and learning. Require training for all teachers, instructional staff, and administrators that is aligned to district-wide efforts to increase

achievement for all students. Monitor on a continual basis and provide ongoing periodic reports to the school board.

A.6.10: Direct district curriculum and instructional leaders to evaluate the level of use of assessment data within the schools and determine how well these data are communicated, understood, and used to guide instruction and program implementation, and to improve student achievement.

A.6.11: Develop a common vocabulary concerning critical concepts for assessment and data. A shared vocabulary will help minimize misunderstandings and conflicting assumptions among school personnel.

A.6.12: Ensure that leading as well as lagging data indicators are included in all school improvement plans. Track the leading data indicators and make mid-course corrections, if necessary.

A.6.13: Continue to implement the APIM (Assess, Plan, Implement, Monitor) process as the data analysis framework for school improvement planning. As the process continues, increase the focus and critical analysis on the **monitoring** aspect to measure progress of initiatives regarding the impact on student achievement.

These recommendations, if implemented, will provide the Richmond County School System a vehicle for ensuring consistent, appropriate use of data to assess student progress and evaluate programs and interventions, analyze results, and ensure that such results are used to make sound decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, and programs.

Finally, it is recommended that appropriate policies and regulations be developed and/or expanded over the next 12 months to support the development of a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan or process. Full development and implementation should be in place within the next two years or less.

Recommendation 7: Design and implement a comprehensive professional learning process that provides for coordination with the curriculum management plan and the student assessment plan, and is focused on producing effective instructional practices associated with high levels of student achievement.

A cohesive and coordinated professional learning plan is committed to aligning a system's resources to effectively and efficiently implement the district's written curriculum and support training in instructional strategies to meet identified teacher and student needs. Such a plan also includes ongoing evaluation of professional development design and delivery to determine whether the training has led to improved student learning and achievement. An effective professional development program is coordinated at the district level, supported during implementation, and monitored to ensure institutionalization over time. The professional learning program is focused and prioritized to make the best use of limited employee training time and fiscal resources.

The mission of a quality professional development program is to increase the capacity of staff members to improve student achievement. This is accomplished by developing the skills of teachers, administrators, and support personnel in the effective delivery of the curriculum. Professional learning is a key factor in ensuring the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. Special emphasis must be placed on training teachers and principals to employ instructional strategies that meet the needs of all students and to implement the adopted instructional model to support differentiation and student-responsive teaching. Additionally, effective professional development must be coordinated with the use of technology in the district to ensure that the technology tools provided are a springboard for quality instructional delivery that engages students in high levels of cognition and alignment with the level of expected performance on assessments.

The Richmond County School System has an active professional learning program. Many courses are provided for staff. The professional learning plan does not provide the guidance necessary to ensure that professional learning programming is consistently implemented, monitored, or evaluated. The plan does not define a process that aligns programmatic offerings to improvements in student achievement. As currently developed, many professional learning sessions are offered during the instructional day, which takes staff away from their work assignment. The characteristics of an effective professional learning plan are not evident in the district plan; however, they are often embedded in other district documents (see [Findings 1.2](#), [1.3](#), [3.1](#), [3.2](#), and [3.3](#)).

This recommendation provides for a comprehensive professional learning plan with central administrative guidance to focus professional learning activities based on district goals and coordination at all levels of the district. Implementation of this recommendation is best accomplished over a two- to three-year period. The development and implementation of a professional learning plan is partially dependent upon the successful implementation of a curriculum management plan and student assessment and program evaluation plan (see [Recommendations 5 and 6](#)).

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended for the Richmond County School System Board of Education.

G.7.1: Direct the superintendent to draft for board review, revision, and approval a revision to *Board Policy GAD* that provides for centralized control and direction of professional learning in the district. *Board Policy GAD* should include:

- Expect professional growth regardless of staff title or responsibilities.
- Require for a comprehensive professional learning plan for all district employees that is linked directly to district strategic goals, is data-informed, and differentiates requirements based on the employee's position, knowledge, and existing skills.
- Require for systematic evaluation of all professional development offerings and programs on a routine basis so that less effective courses or programs are revised or eliminated.
- Provide for centralized control and direction of professional development in the district.
- Incorporate characteristics of the 18 Quality Criteria for Staff Development in [Exhibit 3.1.2](#) and should address the deficiencies identified in [Finding 3.1](#).

G.7.2: Direct the superintendent to develop a multi-year professional learning plan and implement a professional development program that ensures district-wide consistency, continuity, and quality control. The plan should evolve from consideration of at least the following factors:

- Congruency with the district's staff appraisal data,
- Curriculum monitoring data,
- Student assessment data,
- Program evaluation data,
- Student equity needs,
- Needs for system-wide use of assessment data to influence decision making,
- Needs for effectively integrating the use of technology as both a teaching and learning tool,
- District strategic priorities, and
- Staff requests for assistance in curriculum or classroom management needs.

The plan should include an evaluation of the effectiveness of each activity to enhance student achievement. This evaluation component will help determine whether the professional learning program is achieving the desired results.

G.7.3: Direct the superintendent to revise administrative job descriptions to clarify roles and responsibilities and to require that all professional learning be coordinated through a centralized administrator.

G.7.4: Direct the superintendent to report annually on evaluation of professional development initiatives in terms of improved student achievement and demonstrated teacher use and competence in the classroom. Require the annual report to include:

- An overview of the process used to determine the needs for professional learning.

- A review of named professional learning needs, including their connection to student learning and achievement.
- A review of the planning process used to identify and coordinate the best approaches to address student needs, including the process used to identify what knowledge and skills are needed for teachers and/or administrators to address those student needs.
- A review of the major learning outcomes the district and schools determine necessary to accomplish from the training activities.
- A review of the major learning activities offered at both the district and campus levels.
- An update on the percentage of targeted teachers who participated in high quality professional learning by content and program areas.
- A review of the evaluation procedures used to measure the effectiveness of professional learning activities in relation to planned teacher and student outcomes.
- Expected changes to professional learning based on effectiveness outcomes and changing student achievement data.

G.7.5: Commit adequate resources for implementation of a comprehensive professional learning plan.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of the Richmond County School System.

A.7.1: Prepare for board consideration revisions to *Board Policy GAD* to direct development and implementation of a comprehensive written professional learning plan focused on the effective delivery of the adopted curriculum that aligns with the district's long-range strategic plan. Through policy, set the following expectations:

- Alignment of a mission for professional learning with that of the district and a focus on organizational change consistent with district strategic goals.
- A framework that takes a long-view planning approach and focuses on organizational change with professional development efforts in line with district goals.
- A norm of continuous improvement and learning for all employees.
- Provision for district-wide, campus-based, and individual development in a systemic manner.
- Administrators to serve as staff developers of those supervised.
- Data-based analysis of needs.
- A focus on proven research-based approaches with demonstrated effectiveness in increasing productivity.
- Provision of support for all three phases of the change process—initiation, implementation, and institutionalization—that require provision of on-the-job application and follow-up training and support necessary to cement new learning.
- Use of various staff development and adult learning approaches, all based on understanding of adult learning and development.
- Ongoing evaluation using multiple information sources, focusing on all levels of the organization, and based on actual changed behavior.
- System-wide oversight and coordination.
- Provision for necessary funding to carry out staff development goals.

A.7.2: Develop administrative rules and regulations that reference professional learning to ensure they are aligned with the professional learning board policy referenced above. Ensure that administrative guidelines focus on increasing the capacity of staff to deliver the written curriculum and enhance student achievement. Establish an expectation for the development of a multi-year professional learning plan aligned with the

district's long-range strategic plan. Establish a professional learning committee to guide development of a comprehensive, multi-year professional learning plan, and assist in the evaluation of professional learning in the district. Specify that the professional development plan include the following elements:

- Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.
- Requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.
- Requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration.
- Uses disaggregated student achievement data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.
- Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.
- Prepares educators to apply research to decision making.
- Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goals.
- Applies knowledge about human learning and change.
- Provides educators with knowledge and skills to collaborate.
- Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students; to create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments; and to hold high expectations for students' academic achievement.
- Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.
- Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.
- Provides for a minimum of 50 hours of planned professional learning per year for all faculty and administrators.

A.7.3: Design a multi-year professional development plan that addresses the Quality Criteria for Staff Development, as well as the following:

- Incorporation of a multi-year plan that is reviewed and updated annually in response to student achievement data and changing district and school level professional learning needs.
- Congruence with the district's staff appraisal system.
- Ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of professional development initiatives, using multiple data sources.
- Employment of data from curriculum monitoring, staff performance appraisals, and annual reviews; student assessment and achievement; student equity issues; program evaluations; and staff requests for assistance in curriculum implementation or classroom management needs.
- Classroom follow-up support to ensure transfer of learning from professional development programs.
- The multi-year professional development plan should evolve from consideration of the following factors:
 - The goals established in the district's long-range strategic plan;
 - The goals established in individual campus improvement plans;
 - District policy that directs staff development;
 - Congruency with the district's staff evaluation criteria;
 - Findings of campus administrators in annual staff evaluations and ongoing conferences;
 - Curriculum monitoring data;

- Analysis of past student achievement trend data;
- Staff requests for assistance in curriculum or classroom management tasks;
- The design of the district's curriculum management system;
- The design of the district's curriculum;
- The design of assessments used to measure student achievement;
- Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of professional development initiatives, using multiple data sources;
- Clear goals and purposes for professional development based on a comprehensive analysis of district performance data;
- Classroom-based follow-up support to ensure transference of teaching strategies into effective classroom practices; and
- District linkages to the budget development process.

A.7.4: Limit the district professional development program to no more than four areas aligned with the district long-range improvement plan focused on increasing the capacity of teachers and administrators to deliver the written curriculum and enhance student achievement.

A.7.5: Provide a framework to coordinate all professional development efforts in the district to ensure that professional development efforts are aligned with identified district goals and needs. All program efforts need a well-designed process so that the system is not overloaded by building and department level initiatives that may not be coordinated and that compete for limited financial resources, time, and attention of teachers. The professional development framework should also address the facilitated transfer of learning and the use of regular and constructive feedback to inform individual progress.

A.7.6: Update the job description for the Director of Professional Learning to include responsibility for directing, coordinating, and facilitating the development and implementation of a multi-year district and school level professional development plan. The Director of Professional Learning should work collaboratively with the Director of Curriculum and Assessment and the Director of Accountability to identify effective instructional strategies in support of the adopted curriculum; assist building administrators in the effective monitoring of curriculum delivery; and serve as a catalyst for innovation in the use of technology for delivery of instruction.

A.7.7: Update district and building administrator job descriptions to clarify their professional development roles and responsibilities related to implementing a planned and coordinated professional learning program.

A.7.8: Develop a professional learning program specifically for building administrators and curriculum coordinators in the following areas:

- Instructional leadership to promote student achievement.
- The collection and analysis of assessment data to be used in decision making about curriculum and implementation of appropriate interventions.
- Instructional strategies and core competencies for teaching a demographically diverse student population, including gifted, economically disadvantaged, and special needs students.
- Generic instructional strategies and content-specific instructional strategies.
- Strategies for ensuring alignment of the written, taught, and assessed curriculum.
- Strategies for monitoring curriculum delivery.
- Engaging teachers in reflective conversations about their work.
- Strategies for increasing and maximizing academic learning time.
- Strategies for effective student-teacher engagement.

A.7.9: In administrator meetings, regularly provide training in curriculum content, assessment, and instructional strategies in order to enhance and refine administrators' capacity in monitoring implementation of the district's curriculum and instructional interventions.

A.7.10: Incorporate into a multi-year professional learning plan training and support for teachers and administrators to develop their abilities to examine their own cultural values, develop an understanding of the values of their students, and apply what they learn about cultural differences to the improvement of classroom practices.

A.7.11: Develop a professional learning program specifically for support staff in the district.

A.7.12: Ensure that annual operating budgets contain sufficient funding to implement the professional development plan.

A.7.13: Provide an annual written report to the board on progress toward the goals identified in the professional learning plan based on levels of student achievement.

When fully implemented, this recommendation will sharpen the district's focus on professional learning that is designed to enhance the professional capacity of teachers by connecting content and pedagogy with the impact of the instructional practices of teachers on student achievement. A professional learning plan should be developed within one year of receiving this System Review report.

Recommendation 8: Design and implement a comprehensive, curriculum driven budget development process that emphasizes cost-benefit analysis, linking district and school resources toward the attainment of strategic priorities and curricular goals.

Tight connectivity between the budget process and curricular goals is critical. When expenditures are linked to the school system's educational priorities, the school system's design and delivery of the curriculum is greatly enhanced. Alignment of resources provides a system that produces the effective and efficient attainment of desired results. A comprehensive, systemic budget development process that is curriculum based helps ensure the budget represents the school system's strategic priorities toward increased student achievement. Additionally, cost-benefit analysis of desired results allows for the opportunity to reallocate funds to enhance the attainment of curricular goals and strategic priorities.

The school system's current budget development process has placed the district in a position of financial concern due to a significant decline in its fund balance since 2015. Reviewers found no evidence of efforts to tightly connect student achievement or program performance feedback to budgetary decisions. Therefore, regardless of whether or not a program is accomplishing the desired results, the program continues to be funded. Budgetary programs are funded based on school or district decisions with no connectivity to the school system's curricular goals or student achievement. Without data acquired from a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis, programs cannot be purposively selected, changed, or strategically abandoned from the current teaching and learning environment. Board policies provide no direction regarding budgetary decision making (see [Findings 1.3, 4.4, and 5.1](#)).

Reviewers recommend steps to bring the budget development process in line with expectations for a comprehensive curriculum-driven budget process, improving tight linkages to district and campus resources in attaining curricular goals and strategic priorities.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended for the Richmond County School System Board of Education:

G.8.1: Direct the superintendent to design and prepare for board adoption a comprehensive set of financial policies that link costs to program results and provide safeguards ensuring that financial planning is based on curricular goals and strategic priorities. Policies need to require performance standards and benchmarks that help to ensure cost-effectiveness. Policies will serve as guidelines to the board and superintendent for the efficient and effective allocation of district resources. Use the criteria in [Exhibit 5.1.8](#) as a guide.

G.8.2: Direct the superintendent to establish a three-year timeline to bring about systemic change in the school system's financial decision-making process.

G.8.3: Provide the superintendent with a timeline and decision-making framework that will provide direction and parameters for developing an annual operating budget. The decision-making framework should include the following components:

- A statement outlining the board's understanding of current context and realities as they exist in the Richmond County School System. The statement should include the following:
 - A summary of the current issues, external trends, and challenges confronting the school district;
 - A summary of progress made toward attainment of the board's strategic goals; and
 - A multi-year budget assumption, which includes enrollment, revenue, expenditures, and fund balance trends and projections.
- A broad statement of the board's desired results as a direct response to the expenditure of district financial resources. This should be a statement of desired ends and not a statement defining the means to achieve the ends.
- A statement identifying strategies or actions that should not be used by the district in attaining desired ends and goals.
- It is recommended that the timeline and decision-making framework be established at least 16 months before formal adoption of the annual operating budget.
- It is recommended that the budget timeline and decision-making framework be publicly communicated, including posting to the district's website.

G.8.4: Direct the superintendent to include a cost-benefit analysis for each program in the district, with an evaluation cycle (every three years as a minimum) to ensure programs and interventions used in the school system are effective in achieving desired student achievement results. The cost analysis should include setting a minimum required student achievement standard in order to maintain a program/intervention.

G.8.5: Review and revise, as necessary, the district Strategic Plan (strategic/long-range planning process) to ensure that budget planning is linked to multi-year strategic goals.

G.8.6: Adopt a comprehensive set of financial policies that require continuous auditing of the district's financial status and establishment of a link between budget allocations and their impact on individual curriculum programs. Actual costs and benefits should be assigned to the curricular areas to provide a more detailed record of decision making and planning.

G.8.7: Retain within the role of the superintendent the oversight of financial decision making, along with the responsibility of overseeing the mission of the organization. This ensures a comprehensive picture of the system as well as connectivity between program and budget.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended for consideration to the Superintendent of Richmond County School System.

A.8.1: Develop, for board consideration, a comprehensive set of financial policies that support clear linkages between district programs/curricular priorities and financial decisions.

A.8.2: Design strategies for including budget decision making as part of the overall systematic planning process. Budget development is not an independent task performed annually. Financial planning needs to be an ongoing process to ensure that budget allocations are based on curricular priorities and program objectives as may be specified in the strategic plan.

A.8.3: Ensure that a comprehensive system of student assessment and program evaluation, as described in Recommendation 6, is fully implemented to ensure the availability of data that can be used in making decisions regarding the allocation of financial resources.

A.8.4: Establish procedures and prepare documents that communicate the budget process and goals throughout the system, and require that budget and staffing proposals reflect a direct connection to established district goals. Establish a communications link during regularly scheduled leadership meetings to enhance the sharing of budget/cost information, achievement data, and evaluation of program effectiveness. Such linkages will facilitate cost-benefit analysis of programs and help inform future budget decisions.

A.8.5: Appoint a Budget Planning Team that will be responsible for developing budget options organized by program, evaluating incremental levels of funding for programs, rank ordering program increments for funding, and recommending a priority ranking of program budget increments to the superintendent and board within the framework and assumptions established by the board. The Budget Planning Team must include key district leadership, teachers, and principals.

A.8.6: Develop a three-year plan for full implementation of curriculum-driven budgeting, and establish linkages with performance data. The major steps of implementing curriculum-driven budgeting include the following:

- Identify various educational activities or programs, and group them into broad areas of need or purpose served. Examples could include elementary instruction, middle school instruction, high school instruction, instructional support programs, special education services, district administration, professional development, technology, and maintenance. Divide the organization into the most logical, but least number necessary, subgroups based on the existing operating structure.
- Assemble all budgetary information related to each curricular or program area identified. Combine assessment information on student achievement, coupled with related leading and lagging performance indicators, to permit a more accurate evaluation of the connection between expenditures and results. Clarify criteria for establishing basic and needs-driven allocation planning for the various divisions, and communicate those to budget developers.
- Build budget “packages” within each of the subgroups by the priority with which they deliver the objectives of the area of need or purpose. For example, any given program could be defined and packaged into units, which provide programs and services at (1) 90% of last year’s budget, (2) 100% of last year’s budget, and (3) 105% of last year’s budget level. These percentages will differ over time as the system becomes more sophisticated and data-driven.
- Assign the responsibility of preparing budget packages for each of the identified subgroups to specific administrators. Each budget package needs to represent a level of activity that builds sequentially on the previous package. Budget packages should be concise and meaningful and be developed with broad district-wide input.
- Use organizational performance data and appropriate involvement of staff (including principals, directors, coordinators, and teachers) to define current and desired levels of services and program objectives.
- Attach a goal statement to each program area or package that states the purpose it serves. Each budget request shall be described to permit evaluation of the consequences of funding or non-funding in terms of performance results.
- Compile goal statements and budget packages and give them to appropriate staff to gather data to describe service levels, program outputs, and cost benefits.
- Compile budget packages, including costs, into a worksheet with instructions for evaluating and ranking.
- Compile past cost information, especially expenditures as a percentage of the budget, with performance data and make recommendations to guide preliminary budget-building estimates.
- Give budget packages to the Budget Planning Team for evaluation and ranking. Budget requests need to compete with each other for funding based upon evaluation or priority of need and relationship to achievement of program effectiveness. Publish compiled results in a tentative budget and program packages listed in order of ranked priority.

- Prior to finalizing budget options for consideration by the board, seek input on preliminary budget options from key district stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and the community. Refine budget options in consideration of input received from stakeholder groups.
- Build the capital outlay and improvement budget from a zero base each year. Develop multi-year projections for capital improvements, including life-cycle replacement and preventive maintenance costs. Prioritize needs based on health, safety, and impact on the learning environment and protection of capital investments. Capital needs change annually and do not reoccur once met and paid for.
- Finalize budget allocations based on the decision framework established by the board, including board approved budget assumptions and the program funding priorities and ranking by the Budget Planning Team, and recommend to the board.
- The board reviews recommendations, evaluates priorities, establishes which program and services are to be funded and at what level, and adopts the budget.

For additional help in designing and implementing curriculum-driven (performance-based) budgeting, consider this reference: *School Budgeting in Hard Times: Confronting Cutbacks and Critics*. (Corwin Press, 2011).

A.8.7: Provide ongoing training and consultation to all district administrators, principals, and other key staff during the transition to a curriculum-driven budgeting process.

With a curriculum-based approach to budgeting, both programmatic and finances are integrated and, therefore, monitored simultaneously. This process needs to be developed carefully and systematically and cannot be developed overnight.

Given this approach to budgeting based on achieved results, the school system can answer based on how well are we doing, instead of how much was spent? This process will provide the board, district administrators, principals, teachers, staff, and community stakeholders a more complete idea of what is funded and what is not in operations, programs, and services of the Richmond County School System.

In addition, tangible linkages can be identified among curriculum results, curriculum objectives, and curriculum costs. It will be easier to explain why certain portion of the budget are increasing or decreasing each year. The superintendent and the board of education should have a credible rationale and system for appropriating and/or reallocating finances, especially from old, obsolescent, or unproductive programs and activities to new, emerging programs or activities of higher priority.

It cannot be emphasized enough that principals, directors, teachers, and other staff must be key stakeholders in the budget decision-making process. Without their involvement, educational priorities may not be focused or appropriately selected.

VI. APPENDICES

Appendix A

Reviewers' Biographical Data



Randall B Clegg, Ed.D., Lead Reviewer

Dr. Clegg's professional background includes 35 years working in public schools as a teacher and administrator. Dr. Clegg's administrative experience includes serving as an athletic director, junior/senior high school principal, and 28 years as a school superintendent. He has broad experience in long-range planning, fiscal planning and management, personnel management, curriculum design and development, special education, gifted education, and school facilities planning. Periodically Dr. Clegg works as a consultant providing school districts technical support in the areas of curriculum management, financial planning, and curriculum monitoring including classroom walk-through training. Dr. Clegg received his B.M. degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, his M.S. and Ed.S. degrees from Winona State University, and his Ed.D. degree from the University of Northern Iowa. Dr. Clegg completed his CMAC audit training in 1993 and has served as a lead auditor since 2000.



Mary R. Cannie, Ed.D., Reviewer

Dr. Mary R. Cannie retired after 45 years of serving children in educational settings. She served as a teacher in New York City Public Schools and as a site administrator in Wake County, North Carolina Public Schools. Her administrative experiences include serving as Director of Personnel in Halifax County Schools, North Carolina; and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum in Wyandanch School District, Long Island, N.Y. She was Superintendent of Sherburne-Earlville and Uniondale School Districts in New York State. In addition, Dr. Cannie was a professional developer for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, training administrators to use the State's Teacher Performance Assessment Tool.

During her career she served as a consultant to the New York State Department working specifically with schools under registration review. As a national consultant, she work with administrative teams reviewing curriculum documents, identifying disparities between district expectations for curriculum delivery and delivery at the classroom level, and developing plans for district-wide improvement. Dr. Cannie mentored central office staff in areas such as professional development programming, aligning curriculum and instruction, developing positive team focus, and evaluating teacher performance.

Dr. Cannie earned her B.S. in Education and M.S. in Guidance and Counseling from the City College of New York. She was a Cary Leadership Fellow at the Bank Street College of Education and earned a M.S. in Curriculum and completed doctoral study at the University of North Carolina and Greensboro with a focus on leadership development and school administration. Dr. Cannie was trained as a curriculum auditor in 1988. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors for CMSi, she was a lead auditor and trained teams in various products developed by CMSi. She has served on more than 20 audit teams.

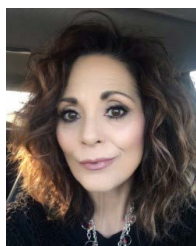
Appendix A (continued)

Reviewers' Biographical Data



Charles T. Carroll, M.A., Reviewer

Charles T. Carroll serves as the Chief Academic Officer for the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD.) He oversees the departments of Academics, Assessment and Accountability, Visual and Performing Arts, Early Childhood, Curriculum Policy, Curriculum and Instruction, Special Populations, Multilingual Programs, Professional Learning and Improvement, and College and Career Readiness. Charles previously served as the Chief Academic Officer for the Keller Independent School District, where he oversaw and influenced all aspects of curriculum and instruction. He also served as the Assistant Superintendent of Leadership and Administrative Services, and in the role of Area Superintendent for the Keller ISD. He holds a Master of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Texas Tech University.



Melani Edwards, M.S., Reviewer

Melani J. Edwards is currently the Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment for the Casa Grande Union High School District in Casa Grande, Arizona. Ms. Edwards graduated with her B.A. in Secondary Education from the University of Arizona in 1996. She was accepted into the iLead Az Principal Internship Program, and earned her M.S. in Educational Leadership from Arizona State University in 2012. She has worked in public education for over 20 years, serving as a classroom teacher, assistant principal and Director of Curriculum & Instruction. Ms. Edwards serves on the board as Member-at-Large for the Arizona chapter of ASCD, and is a member of the University of Arizona's College of Education's Professional Preparation Board.



Jim Ferrell, Ed.D., Reviewer

Jim Ferrell currently serves as department chair for the Educational Leadership Department at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. He also serves as program chair for the School Administration Program within the Educational Leadership Department. He worked as a classroom teacher for 12.5 years teaching social studies and Spanish in grades 6-12. After leaving the classroom, he worked as a middle school principal for six years. Dr. Ferrell earned a B.A. in History from Oklahoma City University, an M.A. in History from the University of Central Oklahoma, and an Ed.D. in School Administration from Oklahoma State University. He received his curriculum auditor training in Tucson, Arizona, in 2008. He has participated on audit teams in Arkansas, Arizona, Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and Washington.



Penny Gray, Ph.D., Reviewer

Penny Gray has been an educator for 40 years, as a teacher and an administrator, in Indiana and California. She taught elementary school for 20 years and was Director of Curriculum Services in the San Marcos Unified School District in California. She has taught graduate courses in educational leadership and supervised students in the Administrative Credential Program for San Diego State University. Dr. Gray co-authored articles on state testing programs and labor relations and three books, *From Good Schools to Great Schools: What Their Principals Do Well*, *Leading Good Schools to Greatness: Mastering What Great Principals Do Well*, and *The New School Management by Wandering Around*. She received her Ph.D. from Claremont Graduate School and completed her audit training in Burlingame, California in 1998. Dr. Gray has served on 33 curriculum management audits in 13 states and Bermuda.

Appendix A (continued)

Reviewers' Biographical Data



Larry Hunt, CAS, Reviewer

Larry Hunt recently retired as a District Data Coordinator with the Onondaga-Cortland-Madison Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in Syracuse, NY. He provided data and assessment leadership to several districts in Central New York, including the management of district data and the analysis and application of data for school improvement planning. His prior experience involved coordinating technical assistance for schools in the Rochester, NY, area that were cited as Schools in Need of Improvement under No Child Left Behind. His teaching experience involved classroom teaching in both alternative education and higher education settings. Mr. Hunt completed his Certificate of Advanced Study in Educational Administration at SUNY Brockport. He has a master's degree in Applied Linguistics from UCLA, a Bachelor of Music degree from DePauw University, and has completed additional graduate work in mathematics and statistics at Rochester Institute of Technology. He completed his audit training in 2007 in Tucson, Arizona, and has participated in audits in Texas, Arkansas, Michigan, New Hampshire, and Georgia.



Robert Iuzzolino, D.Ed., Reviewer

Dr. Iuzzolino received his BA Degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and his M.Ed. and D.Ed. from Pennsylvania State University. He has been an elementary and secondary teacher, as well as a building level and central office administrator. He also has served as Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment for an Educational Service Agency and an Adjunct Professor in a Graduate University Education Program. Dr. Iuzzolino has conducted several in-services and workshops on various educational topics with emphasis in the areas of curriculum alignment, assessment, instructional models, and supervision. He is a member of Phi Delta Kappa, International Literacy Association, National Council on Measurement in Education, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Dr. Iuzzolino is a licensed trainer of the following CMSi programs: 1) Coping with High Stakes Testing: Maximizing Student Achievement with the Power of Deep Curriculum Alignment; 2) A Baker's Dozen: Raising Student Test Scores; 3) Using a Mastery Learning Approach with Powerful Teaching Strategies; 4) Establishing Strategic Lesson Planning and Contextual Delivery; 5) Taking the Mystery out of Testing. He completed his Curriculum Management Audit Training in 1996 in Albuquerque, New Mexico and has served as an auditor on a number of audits.



Jo Ann Pastor, Ed.D., Reviewer

Jo Ann Pastor is an independent educational consultant with experience in the school improvement planning process, curriculum development, and the use of data to improve achievement as well as school/community relations. She has taught at the junior high, high school, and adult levels. She has extensive experience assisting Title I High Priority Schools in making systemic changes to improve student outcomes. Dr. Pastor was also a part-time faculty member in the Walden University graduate program for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. She has been an administrator in rural, urban, and suburban school districts. Her administrative positions included Associate Superintendent for Education and Learning in a large regional education service agency in Michigan, Director of Instruction, and Director of Adult and Community Education. She earned her B.A. from the University of Detroit, her M.A. from Oakland University, and her Ed.D. from Western Michigan University. Dr. Pastor completed her audit training in 1999 in Harrisville, Pennsylvania, and Bloomington, Indiana. She has conducted audits in Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.

Appendix A (continued)

Reviewers' Biographical Data



Brenda Steele, M.S., Reviewer

Brenda Nelson Steele is an educational consultant based in New York City with 31 years of experience in public school education. She was formerly the Executive Director of the Office of Curriculum and Professional Development for New York City public schools and the Deputy Executive Director of the Division of Instructional Support supervising implementation of NYC content and performance standards, Pre-K-12 curriculum development, professional development of administrators and teachers, alternative teacher certification initiatives and teacher recruitment, induction, and mentoring. She has served as a regional manager of schools, elementary school principal, assistant principal, reading specialist, and teacher. Ms. Steele earned her undergraduate degree from Ohio University, master's degree in Corrective and Diagnostic Reading from the City College of New York and Advanced Certification in Educational Administration from Brooklyn College. She completed her audit training in Tucson, Arizona in 2009.



Jeani Stoddard, M.A., Reviewer

Ms. Stoddard is a practicing educator in Texas with over 30 years of experience in grades K-12 and adult education in a variety of settings including public and private schools, correctional institutions, and mental health facilities. She has served in both general and special education classrooms, and as curriculum director, staff development director, assistant principal, reading coach, and RTI/dyslexia interventionist. She currently teaches and coordinates the 504, dyslexia, special education, gifted/talented, and testing programs for San Vicente ISD. Jeani holds master's degrees in secondary education from Austin College and exercise physiology from Texas Woman's University. Post-graduate hours include an administrative certification at the University of Texas at Arlington and her educational diagnostician certification at Sul Ross State University. She completed her curriculum audit training in Phoenix, Arizona, in 2009.



Ronnie Thompson, M.Ed.

Ronnie Thompson is currently Superintendent for the Liberty-Eyalu Independent School District in Texarkana, Texas. Formally he served as Superintendent for Hooks ISD, and Assistant Superintendent for the Texarkana Independent School District in Texarkana, Texas. He has also served as Executive Director of School Improvement, Associate Principal, Assistant Principal, and a classroom teacher. He is an experienced teacher in the Career and Technology field and has served as an adjunct professor of education at Texas A&M University-Texarkana. He has a total of 26 years of experience in education. He has extensive experience in all aspects of district operations: curriculum and instruction, financing, personnel, staff development, strategic planning, special programs, leadership and student services. Mr. Thompson is a graduate of Texas A&M University in Business Management and received his Masters Degree in Educational Administration from Texas A&M University-Texarkana.

Appendix A (continued)

Reviewers' Biographical Data



Jeffrey Tuneberg, Ph.D.

Jeffrey Tuneberg has over 30 years experience in education, including 25 years as Director of Curriculum with the Mercer County Educational Service Center, Celina, Ohio. His teaching background includes experience in urban (Cleveland, OH Public Schools) and suburban settings, as well as overseas (Guam). He was selected as a Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program representative to Japan in 1997. Dr. Tuneberg is also an adjunct professor at Wright State University Lake Campus, Celina, Ohio, and Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio, where he has taught graduate level curriculum classes and served as a supervisor of student teachers. Additional consulting includes serving as a credentialed faculty member with Battelle for Kids, Columbus, Ohio, on the topic of value-added growth measures in schools.

Dr. Tuneberg received his B.S. in Education, M.Ed., and Ph.D. from Bowling Green State University, Ohio. He has served as a consultant to school districts in Ohio, Tennessee, and Oklahoma on issues of teacher licensure, school improvement, and value-added student growth measures. He received his Curriculum Management Audit training in Lima, Ohio in 1999 and has conducted or served as a lead auditor on curriculum audits in Ohio, Oregon, Washington, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Arizona, Maryland, Texas, Georgia, and New Jersey. Dr. Tuneberg has also presented throughout the U.S. and Canada on the Classroom Walk-Through Program, SchoolView, the Baker's Dozen Program, and Deep Curriculum Alignment.



Olivia Elizondo Zepeda, M.Ed.

Olivia Elizondo Zepeda graduated from Northern Arizona University with a BA in Elementary Education. She began her teaching career upon graduation from NAU and later on earned a Master's degree in Bilingual and Multicultural Education. Olivia served as Associate Superintendent for the Gadsden Elementary School District from 2000 to 2017. She was Curriculum and Staff Development Director for 2 years, Principal for 3 years, and teacher. Olivia has taught graduate and undergraduate classes at the University level, and she has taught middle school and elementary grades. Olivia has 40 years of experience in education. She is fully bilingual in English and Spanish. Olivia is currently retired and she serves on the Arizona Western College Board of Trustees. She has always been interested in education for children and adults. She has a passion for service and enjoys serving in agencies that provide assistance to children and adults for educational purposes.

Appendix B

List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team

Board Policies	
Policy AA: School District Legal Status	3/17/2009
Policy AB: School Board Legal Status	1/1/1978
Policy ABB: Board Powers and Duties	9/9/1999
Policy ABCA: Number of Board Members	3/17/2009
Policy ABCD: Board Member Method of Election	3/1/1989
Policy ABCE: Board Member Resignation	9/9/1999
Policy ABCF: Board Member Removal from Office	3/17/2009
Policy ABD: School Superintendent Legal Status	3/1/1989
Policy AD: School Attendance Areas	9/9/1999
Policy AE: School Year	3/17/2009
Policy AFC: Emergency Closings	3/11/2014
Policy BBA: Board Officers	9/11/2008
Policy BBBB: New Member Orientation	7/21/2009
Policy BBBC: Board Member Development Opportunities	10/14/1999
Policy BBBE: Board Member Compensation and Expenses	10/14/1999
Policy BBC: Board Committee	10/14/1999
Policy BBD: Board-School Superintendent Relations	10/14/1999
Policy BBE: School Attorney	7/21/2009
Policy BBF: Advisory Committees	9/1/1991
Policy BBFA: Local School Councils	9/20/2016
Policy BBG: Board Consultants	7/21/2009
Policy BCBA: Board Meeting Time and Place	7/21/2009
Policy BCBD: Board Meeting Agendas	1/1/2009
Policy BCBF: Rules of Order	1/1/2009
Policy BCBH: Board Meeting Minutes	7/21/2009
Policy CBBI: Public Participation in Board Meetings	3/21/2017
Policy CCBK: Executive Sessions	10/14/1999
Policy BD: Policy Development	9/11/2008
Policy BDD: Policy Dissemination	7/21/2009
Policy BDF: Review of Administrative Rules	10/14/1999
Policy BDG: Administration in Policy Absence	7/21/2009
Policy BGA: School Boards Association	10/14/1999
Policy BH: Board Code of Ethics	12/14/2010
Policy BHB: Nepotism	7/19/2011
Policy CEA: Superintendent Qualifications	5/18/2010
Policy CEE: Superintendent Compensation and Benefits	1/1/1989
Policy CEG: Superintendent Professional Development Opportunities	1/1/1978
Policy CL: Councils, Cabinets, and Committees	8/10/2006
Policy CO: School Properties Disposal Procedures	11/16/2006
Policy DCD: Budget Preliminary Adoption Procedures	1/1/1991
Policy DCH: Budget Periodic Budget Reconciliation	1/1/1991
Policy DCI: Budget Line Item Transfer Authority	8/10/2000
Policy DCK: Level of Budgetary Control	9/11/2008
Policy DFC: Federal Funds	10/18/2016

Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
Board Policies	
Policy DFEA: Tax Anticipation Notes	8/10/2000
Policy DFF: Grants	9/1/2007
Policy DFL: Investment Earnings	9/11/2008
Policy DFN: Property Sales	8/10/2006
Policy DH: Bonded Employees	1/19/2010
Policy DIB: Financial Reports	9/23/2010
Policy DIC: Inventories	6/30/1991
Policy DIE: Fraud Prevention	1/17/2017
Policy DJCB: Salary Deductions	1/1/1991
Policy DJD: Expense Reimbursements	8/10/2000
Policy DJE: Purchasing	8/10/2000
Policy DJEAC: Purchasing or Credit Card Use	10/18/2016
Policy DJED: Bids and Quotations	1/17/2012
Policy DK: Student Activities Funds Management	9/11/2008
Policy DL: Cash in School Buildings	5/20/2004
Policy EDC: Transportation Safety	9/11/2008
Policy EED: Vending Machines	9/11/2008
Policy EEE: Wellness Program	9/11/2008
Policy FDC: Naming Facilities	2/16/2010
Policy FGAD: Architect Responsibilities in Facilities Projects	2/16/2010
Policy FGC: Bids and Quotations	2/16/2010
Policy FGG: Facilities Projects Change Orders	1/1/1978
Policy GAAA: Equal Opportunity Employment	1/19/2016
Policy GAC: Staff Involvement in Decision Making	1/1/1989
Policy GAD: Professional Learning Opportunities	3/15/2016
Policy GAE(3): Complaints and Grievances, Non-certified Employees	9/11/2008
Policy GAE: Complaints and Grievances	9/11/2008
Policy GAEB: Harassment	3/18/2014
Policy GAK(1): Criminal Background Check	12/10/2013
Policy GAMA: Drug-Free Workplace	9/11/2008
Policy GANA: Infectious Diseases	10/18/2016
Policy GARH: Employee Leaves and Absences	6/20/2017
Policy GBC: Professional Personnel Recruitment	9/11/2008
Policy GBKA: Professional Personnel Lay-Off	5/3/2010
Policy GBM: Professional Personnel Transfer	2/21/2017
Policy GBQ: Professional Personnel Retirement	2/21/2013
Policy GBRC: Professional Personnel Work Loads	9/11/2008
Policy GBRIB: Professional Personnel Sick Leave	4/19/2016
Policy GBRIG: Federal Family and Medical Leave Act	9/11/2008
Policy GCRA(1): Drug Screening of Bus Drivers	9/11/2008
Policy HIA: Grading Systems	1/17/2017
Policy IBB: Charter Schools	11/19/2013
Policy IDA: Basic Program	8/10/1972
Policy IDBA: Sex Education	9/11/2008
Policy IDCH: Dual Enrollment – Move on When Ready	12/13/2016
Policy IDDD: Gifted Student Programs	7/21/2015

Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
Board Policies	
Policy IDE(3): Competitive Interscholastic Activities, Grades 6-12	9/11/2008
Policy IDFA: Gender Equity in Sports	3/15/2016
Policy IED: Scheduling for Instruction	12/13/2016
Policy IEDA: Unstructured Break Time	9/11/2008
Policy IFBC: Media Programs	7/21/2015
Policy IFBG: Internet Acceptable Use	2/21/2017
Policy IFBGA: Electronic Communications	4/21/2015
Policy IFBGB: Web Pages	4/21/2015
Policy IFCB: Field Trips and Excursions	8/12/1999
Policy IHE: Promotion and Retention	11/18/2014
Policy IKD: School Ceremonies and Observances	9/11/2008
Policy IKDB: Graduation Ceremonies	9/11/2008
Policy JAA: Equal Educational Opportunities	1/19/2016
Policy JBC(1): Homeless Students	10/16/2010
Policy JBC(4): Awarding Units and Transferring Credit	1/17/2017
Policy JBC: School Admissions	7/18/2013
Policy JBCCA(2): Unsafe School Choice Option	9/11/2008
Policy JBD: Absences and Excuses	9/20/2016
Policy JBF: Released Time	12/13/2016
Policy JCDA: Student Code of Conduct	9/11/2008
Policy JCDAJ: Bullying	7/21/2015
Policy JDA: Corporal Punishment	9/11/2008
Policy JGC: Student Health Services	9/11/2008
Policy JGCD: Medication	10/20/2015
Policy JGF(2): Seclusion or Restraint of Students	11/15/2016
Policy JGF: Student Safety	9/11/2008
Policy JGFGB: Concussion Management	9/10/2013
Policy JGI: Child Abuse or Neglect	10/20/2015
Policy JGJA: Suicide Prevention	10/20/2015
Policy JR: Student Records	9/11/2008
Policy KB: Public Information Program	7/18/2017
Policy KBCD: Sports and Special Events Coverage	7/20/2010
Policy KBF: Use of Students for Public Information Programs	10/14/2004
Policy KG: Use of School Facilities	7/20/2010
Policy LEBA: Parental Involvement in Education	9/11/2008
Regulation BCBI-R(1): Public Participation in Board Meetings	3/21/2017
Regulation CO-R(1): School Properties Disposal Procedures	11/16/2010
Regulation DCC-R(1): Budget Preparation Procedures	8/10/2000
Regulation DFF-R(1): Grants	9/1/2007
Regulation DIA-R(1): Accounting System	1/19/2010
Regulation DJCB-R(1): Salary Deductions	1/19/2010
Regulation DJC-R(1): Payroll Procedures	1/19/2010
Regulation DK-R(1): Student Activities Funds Management	2/12/2004
Regulation HIA-R(1): Grading Systems	1/17/2017
Regulation IDCH-R(1): Dual Enrollment Move on When Ready	12/13/2016
Regulation IED-R(1): Scheduling for Instruction	12/13/2016

Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
Board Policies	
Regulation IFBG-R(1): Internet Acceptable Use	7/10/2014
Regulation JBC(1)-R(1): Homeless Students	10/16/2010
Regulation JBF-R(1): Released Time	12/13/2016
Regulation JGF(2)-R(1): Seclusion or Restraint of Students	11/15/2016
Regulation KG-R(1): Use of School Facilities	7/20/2010
RCSS Policy Calendar 17-18	

Job Description	
21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor	2012
21st Century Afterschool Program Enrichment Instructor (Summer)	2012
21st Century Community Learning Center District Project Coordinator	2009
21st Century Community Learning Center School Site Coordinator	2009
8.5 High School Broadfield Science Teacher	2017
8.5 High School English Teacher	2017
8.5 Middle Grades English Teacher	2017
8.5 Middle Grades Math Teacher	2017
Academic Supervisor for Performance Learning Center	2012
Accountability and IE ² Officer	2015
Accountability Program Specialist	2015
Adapted Music Teacher	2009
Adapted Physical Education Teacher	2009
Administrative Intern	2015
After School Lead Teacher	2010
After School Teacher	2010
Afterschool Academic Program Instructor	2011
Assistant Principal	2009
Assistant Principal for Career, Technical, Agricultural Education	2009
Assistant Superintendent (Area I, II, and III)	2015
Assistant Superintendent of Instruction	2013
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services	2013
Assistive Technology Facilitator	2009
Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Technology	2015
Band Director	2009
Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Program Specialist	2009
Chief Financial Officer	2012
Chief Technology Officer	2008
Coordinator for Assessments and Research	2015
Coordinator for School Improvement/Professional Learning	2013
Coordinator of College and Career Readiness	2017
Coordinator of Counseling, Safe and Drug Free Schools	2015
Coordinator of Instructional Technology	2017
Coordinator of Special Education Services	2008
Coordinator of Student Information and Data Analyst	2009
Curriculum Coordinator	2015
Deputy Superintendent of Schools	2012
Director of Alternative Education	2009

Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
Job Description	
Director of Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE)	2009
Director of Certified Trades	2017
Director of Curriculum	2009
Director of Human Resources	2017
Director of Internal Auditing	2008
Director of Non-Certified Trades	2017
Director of Operations	2017
Director of Professional Learning	2009
Director of School Nutrition Program	2009
Director of School Safety and Security (Chief)	2012
Director of Student Services	2017
Director of Transportation	2009
Early College English Teacher	2009
Early College History Teacher	2009
Early College Math Teacher	2009
Early College Science Teacher	2009
Early College Spanish Teacher	2009
Elective Program Specialist	2015
Elementary School Principal	2009
Employee Evaluation Specialist	2009
English Language Arts Coordinator K-12	2009
ESOL Itinerant Teacher	2009
Fine Arts Coordinator	2009
Flexible Learning Program Coordinator	2014
Flexible Learning Program Manager	2014
Georgia Learning Resource System Program Specialist	2009
GNETS Paraprofessional	2008
GNETS Social Worker	2009
Graduation and Attendance Specialist	2015
Grant Program Specialist	2015
Head Football Coach	Undated
High School Principal	2009
Instructional Materials (Textbook) Manager	2010
Instructional Technology and State Reporting Specialist	2015
Instructional Technology Specialist	2008
JROTC Senior Navy Instructor	Undated
Lead Coordinator East Georgia Regional Learning Resource System (GLRS)	Undated
Lead School Social Worker	2009
Literacy and Math Center Media Teacher	2016
Literacy and/or Mathematics Teacher	2016
Literacy or Mathematics Paraprofessional	2016
Literacy/Mathematics Teacher	2016
Math and/or Literacy Title I Intervention Teacher	2015
Math Teacher on Special Assignment	Undated
Math, Science, or Literacy Academic Support Specialist	2015
Mathematics Coordinator	2009

Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
Job Description	
Media Specialist	2009
Middle School Counselor	2009
Middle School Graduation Coach	2009
Middle School Principal	2009
Paraprofessional	2008
Paraprofessional (General Education)	2008
Paraprofessional (Pre-K)	2011
Paraprofessional (Special Education)	2008
Part-Time Lead Teacher (K-8) Boys and Girls Clubs of Augusta After School Programs	2009
Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Program Specialist	2017
Pre-K Lead Teacher	2011
Pre-K Lead Teacher Facilitator	Undated
Pre-K Program Manager	2013
Preschool Special Education Teacher	2009
Preschool Special Education Teacher-Evaluator	2009
Principal	2009
Professional Learning Facilitator – English Language Arts (Elementary)	2015
Professional Learning Facilitator – Mathematics (Elementary)	2015
Professional Learning Facilitator – Social Studies K-12	2015
Professional Learning Facilitator for Leader Quality	2015
Professional Learning Facilitator for Teacher Quality	2015
Professional Learning Instructional Technology Specialist	2008
Professional Learning Specialist	Undated
Professional Learning Specialist - Social Studies	2011
Professional Learning Specialist – STEM	2015
Program Coordinator (Sand Hills GNETS Program)	2012
Program Manager [RT3]	Undated
Program Specialist (Special Education)	2009
Project Director Teaching American History Grant	2009
RCSS Project Plus Summer Program Teachers	2009
Reading or Math Intervention Teacher	2017
Response To Intervention (RTI) Program Specialist	2015
Sand Hills Program Director, Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Services (GNETS)	2009
School Psychologist	2009
School Social Worker	2009
Science, Health, Physical Education, and Family Dynamics Coordinator	2009
Senior Director of Facilities Services	2009
Senior Director of Transportation	2016
Social Studies Teacher on Special Assignment	2009
Social Studies/Foreign Language Coordinator	Undated
Special Education Autism Facilitator	2009
Special Education Paraprofessional	2009
Special Education Preschool Paraprofessional	2009
Speech Language Pathologist	2009
Substitute Teacher	2016
Summer School Principal	2010

Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
Job Description	
Summer School Teacher	2009
Superintendent of Schools	2008
Teacher	2009
Teacher Contract Monitored School Tubman Middle School	2009
Teacher for Early Intervention Program	2009
Teacher for Special Education	2009
Teacher on Special Assignment – Core Content Areas	2009
Title I Department Coordinator	2017
Title I District School Improvement Specialist	2015
Title I Instructional Provider	2009
Title I Program Specialist	2009
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE)	2012
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Automotive Service Technology	2012
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Broadcast & Video Production	2012
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Collision Repair	2012
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Culinary Arts	2012
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Electronic Technology	2012
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) - Information Technology	2012
Trade & Industrial Education Teacher (CTAE) – Manufacturing & Engineering Sciences	2012
Transition/Community-Based Instruction Facilitator	2009
Varsity Boys Head Basketball Coach	2009

Plan Documents	
2016-2017 Title I Division Plan Improvement Plan	September 2017
2017-2018 Title I Division Plan Improvement Plan	August 2017
A. Brian Merry Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8/24/17
A.R. Johnson Health Science and Engineering Magnet School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8/17/2017
Academy of Richmond County 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8/22/2017
Accountability and Strategic Wavers Office Improvement Plan 2017-2018	August 22, 2017
Accountability Department Plan Summary	Undated
Accountability Manual	Undated
Alternative School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 21, 2017
Barton Chapel Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
Blythe Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
C.T. Walker Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8/22/2017
Copeland Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 15, 2017
Craig-Houghton Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 17, 2017
Cross Creek High School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8-1-17
CT Walker Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8/22/2017
CTAE Division Plan Revised	September 2017
Curriculum and Instruction District Improvement plan 2015-16	2015-16
Deer Chase Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 26, 2017
Department of Accountability School Improvement Plan Rubric	Undated
Diamond Lakes Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 2017
District Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017

Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
Plan Documents	
ELA Department Improvement Plan	Undated
Freedom Park K-8 Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 21, 2017
Freedom Park K-8 Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 21, 2017
George P. Butler High School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017
Glen Hills Middle 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 15, 2017
Glenn Hills Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
Glenn Hills High School, School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017
Goshen Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	October 2, 2017
Gracewood Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8/22/2017
Hains Elementary 2017-2018 School improvement Plan	10/6/17
Hephzibah Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 21, 2017
Hephzibah High School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
Hephzibah Middle School, School Improvement Plan	8/13/17
Hornsby Middle School, School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017
Information Technology Department Plan 2017-18	August 30, 2017
Intermediate Literacy and Math Center 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	9/22/17
Jamestown Elementary School, School Improvement Plan	August 21, 2017
Jenkins-White Elementary School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017
John M. Tutt Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 23, 2017
John S. Davidson Fine Arts High School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8/18/2017
Johns S. Davidson Fine Arts Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8/18/2017
Johnson Magnet Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Lake Forest Hills Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 2017
Lamar Milledge Elementary School Improvement Plan	8.17.2017
Laney High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Langford Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 24, 2017
Lucy C. Laney High School, School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017
Mathematics Department Improvement Plan	2015-19
McBean Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
Meadowbrook Elementary School, School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017
Morgan Road Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8-22-2017
Murphey Middle School, School Improvement Plan	June 29, 2017
Network IT RCSS Plan	Undated
Nutrition Services Plan Summaries 2017-2018	Undated
Performance Learning Center School Improvement Plan	8/16/2017
Pine Hill Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 2017
Professional Learning District Improvement Plan 2017-2018	August 20, 2017
Quarterly Reports 2015 - 2017	
RCSS Gifted Department Improvement Plan	2015-2018
Reaching Potential Through Manufacturing 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8/15/2017
Richmond County Strategic Plan – 2016	2016
Richmond County Technical Career Magnet School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
Richmond Technology Plan 2014-2017	2014-2017
Rollins Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8-14-2017
Science Department District Improvement Plan	2015-2017
Social Studies Division Plan	2015-19

Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
Plan Documents	
Southside Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 22, 2017
Special Education Improvement Plan 2017-2018	September 8, 2017
Spirit Creek Middle School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 2017
Sue Reynolds Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017
T. Harry Garrett Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	October 2, 2017
T.W. Josey School Improvement Plan 2017-2018	April 2017
Terrace Manor Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8/22/17
The Early College at Laney 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 15, 2017
Tobacco Road Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 19, 2017
W.S. Hornsby Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 1, 2017
Warren Road Elementary School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	8/22/2017
Westside High School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 25, 2017
Wilkinson Gardens Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	September 27, 2017
Willis Foreman Elementary School Improvement Plan	August 14, 2017
Windsor Spring Elementary 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan	August 22, 2017

Needs Assessment Documents	
2016-2017 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Academy of Richmond County	Undated
2016-2017 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Barton Chapel Elementary School	Undated
2016-2017 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Freedom Park 6-8	Undated
2016-2017 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Morgan Road Middle School	Undated
2016-2017 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Roy E. Rollins Elementary School	Undated
2016-2017 Weighted School Assessment Inventory T. W. Josey High School	Undated
2016-2017 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Wilkinson Gardens Elementary School	Undated
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Elementary Schools (Pilot Version)	Undated
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory High Schools (Pilot Version)	Undated
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Middle Schools (Pilot Version)	Undated
Academy of Richmond County High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Alternative Education Center at Lamar Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Barton Chapel Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Bayvale Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Blythe Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Butler High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 District Report	March 2017
Copeland Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Craig-Houghton Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Cross Creek High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Davidson High School Needs Assessment	Undated
Davidson Middle School Needs Assessment	Undated
Deer Chase Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Diamond Lakes High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Dorothy Hains Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Freedom Park K-8 Elementary Needs Assessment	Undated
Freedom Park K-8 Middle Needs Assessment	Undated
Garrett Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017

Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
Needs Assessment Documents	
Glenn Hills Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Glenn Hills High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Glenn Hills Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Goshen Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Gracewood Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Hephzibah Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Hephzibah High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Hephzibah Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Hornsby Elementary Data Needs Assessment	Undated
Jamestown Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Jenkins-White Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Josey High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Lake Forest Hills Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Lamar – Milledge Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Langford Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Lighthouse Care Center of Augusta Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
McBean Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Meadowbrook Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Merry Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Monte Sano Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Morgan Road Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Murphey Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Performance Learning Center Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Pine Hill Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Richmond County Technical Career Magnet School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Richmond Evaluation Report 2014	
Rollins Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Sego Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Southside Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Spirit Creek Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Sue Reynolds Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
T. Harry Garrett Needs Assessment 2017-18	Undated
Terrace Manor Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Tobacco Road Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Tutt Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
W.S. Hornsby Middle School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Walker Traditional Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Warren Road Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Westside High School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
WFES Data Needs Assessment	Undated
Wheless Road Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Wilkinson Gardens Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017
Willis Foreman Elementary School Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 School Report	March 2017

Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
Curriculum Documents	
2017 Georgia Milestones - all grades	Undated
ACTFL Inverted Pyramid - All Foreign Languages – Grades K-12	Undated
All High School Course Curriculum Documents Located In The RCSS Rubicon Atlas Online System	2017-2018
Uses Assessments Word File From District Website	2017-2018
Benchmark Literacy Leveled Readers Social Studies - all Grades	Undated
Benchmark Literacy Unit Leveled Readers –Elementary	Undated
Course Numbering PDF file	June 13, 2017
Course Dr. Allen Current Year DESCRIPTIONS Excel File	October 31, 2017
Courses Offered at Each School Excel file	October 31, 2017
Courses Offered at Each School Excel file	Oct. 21, 2017
CTAE Course Title Match Excel file	Oct. 29, 2017
Curriculum documents in RCSS Rubicon Atlas website	2017-2018
Curriculum Overview - all subjects	Undated
Curriculum Understand Expectations For Standards Word File From District Website	2017-2018
District-Adopted Textbooks – Teacher Editions For Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, And Social Studies For Selected Grades	Various
ELA Foundational Skills Assessment Check - Grades K-12	Undated
ELA Lessons - Grades K-12	Undated
ELA Pyramid of Intervention - Grades K-12	Undated
ELA Teacher Resources - Grades K-12	Undated
GaDOE Teacher Guidance Documents - Grades K-12	Undated
Georgia Fine Arts (GPS) - Grades K-12	Undated
Georgia Milestones EOC Study Guides, Core subjects - all grades	Undated
Georgia Physical Education (GPS) Grades K-12	Undated
Georgia Standards Of Excellence - All Subjects	Undated
Georgia Standards Of Excellence From State Website	July 2016
GM EOC Assessment Guides - All Subjects	Undated
GMAS Resources And Information - All Grades	Undated
Grade Level Units For All Subjects K-12	Undated
Grade Performance Tasks ELA	Undated
Houghton Mifflin: Social Studies <i>U.S. History Civil War to Today</i> (Georgia Edition); Clairmont Press: <i>Georgia Studies for Georgia Students</i> ; Pearson: <i>United State History</i> (digital); and Pearson: <i>Economics</i> (digital)	Various
HS Courses in Rubicon not on list Excel file	Oct. 29, 2017
IDA-Spreadsheet-Course-Descriptions Excel file	October 10, 2017
Language Arts - Mini writing Tasks - Grades K-5	Undated
Language arts textbooks: <i>Benchmark Literacy Common Core Edition</i> , Teacher's Edition Grade 3, Grade 5, <i>Georgia Collections</i> Teacher's Edition Grade 8, and Pearson <i>Common Core Literature Georgia</i> Teacher's Edition Grade 9	Various
Listening and Speaking Checklist Language Arts - all grades	Undated
Master Scheduling Best Practices PDF file	Jan. 2017
Mathematics High School Flip Book	Undated
Mathematics Resources - All Grades	Undated

Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
Curriculum Documents	
Mathematics textbooks: <i>envision MATH Common Core</i> Teachers' Editions for grades 3 and 5, Scott Foresman Addison Wesley; <i>Go Math</i> Middle School Grade 8 Teacher Edition, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; <i>Algebra I</i> Teacher Edition, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; and <i>Geometry</i> Teacher Edition Houghton Mifflin Harcourt	Various
National Government Informal Progress check, Social Studies - Grades 6-12	Undated
Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)	2013
Pacing Guides for all subject - Grades K-12	Undated
Pre and Post Assessments: Selected Response, Core subjects - Grades 6-12	Undated
RCK12 Benchmark Assessment Blueprints for Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science for selected grades	2017-2018
RCK12 Benchmark Assessment Blueprints for Social Studies for selected grades	2018-2019
RCK12 ELA Secondary Instructional Expectations Manual	Undated
RCK12 Elementary Instructional Expectations Manual	Undated
RCK12 Instructional Manual 2017-2018	2017-2018
RCK12 Math Instructional Expectations Manual Middle and High School	Undated
RCK12 Mathematics Instructional Manual zip file	2017
RCK12 Mathematics Pyramid of Intervention - all grades	Undated
RCK12 Science Instructional Expectations Manual Middle and High School	Undated
RCK12 Social Studies Instructional Expectations Manual Middle and High School	Undated
RCSS Instructional Materials Procedure Manual	Revised October 2016
RCSS SPARC Curriculum and Instruction Rubric on district website	Undated
Richmond County Learning Resource Adoption Timeline Social Studies and Science	Oct. 2016
Richmond County Lesson Planning Template Word file downloaded from the RCSS Rubicon Atlas system	Undated
Science 101 Instructional Support - all grades	Undated
Science textbooks: <i>Georgia HSP Science</i> , Pearson <i>Environmental Science</i> , McGraw-Hill <i>Physical Science</i> , and Pearson <i>Biology</i>	Various
Scope and Sequence (Horizontal and Vertical) for all courses and all grades	Undated
Social Studies Resources - All Grades	Undated
SPARC Curriculum And Instruction Rubric	2017-2018
Standards Alignment Documents – All Subjects	Undated
Summary of Changes for Mathematics Standards Kindergarten - Grade 8 Revised for 2015-2016	February 20, 2015
Textbook Adoption Timeline - Science and Social Studies	October 2016
WIDA Can DO Elementary	Undated
Mathematics Benchmark Test 1-3 for grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I, and Geometry	2017-2018
RCK12 Mathematics Benchmark Blueprints for grades 3, 5, 8, Algebra I and Geometry	2017-2018
Ga GSE Social Studies - Grades 1-12	Undated
CTAE - Business & Computer Science Standards - Grades 6-8	Undated
Discourse in Science - Grades 6-12	Undated
Eduplace Outline Map Social Studies - Grades 6-12	Undated
Fryer Vocabulary Documents Social Studies - Grades 6-12	Undated
Georgia Modern Languages and Latin (GPS) Grades 6-12	Undated
Growth Mindset Lessons, Mathematics - Grades 6-12	Undated
Marzano's Six Steps Process to Teaching Vocabulary - Grades 6-12	Undated
Math Concept Lessons - Grades 6-12	Undated
Mathematics Framework Task Units - Grades 6-12	Undated

Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
Curriculum Documents	
Reading in Science - Grades 6-12	Undated
Science Argumentative Design Inquiry - Grades 6-12	Undated
Science Literacy documents - Grades 6-12	Undated
Science Notebook Center - Grades 6-12	Undated
Social Studies Available Leveled Text - Grades 6-12	Undated
Writing in Science CER Grades 6-12	Undated
ACTFL 21st Century Skills Map: all Foreign Languages - Grades 9-12	Undated
ACTFL: World Readiness Standards for Learning - Grades 9-12	Undated
ELA Writing Anchor Papers - Grades 9-12	Undated
ELA Writing Pacing Guides - Grades 9-12	Undated
Literature Lesson Plans - Grades 9-12	Undated
OPTIC documents Language Arts - Grades 9-12	Undated
Assessment Documents	
2017 ACT – Scores	Undated
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Academy of Richmond County	Undated
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Barton Chapel Elementary School	Undated
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Elementary Schools (Pilot Version)	Undated
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Freedom Park 6-8	Undated
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory High Schools (Pilot Version)	Undated
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Middle Schools (Pilot Version)	Undated
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Morgan Road Middle School	Undated
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Roy E. Rollins Elementary School	Undated
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory T.W. Josey High School	Undated
2017-2018 Weighted School Assessment Inventory Wilkinson Gardens Elementary School	Undated
3-year PSAT 2016	Undated
Advanced Placement Exam Contract	Undated
Advanced Placement Exam Procedures	February 2017
AP 3 Year Summary 2017	Undated
AP Summary 2014-2017	Undated
Assessment Inventory Results	May 2017
Assessment Inventory Table	Undated
Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2017-2018 District Report	2017-2018
Data Framework APIM Power Point	Undated
iReady EOC Algebra Match_2016-2017	Undated
iReady EOC Geometry Match_2016-2017	Undated
iReady EOG Math Match_2016-2017	Undated
iReady EOG Reading Match_2016-2017	Undated
iReadyMilestones_Math_Crosswalk_2015-2016	Undated
iReady Correlation Presentation 2015-2016	2015-2016
iReady Correlation Presentation 2016-2017	2016-2017
iReady EOC 9th Lit Match_2016-2017	Undated
iReady EOC American Lit Match_2016-2017	Undated
iReadyMilestones_ELA_Crosswalk_2015-2016	Undated
Richmond Evaluation Report 2014	2014
SAT 2017	Undated
Universal Screening Rubric 2014	2014

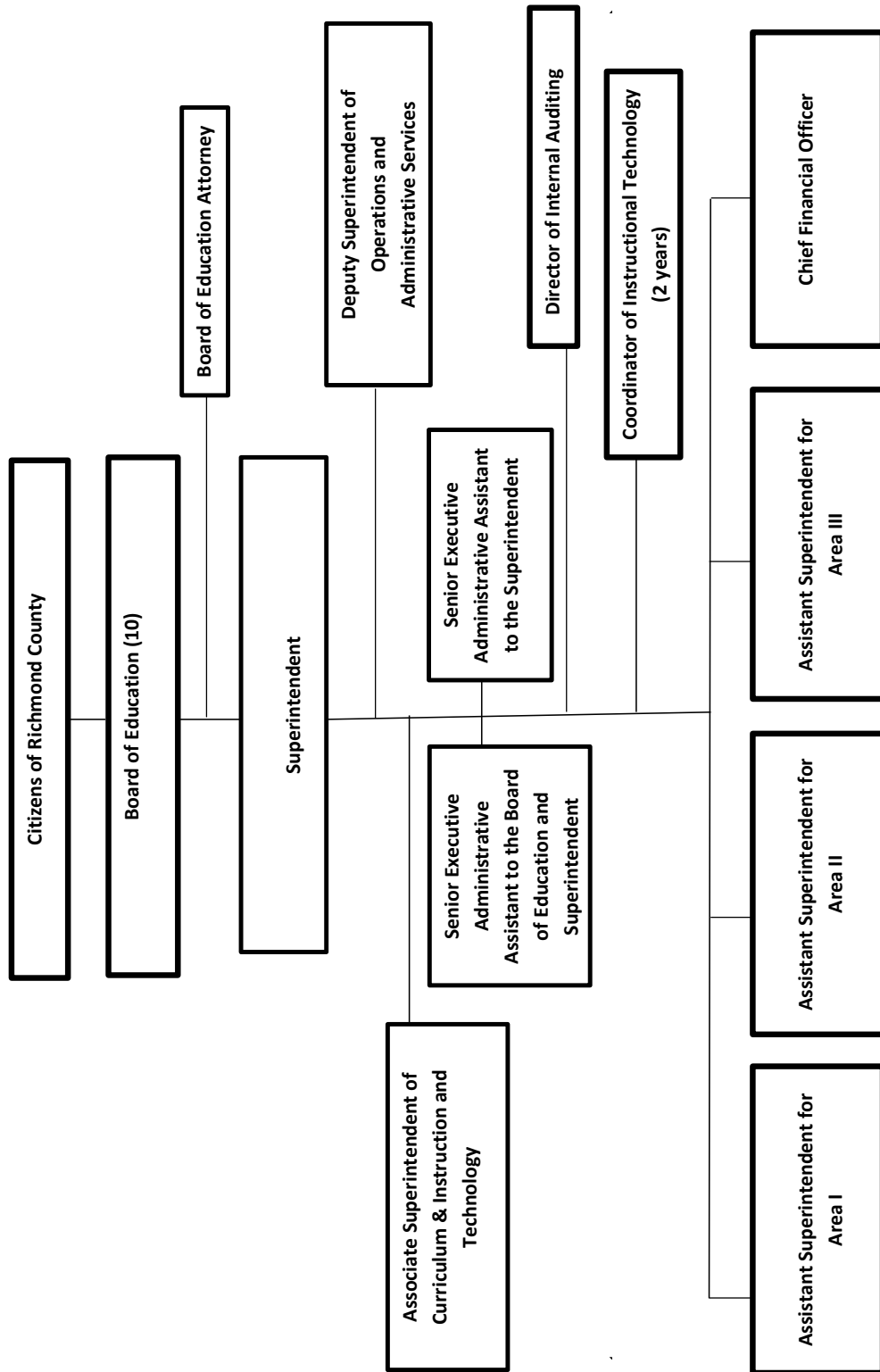
Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
Financial Docs	
Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2013	June 30, 2013
Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2014	June 30, 2014
Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2015	June 30, 2015
Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2016	June 30, 2016
Current 2017 Tax Digest and 5 Year History of Levy	Undated
Donations 23 Account 07/01/2015-06/30/2017	10/26/2017
Final FT100 2017 School Allocations	Undated
Financing Georgia's Schools: A 2015 Briefing	2015
Financing Georgia's Schools: A 2015 Briefing	2015
FT100 2016 School Allocations - To Schools	Undated
FT100 2018 School Allocations	Undated
FY18 Allocation State Max Final Allocations	Undated
General Fund Statement of Income and Expenditures FY17 FY18	Undated
RCSS Board of Education Statement of Income and Expenditures	June 30, 2017
RCSS Budget Presentation FY2017-2018	2017
Salary Schedules and Supplements 2016-2017 Fiscal Year	Undated
School Nutrition Service Fund Statement of Income and Expenditures FY15	Undated
School Nutrition Service Fund Statement of Income and Expenditures FY16	Undated
School Nutrition Service Fund Statement of Income and Expenditures FY17	Undated
Technology Budget 2015-2018	2015-2018
Title I Allocations	2017-2018
Title I A School Allocations- 2018 Poverty Level Included	2018
Title I A School Allocations-2017 Poverty Level Included.	2017
General Documents	
2016-2017 Internet Acceptable Use Policy	2016-2017
2017-2018 Tutt Faculty Handbook	6/06/2016
2017-2018 Richmond County School System Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) and Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) Timeline	
Academic and Creative Enrichment (ACE) Program (Gifted Instructor's Policies and Procedures Handbook)	2016
AdvancED External Review	April 12, 2013
Advanced Placement IB MOWR Disaggregation	2017
AdvancED Progress Assessment	August 3, 2017
AP IB MOWR Disaggregated 3 Year	Undated
APIM Leadership Power Point	Undated
Building Capacities 2017	Undated
Civil Rights Compliance Review	December 10, 2014
CTAE Study	Undated
Department of Accountability Parent Engagement Plan Rubric	Undated
District Library Statistics Report Job	Undated
ELEOT FAQ www.advanc-ed.org/services/eleot/faq	Accessed 10/2017
Enrollment Data	10/10/2017
Enrollment in Special Education	10/24/2017
Enrollment in Special Education By School	10/27/2017
Georgia's Leader Keys Effectiveness System Implementation Handbook	July 1, 2017

Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
General Documents	
Georgia's Teacher Keys Effectiveness System Implementation Handbook	July 2017
Gifted Department Monthly Meetings and PL Agendas	2016-17
Gifted Education Handbook 2017-18	6/27/2017
Gifted Enrollment by Schools 2017 (3-year comparison)	Undated
Initial Contract of Employment	Undated
K-3 Student Learning Project	March 2017
Master Scheduling Best Practices Jan 2017	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Academy of Richmond County	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Butler High School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Cross Creek High School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Glenn Hills High School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Glenn Hills Middle School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Hephzibah High School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Hephzibah Middle School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Langford Middle School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Lucy C. Laney High School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Morgan Road Middle School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Murphey Middle School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Pine Hill Middle School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Spirit Creek Middle School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at T. W. Josey High School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Tutt Middle School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at W.S. Hornsby Middle School	Undated
Observations on 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents at Westside High School	Undated
Online Speech Therapy Brochure	Undated
Professional Learning Hours for 3 Years	Undated
Principal Experience Info	Undated
RCK12 Standards-Based Grading Module 1 Overview	Undated
RCK12 Standards-Based Grading Module 2 Rubrics for Standards-Based Grading	Undated
RCK12 Standards-Based Grading Module 3 SBTG Gradebook Setup	Undated
RCK12 Standards-Based Grading Module 4 Progress Report	Undated
RCK12 Standards-Based Grading Module 5 Planning Your Parent Conference	Undated
RCK12 Standards-Based Report Card Parent Meeting	Undated
RCSS Discipline Data_3 years	Undated
RCSS Gifted Handbook Revised 6-2017	Undated
Richmond County Special Education Policies, Procedures, and Practices 2017-2018	Undated
SBRC Parent Meeting Script	Undated
Score Distribution report (by Teacher)	October 18, 2017
Special Education Child Count	10/27/2017
Special Education Child Count by Primary Area	10/24/2017
Standards Based Grading Parent Guide	Undated
Standards Based Report Card Feedback Meeting Central Office	July 11, 2017
Standards-Based Report Card Implementation Timeline	Undated
Standards Based Report Card Letter	Undated
Student Per Computer	2016-17
The County Board of Education of Richmond County Overview	Undated

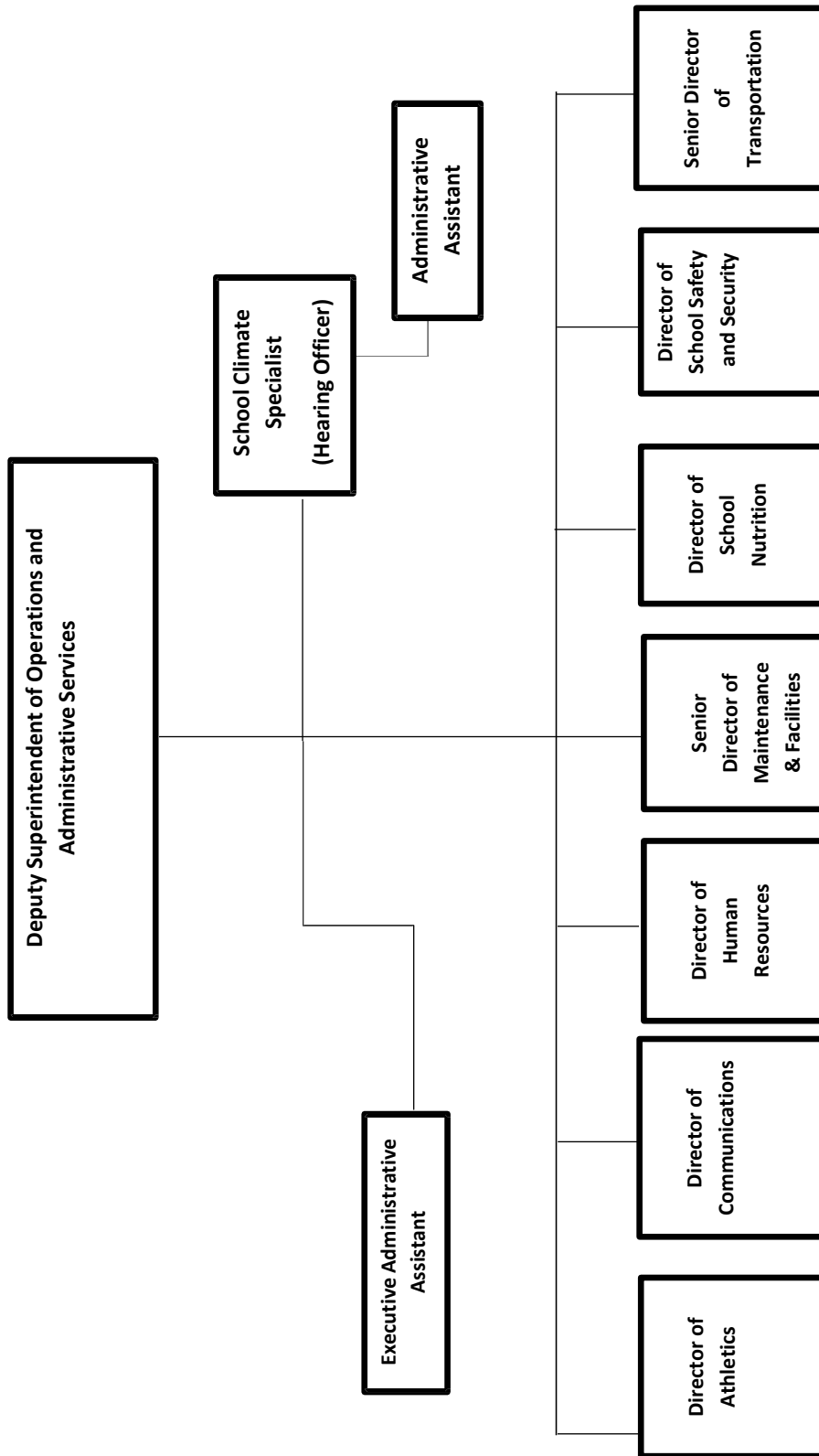
Appendix B (continued) List of Documents Reviewed by the Richmond County School System Review Team	
General Documents	
Waiver Teacher Numbers	Undated
Walker Master Schedule 17-18	Undated
Warren Road Faculty Handbook 2017 2018	2017
WFES Master Schedule 2017-2018	Undated
WRES Connections Schedule 2017-2018	August 31, 2017

Appendix C

Current Organizational Chart Richmond County School System 2017-18

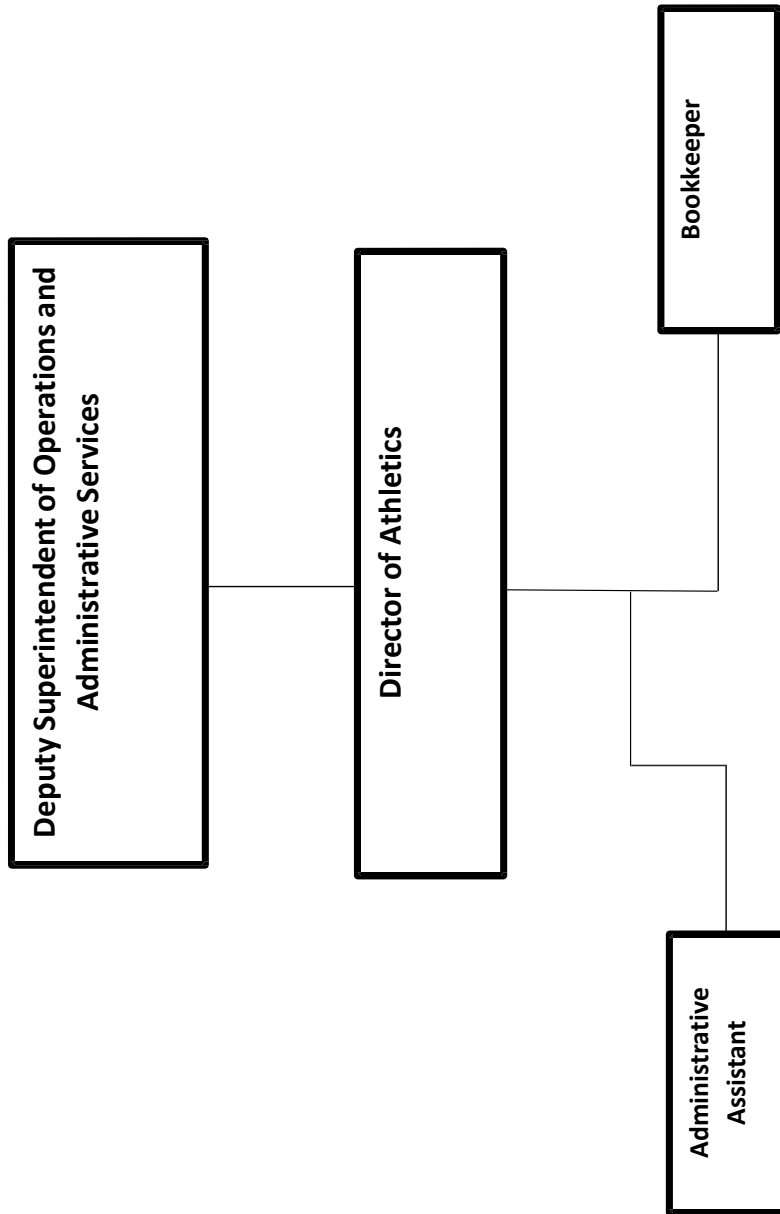


**Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18**



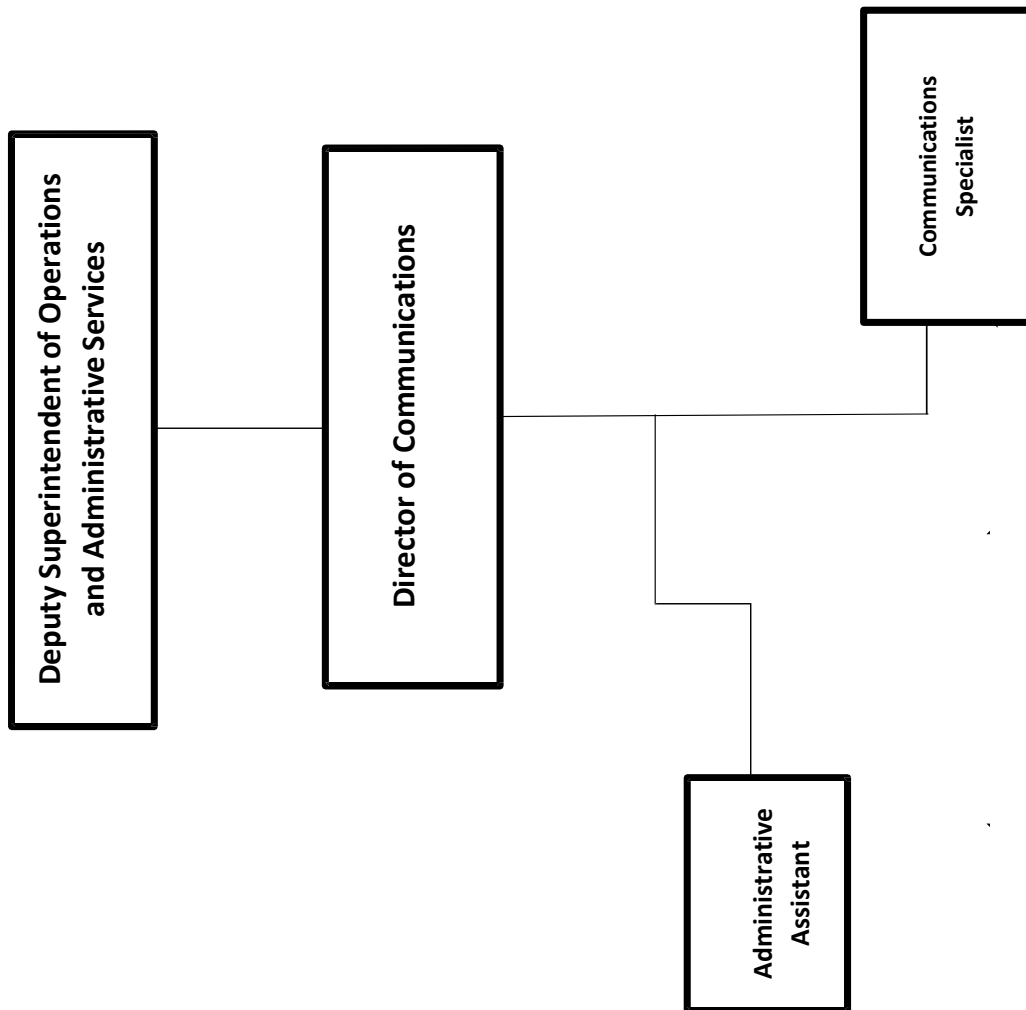
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18

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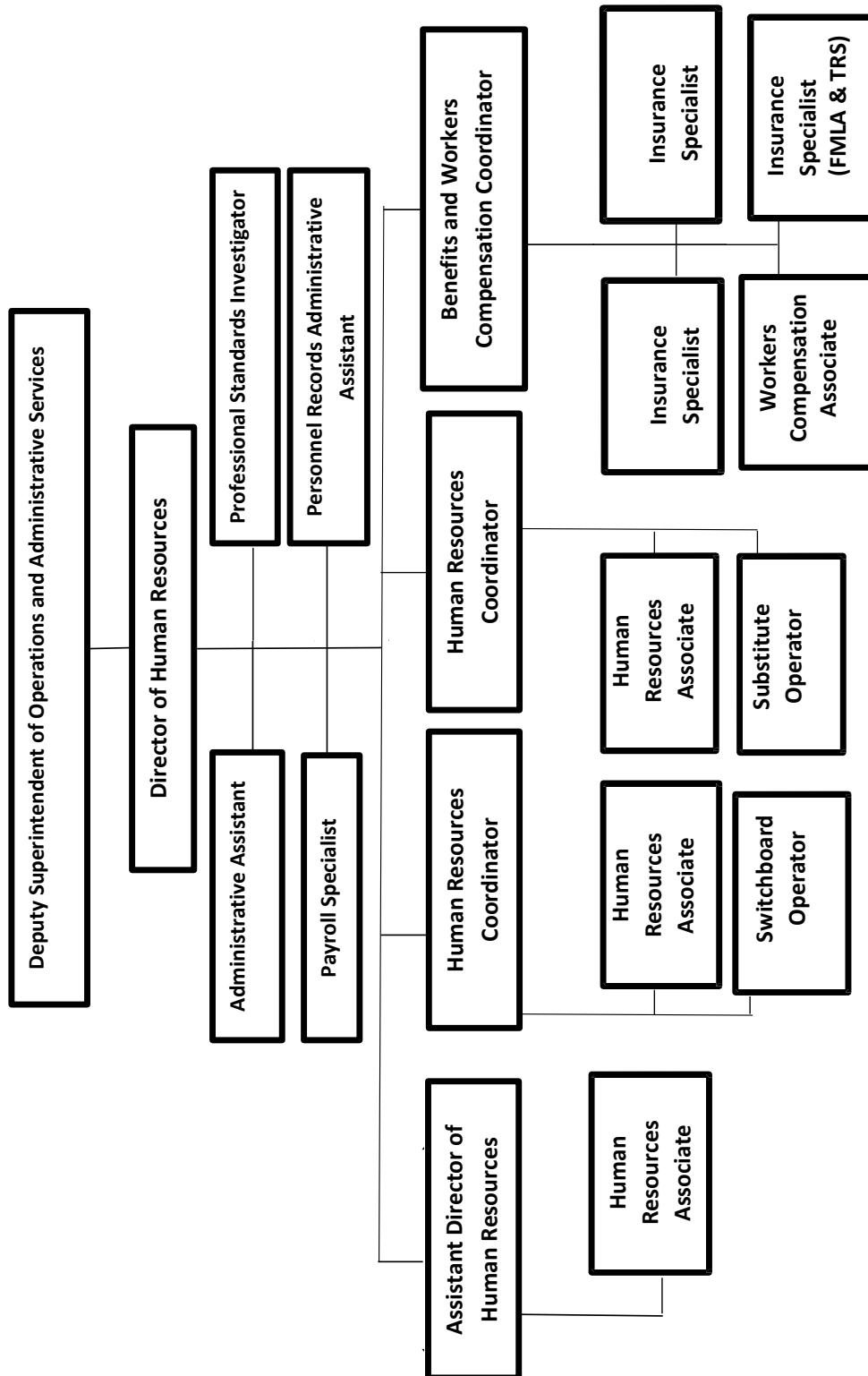


Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18

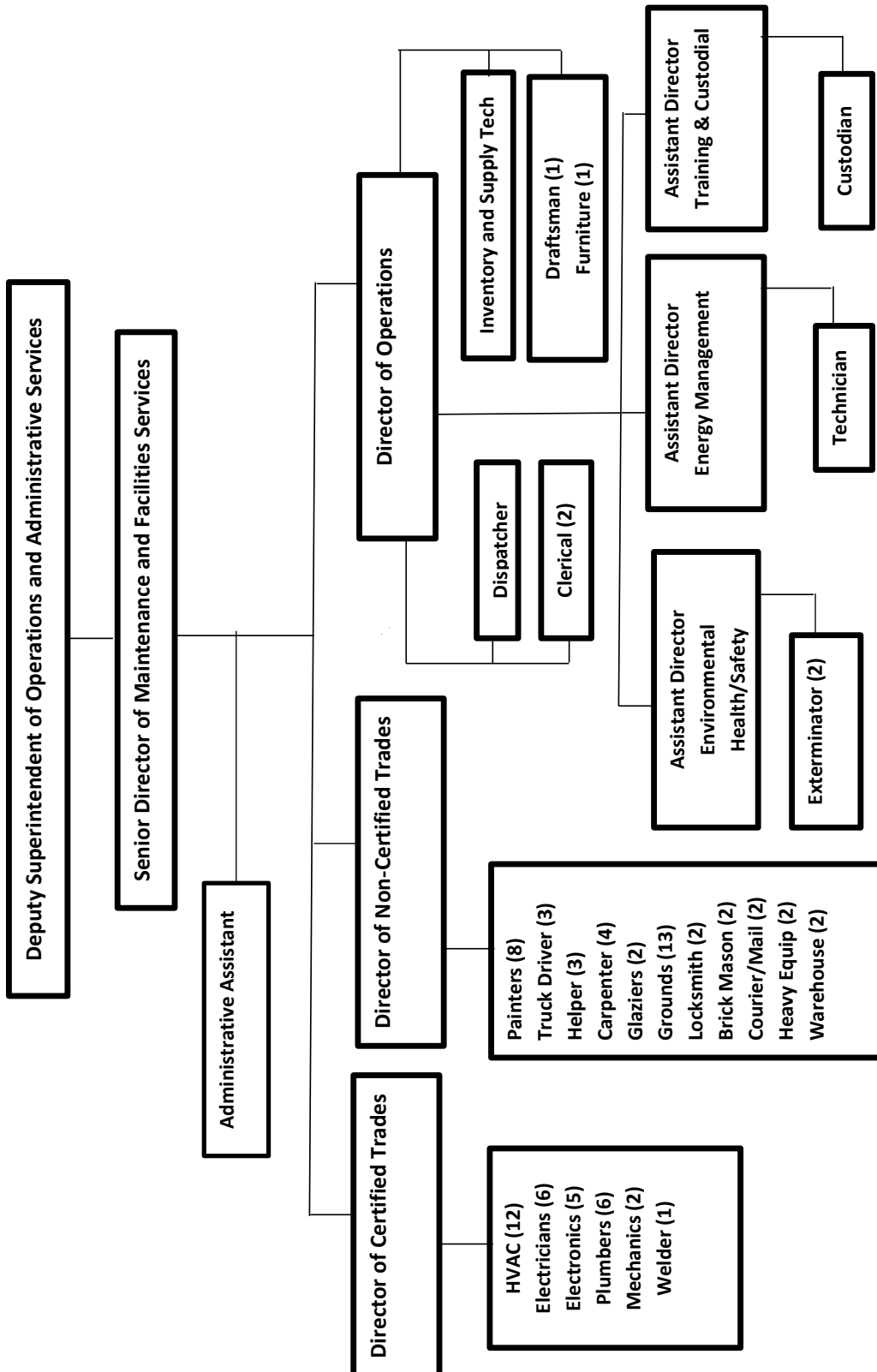
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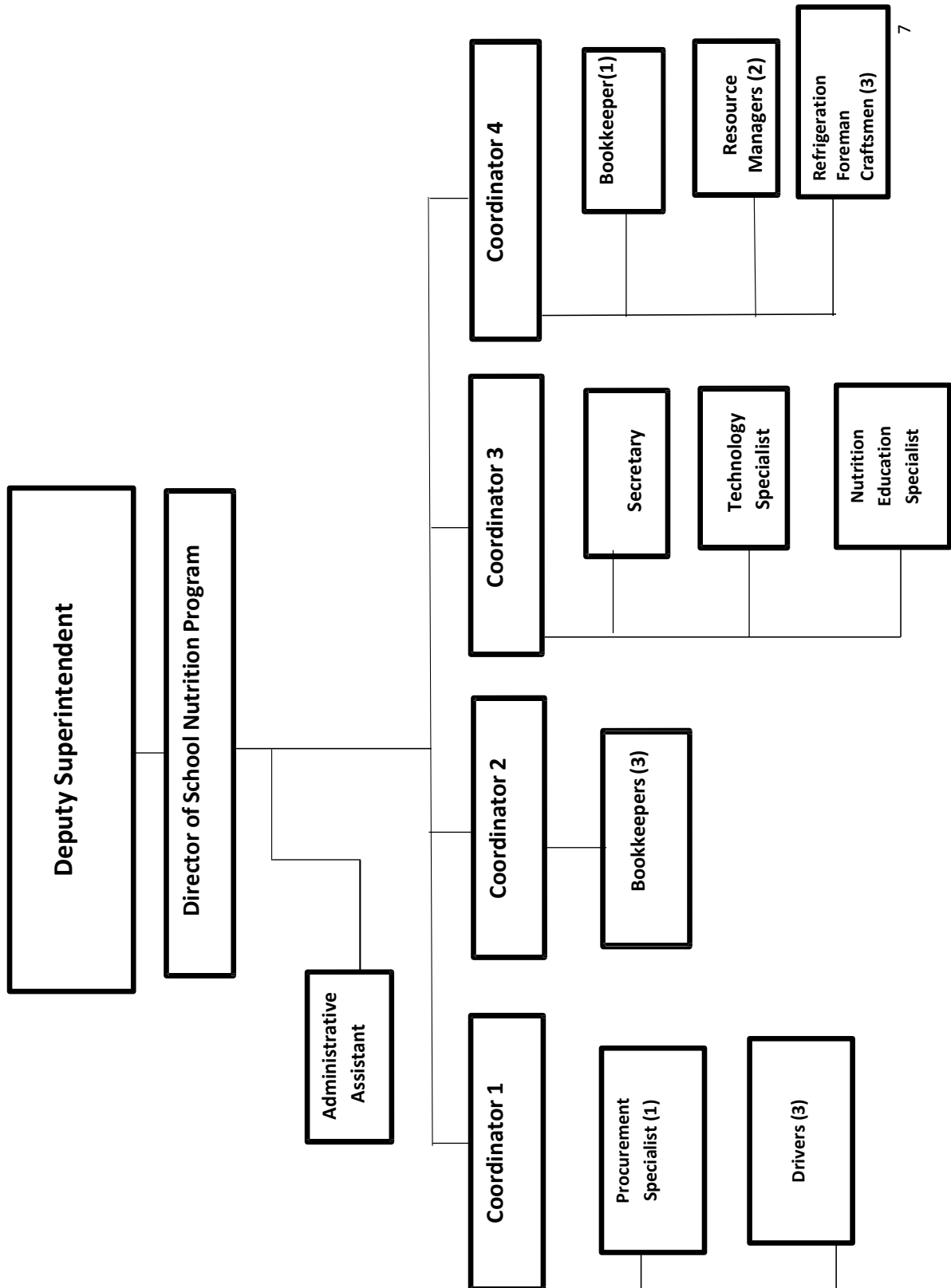
Appendix C (continued)
 Current Organizational Chart
 Richmond County School System
 2017-18



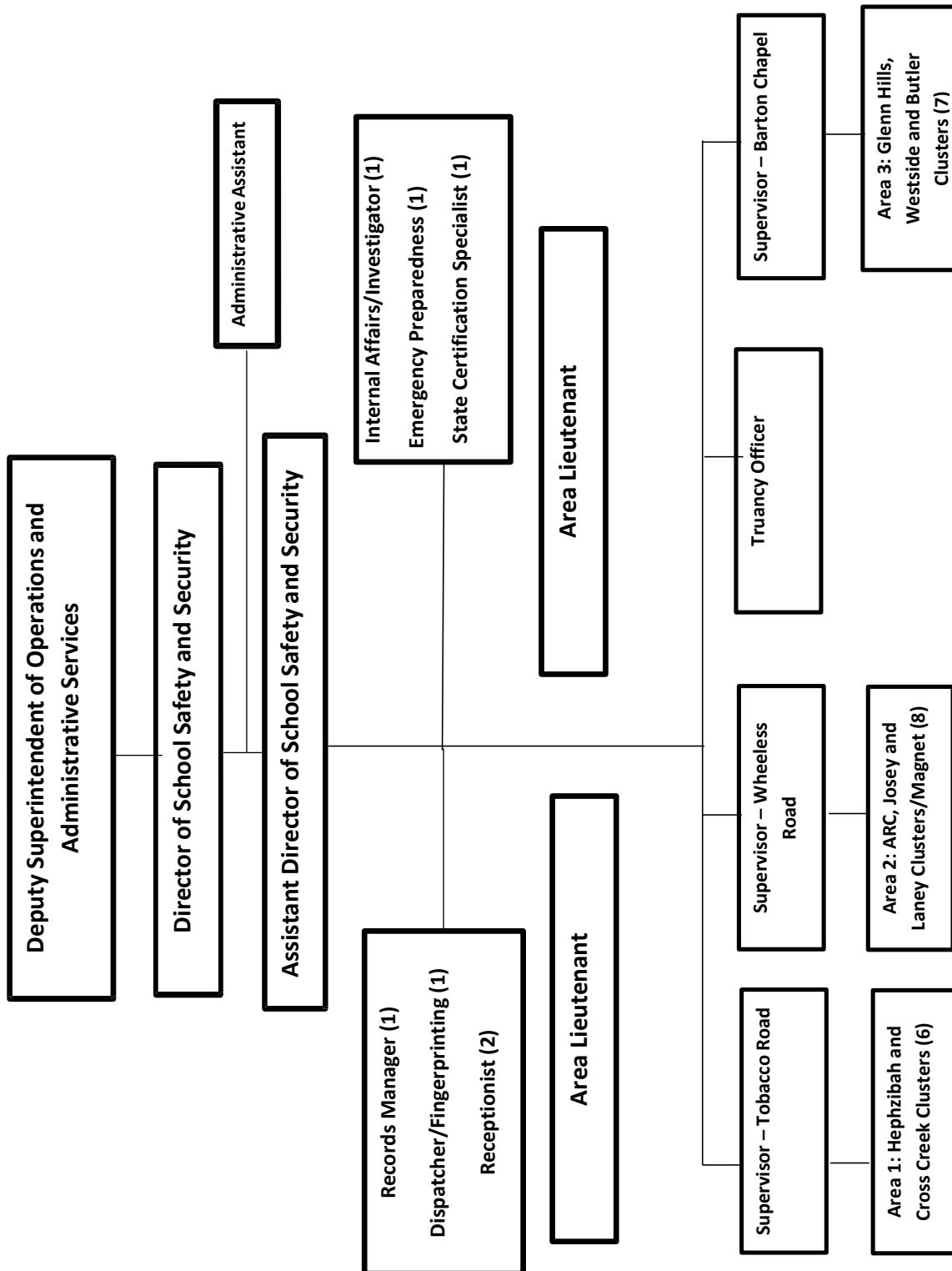
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



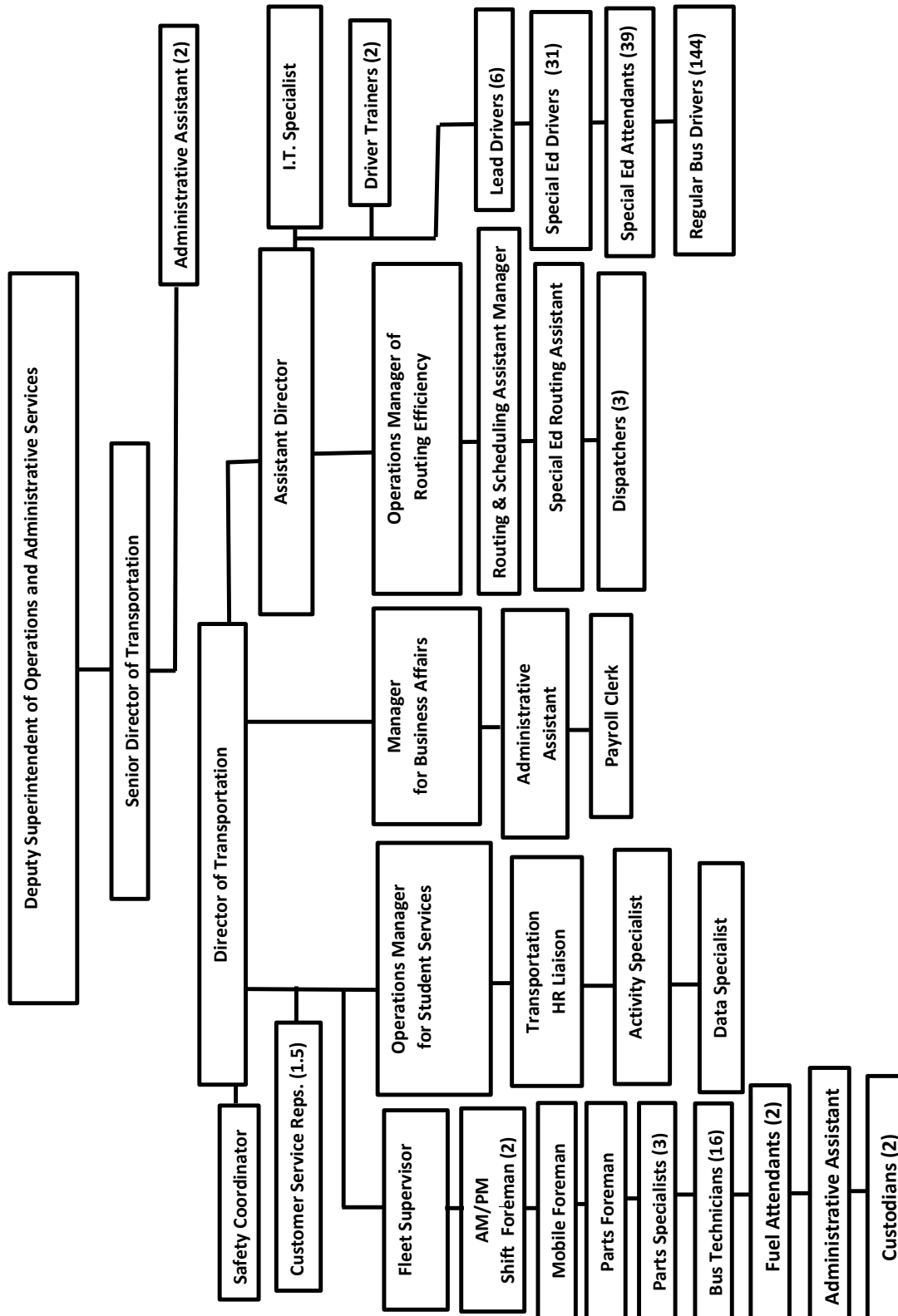
**Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18**



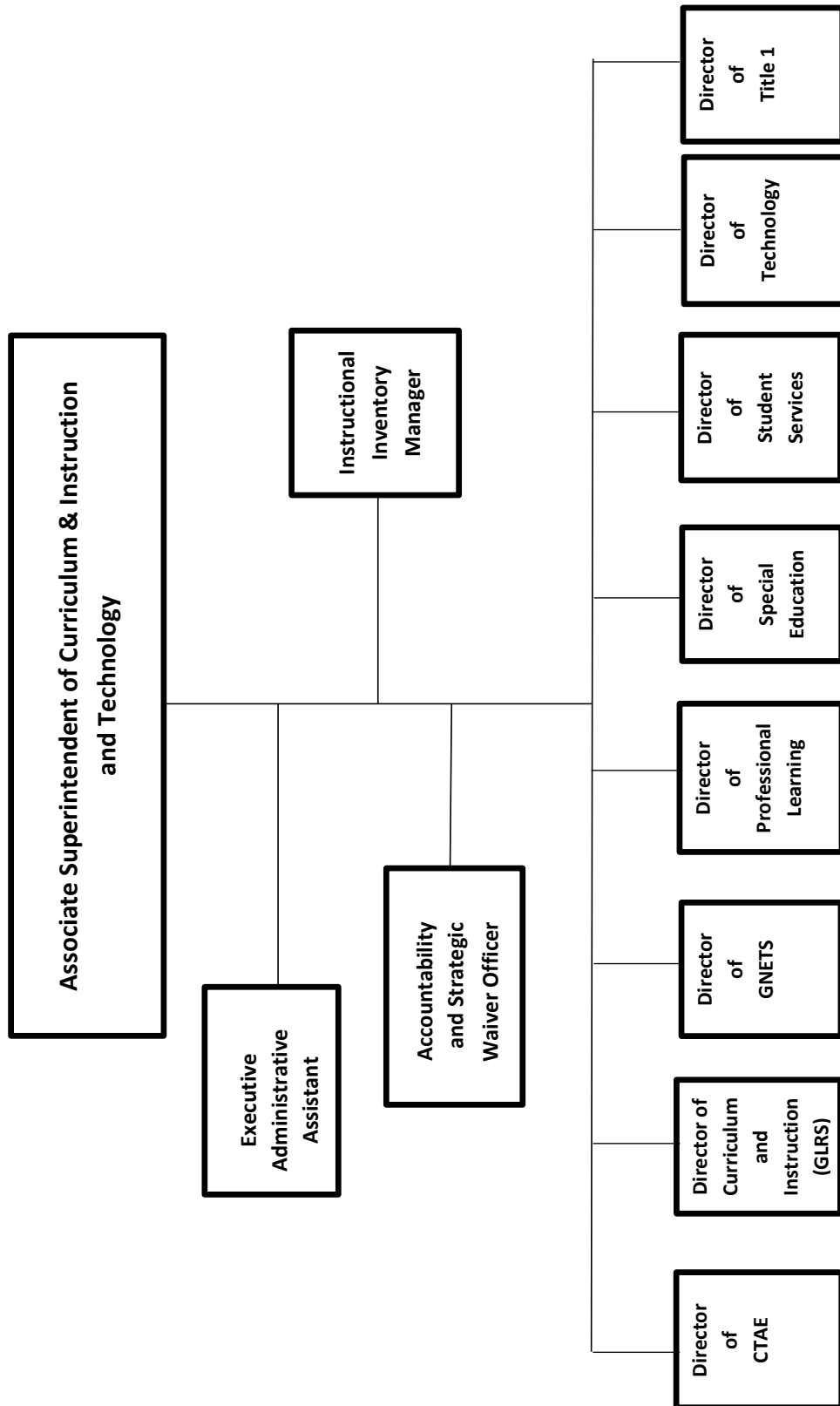
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



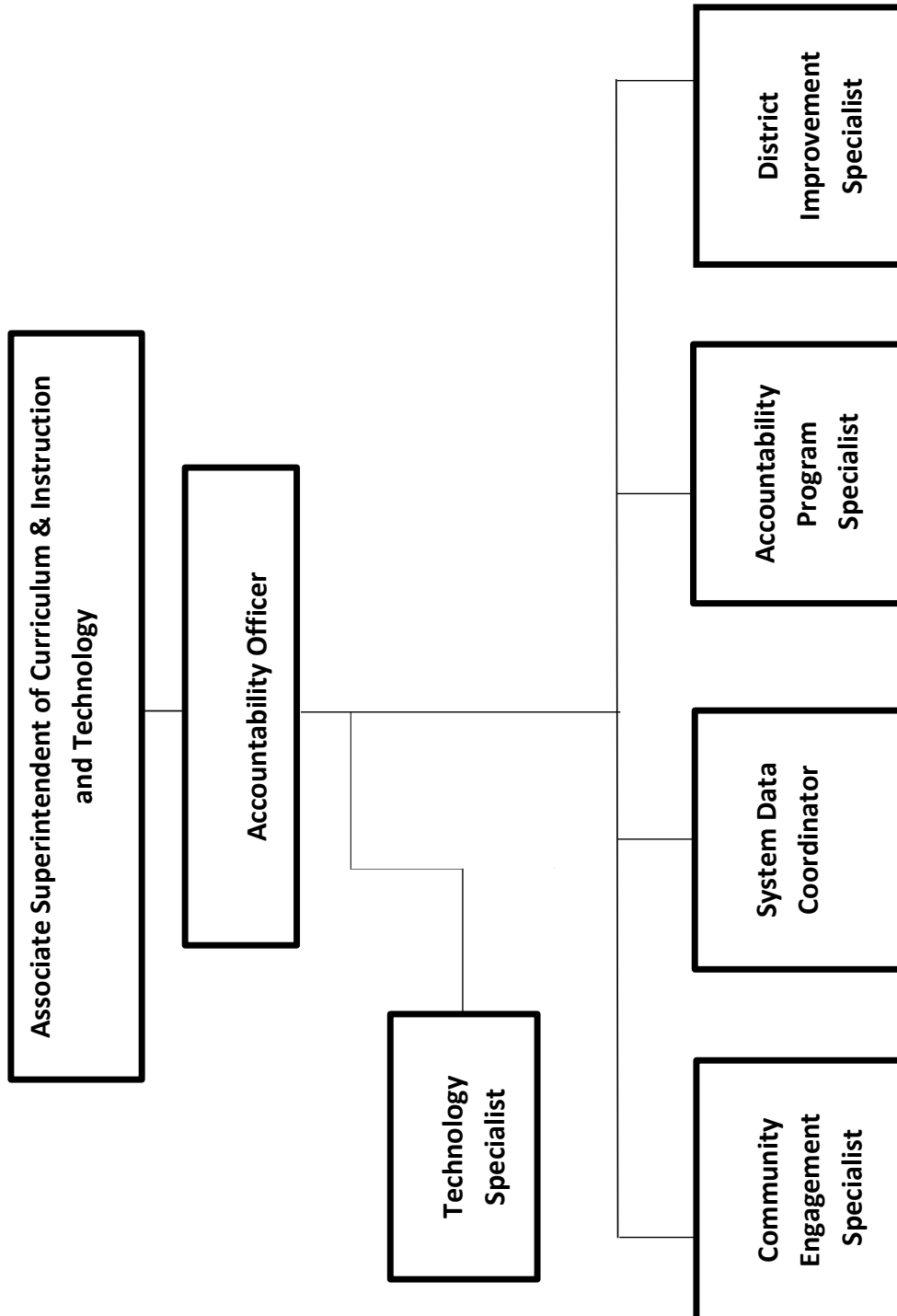
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



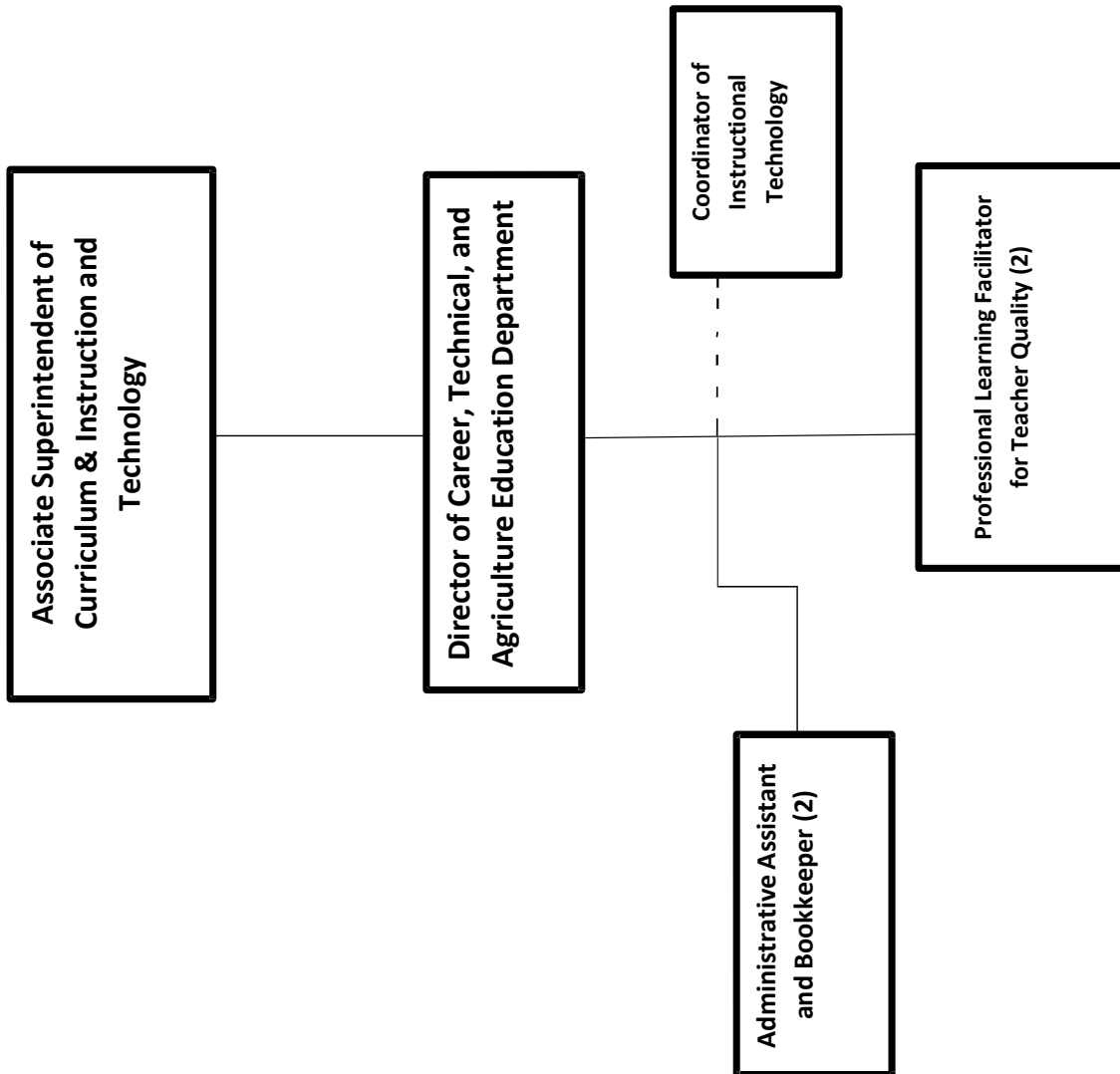
**Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18**



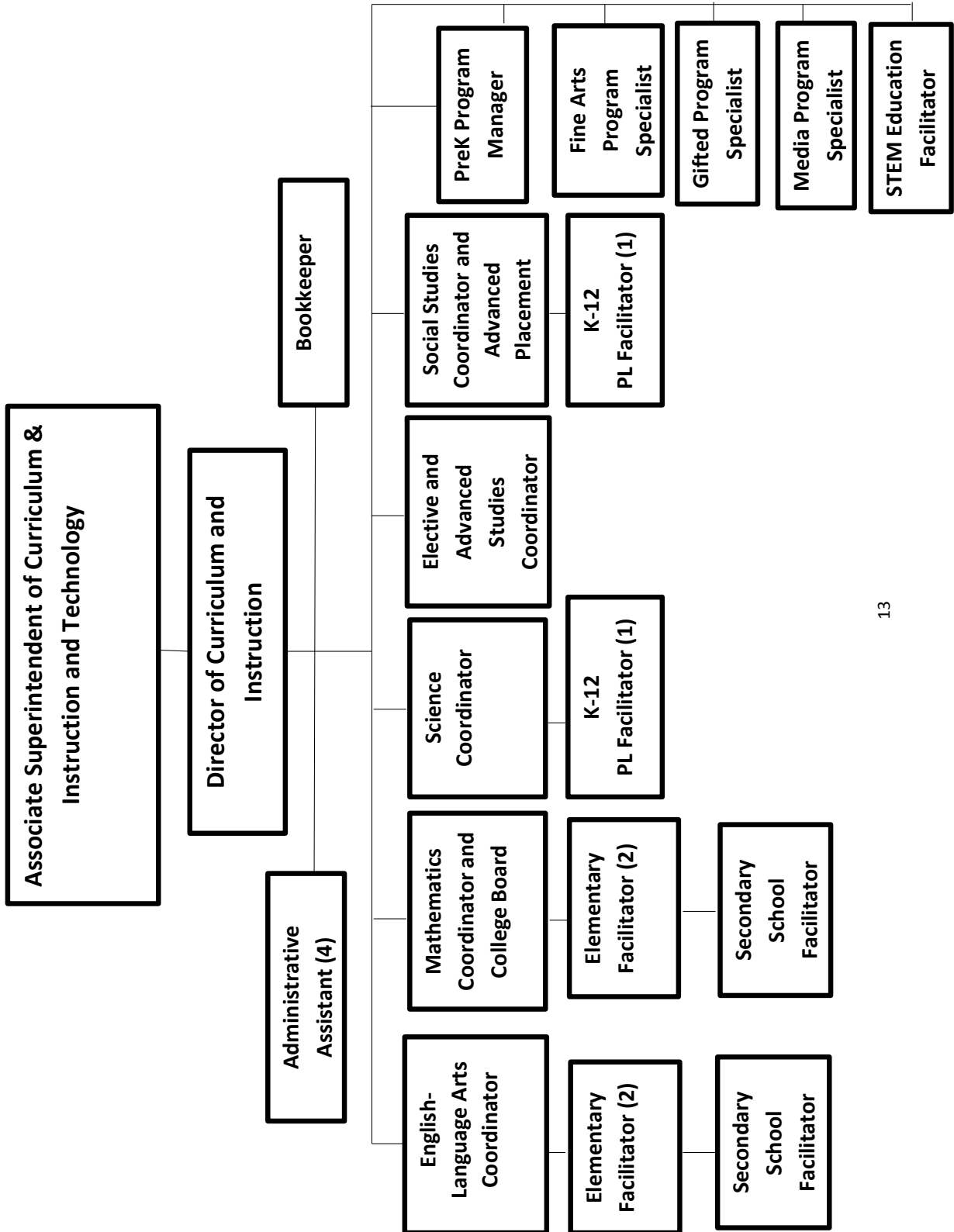
**Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18**



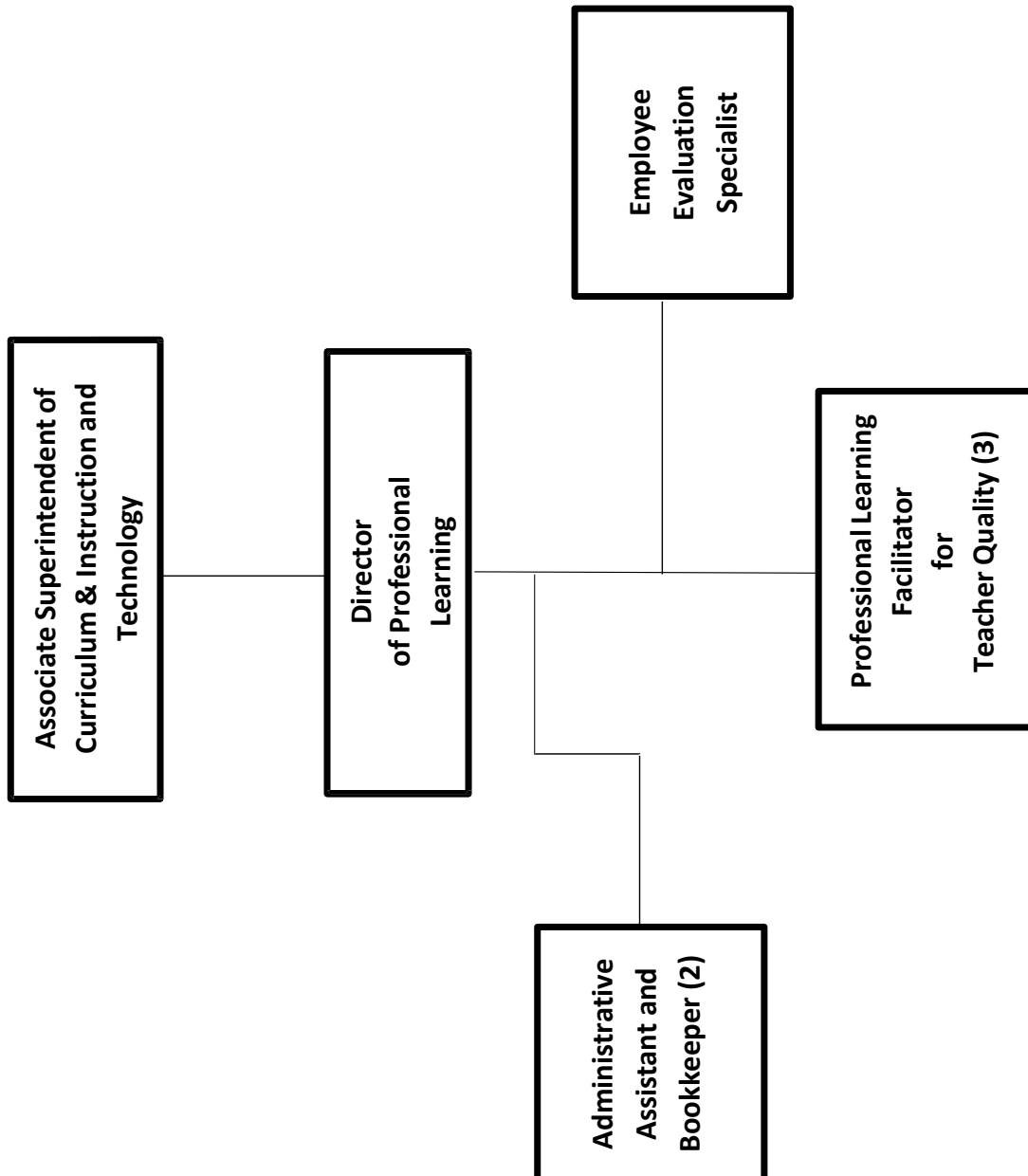
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



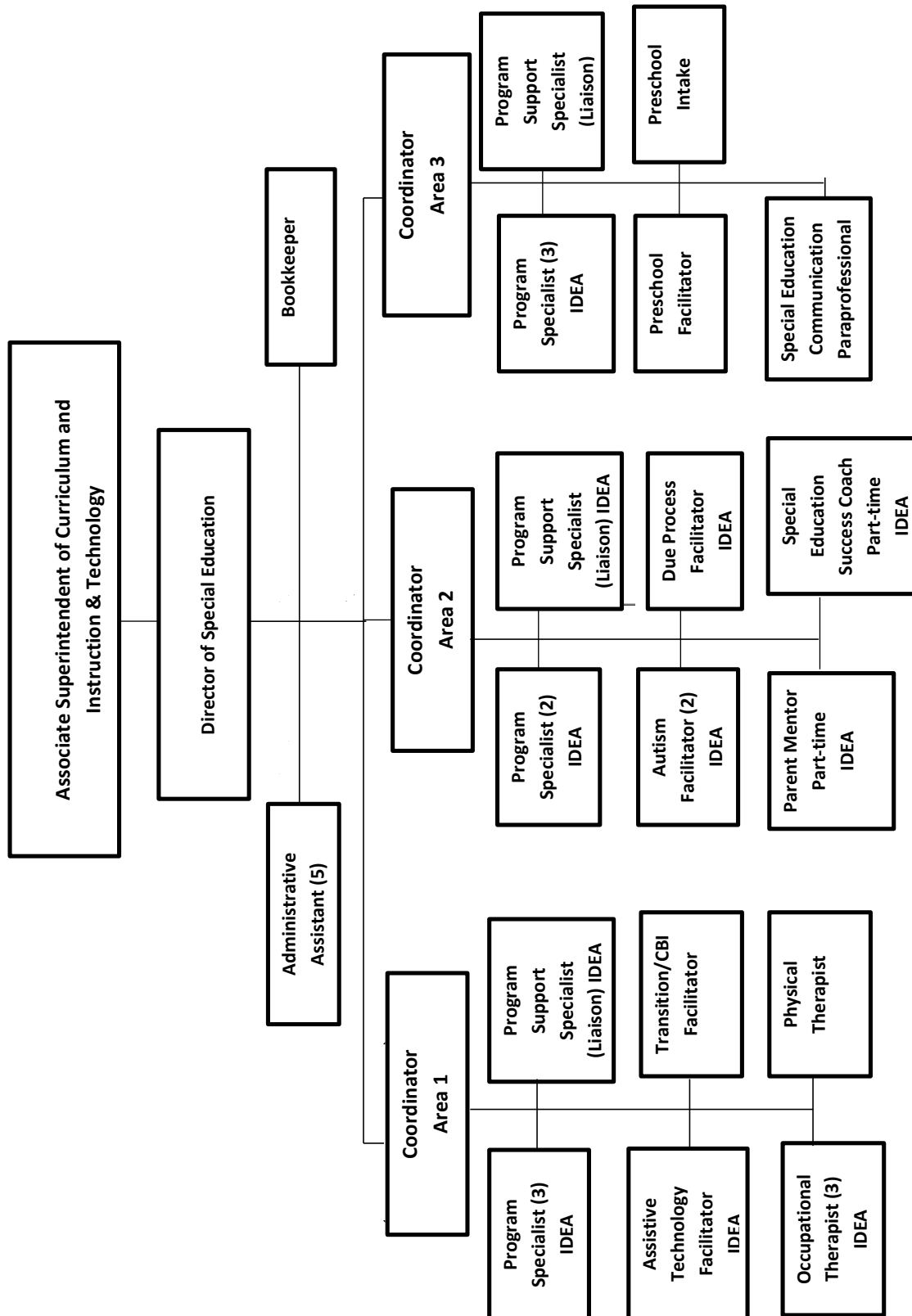
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



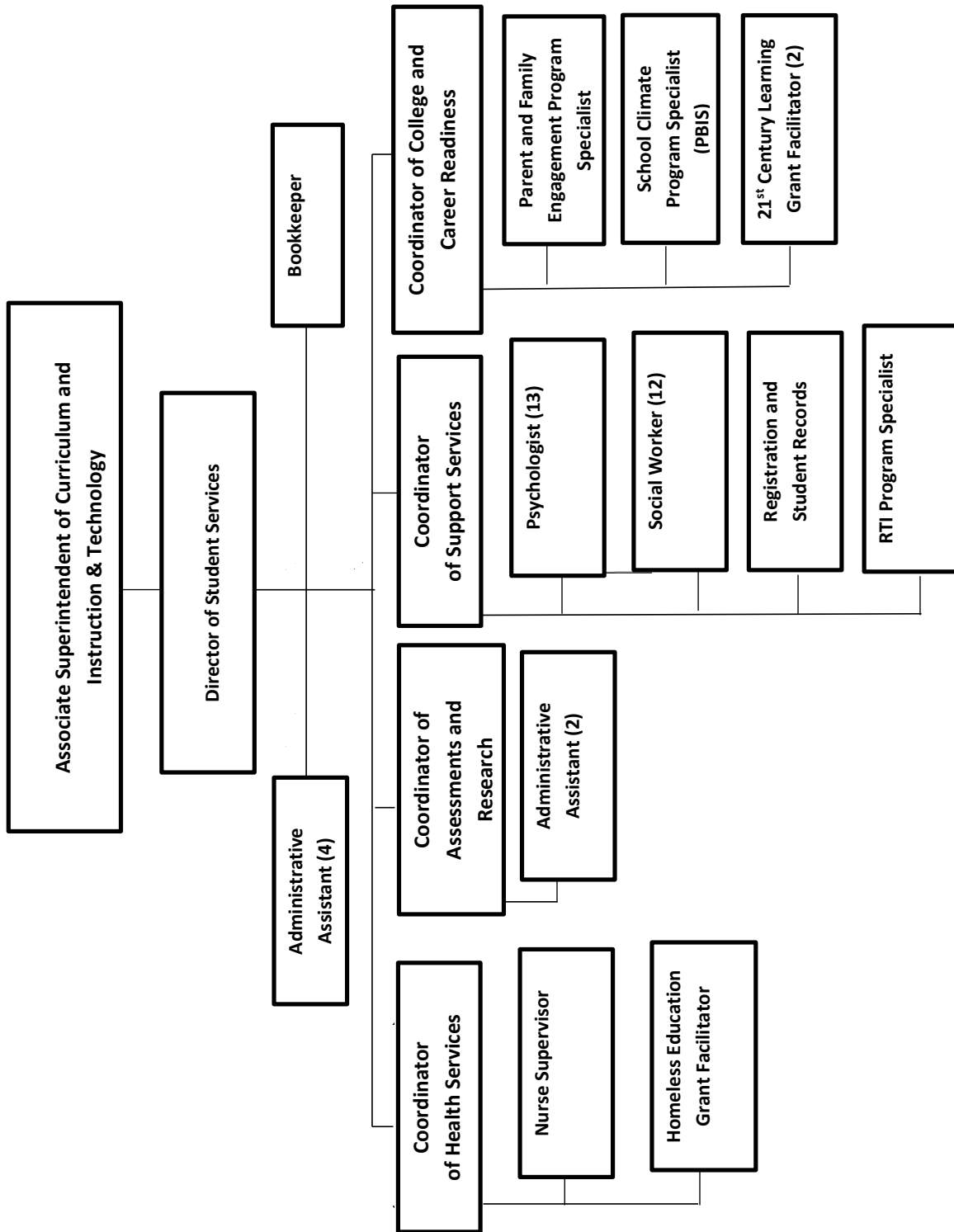
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



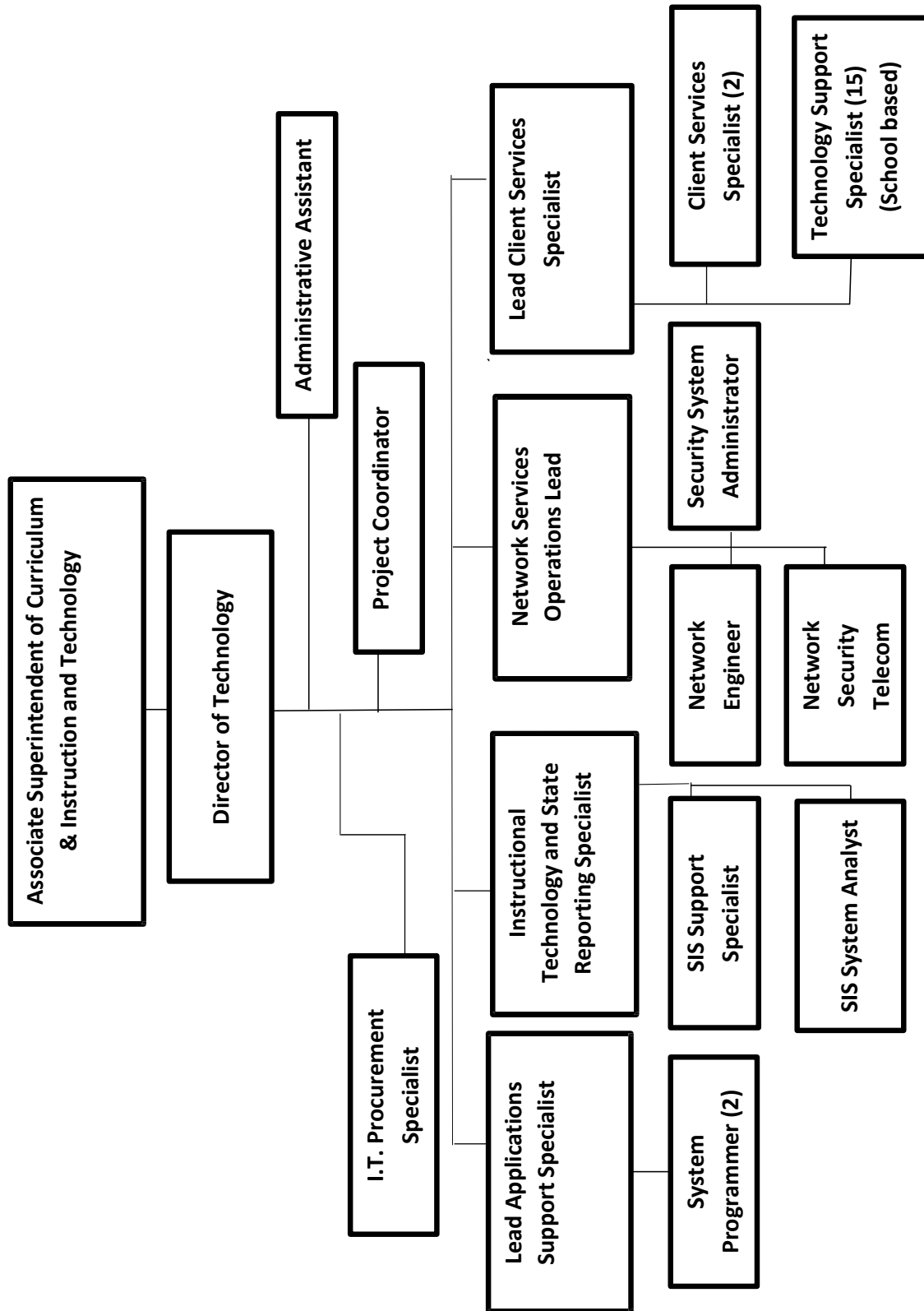
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



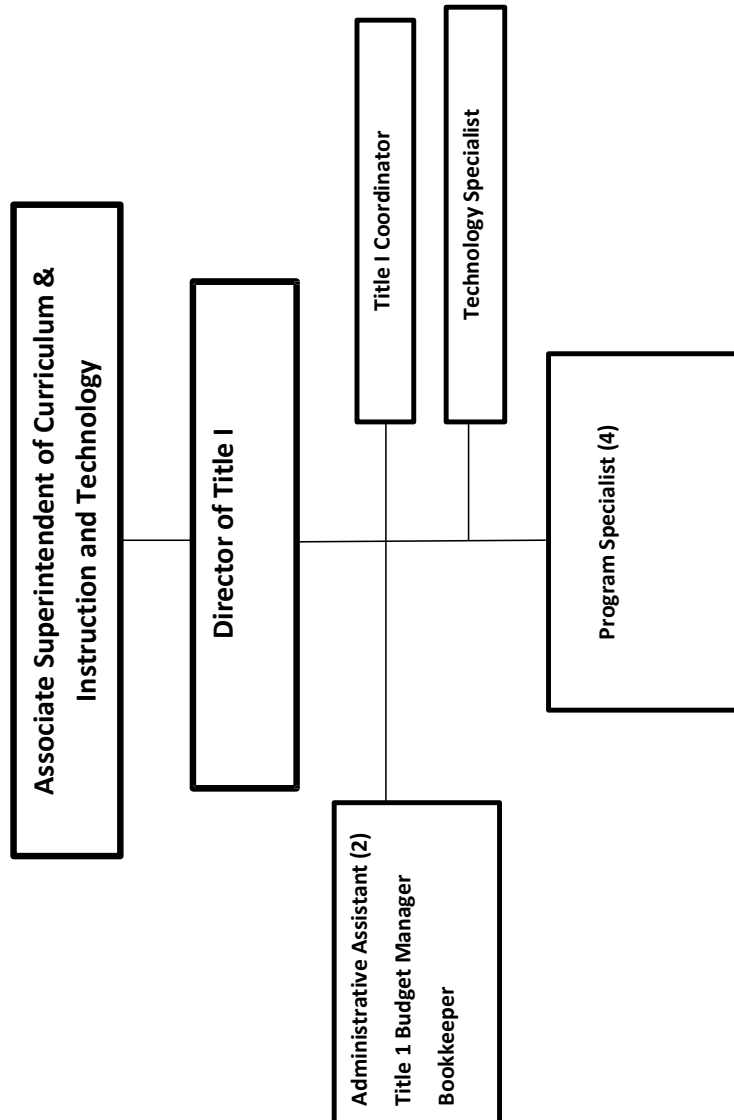
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



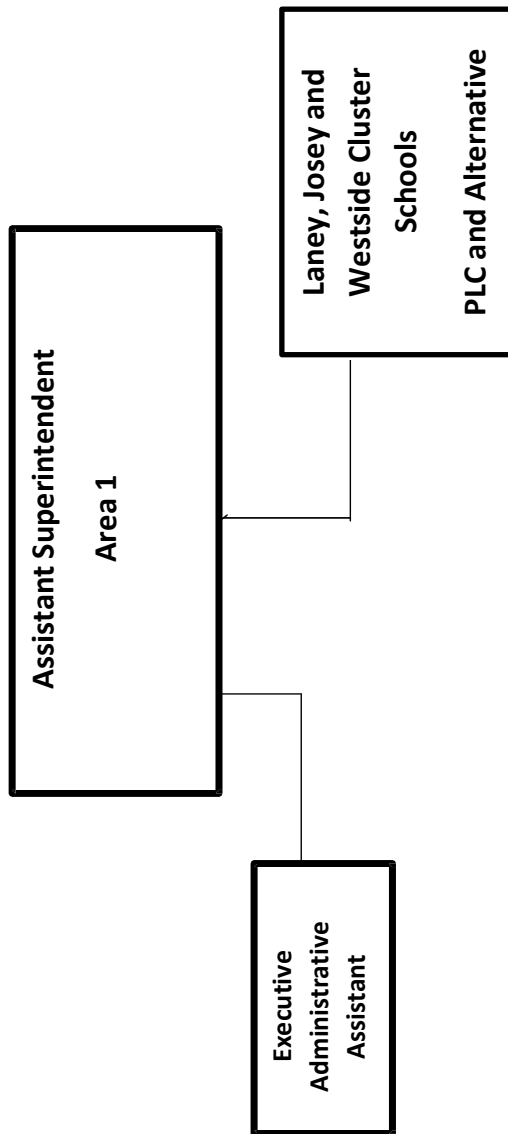
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



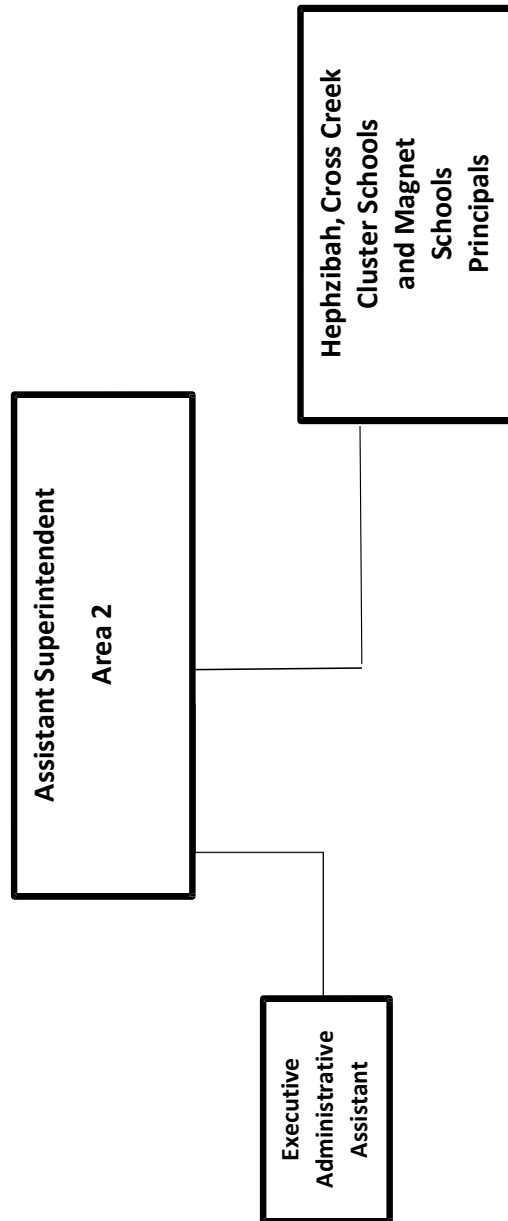
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



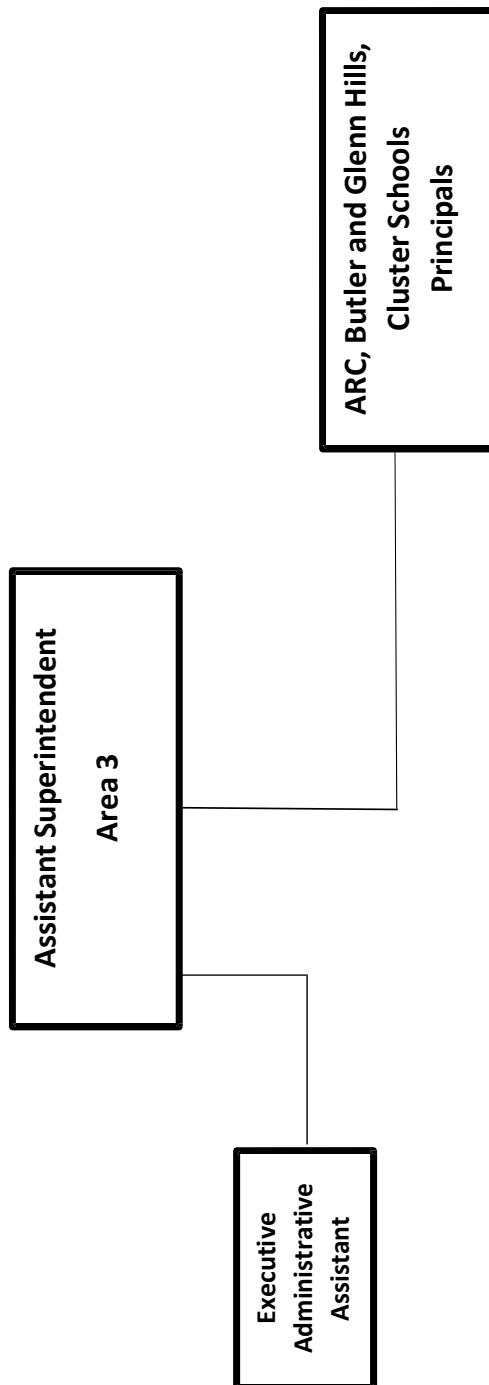
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



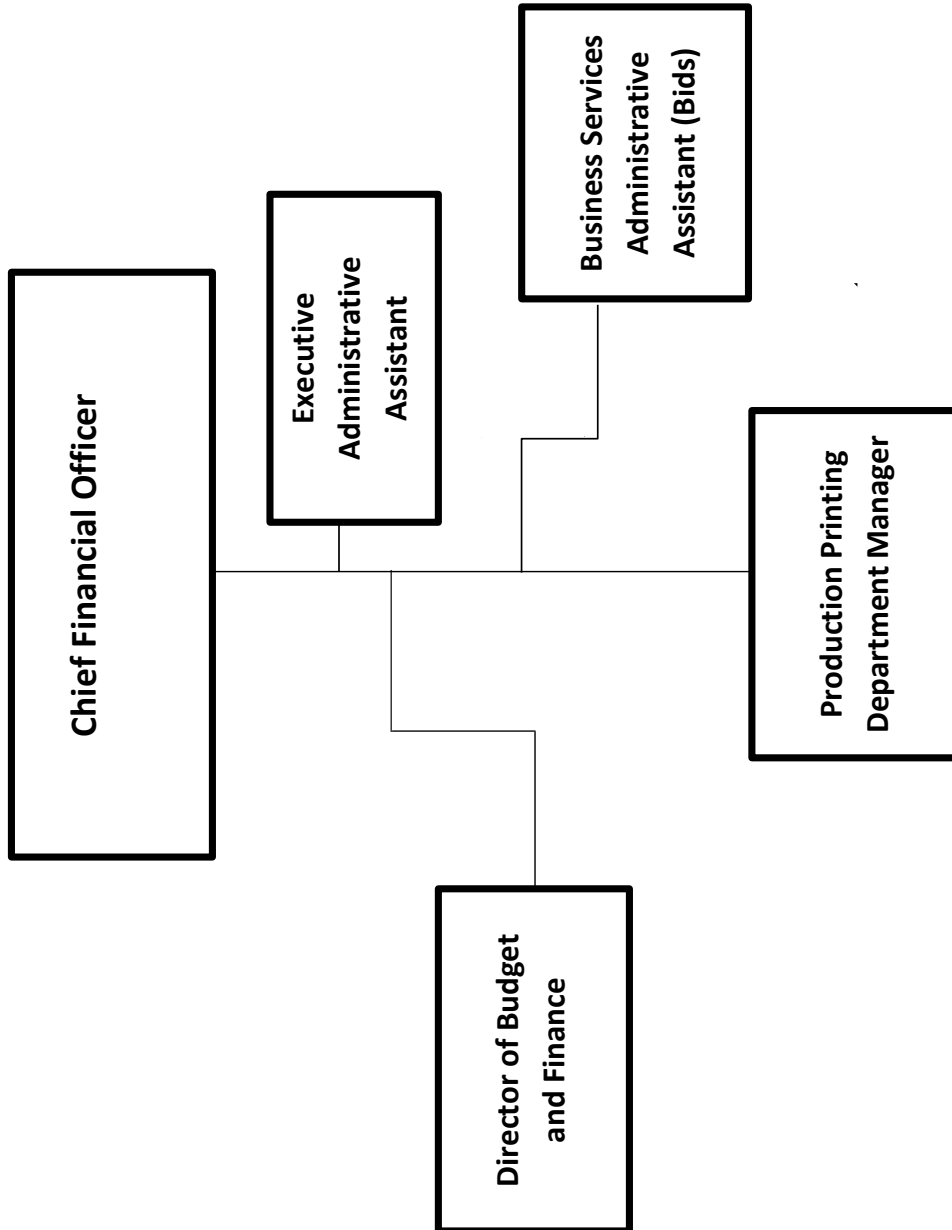
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



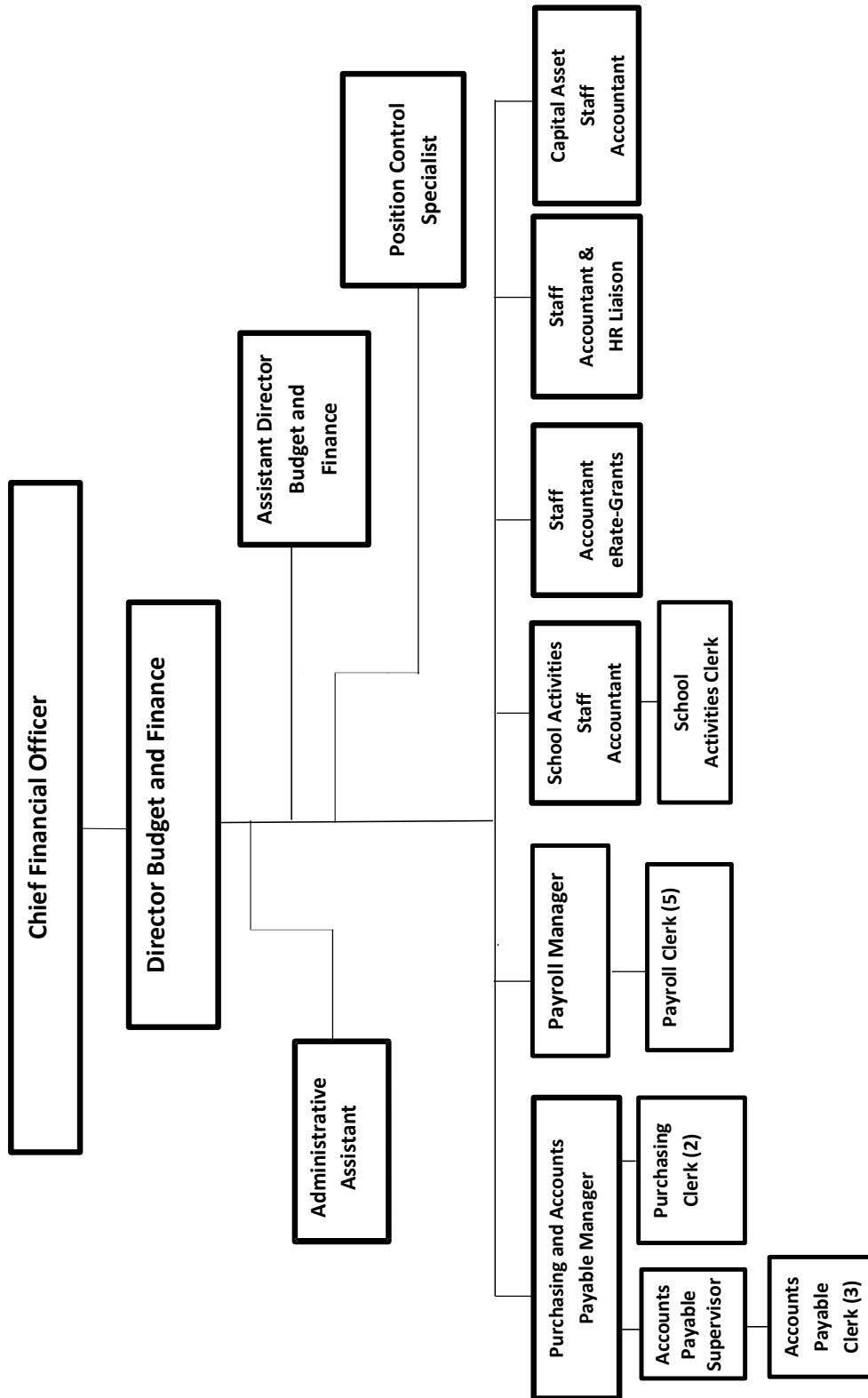
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



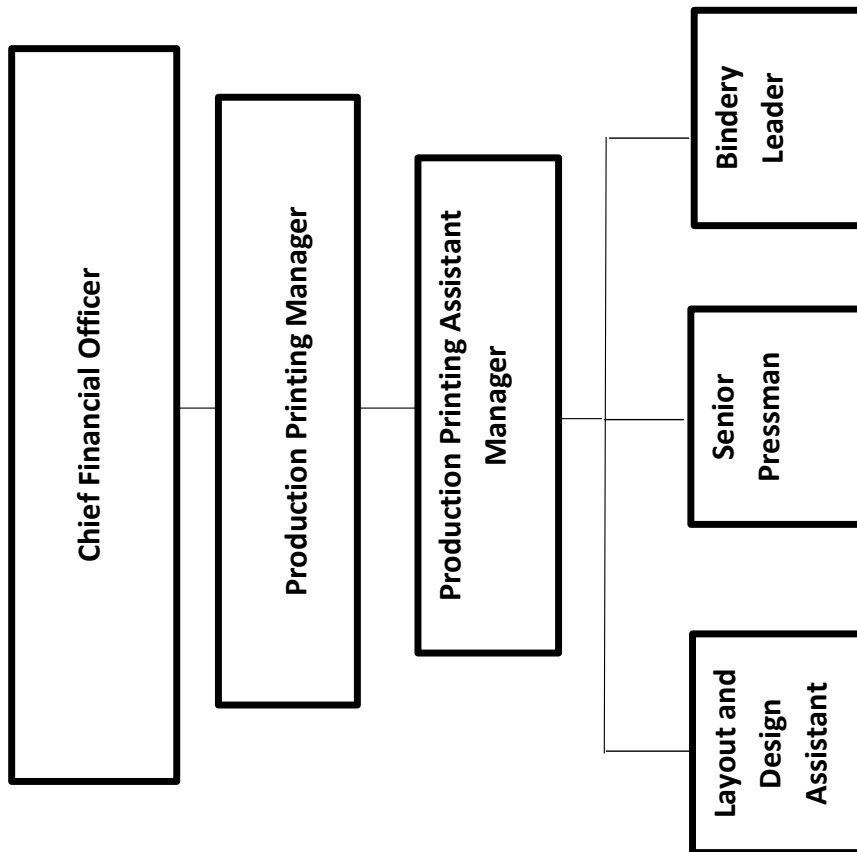
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



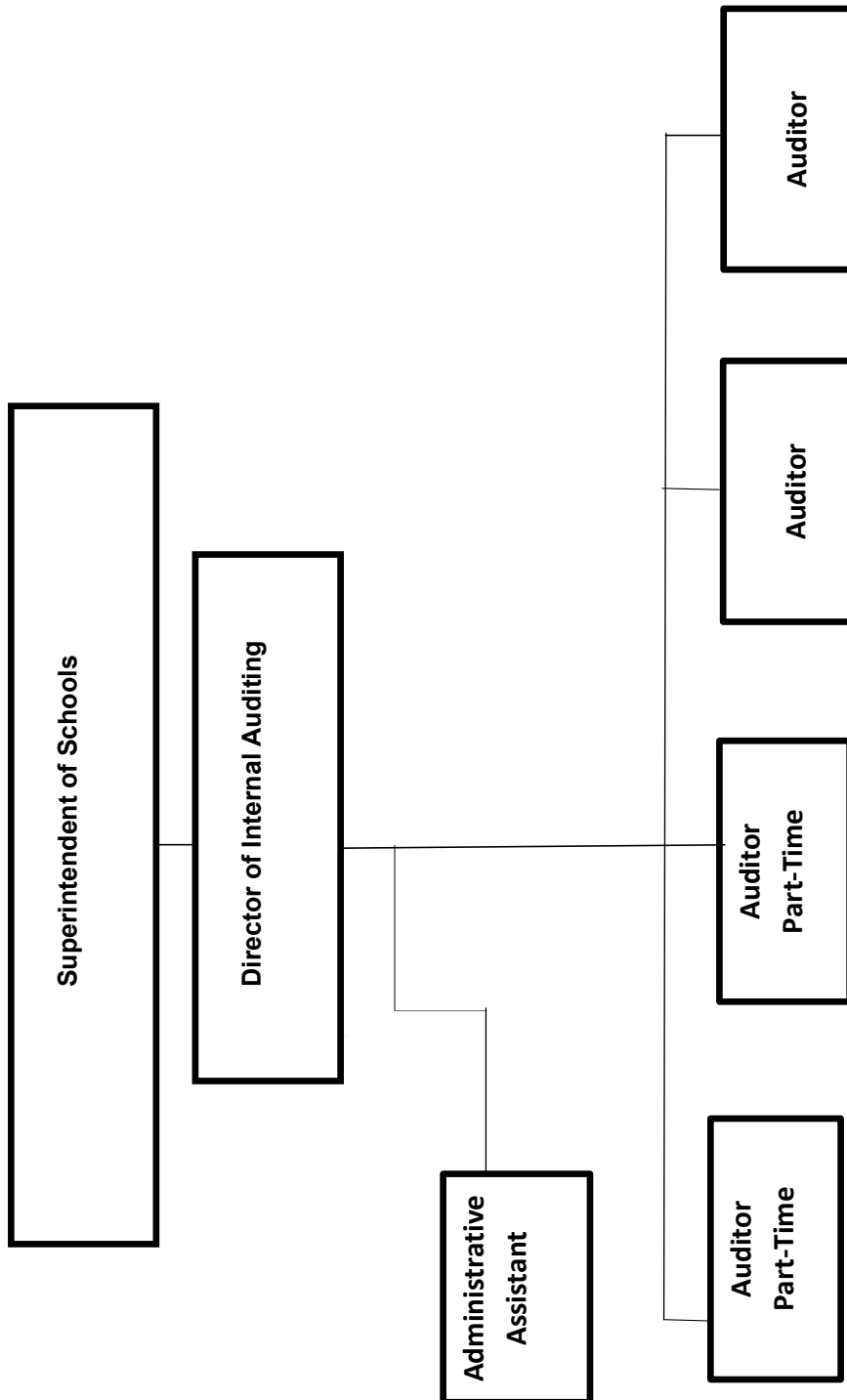
Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18



Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18

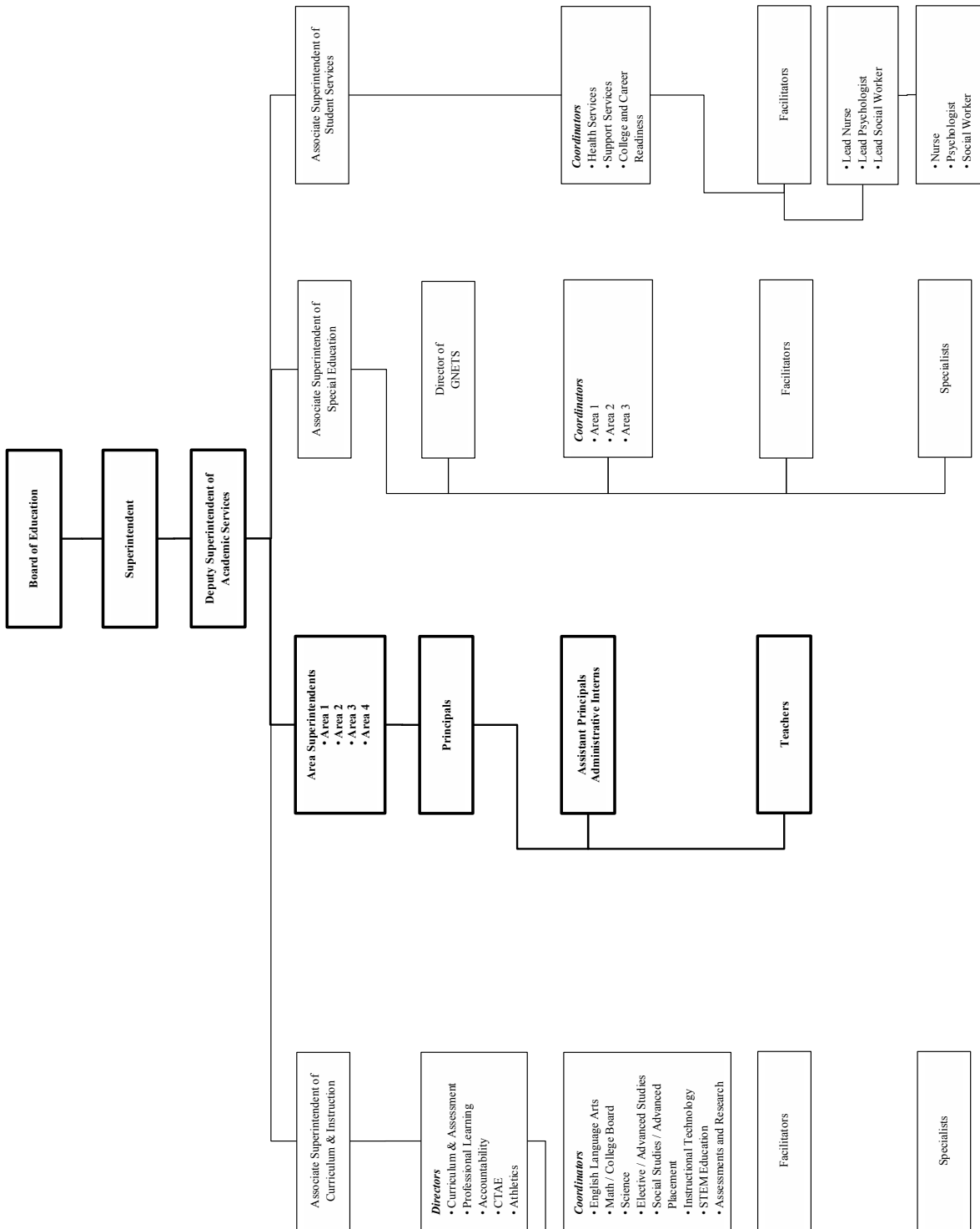


Appendix C (continued)
Current Organizational Chart
Richmond County School System
2017-18

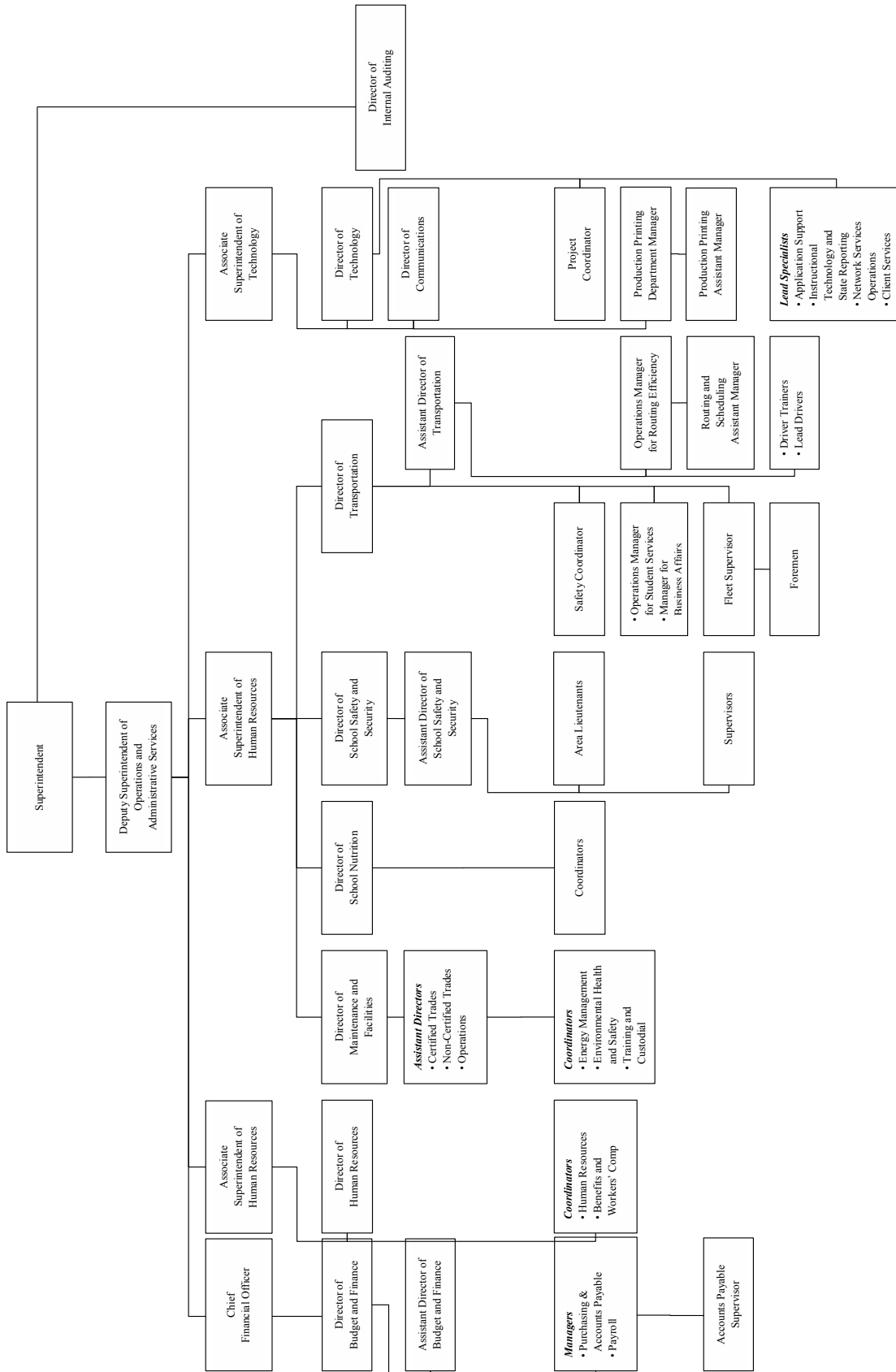


Appendix D

Recommended Table of Organization Richmond County School System



Appendix D (continued)
Recommended Table of Organization
Richmond County School System



Appendix E

Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12

Richmond County School System

October 2017

Elementary School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents

Exhibit 2.2.1: Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 5

Course Offering	K	1	2	3	4	5	Courses Offered	Curriculum Guides Presented
Core Courses								
Language Arts								
English Language Arts	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Gifted Language Arts		X	X	X	X	X	5	5
ELA	X	X		X			3	3
Writing	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Speech 30	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Speech 60	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Speech KK*							1	1
Mathematics								
Mathematics	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Gifted Math		X	X			X	3	3
MATH	X		X			X	3	3
Social Science								
Social Studies	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Gifted Social Studies			X	X			2	2
SOCSTU 1/5*							2	2
Science								
SCIENCE/5*							1	1
Science	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
STEM Exploratory	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	0
Gifted Science			X	X		X	3	3
Subtotal Core Subject Areas							71	65
Percentage of Core Subject Areas with Curriculum							92%	
Non-Core Courses								
ESL								
ESOL	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Fine Arts								
Dance	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Music General	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Theatre Arts	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Visual Arts	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Foreign Language								
Spanish	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Chinese				X	X	X	3	0
Health and Physical Education								
Health	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Physical Education	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Adaptive PE		X			X		2	2
Gifted Health			X				1	1

Appendix E (continued) Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Richmond County School System October 2017 Elementary School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents Exhibit 2.2.1: Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 5								
Course Offering	K	1	2	3	4	5	Courses Offered	Curriculum Guides Presented
Non-Core Courses								
Personal Social Skills								
Computer Literacy	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Study Skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	6
Special Education								
Gifted Resource		X	X	X	X	X	5	5
Subtotal Non-Core							71	68
Percentage of Non-Core Courses with Written Curriculum								96%
Total Courses with Written Curriculum								133
Percentage of Elementary Courses with Written Curriculum								94%
Key: X= Course offered *= Grade level not specified								
Data Source: RCSS curriculum documents found in Rubicon Atlas.								

Middle School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.2: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 6-8

Course Offering	6	7	8	Courses Offered	Curriculum Guides Presented
Core Courses					
Language Arts					
Language Arts	X	X	X	3	3
Language Arts/Grade 6 ConEnr	X			1	-
Gifted Language Arts		X	X	2	2
Honors Language Arts	X	X	X	3	3
Speech 30		X	X	2	-
Subtotal Language Arts				11	8
Mathematics					
Mathematics	X	X	X	3	3
Mathematics AB Enrichment	X	X	X	3	-
Gifted Honors Math	X	X	X	3	3
Gifted Mathematics			X	1	-
Honors Math	X	X		2	-
Subtotal Math				12	6
Science					
Science	X	X	X	3	3
Gifted Honors Science		X		1	-
Honors Science	X	X		2	1
Subtotal Science				6	4

Appendix E (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12
Richmond County School System
October 2017
Middle School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.2: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 6-8

Course Offering	6	7	8	Courses Offered	Curriculum Guides Presented
Core Courses					
Social Science					
Social Studies/Georgia Studies	X	X	X	3	3
Gifted Social Studies/Georgia Studies		X	X	2	1
Gifted Honors Social Studies/GA St	X	X	X	3	-
Honors Social Studies/Georgia Studies	X	X	X	3	-
Subtotal Social Science				11	4
Total Core Courses and Guides				40	22
Percent of Core Courses with Curriculum Guides					55%
Non-Core Courses					
Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE)					
Exp. Engineer Tech	X			1	1
Invention and Innovation		X		1	1
*Apps of Communications/MS				1	-
*Broadcast & Graphic Comm/MS				1	-
*Introduction to Communications/MS				1	-
Technological Systems			X	1	1
Business and Computer Science	X	X	X	3	1
Career Awareness	X			1	1
Career Discovery		X		1	1
Career Management			X	1	1
Healthcare Science	X	X	X	3	3
Subtotal CTAE				15	10
ESOL					
ESOL	X	X	X	3	1
Subtotal ESOL				3	1
Fine Arts					
*Ballet I, II, III/MS				3	1
*Jazz Dance I, II, III/MS				3	-
*Beginning Men's Dance/MS				1	1
*Modern Dance I, II, III/MS				3	-
*Theater Technology I, II/MS				2	1
*Theatre Arts Literature/MS				1	-
*Theatre Arts/Fundamentals I, II/MS				2	-
*Dramatic Arts/Fund I, II/MS				1	-
Visual Arts	X	X	X	3	3
*Visual Arts/Sculpture I, II/MS				2	-
*Visual Arts/Com I, II, III/MS				3	1
Music General	X	X	X	3	3
Beginning Band	X	X	X	3	3
*Intermediate Band I, II/MS				2	2
*Advanced Band I/MS				1	1

Appendix E (continued) Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Richmond County School System October 2017 Middle School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents Exhibit 2.2.2: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 6-8					
Course Offering	6	7	8	Courses Offered	Curriculum Guides Presented
Non-Core Courses					
Fine Arts (continued)					
Beginning Orchestra	X	X	X	3	2
*Intermediate Orchestra/MS				1	-
*Beginning Jazz Band				1	-
*Beginning Keyboard Techniques I/MS				1	-
*Intermediate Keyboard Techniques I,II/MS				2	-
*Advanced Keyboard Techniques I/MS				1	-
*Beginning Men's Chorus I/MS				1	-
*Advanced Men's Chorus I/MS				1	-
*Advanced Women's Chorus I/MS				1	-
Beginning Chorus	X	X	X	3	3
Subtotal Fine Arts				48	21
Foreign Language					
Spanish	X	X	X	3	3
Subtotal Foreign Language				3	3
Health and Physical Education					
Health	X	X	X	3	3
Physical Education	X	X	X	3	3
Subtotal Health and Physical Education				6	6
Personal and Social Skills					
*Stem's Research	X	X	X	3	-
Study Skills	X	X	X	3	-
Subtotal Personal and Social Skills				6	-
Total Non-Core Courses and Guides				81	41
Percent of Non-Core Courses with Curriculum Guides					51%
Percent of Core Courses with Curriculum Guides					55%
Percent of Total Middle School Course with Curriculum Guides					52%
Key: X = Course offered ; Dash = Course offered, but no guide presented; *=Grade level of course offering not specified					
Data Source: RCSS curriculum documents found in Rubicon Atlas					

Appendix E (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12
Richmond County School System
October 2017
High School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.3: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 9-12

Course Title	Courses Offered	Offerings with Curriculum	Percentage of Offerings with Curriculum
Core Courses			
English Language Arts			
Advanced Composition	1	0	0
Advanced Composition II	1	0	0
American Literature/Composition	1	1	100
AP English Language/Composition	1	1	100
AP English Language/Composition/American Literature	1	0	0
AP English Literature/Comp	1	0	0
Basic Reading/Writing III	1	0	0
Basic Reading/Writing II	1	0	0
Basic Reading/Writing IV	1	0	0
Basic Reading/Writing I	1	0	0
British Literature/Composition	1	1	100
Composition & Rhetoric	1	0	0
Gifted American Literature/Composition	1	0	0
Gifted AP English Language/Composition/American Literature	1	0	0
Gifted AP English Literature/Composition	1	0	0
Gifted British Literature/Composition	1	0	0
Gifted Honors 9th Gr Literature/Composition	1	1	100
Gifted Honors 10th Gr Literature/Composition	1	1	100
Gifted Honors American Literature	1	1	100
Gifted Honors American Literature/Composition	1	0	0
Gifted Honors British Literature	1	1	100
Gifted IB English A Lit Yr 1	1	0	0
Gifted IB English A Lit Yr 2	1	0	0
Honors 10th Grade Literature/Composition	1	0	0
Honors 9th Grade Literature/Composition	1	0	0
Honors American Literature/Composition	1	0	0
Honors British Literature/Composition	1	0	0
IB English A Literature Year 1	1	0	0
IB English A Literature Year 2	1	1	100
Journalism I	1	0	0
Journalism II	1	0	0
Literature & History of the New Testament	1	0	0
Literature & History of the Old Testament	1	0	0
Literature (9)	1	1	100
Literature (9-10)	1	0	0
Multicultural Literature/Composition	1	1	100
Oral Communication in the Content Areas	1	0	0
Oral/Written Communication	1	0	0
Read & Listen in the Content Area	1	0	0

Appendix E (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12
Richmond County School System
October 2017
High School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.3: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 9-12

Course Title	Courses Offered	Offerings with Curriculum	Percentage of Offerings with Curriculum
Core Courses			
English Language Arts (continued)			
Reading Enrichment	1	0	0
Speech Forensics III	1	0	0
Speech Forensics II	1	0	0
Speech Forensics I	1	0	0
Speech 30/Grade 10	1	0	0
Speech 30/Grade 11	1	0	0
Speech 30/Grade 9	1	0	0
Speech 30/Grade 9	1	0	0
Speech 30/Grade 12	1	0	0
Speech 60/Grade 10	1	0	0
Speech 60/Grade 11	1	0	0
Speech 60/Grade 12	1	0	0
Speech 60/Grade 9	1	0	0
Writer's Workshop A	1	0	0
Writing in the Content Areas	1	0	0
Subtotal English Language Arts	54	10	19
Mathematics			
Advanced Math Decision Making	1	1	100
Advanced Algebra	1	0	0
Algebra I	1	1	100
Algebra I Support	1	1	100
Algebra II	1	1	100
Algebra II Support	1	0	0
AP Calculus	1	0	0
AP Statistics	1	1	100
Coordinate Algebra	1	0	0
Foundations of Algebra	1	1	100
Foundations of Mathematics	1	0	0
Geometry	1	1	100
Geometry Support	1	0	0
Gifted Algebra II	1	0	0
Gifted AP Calculus	1	0	0
Gifted AP Statistics	1	1	100
Gifted Honors Algebra I	1	1	100
Gifted Honors Algebra II	1	1	100
Gifted Honors Geometry	1	1	100
Gifted Honors Pre-Calculus	1	1	100
Gifted IB Math Studies Year 2	1	0	0
Gifted Pre-Calculus	1	0	0

Appendix E (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12
Richmond County School System
October 2017
High School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.3: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 9-12

Course Title	Courses Offered	Offerings with Curriculum	Percentage of Offerings with Curriculum
Core Courses			
Mathematics (continued)			
Honors Algebra I	1	0	0
Honors Algebra II	1	0	0
Honors Geometry	1	0	0
Honors Pre-Calculus	1	0	0
IB Mathematical Studies Year 2	1	1	100
IB Mathematics Studies Year 1	1	0	0
Pre-Calculus	1	1	100
Subtotal Mathematics	29	14	48
Science			
AP Biology	1	0	0
AP Chemistry	1	1	100
AP Environmental Science	1	1	100
AP Physics C: Mechanics	1	0	0
AP Physics I	1	0	0
Biology I	1	1	100
Chemistry I	1	1	100
Earth Systems	1	0	0
Environmental Science A	1	1	100
Forensic Science	1	1	100
Gifted AP Biology	1	0	0
Gifted AP Environmental Science I	1	0	0
Gifted AP Physics	1	0	0
Gifted Chemistry I	1	0	0
Gifted Environmental Science	1	0	0
Gifted Honors Biology I	1	0	0
Gifted Honors Chemistry I	1	0	0
Gifted Honors Human Anatomy/Physiology	1	0	0
Gifted Honors Physics I	1	0	0
Gifted IB Biology Year 1	1	0	0
Gifted IB Biology Year 2	1	0	0
Gifted IB Physics Year One	1	0	0
Gifted IB Physics Year Two	1	0	0
Gifted Physics I	1	0	0
Gifted Zoology	1	0	0
Honors Biology I	1	0	0
Honors Chemistry I	1	0	0
Honors Physics I	1	0	0
Human Anatomy/Physiology	1	1	100
IB Biology Year 1	1	0	0

Appendix E (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12
Richmond County School System
October 2017
High School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.3: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 9-12

Course Title	Courses Offered	Offerings with Curriculum	Percentage of Offerings with Curriculum
Core Courses			
Science (continued)			
IB Biology Year 2	1	1	100
IB Environmental Systems	1	0	0
IB Physics Year One	1	1	100
IB Physics Year Two	1	1	100
Physical Science	1	1	100
Physics I	1	1	100
Zoology	1	1	100
Subtotal Science	37	13	38
Social Studies			
African American History	1	0	0
American Government/Civics	1	1	100
AP Government/Politics: U.S.	1	1	100
AP Human Geography	1	1	100
AP Psychology	1	1	100
AP United States History	1	1	100
AP World History	1	1	100
Basic Psychology	1	0	0
Current Issues	1	1	100
Economics	1	0	0
Ethnic Studies	1	1	100
Gifted AP Government/Politics U.S.	1	0	0
Gifted AP Psychology	1	0	0
Gifted AP U.S. History	1	0	0
Gifted AP World History	1	0	0
Gifted Community Service & Learning II	1	0	0
Gifted Community Service & Learning IV	1	0	0
Gifted Community Service & Learning I	1	0	0
Gifted Community Service & Learning III	1	0	0
Gifted Economics/Business/Free Enterprise	1	0	0
Gifted Honors Econ/Business/Free Enterprise	1	0	0
Gifted Honors U.S. History	1	0	0
Gifted Honors World History	1	0	0
Gifted IB 20th Century History	1	0	0
Gifted IB History of Americas Y1	1	0	0
Gifted IB Personal & Professional Skills Yr One	1	0	0
Gifted IB Psychology Year One	1	0	0
Honors American Government/Civics	1	0	0
Honors Economic/Business/Free Enterprise	1	0	0
Honors The Humanities/SS	1	0	0

Appendix E (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12
Richmond County School System
October 2017
High School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.3: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 9-12

Course Title	Courses Offered	Offerings with Curriculum	Percentage of Offerings with Curriculum
Core Courses			
Social Studies (continued)			
Honors United States History	1	0	0
Honors World History	1	0	0
IB 20th Century History Year 1	1	0	0
IB Gifted Personal & Professional Skills Yr Two	1	0	0
IB History of the Americas Y1	1	1	100
IB Personal & Professional Skills Yr One	1	1	100
IB Personal & Professional Skills Yr Two	1	1	100
IB Psychology Year One	1	1	100
IB Psychology Year Two	1	1	100
IB Theory of Knowledge Year 1	1	0	0
IB Theory of Knowledge Year 2	1	0	0
Psychology	1	1	100
Sociology	1	1	100
The Humanities/Social Studies	1	0	0
The Individual & the Law	1	0	0
United States & World Affairs	1	0	0
United States History	1	1	100
World Geography	1	0	0
World History	1	1	100
Subtotal Social Studies	49	17	35
Subtotal Core Subject Areas	169	54	32
Non-Core Courses			
Career Technical Agricultural Education			
Advanced AC and DC Circuits	1	1	100
Advanced Fashion Merchandise & Retailing	1	1	100
Advanced Sports & Entertainment Marketing	1	1	100
Advanced Cybersecurity	1	1	100
AP Computer Science	1	0	0
Audio/Video Technology & Film II	1	0	0
Audio/Video Technology & Film	1	1	100
Audio/Video Technology & Film III	1	1	100
Banking Investing & Insurance	1	1	100
Basic Agricultural Science	1	1	100
Basic Maintenance & Light Repair	1	1	100
Beg Keyboard Techniques	1	0	0
Business & Computer Science WBLP	1	1	100
Business & Technology	1	1	100
Business Administration	1	0	0
Business Communications	1	1	100

Appendix E (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12
Richmond County School System
October 2017
High School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.3: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 9-12

Course Title	Courses Offered	Offerings with Curriculum	Percentage of Offerings with Curriculum
Non-Core Courses			
Career Technical Agricultural Education (continued)			
Business Management WBLP	1	0	0
Career Tech Instruction I	1	1	100
Career Tech Instruction II	1	0	0
Career Tech Instruction III	1	0	0
Career Tech Instruction IV	1	0	0
Chemical Texture Services	1	0	0
Commercial Wiring I	1	0	0
Commercial Wiring II	1	0	0
Computer Science	1	1	100
Consumer Finance	1	0	0
Cosmetology Service Core I	1	0	0
Cosmetology Services II	1	1	100
Cosmetology Services III	1	1	100
Criminal Investigations & Forensics	1	1	100
Criminal Justice Essentials	1	1	100
Culinary Arts I	1	1	100
Culinary Arts II	1	1	100
Culinary Arts WBLP	1	0	0
Digital Design	1	1	100
Digital Electronics	1	1	100
Early Childhood Education I	1	1	100
Early Childhood Education II	1	1	100
Early Childhood Education III	1	1	100
Education WBLP	1	0	0
Energy Systems Applications	1	1	100
Engineering & Technology WBLP	1	0	0
Engineering Applications	1	0	0
Engineering Concepts	1	0	0
Entrepreneurial Ventures	1	1	100
Entrepreneurship	1	1	100
Fashion Merchandising & Retail	1	1	100
Financial Literacy	1	1	100
Floriculture Production & Management	1	0	0
Food Nutrition & Wellness	1	1	100
Food for Life	1	1	100
Food Science	1	1	100
Forest Science I	1	0	0
Foundations of Electronics	1	1	100
Foundations of Engineering Technology	1	1	100

Appendix E (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12
Richmond County School System
October 2017
High School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.3: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 9-12

Course Title	Courses Offered	Offerings with Curriculum	Percentage of Offerings with Curriculum
Non-Core Courses			
Career Technical Agricultural Education (continued)			
Foundations of Manufacturing & Materials Science	1	0	0
Fundamentals of Web Design A	1	0	0
General Horticulture & Plant Science	1	1	100
Hair Care and Treatment	1	0	0
Hair Services Practicum I	1	0	0
Industry Fundamentals & Occupational Safety	1	0	0
Information Technology Essentials	1	1	100
Information Technology WBLP	1	0	0
Introduction to Business and Technology	1	1	100
Introduction to Culinary Arts	1	1	100
Introduction to Cybersecurity	1	1	100
Introduction to Digital Technology	1	1	100
Introduction to Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security	1	1	100
Introduction to Metals	1	0	0
Introduction to Personal Care Services	1	1	100
Introduction to Sports and Entertainment Marketing	1	1	100
Jobs for GA Grads-Work Ethics I	1	0	0
Jobs for GA Grads-Work Ethics II	1	0	0
Jobs for GA Grads-Work Ethics IV	1	1	100
Legal Environment of Business	1	0	0
Maintenance & Light Repair II	1	1	100
Maintenance & Light Repair III	1	1	100
Manufacturing Sciences WBLP	1	0	0
Marketing & Entrepreneurship	1	1	100
Marketing Management	1	1	100
Marketing Principles	1	1	100
Marketing WBLP	1	0	0
Networking Fundamentals	1	1	100
Nursery & Landscape	1	0	0
Patient Care Fundamentals	1	1	100
Patient Care Technician	1	1	100
Personal Services Occupations WBLP	1	0	0
Precision Prod Occupations WBLP	1	0	0
Production Enterprises	1	0	0
Project Management	1	0	0
Public Safety WBLP	1	0	0
Robotics & Automated Systems	1	0	0
Salon Management	1	0	0
Sheet Metal II	1	0	0

Appendix E (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12
Richmond County School System
October 2017
High School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.3: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 9-12

Course Title	Courses Offered	Offerings with Curriculum	Percentage of Offerings with Curriculum
Non-Core Courses			
Career Technical Agricultural Education (continued)			
Web Design	1	1	100
Welding I	1	0	0
Welding II	1	0	0
Welding III	1	0	0
Wildlife Management	1	1	100
Work-Based Learning	1	1	100
Subtotal Career Technical Agricultural Education	100	56	56
English as a Second Language			
Communication Skills II	1	0	0
Communication Skills I	1	0	0
Communication Skills	1	0	0
Subtotal English as a Second Language	3	0	0
Fine and Performing Arts			
Advanced Band III	1	0	0
Advanced Band II	1	0	0
Advanced Band IV	1	0	0
Advanced Band I	1	1	100
Advanced Choral Ensemble III	1	0	0
Advanced Choral Ensemble II	1	0	0
Advanced Choral Ensemble IV	1	0	0
Advanced Choral Ensemble I	1	0	0
Advanced Chorus III	1	0	0
Advanced Chorus II	1	0	0
Advanced Chorus IV	1	0	0
Advanced Chorus I	1	1	100
Advanced Jazz III	1	0	0
Advanced Jazz IV	1	0	0
Advanced Orchestra III	1	0	0
Advanced Orchestra II	1	0	0
Advanced Orchestra IV	1	0	0
Advanced Orchestra I	1	1	100
Advanced Women's Chorus I	1	0	0
AP Art History	1	0	0
AP Studio Art: Drawing	1	1	100
AP Studio Art: 2D Design Portfolio	1	0	0
Beg Instrumental Ensemble I	1	0	0
Beg Music Theory & Composition	1	0	0
Beginning Band II	1	0	0
Beginning Band I	1	1	100

Appendix E (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12
Richmond County School System
October 2017
High School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.3: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 9-12

Course Title	Courses Offered	Offerings with Curriculum	Percentage of Offerings with Curriculum
Non-Core Courses			
Fine and Performing Arts (continued)			
Beginning Chorus I	1	1	100
Beginning Music Technology	1	0	0
Beginning Orchestra I	1	0	0
Beginning Women's Chorus I	1	0	0
Contemporary Music Studies	1	0	0
Dance I	1	0	0
Dramatic Arts/Fundamentals III	1	0	0
Ethnic Music Studies I	1	1	100
Gifted AP Art History	1	0	0
Gifted AP Studio Art: 2D Design Portfolio	1	0	0
Gifted AP Studio Art: 3D Design Portfolio	1	0	0
Gifted IB Visual Arts Year One	1	0	0
IB Music Year One	1	0	0
IB Music Year Two	1	0	0
IB Visual Arts Year One	1	0	0
IB Visual Arts Year Two	1	0	0
Intermediate Band II	1	0	0
Intermediate Band I	1	1	100
Intermediate Chorus I	1	0	0
Intermediate Jazz II	1	0	0
Intermediate Jazz I	1	0	0
Intermediate Orchestra III	1	0	0
Intermediate Orchestra II	1	0	0
Intermediate Orchestra I	1	1	100
Intermediate Women's Chorus I	1	0	0
Music Appreciation I	1	1	100
Music Appreciation II	1	0	0
Theatre Arts/Acting III	1	0	0
Theatre Arts/Acting II	1	0	0
Theatre Arts/Acting I	1	0	0
Theatre Arts/Fundamentals II	1	1	100
Theatre Arts/Fundamentals I	1	0	0
Theatre Technology III	1	0	0
Theatre Technology II	1	0	0
Theatre Technology IV	1	0	0
Theatre Technology I	1	1	0
Visual Arts	1	0	0
Visual Arts/Art History & Criticism	1	0	0
Visual Arts/Ceramics/Pottery I	1	1	100

Appendix E (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12
Richmond County School System
October 2017
High School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.3: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 9-12

Course Title	Courses Offered	Offerings with Curriculum	Percentage of Offerings with Curriculum
Non-Core Courses			
Fine and Performing Arts (continued)			
Visual Arts/Comprehensive I	1	1	100
Visual Arts/Drawing I	1	1	100
Visual Arts/Drawing II	1	0	0
Visual Arts/Painting	1	1	100
Visual Arts/Photography III	1	0	0
Visual Arts/Photography II	1	0	0
Visual Arts/Photography I	1	0	0
Visual Arts/Sculpture I	1	1	100
Visual Arts/Ceramics/Pottery III	1	0	0
Visual Arts/Ceramics/Pottery II	1	0	0
Subtotal Fine and Performing Arts	75	17	23
Health and Physical Education			
Adaptive PE	1	0	0
Advanced Personal Fitness	1	0	0
Advanced Team Sports	1	0	0
Advanced Weight Training	1	0	0
Aerobic Dance	1	0	0
Exercise and Weight Control	1	0	0
General Physical Education II	1	0	0
General Physical Education IV	1	0	0
General Physical Education III	1	0	0
Health	1	1	100
Intermediate Lifetime Sports	1	0	0
Intermediate Outdoor Education	1	0	0
Intermediate Recreational Games	1	0	0
Intermediate Team Sports	1	0	0
Intermediate Track and Field	1	0	0
Introductory Lifetime Sports	1	0	0
Introductory Outdoor Education	1	0	0
Introductory Recreational Games	1	0	0
Introductory Team Sports	1	1	100
Introductory Track and Field	1	0	0
Introductory Recreational Games	1	0	0
Personal Fitness	1	1	100
Physical Conditioning	1	0	0
Weight Training	1	1	100
Subtotal Health and Physical Education	24	4	17

Appendix E (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12
Richmond County School System
October 2017
High School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.3: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 9-12

Course Title	Courses Offered	Offerings with Curriculum	Percentage of Offerings with Curriculum
Non-Core Courses			
Military Science/JROTC			
JROTC AF III: Global & Cultural Studies I	1	0	0
JROTC Navy III-Maritime History	1	0	0
JROTC: Army Leadership Edu 1	1	0	0
JROTC: Army Leadership Edu 2	1	0	0
JROTC: Army Leadership Edu 3	1	0	0
JROTC: Army Leadership Edu 4	1	0	0
JROTC AF Aerospace science: Flight Leadership II	1	1	100
JROTC AF Aerospace science: Aviation Leadership I	1	1	100
JROTC AF Aerospace science Leadership IV	1	1	100
JRPTC AF Aerospace science: Astro. Leadership III	1	0	0
MCJROTC Leadership Education III	1	0	0
MCJROTC Leadership Education II	1	0	0
MCJROTC Leadership Education IV	1	0	0
MCJROTC Leadership Education I	1	0	0
Naval Science III-Naval Knowledge	1	0	0
Naval Science IV-Ethics & Leadership A	1	0	0
Naval science I-Cadet Field	1	0	0
Naval science II-Nautical science	1	0	0
Naval science I-Intro NJROTC	1	0	0
Naval science V: Effective Communication	1	0	0
Subtotal JROTC	20	3	15
Other Non-Core			
AVID Study Skills I	1	0	0
AVID Study Skills II	1	0	0
AVID Study Skills III	1	0	0
SAT Preparation	1	0	0
Tools for College Success	1	1	100
Subtotal Other	5	1	20
Special Education			
Compensatory Skills	1	0	0
Peer Facilitation I	1	1	100
Peer Facilitation III	1	1	100
Peer Facilitation II	1	1	100
Peer Facilitation IV	1	1	100
Social Skills III	1	0	0
Social Skills II	1	0	0
Social Skills I	1	0	0
Study Skills I	1	1	100
Study Skills II	1	1	100

Appendix E (continued)
Scope of the Written Curriculum Kindergarten Through Grade 12
Richmond County School System
October 2017
High School Courses with Associated Curriculum Documents
Exhibit 2.2.3: Scope of the Written Curriculum Grades 9-12

Course Title	Courses Offered	Offerings with Curriculum	Percentage of Offerings with Curriculum
Non-Core Courses			
Special Education (continued)			
Study Skills III	1	1	100
Economics/Business/Free Enterprise	1	1	100
Subtotal Special Education	12	8	67
World Languages			
French III	1	1	100
French II	1	1	100
French IV	1	1	100
French I	1	1	100
German IIA	1	0	0
German IV	1	0	0
Gifted French III	1	0	0
Gifted French II	1	0	0
Gifted French IV	1	0	0
Gifted French I	1	0	0
Gifted IB Spanish Year One	1	0	0
Gifted IB Spanish Year Two	1	0	0
Honors Spanish III	1	0	0
Honors Spanish II	1	0	0
Honors Spanish I	1	0	0
IB Spanish Year One	1	1	100
IB Spanish Year Two	1	1	100
IB Spanish ab initio SL	1	0	0
Latin IIA	1	0	0
Spanish III	1	1	100
Spanish II	1	1	100
Spanish I	1	1	100
Honors Spanish IV	1	0	0
Subtotal World Languages	23	9	39
Subtotal Non-Core Courses	262	98	37
Total Scope of the Grades 9-12 Curriculum	431	152	35
<i>Data Source: Curriculum documents in the district Rubicon online system; Courses Offered at Each School Excel file; HS Courses in Rubicon not on list Excel file; Consolidated HS courses offered in RCSS-to be approved Excel file; IDA-Spreadsheet-Course-Descriptions Excel file located in Reviewers' Dropbox.</i>			

Appendix F

Teacher Survey

The Richmond County School System has contracted with Curriculum Management Solutions, Inc. (CMSi) to conduct a Comprehensive System Review for Curriculum Design and Delivery to identify barriers to student learning and provide recommendations for removing those barriers. The review team will be on site from October 23, 2017 through October 27, 2017. The review team will be reviewing documents, visiting school sites, and interviewing internal as well as external stakeholders during their visit. In addition, we would sincerely appreciate your assistance and cooperation in responding to this survey related to the delivery of curriculum and instruction. Your participation will help us finalize our conclusions concerning the major strengths and opportunities for improvement in the Richmond County School System. The survey should take no more than 15-20 minutes to complete. Please do not place your name or school name on the survey. All survey responses will remain confidential and will not reflect on you or your position. Thank you in advance.

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SURVEY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 31, 2017.

Thank you for your assistance.

1. What is the job title for your current position?

- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Department Chair
- ☐ Teacher Specialist or Coach
- ☐ Counselor
- ☐ Teacher on Special Assignment

Other (please specify)

2. What is your level or area of assignment?

- ☐ Elementary School (K-5)
- ☐ Elementary School (K-8)
- ☐ Middle School
- ☐ High School
- ☐ Magnet School
- ☐ Special School
- ☐ District-wide Program

Other (please specify)

3. What is your primary instructional content area?

- ☐ All core content areas
- ☐ Reading/English
- ☐ Mathematics
- ☐ Science
- ☐ Social Studies
- ☐ Foreign Language
- ☐ Music/Art
- ☐ Physical Education/Health
- ☐ Career and/or Technology

Other (please specify)

4. What are the strengths of the Richmond County School System?

5. What are the areas that need improvement in The Richmond County School System?

6. When planning for instruction, what resources do you use most frequently?

- ☐ I use the Georgia Performance Standards
- ☐ I use the district adopted textbook(s) and resources
- ☐ I use the district developed curriculum documents
- ☐ I use campus developed curriculum documents
- ☐ I use my own ideas and/or resources
- ☐ I use one or more purchased curriculum programs
- ☐ I use resources I found online I located myself or suggested by colleagues
- ☐ NA (In my position I am not responsible for planning instruction)

Other (please specify)

7. If you checked in the the previous question "I use one or more purchased curriculum programs" or "I use online resources," please name the program under Program Title below and indicate to what degree you believe it is aligned to the Georgia Standards. Otherwise skip this questions

	Aligned to Georgia's Stands of Excellence	Not Aligned to Georgia's Stands of Excellence	I Don't Know
Program #1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Name of Program or online resource	<input type="text"/>		
Program #2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Name of Program or online resource	<input type="text"/>		
Online Resource #1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Name of Program or online resource	<input type="text"/>		
Online Resource #2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Name of Program or online resource	<input type="text"/>		

8. The district's written curriculum is:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	do not use curriculum for my job
Easily accessible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
User friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Useful in planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Useful in planning instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effective in providing suggestions for strategies and approaches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helpful in identifying aligned materials and resources for my lessons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effective in suggesting ways to differentiate my instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effective in providing suggestions for reteaching or intervention activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="text"/>				

9. How clearly are expectations for classroom delivery of the curriculum and classroom instruction communicated through the following:

	Very Clearly	Clearly	Somewhat Clearly	Not Clearly	NA
Board policy and communications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Central office communications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Building administrator communications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Written curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring of classroom instruction by administrators of instructional coaches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

10. There are a reasonable number of objectives for my content area (students can master all objectives in the instructional time available).

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

11. I have had adequate training in the use of curriculum documents and aligned instructional resources.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

12. I have been trained in strategies for understanding and address the various cultural needs of my students.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

13. How would you rate the overall quality of district curriculum documents to guide instruction in providing suggestions for the following:

	Poor	Fair	Good
Initial teaching strategies/approaches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of instruction materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student learning activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessment of student learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Differentiation of Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

14. Please response to each of the following statements about your classroom and school.				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There is a wide range of academic ability in my classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My classroom instruction meets the needs of all my students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Differentiation is necessary for my students' needs to be met.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the knowledge, tools, and support to effectively differentiate instruction for my students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have received adequate training in how to successfully differentiate instruction for my students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the resources and materials I need to support each student's needs in my classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have a clearly defined model for delivering instruction to students in the district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is clear direction from the district regarding what classroom instruction should look like.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments:				

15. Please respond to each of the following statements about assessment in the district.					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
We have adequate instruments for assessing each student's progress in mastering the curriculum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The quality of the assessments available for use is very high.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The assessments are clearly linked to specific, discrete standards/objectives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to see results from the assessments immediately or almost immediately.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments:					
16. I have adequate assessment tools to use to determine student mastery of curriculum objectives.					
<input type="radio"/> Agree <input type="radio"/> Disagree					
Comments:					
17. What tools do you use in your classroom on an ongoing basis to assess student learning? (Check all that apply)					
<input type="radio"/> Mandated STATE developed assessment tools <input type="radio"/> Optional STATE developed assessment tools <input type="radio"/> Mandated DISTRICT developed assessment tools <input type="radio"/> Optional DISTRICT developed assessment tools <input type="radio"/> Mandated CAMPUS developed assessment tools <input type="radio"/> Optional CAMPUS developed assessment tools <input type="radio"/> Assessment tools I created myself <input type="radio"/> I do not use assessment tools for this purpose <input type="radio"/> N/A (Not applicable to my assignment) <input type="radio"/> Other (Please Specify					

18. How frequently do you use the results of assessments to plan instruction?

- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Several times per week
- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Rarely or not at all
- ☐ NA

Comments:

--

19. How do you use student assessment data? (check all that apply)

- ☐ To give grades
- ☐ To plan reteaching
- ☐ To refer students to intervention
- ☐ To place students in small groups for targeted instruction
- ☐ To place students in the correct course or level

Other (please specify)

--

20. Please provide a recent example of how you have used student assessment data to inform instructional decisions.

--

21. Individual learning plans and intervention plans are developed for students at this school who are underachieving, as indicated by student assessment data.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

22. What are the district's expectations for teachers' use of data to improve teaching and learning?

--

23. I have been adequately trained in effective strategies for working with English learners.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

24. Please respond to the following questions about the district's program for English language learners.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Our district has a well-designed plan to support students whose primary language is not English.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is an explicit instructional model teachers use for English language development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All students have full access to the core curriculum through sheltered language instruction or primary language support.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My school has fully implemented the district plan for English language learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been trained in effective strategies for working with English language learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

25. I have been adequately trained in effective strategies for working with gifted and talented learners.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

26. Please respond to each of the following statements about the Gifted & Talented Program.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
My classroom instruction meets the needs of all students identified as gifted and/or talented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the knowledge, tools, and support necessary to effectively differentiate my instruction for students identified as gifted and/or talented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have received adequate training in how to successfully serve students in my classroom identified as gifted and/or talented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the resources and materials I need to support gifted and/or talented students in my classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have a clearly defined model for delivering services to gifted and talented students in this school district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have adequate tools for assessing the academic progress of gifted and talented students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment:

27. I have been adequately trained in effective strategies for working with students with special learning needs.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

28. The overall quality of programs at my campus designed to support students with special learning needs is indicated below:

	Not available at my campus	Poor	Medicore	Good	Excellent
Special Education/IEP	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
504 Plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ESL/Bilingual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gifted/Talented	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advanced Placement (AP or Pre-AP) Courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Honors classes/courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Title I	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interventions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Indicate other program:

29. Please respond to the following statements about the program for special education students.					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
Our school district has a well-designed plan to support students who have a learning disability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the knowledge, tools, and support to effectively meet the instructional needs of students with a learning disability in my classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have received adequate training in how to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the resources and materials I need to support special education students in my classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is clear direction for what an inclusive classroom should look like.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have adequate assessment tools for assessing the academic growth of students identified with special needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments:					
30. I have been trained in strategies for differentiating instruction to meet the individual needs of my students.					
<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree <input type="radio"/> Agree <input type="radio"/> Neutral <input type="radio"/> Disagree <input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree					
Comments:					

31. I use strategies for differentiating instruction to meet the individual needs of my students.

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ At least weekly
- ☐ Several times a month
- ☐ Several times a quarter
- ☐ Rarely

Comments:

--

32. I have had adequate training in the use of technology while delivering instruction.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

33. Technology software and programs are clearly referenced in the curriculum documents for my grade/course.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know or No opinion

Comments:

--

34. There is a process through which instructional software and online programs are reviewed for alignment with the district's written curriculum before their purchase or acquisition.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Don't Know

Comments:

35. I have had adequate training in integrating the use of technology into student assignments and projects.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

36. The frequency with which I use the following learning technology tools in the classroom to support learning is:

	This technology is not available in my classroom	Less than once per month	1-3 days per month	1-2 days per week	3-5 times per week
Computers (laptops and/or desk top computers)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tablets (iPads or similar)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Smart phones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Google Apps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Calculators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interactive White Boards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overhead documents cameras or projectors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other - Please specify

37. How often does your principal or assistant principal visit your classroom?

	Daily or almost daily	At least weekly	At least monthly	At least twice a year	I rarely see this person	N/A (Not Applicable)
Principal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assistant Principal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Specialist/Coach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

(Please specify)

38. There is a formal expectation that I incorporate the use of technology to deliver instruction and engage students.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

39. From whom do you get the most instructional support/coaching (including monitoring, modeling, and feedback)?

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ District-based instructional coach
- ☐ Campus-based instructional coach
- ☐ Formally assigned mentor
- ☐ Department head or lead teacher
- ☐ Another teacher
- ☐ I do not receive instructional support/coaching
- ☐ Comments:

40. If I ever need help with my teaching or lesson planning, my PRIMARY source of help would be:

- ☐ Another teacher
☐ A curriculum or professional development specialist
☐ My principal
☐ Someone outside of the school system
☐ (Please specify)

41. I consider the quality and relevance of professional development to be:

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Poor
District provided training (Outside consultant or specialist)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
District provided training with district personnel conducting (curriculum personnel, central office administrator, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School site provided (principal, department head, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State provided training or workshop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Out-of-district professional development (conferences, workshops)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

42. Please check the responses which describe how your principal, assistant principal, other administrator or coach/strategist provides you with useful feedback on informally observed lessons.

	No feedback given	Feedback is always useful	Feedback is somewhat useful	Feedback is not useful
Principal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assistant Principal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
District Administrator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coach/Strategist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

43. What has been the focus of professional learning this year at your campus? (study groups, professional development days, individual teams, PLCs)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Language Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Use of Formative Assessments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Data Analysis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fine Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Differentiated instruction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Career/Technology Education | <input type="checkbox"/> No focus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Strategies | <input type="checkbox"/> RTI |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No particular focus for professional development | <input type="checkbox"/> Use of technology as a teaching/learning tool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics | <input type="checkbox"/> Critical thinking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Selection and use of formative assessment tools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategies for use with English language learners | <input type="checkbox"/> Response to Intervention |

Comments:

44. What would increase the effectiveness of the district's professional development program in supporting your work as a teachers in the Richmond County School System?

45. At our campus we have a single school improvement plan that spans more than one year and is focused on a limited number of academic goals that direct my work with students.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ No opinion
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

46. My school's improvement plan focuses our work throughout the school.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Don't know

Comments:

--

47. My school has the resources necessary to meet the needs of all students.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

48. Please rate your school facilities in providing a quality teaching and learning environment.				
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Curb appeal (i.e., external appearance - especially building entrance)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall physical condition of the building(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ongoing maintenance (e.g., timelines and quality of needed repairs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Size (i.e., adequate accommodation of student enrollment and activities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Custodial care (e.g., cleaning)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety/ADA accommodations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comfort (e.g., comfortable air temperature, good acoustics, sufficient lighting)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall positive teaching and learning environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments:				
<div></div>				
49. What is the best description of how your building's budget is developed or determined each year?				
<input type="radio"/> Mostly developed or determined by people at the central office <input type="radio"/> Mostly developed or determined by the principal <input type="radio"/> Most developed or determined by a group of people at our campus (teachers, administrators, staff, etc.) <input type="radio"/> Mostly developed or determined by parents				
Comments:				
<div></div>				
50. If there were one thing about this school district that you believe needs to be changed or improved, what would that be?				
<div></div>				
51. Is there anything else about your school system you believe the reviewers should know?				
<div></div>				

52. How would you rate the quality of instructional leadership in your building?

- ☐ Highly Effective
- ☐ Effective
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Somewhat Ineffective
- ☐ Not Effective

Comments:

--

Appendix G

Building Administrator Survey

The Richmond County School System has contracted with Curriculum Management Solutions, Inc to conduct a Comprehensive System Review for Curriculum Design and Deliver to identify barriers to student learning and provide recommendations for removing those barriers. The curriculum review team will be on site October 23, 2017 through October 27, 2017. The review team will be reviewing documents, visiting school sites, and interviewing internal as well as external stakeholders. In addition, we would appreciate your assistance and cooperation in responding to this survey related to instructional leadership. Your participation will help us in finalizing our conclusions concerning the major strengths and opportunities for improvement in the Richmond County School System. The survey should take no more than 20-30 minutes to complete. Please do not place your name or school name on the survey. All survey responses will remain confidential and will not reflect on you or your position. Thank you in advance!

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SURVEY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 31, 2017.

1. What level is your school?

- ☐ Elementary
- ☐ Middle School
- ☐ High School
- ☐ Magnet or Special School

2. What is your position?

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ Other (please specify)

3. What are the strengths of the Richmond County School System?

4. What are the areas that need improvement in the Richmond County School System?

5. There is adequate direction in board policies and administrative regulations for all building-level decision making.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

List any board policies that you believe are unclear, out of date or missing.

--

6. The district has clear job descriptions for each position I supervise.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

List any job descriptions that you believe are unclear, out of date, or missing.

--

7. I am well aware of the district's goals and mission that drive our district and individual schools.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

8. I am well aware of the district's improvement plan that drives the work of the district and individual schools.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

9. At my school, we have a single school improvement plan that spans more than one year.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

10. Our school improvement plan has less than four overall goals to guide our decision making.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

11. To what degree do you use the school improvement plan as your road map for decision-making and planning?

- ☐ It is the primary driver for decision-making.
- ☐ It drives decision making to a large degree.
- ☐ It is somewhat a driver for decision making, but other factors are used more often.
- ☐ It is only used slightly as a driver for decision making.

Comments:

--

12. The professional development I receive in my position as a building leader sufficiently meets my needs.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A (have not been in position long enough to receive training)

Comments:

--

13. I have had adequate training in the district curricula enabling me to support teachers' delivery of instruction.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

14. The district designed curriculum is:					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
Aligned with the Georgia Standards for Excellence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easily accessible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
User friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Useful in planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effective in providing suggested strategies and approaches for instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helpful in identifying instructional materials and resources that are aligned to the adopted curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effective in suggesting ways to differentiate instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effective in providing suggestions for reteaching or intervention ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helpful in suggesting meaningful student learning activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments:					
15. Please respond to each of the following statements about the district designed curriculum.					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
Teachers in my building consistently use the district written curriculum to plan their lessons.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are a reasonable number of learning objectives for each content area.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers have adequate training in the use of the curriculum documents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers have adequate training in the use of instructional resources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments:					

16. I visit each classroom in my building:

- ☐ Daily or almost daily
- ☐ At least weekly
- ☐ At least monthly
- ☐ At least twice a year
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ N/A (my duties do not include classroom visits)

Comments:

--

17. Do you use a walk-through protocol to monitor instructional delivery? (Mark all that apply)

- ☐ I use a district walk-thru protocol
- ☐ I use a protocol selected by myself for my school
- ☐ I do not use a formal walk-through protocol
- ☐ Other (please specify)

--

18. When in classrooms, I look for the following:

--

19. The percentage of teachers considered marginal teachers (ineffective at improving student learning) in my building is approximately:

- ☐ 0-5%
- ☐ 6-10%
- ☐ 11-20%
- ☐ 21-30%
- ☐ More than 30%

20. Please rate the degree to which the teachers in your building are:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/ Not Observed
Effective in improving student learning and their subsequent test scores.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effective at differentiating instruction to meet individual students' needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sensitive to the linguistic, cultural, and economic diversity among our students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consistently use student data in planning their daily instruction.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consistently select instructional interventions based on formative student achievement data.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are effective in meeting the needs of English language learners and are successful in improving their test performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. The teachers and support personnel in my building have consistently high expectations for student performance.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ N/A (have not had opportunity to observe)

22. Please respond to each of the following statements about your classrooms and school.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There is a wide range of academic ability in my school's classrooms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom instruction meets the needs of each student.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Differentiation is necessary to meet students' needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers have the knowledge, tools, and support to effectively differentiate instruction for students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers have a clearly defined model for delivering instruction to students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is clear direction from the district regarding what classroom instruction should look like.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

23. The overall quality of school programs designed to support students with special learning needs is indicated below:

	Not available on my campus	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Special Education/IEP	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
504 Plans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ESL/Bilingual Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gifted and Talented	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Title I	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Honors Classes/Courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advanced Placement Courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post-Secondary Enrollment Courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interventions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Indicate "Other" program(s) and report level of quality

24. What are the strengths of the district's ELL program?

25. What are aspects of the district's ELL program that need improvement?

26. Please respond to the following questions about the district's program for English language learners.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Our district has a well-designed plan to support students whose primary language is not English.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is an explicit instructional model teachers use for English language development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All students have full access to the core curriculum through sheltered language instruction or primary language support.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My school has fully implemented the district plan for English language learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am well versed in effective strategies for working with English language learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

27. What are the strengths of the district's Gifted & Talented program?

28. What are aspects of the district's Gifted & Talented program that need improvement?

29. Please respond to the following questions about the district's program for gifted and talented students.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Classroom instruction in our district is meeting the needs of all GT students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers are skilled in differentiating their instruction to meet the needs of GT students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers have the knowledge, tools, and support to effectively differentiate instruction for all GT students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers have received adequate training in how to successfully serve GT students' needs in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers have the resources and materials necessary to support GT students in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a clearly defined model for delivery services to GT students in the district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The district has adequate instruments for assessing GT students' progress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments:				
<div></div>				
30. What are the strengths of the district's Special Education program?				
<div></div>				
31. What are aspects of the district's Special Education program that need improvement?				
<div></div>				

32. Please respond to the following questions about the district's program for special education students.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Classroom instruction in our district is meeting the needs of all special education students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers are skilled in differentiating their instruction to meet the needs of special education students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers have the knowledge, tools, and support to effectively differentiate instruction for all special education students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers have received adequate training in how to successfully serve special education students' needs in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers have the resources and materials necessary to support special education students in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

33. Adequate professional development time and opportunities are available to support teachers in improving instruction to meet diverse student needs.

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

34. Effective implementation of professional development is evident as teachers deliver instruction to meet student needs.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

35. Teachers have been trained in strategies for understanding and addressing the various cultural needs of students.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

36. Teachers have received adequate training in how to successfully differentiate instruction.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

37. In general, how often do teachers in your school use strategies for differentiating instruction to meet the needs of students?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ At least weekly
- ☐ Several times a month
- ☐ Several times a quarter
- ☐ Rarely

Comments:

--

38. Substitute teachers in my school consistently are of high quality and well equipped to deliver sound instruction.

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ N/A
- ☐ Other (please specify)

--

39. Adequate assessment tools are available to teachers to support them in determining student progress in mastering curriculum objectives.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A (have not had opportunity to observe)

Comments:

--

40. How do you use assessment data?

--

41. In general, how frequently do teachers at your school use the results of assessments to plan instruction?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Rarely or not at all

Comments:

--

42. In general, how do teachers make use of assessment data? (Mark all that apply)

- ☐ To give grades
- ☐ To plan reteaching
- ☐ To refer students for interventions
- ☐ To place students in small groups for targeted instruction
- ☐ To place students in the correct course or level

Comments:

--

43. How do you share assessment data in your school?

--

44. in my building, sufficient technology is available to support student learning.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

45. In my building technology is available to support teachers' instructional delivery.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

46. Teachers in my building appropriately integrate the use of technology into their instruction.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

47. In my building there is a clear expectation for the use of technology as a teaching and learning tool.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

48. I have adequate assistance from central office personnel in supporting effective instructional delivery in my school (e.g., monitoring, providing feedback and correction, addressing problems).

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

49. I have adequate support from central office when I recommend dismissing/non-renewing personnel.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Does Not Apply/Don't Know

Comments:

--

50. The best description of the philosophy that informs the distribution of financial and human resources at this school is:

- ☐ All students receive an equal proportion of resources.
- ☐ Students who have greater resource needs receive more.

Comments:

--

51. How would you rate the influence of your annual school goals and objectives on the allocation of funds to your school.

- ☐ Little or no influence
- ☐ Some/Moderate influence
- ☐ Major/Primary influence

Other (please specify)

--

52. What is the best description of how the DISTRICT budget is developed or determined each year?

- ☐ Mostly developed or determined by people at the central office
- ☐ Mostly developed or determined by a team comprised of district and building personnel.
- ☐ Mostly developed or determined by a team representing various district stakeholders (e.g. board members, district and building personnel, parents/community members).

Comments:

--

53. What is the best description of how your BUILDING budget is developed or determined each year?

- ☐ Mostly developed or determined by people at the central office.
- ☐ Mostly developed or determined by the principal.
- ☐ Mostly developed or determined by a building leadership team.
- ☐ Mostly developed or determined by building personnel as a whole.
- ☐ Mostly developed or determined by a team representing various stakeholder groups (e.g., administrators, teachers, staff members, parents/community members).

Comments:

--

54. Please rate your school facilities in providing a quality teaching and learning environment.				
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Curb appeal (i.e., external appearance-- especially building entrance)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall physical conditions of the building(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ongoing maintenance (e.g., timeliness and quality of needed repairs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Size (i.e., adequate accommodation of student enrollment and activities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Custodial care (e.g., cleaning)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety/ADA accommodations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comfort (e.g., comfortable air temperature, good acoustics, sufficient lighting)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall positive teaching and learning environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments:				
<div></div>				
55. I have adequate support from central office in dealing with non-instructional building management issues.				
<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree <input type="radio"/> Agree <input type="radio"/> Disagree <input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree				
Comments:				
<div></div>				

56. I am satisfied with the response time to maintenance issues in my building.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A (have not had opportunity to know)

Comments:

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57. If there was ONE thing about this school system you believe needs to be changed or improved, what would it be?

--

58. Is there anything else about your school system you believe the auditors should know? Please comment below:

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Appendix H

Parent Survey

Leaders of the Richmond County School System have contracted with Curriculum Management Solutions for an external evaluation team to complete a Comprehensive System Review for Curriculum Design and Delivery. The review team will be on site October 23-27, 2017. During the week the review team will visit each school and conduct interviews with district stakeholders. However, the review team will not have the opportunity to speak with everyone in the district. We would like to use the following survey to gather input from as many parents in the Richmond County School System as possible. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey so your opinion can be represented.

All answers will remain anonymous and survey information will only be reported in aggregate. Thank you for your assistance with this important project.

Please complete the survey by October 31, 2017 .

1. What grade level is your child (or children) in? Mark all that apply.

- ☐ Kindergarten
- ☐ First Grade
- ☐ Second Grade
- ☐ Third Grade
- ☐ Fourth Grade
- ☐ Fifth Grade
- ☐ Sixth Grade
- ☐ Seventh Grade
- ☐ Eighth Grade
- ☐ Ninth Grade
- ☐ Tenth Grade
- ☐ Eleventh Grade
- ☐ Twelfth Grade

2. What are the strengths of the Richmond County School System?

3. What are the areas that need improvement in the Richmond County School System?

4. My child's school does a good job of equipping my student with the skills he/she needs to be successful.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

5. I can easily access the curriculum my child is being taught.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

6. My child frequently uses technology while in school to complete activities and/or projects.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Do not Know

Comments:

--

7. I receive regular communication from my child's teacher and/or school regarding the results of assessments and tests my child has taken.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

8. My child's teacher(s) regularly engages my child in challenging, hands-on learning activities.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

9. My child's needs for engaging and challenging academic instruction are being met.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

10. My child's teacher(s) makes modifications to their instruction and assignments in response to my child's specific learning needs.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

11. Teachers at my student's school have high standards for academic achievement

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Comments:

--

12. I always know how well my child is doing in school.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

13. My child's homework helps deepen his/her understanding of important ideas and concepts.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

14. My child's school creates a welcoming environment for parents.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

15. My child's school principal fosters an environment in which staff and parents work together to improve student achievement.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

16. How often do you communicate with your child's teacher?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once or twice a school year
- ☐ Every few months
- ☐ Weekly or more often

Comments:

--

17. Information sent home by my child's school is easy to understand.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

--

18. How often does your child's teacher communicate directly with you about your child's academic progress?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once or twice per year
- ☐ Every few months
- ☐ Weekly or more

Comments:

--

19. My child's school encourages parents to provide input into school decisions?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

Comments:

--

20. Does your child's school provide a safe environment for your child?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Comments:

--

21. My child receives services/programming in the following area(s): (Mark all that apply)

- ☐ Gifted/talented or Advanced Academics Programming
- ☐ English Language Learning (ELL)/English Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL)
- ☐ Special Education
- ☐ Other disability/504 planning and services
- ☐ Dual Enrollment/ Move On When Ready
- ☐ Other (please specify)

--

22. What is your overall satisfaction with your child's school?

- ☐ Highly Satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat Satisfied
- ☐ Not Very Satisfied

Comments:

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23. Do the Richmond County Schools provide a good value for your tax dollars?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Comments:

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