



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of Superintendent

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M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: September 2, 2010

TO: Members, School Board

FROM: Steve Atwater, Ph.D. 
Superintendent of Schools

RE: Curriculum Audit Report

Background: In April of last year the district contracted with Phi Delta Kappa to conduct a curriculum audit of the district. A team of seven auditors spent a week combing through our curriculum related documents, interviewing district stakeholders and visiting schools. The audit used the following five standards for its review: 1) control of resources, programs and personnel; 2) established clear and valid objectives for students; 3) internal consistency and rational equity in its program development and implementation; 4) use the results from system-designed and/or- adopted assessments to adjust, improve, or terminate ineffective practices or programs; 5) district has improved productivity. The findings of the audit are presented in a lengthy report but are summarized in the shorter document that is included in your meeting packet

Reason for this worksession: Lead auditor, John Rouse, will present the findings of the audit. In addition to the findings, the report includes a series of recommendations that the district can implement to address the identified areas of deficiency.

A Curriculum Management Audit
of the
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
Soldotna, Alaska

Executive Summary

Date Audit Presented: September 2010

Members of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Audit Team:

Lead Auditor

John P. Rouse, M.Ed.

Auditors

Steve Kolb, Ed.D.

Rodney Rich, M.S.

Carolyn S. Ross, Ed.D.

Michelle Steagall, Ed.D.

Joy Torgerson, Ph.D.

Lynn F. Zinn, Ed.D.

I. INTRODUCTION

This document constitutes an executive summary of the final report of a Curriculum Management Audit of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. The audit was commissioned by the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education/Governing Authority within the scope of its policy-making authority. It was conducted during the time period of April 19-23, 2010. Document analysis was performed off site, as was the detailed analysis of findings and site visit data.

Background

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District consists of 44 school programs spread across 25,600 miles in 21 communities. Each community is unique in its diversity and culture, including four Alaska Native villages with no road access and four Russian village schools. School buses transport approximately 4,000 students each day, traveling more than 7,000 miles daily. Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is the largest employer on the Kenai Peninsula with a monthly payroll in excess of \$5.5 million. Nearly half (46 percent) of the district's certified staff have been members of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District educational team for at least 10 years. Approximately 73 percent of the general fund expenditures go towards instruction. The district currently serves 9,047 students, which includes students receiving services in charter schools and through online education. These students are housed in 14 elementary schools, four middle schools (grades 6-8 and 7-8), 11 secondary schools (grades 7-12 and 9-12), and 15 schools which are classified as "small" schools because they house students from kindergarten through grade 12.

District wide the pupil-teacher ratios are as follows:

- K 1:20
- Grades 1-3 1:22
- Grades 4-6 1:24
- Secondary 1:24
- Small schools K-12 1:17

Data Sources: district document, Fast Facts, and the 2009-10 budget report.

Audit Background and Scope of Work

The Curriculum Management Audit is 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 Management Audit is an independent examination of three data sources: documents, interviews, and site visits. 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 Kenai Peninsula Borough School District 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 Management 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 Management 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 Management 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 management audits have been performed in hundreds of school systems in more than 28 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 Management Audit have been reported in the national professional literature for more than a decade, 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).

Phi Delta Kappa's International Curriculum Management Audit Center has an exclusive contractual agreement with Curriculum Management Systems, Inc. (CMSi—a public corporation incorporated in the State of Iowa, and owner of the copyrights to the intellectual property of the audit process), for the purpose of conducting audits for educational institutions, providing training for auditors and others interested in the audit process, and officially assisting in the certification of PDK/ICMAC-CMSi curriculum auditors.

This audit was conducted in accordance with a contract between Kenai Peninsula Borough School District and the International Curriculum Management Audit Center at Phi Delta Kappa International. All members of the team were certified by Curriculum Management Systems, Inc.

The names of the curriculum auditors in this audit included the following individuals:

- Mr. John P. Rouse
- Dr. Joy Torgerson
- Dr. Lynn Zinn
- Dr. Steve Kolb
- Mr. Rodney Rich
- Dr. Michelle Steagall
- Dr. Carolyn Ross.

System Purpose for Conducting the Audit

In the school district's RFP for the curriculum audit, the following was stated as to the purpose of the audit:

“The curriculum management audit is to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School curriculum and curriculum management processes and practices for the following purposes:

- To examine core curriculum and instruction (science, reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies), and any aspects of operation of the instructional program of the district that enhances or hinders its design and/or delivery.
- To ensure that the District is prepared for the rigorous standards of the future.
- To gain strategic insight into key policy and institutional level issues for the District.”

A curriculum audit is designed to reveal the extent to which officials and professional staff of a school district 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 district 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 fiscal support is optimized under the conditions in which the school district functions.

Approach of the Audit

The Curriculum Management 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 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 Management Audit 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 Management 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.

III. 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 Auditors Expected to Find in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District:

A school system meeting PDK-CMSi Curriculum Management Audit 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 Auditors Found in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District:

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

The control standard of the audit frames everything else in it. In American education, the fundamental control of the public schools is centered in a locally elected or appointed school board or school committee. This decentralized approach to education, placing the responsibility for the schools directly in the hands of the people, clearly represents the approach of only a handful of nations on the earth. While presenting great strengths, it is also not without its drawbacks. Chief among them is the dependency for sound control to be defined within local board policies. Too often the board bypasses this responsibility and moves to dabble in administrative matters directly.

The auditors found a long-range plan for the school system as well as school site plans. The auditors examined the table of organization (TO) for the district. The district table of organization had minor problems with logical grouping of functions, scalar relationships, and full inclusion. Most job descriptions for positions in the district table of organization had not been updated for many years. No recently board-approved job descriptions were in place for this department.

While the district provides for a wide array of staff development opportunities, the auditors found the offerings to be fragmented and unfocused on school system priorities and competitive with teacher time. In short, the staff development function is splintered within the school district.

The auditors did not examine the current teacher and administrative appraisal systems because the district is in the process of releasing its newly designed performance appraisal system.

Finding 1.1: Board policies and administrative regulations are inadequate to promote system-wide quality control.

Educational policy development is a major responsibility of the school board. It is through its policies that the board maintains, over time, its responsibility for system control and direction. Comprehensive board policies provide direction to the day-to-day operations of the school district. It is also through policies that commonly understood standards are established and maintained over time for the design and delivery of all written, taught and tested curricula.

In order for policies to provide the necessary operational framework, they must be useful in controlling and directing decision making. Policies must reflect the expectations set by the board and focus the resources of the board towards specific goals. Policies drive practice. 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 are ignored, there is no effective guidance for administrators or staff. The result may be that decision making is left to individual or special interest discretion. In such instances, there is 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 board.

Administrative regulations are the directives approved by the superintendent to carry out the board policy. They provide the actions, procedures, and processes in a precise manner to bring the policy to fruition. To determine the status of policy and regulation development in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, the auditors reviewed all district policies presented for examination as well as interviewed staff and board members regarding their quality and use.

Overall, auditors found the policies and regulations to be inadequate to promote system-wide quality control when rated against Curriculum Management Audit criteria; the policies and regulations reviewed met 10 percent of the 27 criteria.

The auditors examined each relevant policy and regulation to determine if the audit criteria were met. For each criterion, a score of 0 to 3 points was given based on the characteristics of the policy or regulation. If a policy or regulation (or several considered together) met the descriptors attached to each score (1-3), the policy or regulation was given the corresponding score (1-3). If a policy or regulation was considered too weak to meet the descriptors or if there was no policy or regulation regarding the criterion, a rating of 0 was given. To be considered adequate, 70 percent of the total possible points for a standard (set of criteria) had to be given.

Summary

The auditors compared governing policy and administrative regulations to audit criteria for quality in the areas of control, direction, connectivity and equity, feedback, and productivity. It was determined that board policies are inadequate to direct the superintendent and staff for effective management of curriculum and other district functions.

Finding 1.2: Multi-year district planning is in place in Kenai Peninsula Borough School District; however, the district long-range plan is inadequate to direct major change in the system.

District planning is a process by which district officers envision the district's future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future. It is a way of describing a vision of the future state of the district. In this process multiple data sources are used. Decisions are made with clear future goals in mind. Embedded in this planning system is the ability to modify and adjust direction based upon student needs, new legislation, or changes in the community. It is an example of leadership keeping a focus on the organizational work needed to implement or actualize the planning.

In order to understand how Kenai Peninsula Borough School District carries out the planning process a number of documents were reviewed. These included:

- District Long Range Plan
- Kenai Borough School District Improvement
- A sampling of school improvement plans
- Six Year Plan and School Construction Needs
- District Professional Development Plan
- Administrative Regulation 0520: Philosophy-Goals-Objectives and Comprehensive Plans School Accountability/School Improvement
- District Technology Plan
- Board policies
- Board agendas and meeting minutes
- Committee meeting agendas and minutes.

In addition, interviews were conducted with board members, central office staff, building level administrators, parents, community leaders, and teachers. There is mention in several documents reviewed of a Strategic Plan in 2000-01, but there were no documents presented for auditors to review regarding a current strategic plan. However, there is a board approved *District Long Range Plan 2007-2012*, and a document entitled Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Plan on a Page 2007-2012. These documents include guiding principles and goals entitled organizational competence, organizational improvement, organizational agility, and organizational sustainability. Overall, the auditors found that planning does take place in the district; however, current plans are inadequate to achieve the vision of planning. Planning across the system lacks connectivity and is sporadically monitored. The quality of school improvement plans varies.

Summary

Multi-year district planning is in place in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District; however, the long-range plan is inadequate to direct the change necessary to strengthen the delivery of instruction throughout the district. The auditors found the school improvement plans to be adequate to address current changes in the system. Most school improvement plans contained action plans including dates, timelines, and professional development activities.

Finding 1.3: The administrative organization structure does not meet audit criteria for sound organizational management of the school system.

Administrative functions provide the mechanism for the governing board to translate its values, goals, policies, and intentions into action. The board exercises its responsibility by determining the results it wants the system to attain, by conducting organizational oversight, by authorizing the budget, and by supervising the chief executive officer. To accomplish its purposes, the board of education needs to provide the superintendent with sufficient staff to fulfill relevant functions and appropriately manage the work. Clear organizational relationships are important for the effective management of a school system. Successful educational organizations assign and

arrange personnel by function to ensure the effective and efficient design and delivery of curriculum. The simplest expression of these relationships is the organizational chart(s) that clearly depicts employee relationships, line/staff relationships, and the line of authority among them.

Summary

The KPBSD board policies, organizational structure, and related decision-making processes are missing important key functions and do not include all of the principles of sound management.. Connections between job descriptions, day-to-day operations, and the tables of organization are inconsistent or missing entirely. Consequently, the current administrative structure does not meet all of the audit criteria that are necessary for sound organizational management. Kenai Peninsula Borough School District's administrative organization structure does not strengthen communication, effectiveness, or efficiency in the district and may contribute to confusion and weak communication between the district and campuses.

Finding 1.4: Job descriptions are inadequate in specifying organizational roles, relationships, and duties related to system-wide quality control of curriculum design and delivery.

Job descriptions are written resumes of the duties of persons employed by the school district. They are essential for the purposes of establishing sound clustering of duties and for the establishment of economy of scale. Clear descriptions of duties and qualifications enable accurate assignment in the superior/subordinate chain of command and for the creation of arenas of similar grouping of functions. Strong job descriptions provide clear statements that delineate job titles, qualifications, immediate links in the chain of command, and a description of functions, duties, and responsibilities of the job. Since auditors examined an educational organization whose purpose is instructional, all positions should have a connection to the design or delivery of the curriculum. They should describe essential employee qualifications, the curricular tasks that must be completed in order for the organization to accomplish its mission, and the relationship of one position to another. Job descriptions must also be accurate, current, and noted in the organizational charts of the district. To determine the availability and quality of job descriptions, auditors analyzed all job descriptions or job vacancy postings presented for review. Few job descriptions were presented for review; many were job vacancy announcements. Board policies were also reviewed to determine the requirements for written job descriptions, and staff was interviewed regarding job responsibilities and the accountability structure.

Auditors reviewed job descriptions for a match with titles in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District organizational chart contained in board policy. Seven Kenai Peninsula Borough School District job descriptions were presented to the auditors, which is 37 percent of the positions noted on the organizational chart. Job descriptions presented to the auditors included:

1. Superintendent of Schools
2. Student Nutrition Services Administrator
3. Director, Planning/Operations
4. Director of Human Resources
5. Program Coordinator, Pupil Services
6. Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
7. Director Pupil Services.

Overall, auditors found that job descriptions were inadequate and were weakest in specifying links to the chain of command and strongest in delineating the functions, duties, and responsibilities of the position. District and site administrators identified that not having a position dedicated to special education leads to organizational inefficiencies. Data show that the organization chart reviewed by the auditors does not specify organizational roles, relationships and duties related to system-wide quality control of curriculum design and delivery. There was no mention of the organization chart during interviews by auditor. Curriculum linkage was not present in the job descriptions for the last three positions shown in the exhibit.

Summary

The auditors found that the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District job descriptions are inadequate in specifying organizational roles, relationships, and duties related to system-wide quality control of curriculum design and delivery. In the case of special education, those responsibilities were dispersed to several other administrative positions.

STANDARD 2: THE SCHOOL DISTRICT HAS ESTABLISHED CLEAR AND VALID OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS.

A school system meeting this audit 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. The 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 Auditors Expected to Find in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District:

Common indicators the PDK-CMSi auditors 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 Auditors Found in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District:

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

Various documents were presented to the auditors describing the goals and plans for processes and procedures to provide direction for curriculum design and delivery. However, a single, comprehensive curriculum management plan that would provide a focused and cohesive educational program was not presented to the auditors. The auditors found district staff making strides toward aligning district curriculum with the Alaska Content and Performance Standards. However, all curriculum areas in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District have not yet been fully aligned in design to increase student achievement.

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District did not have a curriculum management plan at the time of the audit. Auditors used board policies, administrative regulations, the *Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Long Range Plan 2007-2012*, the *Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Professional Development Plan Certified Personnel*, district curriculum guides, and the district curriculum review cycle information to review components of an effective curriculum management plan. The documents met 7 of the 15 total audit criteria, or 47 percent. The criteria not meeting audit standards included: roles and responsibilities, format and components, a reasonable number of precise objectives, objective content in relation to multiple context and cognition types, differentiation of instructional approaches and selection of student objectives, formative and summative evaluation of programs, monitoring procedures, and a communication plan for the design and delivery of the curriculum as well as celebration of progress.

The scope of a district's curriculum is the presence of curriculum documents to guide instruction in every subject and course offered to students. The lack of guiding curriculum documents increases the risk of inconsistency and fragmentation across courses, grade levels, and schools. To be considered adequate according to audit

criteria, 70 percent of the district's subjects and courses must have guiding curriculum documents as well as 100 percent of the core subject areas. The curriculum scope was inadequate because auditors were not presented with curriculum guides for all core subject areas. Seventy-two (72) percent of the total courses offered by the school district had curriculum guiding documents available.

Having curriculum documents available is only one piece of providing appropriate curriculum guidance to teachers, however. Curriculum documents must also provide direction and consistency to enable students to achieve at high levels. Comprehensive curriculum documents identify lesson objectives, specific prerequisite skills necessary to address those objectives, instructional resources, preferred teaching strategies, and assessment measures. Auditors reviewed curriculum guides for all subject areas of the curriculum in relation to the quality criteria necessary for guiding the district curriculum delivery in classrooms. The district's curriculum guides did not meet audit quality criteria for basic or deep alignment. In-depth analysis of core curriculum guides indicated discrepancies in content and cognition when comparing objectives with assessments and strategies.

Inclusion of the national standards was not always present in the reviewed grade level objectives for language arts, science, and social studies. The cognitive levels of objectives did not always provide for the rigor expected by the district's long-range plan. The redundancy analysis illustrated that even when objectives were covered as intended, objectives may not be extending learning across grade levels. Use of the curriculum guides was inconsistent, with interview information indicating that grade level expectations were utilized at some sites while textbooks drove instruction at others.

Finding 2.1: The district has no comprehensive curriculum management plan in place to provide direction for curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation.

A curriculum management plan establishes a process for the design, delivery, communication, and evaluation of a district's curriculum. Clearly written and decisive board policies are the foundation of an effective plan. They set expectations for staff members to execute and maintain the articulation and coordination of the written curriculum across all grade levels and subject matter. A curriculum management plan institutionalizes the philosophical and procedural intent of the school district. Such a plan is designed to function in conjunction with all other district plans as well as individual school improvement plans. When all planning is integrated and committed to policy, consistency over time is more likely. This ensures that changes in personnel will not significantly affect a district's curriculum management system.

Because a curriculum management plan was not presented to auditors, a variety of documents were reviewed to determine their congruence with a quality curriculum management plan. Interviews were also conducted with board of education members, district administrators, principals, teachers, and parents concerning curriculum management in the school district.

Auditors found that curriculum management processes existed in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District in board policies, administrative regulations, and other school district documents outlined in [Exhibit 2.1.1](#) at the time of the audit. In combination, these documents were rated as inadequate, meeting 7 of 15, or 47 percent, of the curriculum management plan criteria. To be considered adequate, 11 of 15 criteria, or 73 percent, must be present in district documents.

Summary

The auditors found that existing curriculum management documents did not meet audit criteria for quality in directing teaching and learning for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District.

Finding 2.2: The scope of the district curriculum guides is inadequate to direct instruction.

Curriculum documents are work plans that provide for the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. These documents must include several components to provide teachers direction as they plan classroom instruction. These components include student goals or objectives, prerequisite skills, instructional materials, teaching strategies, and assessment measures.

A complete set of curriculum guides or documents encompassing all district subjects and courses is essential for every teacher. The existence of these documents is considered the scope of the written curriculum and is a key

component of a district's quality control of the educational program. Without written curriculum documents, teachers are forced to rely on other resources for curriculum content and delivery that may or may not be aligned with district goals and objectives. To determine the scope of the district's curriculum, the personnel of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District provided auditors with online and written curriculum guides and course descriptions for review. Board policies, district plans, and other curricular documents were also analyzed. Interviews were conducted with district administrators, principals, teachers, and parents concerning the presence of a district curriculum.

Auditors expect to find curriculum documents available for every subject or course offered by a school system. If all of the core curricular areas and 70 percent of the district non-core courses provided to students have curriculum documents, auditors determine the scope of the written curriculum to be adequate. The scope of the curriculum in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District was inadequate. Although 74 percent of the total courses offered by the district had curriculum guides or course descriptions associated with them, only 73 percent of the core curricular areas had guiding curricular documents.

To determine the scope of the written curriculum, auditors compared the courses offered by the district to the curriculum guides presented by district personnel as guiding curriculum documents. Auditors reviewed the schools' course catalogs, course descriptions, and curriculum guides to determine the presence or scope of the written curriculum in the school district.

Auditors found inconsistencies in the course titles listed in school course description documents. Multiple course names were used for the same course content. Further, district curriculum guides did not consistently match course titles identified at various schools. No one district document was inclusive of all the school courses available.

Summary

In summary, the online/written curriculum guides and course descriptions failed to meet audit criteria for the scope of the written curriculum for the district because of the deficiency in the core areas. Although the scope of the district curriculum met the first part of the adequacy criteria curriculum documents, the core areas had a total of 73 percent of the courses with written curriculum available. Curriculum coverage of 100 percent in the core areas is required to meet this standard. The elementary level was adequate in both areas because 100 percent of all subjects offered at those levels had written curriculum.

No other grade levels met this standard. Further, there were differences in the number of courses offered in all subject areas across the middle and high schools. Multiple course names were utilized to identify the same course content. Overall, the district's written curriculum was considered inadequate to direct instruction.

Finding 2.3: The quality of the district curriculum guides is inadequate to direct the delivery of instruction in district schools.

Quality instruction focused on student achievement begins with well-written curriculum guides or courses of study. These guides communicate the district's intention for achieving system priorities in a focused and coordinated manner. Curriculum guides are blueprints for planning and delivering instruction to students. These documents represent agreement on the objectives to be taught, the emphasis on the objectives in terms of instructional time and assessment, connection of the curriculum vertically through prerequisite skills and knowledge, instructional materials to be used, teaching strategies to utilize, assessments aligned with the objectives in content and context, and evaluation procedures. When district curriculum documents are not available or are incomplete, teachers are left to utilize their own resources and strategies that may or may not align with state assessments and district goals, thus resulting in inconsistent instruction and unpredictable student results.

To determine the quality of the written curriculum in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, auditors analyzed district plans, board policies, administrative regulations, curriculum guides, and course descriptions. They also visited classrooms in district schools and conducted interviews with board of education members, district administrators, principals, teachers, and parents. Auditors found district curriculum guides to be inadequate in quality to provide for the effective delivery of instruction in district schools. There were no

curriculum guides that met the minimum quality standard of 12 out of 15 possible points using the Curriculum Management Audit criteria. Further frames of analysis indicated problems with national standard exclusions, internal consistency, redundancy of objectives, and cognitive types of objectives.

In general, the curriculum guides as presented to the auditors did not contain adequate information to provide teachers with complete and comprehensive work plans to guide their teaching. The district's curriculum guides did not contain enough information to provide teachers with comprehensive work plans to guide their teaching. All of the guides were rated as inadequate. While every reviewed curriculum guides contained objectives, lacking were aligned assessments connected to the objectives, a complete scope and sequence of prerequisite skills, a delineation of available instructional resources, and specific examples of how to teach the key concepts in the classroom.

Analysis of Further Alignment

In addition to identifying the scope of available curriculum, the auditors also conducted further frames of analysis of the core subject areas (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) for national standards alignment at the request of the district. This type of analysis is not typically a part of the audit process. The reader of this analysis needs to be cautious about assuming that increased alignment to a set of national standards will result in increased achievement. In the case of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, the district office administrative staff members expressed concern that the KPBSD is geographically and socially isolated from the rest of the nation's schools. Data from an analysis of locally developed curriculum documents and standards generally accepted as being representative of the nation would provide district staff members an external validation of the local curriculum documents.

Auditors' reports of these further frames of analyses have been divided as follows:

- I. Congruence of national standards: a review of linkages between curriculum guide objectives and national learner expectations;
- II. Articulation from level to level within the district objectives: a review of vertical flow and articulation of district objectives across grades for possible redundancy or repetition of learning objectives without extension through subsequent grade levels;
- III. Congruence of instructional strategies/activities and district curriculum guide objectives: an analysis of the alignment of suggested instructional strategies and/or classroom activities found in district curriculum guides or adopted textbooks with district objectives; and
- IV. Congruence of assessments in district resources with district objectives: analyses of alignment of assessment examples found in adopted resource materials with district objectives;
- V. Cognitive types of curriculum guide objectives: an analysis of the cognitive domains found in the district curriculum guide objectives.

As part of the approach to these analyses, the auditors reviewed board policies, administrative regulations, and other district documents for information about curriculum design and delivery. In addition, the auditors reviewed district objectives, instructional materials, suggested strategies, and assessment items in all core subject areas. Interviews were also conducted with district administrators, principals, teachers, and parents concerning the use of district curriculum documents in the district.

Overall, the auditors found a lack of internal consistency in curriculum documents in the areas of reflection of national standards; internal consistency of objectives, instructional strategies, and assessments; inconsistent spiraling of objectives throughout grade levels; and a lack of variety in cognitive types of objectives. Further, interview information indicated that teachers often relied on their own preferences to guide instruction rather than following the adopted curriculum guides.

Use of the Written Curriculum

Consistent use of user-friendly quality curriculum guides to support teaching and learning in classrooms is critical to establishing quality control of the educational program of a school district. In order for students to have equal access to the adopted curriculum with comparable opportunities for achievement, teachers at all district sites and all grade levels should provide instruction to support student mastery of district goals and objectives. Likewise, it is important for all teachers to have access to and use the adopted primary and supplemental resources to support student achievement. To determine the extent to which district curriculum guides were used by classroom teachers to provide program consistency and to ensure student access to the intended curriculum, the auditors interviewed district administrators, building administrators, and teachers.

The auditors found that teachers and principals noted that they used state grade level expectations, which were the curriculum guides in some cases. District personnel also described using textbooks interchangeably as curriculum and being textbook-driven. Several administrators and teachers noted that they did not use the district-adopted textbooks but were using old editions that they felt better met student needs. Several comments indicated that teachers were using their best judgment in making content and instructional decisions. At several buildings, personnel indicated that they were creating their own curricular documents such as standards-based curriculum documents, curriculum maps, and pacing charts. Auditors found little evidence of horizontal consistency and vertical articulation in the use of the district curriculum.

Summary

The auditors found that the quality of the district's written curriculum was inadequate to direct the delivery of instruction in district classrooms. Deficiencies in the curriculum guides appeared throughout all grade levels and across all subject areas when the auditors examined them for basic quality criteria. Guides were inconsistent in format; objectives were not written in a consistent, well-defined manner; assessments were not included; a complete scope and sequence was lacking; few resource connections were included; and limited teaching strategies were provided. No reviewed curriculum guides met the standard of quality as determined by audit criteria.

Further frames of analysis revealed inconsistencies in the inclusion of national standards, the internal consistency of strategies and assessments to objectives, the spiraling of objective content, and the cognitive levels of objectives. Auditors found that the district curriculum guides lacked the deep alignment needed to support optimal student achievement and were inconsistently used to direct instruction.

STANDARD 3: THE SCHOOL DISTRICT DEMONSTRATES INTERNAL CONSISTENCY AND RATIONAL EQUITY IN ITS PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.

A school system meeting this Curriculum Management Audit 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 Auditors Expected to Find in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District:

The PDK-CMSi auditors 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 Auditors Found in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District:

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

The auditors found that inequalities exist in student access to a consistent curriculum and to some district programs and services. Numerous programs and interventions have been implemented to meet student needs, but they have not had a positive impact on student achievement. A large number of ninth graders drop out of school before they reach the twelfth grade, and the graduation rate continues to be an issue. The budget process and staffing allocations have been designed to assist the smaller schools in the district. Even with this extra effort, students outside of the Central Peninsula are not receiving an equitable educational program. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District developed a comprehensive professional development plan for certified personnel in 2007. In conjunction with other district plans and documents, it was adequate in guiding the district's professional development program. Implementation of the professional development program was ineffective with inconsistencies in the following areas: coordination of training at the district and building levels, differentiation of training content and training methodologies, and measurement of professional development in terms of student achievement and changed teacher behavior. Lastly, because professional development training was not mandatory, the delivery of the district curriculum was left to individual teacher interpretation.

Board policies, job descriptions, and appraisal instruments do not provide clear and common direction to principals and others for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum. Principals visit classrooms and engage in various types of monitoring activities, but they indicated wide differences in the quality, amount, and types

of monitoring tasks performed. Some of the elementary principals have worked together to initiate a common procedure for their buildings, but the central office has not directed this practice.

Expectations for instructional practice are not clearly communicated in board policy, job descriptions, the teacher appraisal instrument, or curriculum guides. Teaching strategies observed were generally incongruent with district expectations for the use of a variety of approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners, for small group work, and for the use of technology to support instruction. During brief classroom visits, the auditors observed a preponderance of teachers engaged in direct instruction.

Finding 3.1 Despite district efforts, inequities exist in access to comparable programs, services, and learning opportunities for students.

In an effective school system, all students have equal access to the programs and services available in the district. Access to these programs and services should not be determined by gender, ethnicity, attendance area, or socioeconomic status. The auditors expect to find similar proportions of students by gender and ethnic origin in specific programs as reflected in the general student population. No single student group should be disproportionately represented in retention and suspension rates, graduation rates, and enrollment in various special programs and services.

While the term equal means “exactly the same,” the audit refers to equity with regard to the allocation of resources based on need. Rather than distributing resources based on a per pupil allocation, equity requires that additional resources be directed to students with greater needs. Without equal access to programs and services and equitable distribution of resources, school systems perpetuate the disparities among students that a public school education was designed to ameliorate. The auditors reviewed documents including board policies, district plans, test data, budget documents, and enrollment and participations reports compiled by school district and state personnel. They interviewed board members, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community members relative to equality and equity issues within the district. Auditors also visited classrooms in 34 schools and collected observational data on most of the instructional spaces in the district.

The auditors found that the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District’s board policies and the district long-range plan do not provide direction so that students will have equal access to programs and opportunities (see [Finding 1.1](#) and [Finding 1.2](#)). The quality of the written curriculum varies, and articulation and coordination are inadequate to provide a seamless and consistent K-12 curriculum (see [Findings 2.2](#) and [2.3](#)). Many programs and interventions have been implemented to address student needs, but they generally haven’t been systematically designed, implemented, evaluated, or linked to the curriculum to positively impact student learning (see [Finding 4.1](#)). Expectations for teaching practices have not been clearly communicated (see [Finding 3.3](#)), and monitoring the delivery of the curriculum is not systemic (see [Finding 3.4](#)). The auditors also noted inequalities in staff demographics and in student participation in various programs such as talented and gifted. A large number of students drop out of school. Disparities exist in the number of students suspended or expelled.

Student achievement data indicate disparities among student groups (see [Finding 4.3](#)). Alaskan Native, limited English proficient learners, and economically disadvantaged students’ rates of progress are insufficient to close the achievement gaps within a reasonable amount of time.

Summary

Inequalities exist in several areas, and resources do not flow to the areas of greatest need. The good intentions of the district to provide additional resources to the “small schools” have resulted in additional staffing and additional resources. However, programs are not adequate even with these additional resources. This is reflected by the concerns expressed related to participation in Advanced Placement courses across the district. Even schools in the Central Peninsula expressed concern about their inability to make these offerings available to their students. Native Alaskan students continue to be at risk of dropping out of school, and they are also overrepresented in the special education program. Native Alaskan students also receive a disproportionate number of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions. One key factor impacting achievement levels of minority and economically disadvantaged students is a lack of alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. A large number of these students leave the school system between grades 9 and 12. Staff demographics do not

reflect the ethnic and gender representation of the student body. Disproportional student enrollments by ethnicity were noted in special education and the gifted and talented programs. Despite district efforts, inequities exist in access to comparable programs, services, and learning opportunities for students.

Finding 3.2: The district professional development program is adequate. Professional development efforts have been initiated but are not yet coordinated to provide focus on district priorities and to develop staff expertise for sustainability.

An effective professional development program is guided by a comprehensive, long-range plan that provides all instructional staff members with the knowledge and skills to deliver the written curriculum. Consistent implementation of the written curriculum among and between classes, grade levels, departments, and schools is a vital part of the professional development plan. A professional development plan coordinated with other district and building plans, linked to identified district needs, and in combination with student assessment data results in improved student achievement.

In successful programs, professional development is more than a one-time workshop or training session. Professional development is an ongoing, results-based process that involves all segments of a school district. A variety of instructional models are utilized in professional development presentations, mirroring strategies that district personnel are expected to use in their own classrooms. Effective professional development includes presentation of content, demonstration of skills, modeling, guided practice, coaching, and intensive follow-up. Follow-up activities include meaningful practice of what was presented and monitoring to effectively measure the success of the training in improving student achievement. To determine the effectiveness of the professional development program in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, auditors reviewed board policies, district plans, professional development timelines, course and class reports, job descriptions, evaluation instruments, department emails, and website information. Interviews were also conducted with board members, district administrators, principals, teachers, and parents to determine the degree to which professional development aligns with district priorities and equips staff members to attain those priorities.

Auditors found that a comprehensive professional development plan was created in 2007 as a result of a district professional development study team's recommendation and the district long-range plan requirement. After reviewing the *Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Professional Development Plan Certified Personnel*, the *Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Long Range Plan 2007-2012*, board policies, administrative regulations, job descriptions, and evaluation instruments, auditors concluded that district documents were adequate in guiding the district's professional development program, meeting 78 percent of the characteristics of an effective staff development program according to audit criteria. However, implementation of the program was found to be lacking as the coordination of district and building professional development activities did not always occur, nor did monitoring professional development use in the classroom or measuring the effects of professional development on student achievement. Further, because professional development was not mandatory at the time of the audit, it was uncertain as to whether all staff members were equipped with the training necessary to effectively deliver the district's curriculum.

Summary

Although district planning efforts were moving to purposeful coordination of all professional development in the school district, a lack of connectivity existed between district planning expectations and their implementation. Inconsistencies were present in the following areas: congruence between district and building training content, differentiation of professional development for the three levels of teachers as outlined in the professional development plan, professional development activities utilizing coaching and practice, professional development connected to student achievement data, and measurement of changed teacher behavior as a result of professional development. Further, because professional development was not mandated for all staff members at the time of the audit, district expectations for the design and delivery of the curriculum may not have occurred, thereby preventing the institutionalization of curriculum content and preferred instructional strategies. In conclusion, the full actualization of the district's professional development program has not come to fruition.

Finding 3.3: Classroom observations indicate that instructional practices are not congruent with district expectations.

The effective delivery of curriculum is a key determinant of the district's capacity to impact student achievement. Effective delivery of the curriculum begins with well-written curriculum guides that identify district priorities and goals for student learning. Congruent expectations for the delivery of the curriculum need to be specified in board policy, job descriptions, and the teacher appraisal process. Staff development needs to be aligned with these expectations and provide teachers the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of curriculum delivery. Administrators need to consistently monitor instruction and provide teachers with feedback about their teaching. Diversifying teaching methods promotes student growth, combats student boredom, and addresses diverse students' learning styles and needs. In order to best meet the instructional needs of students who have varying academic skills, linguistic backgrounds, learning modalities, and levels of engagement, teachers must know and apply a wide variety of instructional techniques.

The auditors analyzed board policies, curriculum documents, school improvement plans, job descriptions, and the teacher appraisal instrument to determine district expectations for the delivery of the curriculum. The auditors also interviewed board members, administrators, and teachers to gather information about the nature of teaching practices used in district classrooms. Brief visits were made to classrooms at all school sites. Brief classroom visits provided the auditors with a general impression of the teaching practices used in the district across all grade levels. Two approaches were taken for these classroom visits. The first was the Classroom Observation Log. This observation was conducted in every classroom visited by the auditors. The second observation was the School View observation protocol. That observation was conducted in approximately one in every three classrooms.

The School View protocol is a broader observation and includes a look at Powerful Instructional Practices, including Marzano's *What Works in the Classroom*. A few examples of innovative or creative methods of instruction and the use of technology were observed in several classrooms. However, instances of varied approaches to learning and challenging activities were infrequent. Using the Classroom Observation Log, the auditors observed and recorded teacher behavior and student behavior upon entering the classroom.

Auditors expected to find students highly engaged in the instructional process. This high level of engagement provides students with greater motivation, and learning increases as a result. However, during brief snapshot visits to the classroom, auditors observed that over 42 percent of the students were listening to a whole group presentation or were off task.

Technology Usage

During classroom observations, data on technology usage by teachers and students were collected. A variety of instructional technologies were found in the classrooms at each instructional level. They included Smart/Promethean Boards, video/audio equipment, computer labs, mobile computer labs, and projection systems. Technology was present in most classrooms and was used by teachers in the delivery of instruction. However, it was most often used in a very traditional manner. Smart Boards were used in ways similar to the uses of the white board, for presentations that traditionally were made with overhead projectors. The predominant use of the computers by students as observed by the auditors was to deliver a canned program. The students rarely used the Smart Board, with its capability for interactivity.

School View

The auditors were told that there has been some professional development related to Marzano's, *What Works in the Classroom*. As a result the auditors choose to use School View as the yardstick by which to determine the alignment of classroom observation activities with Marzano's Powerful Instructional Practices that are described in *What Works in the Classroom*. These strategies are the basis for "SchoolView," and the observations were conducted in approximately one in every three classrooms. The auditors used the School View observation protocol in 27 Kenai Peninsula Borough School District schools.

Auditors found the following regarding the use of powerful instructional practices in classrooms:

- The sample included 10 elementary schools, seven small schools (K-12), four middle schools (one 6-8 and three 7-8), and six high schools. To varying degrees, evidence of the powerful instructional practices components was observed in most schools (70.4 percent). The auditors noted that they did not see evidence of the powerful instructional practices in eight (29.6 percent) schools.
- The Uses Questions practice was the most often observed (11 of the schools visited, or 40.7 percent). Examples of Uses Questions most often occurred in the elementary level and included events when teachers were helping students decide appropriate strategies. In one classroom the students were measuring items and deciding which metric unit would be the most appropriate to use.
- The second most often used practice was Uses Feedback throughout Lesson, which was seen in eight (29.6 percent) of the schools visited. An example of Uses Feedback throughout Lesson occurred in a World History classroom. The teacher was discussing current events and having an open discussion about social issues.

During building visitations the auditors also observed behaviors that were not congruent with the instructional strategies framework. Students were engaged in the following passive activities: worksheet learning activities (Takes Notes), teacher talk and lecture (Summarizes and Uses Questions), students sleeping in class, and students painting rocks for Earth Day.

Summary

Overall, observations of classroom teacher and student behaviors, use of technology, and alignment of practice to powerful instructional strategies indicate that teachers and students are most often involved in traditional learning activities where students have little to no responsibility for their learning. Teachers utilize some type of direct/whole group instruction strategy and students are engaged in seatwork or whole group learning activities.

The district has placed a significant amount of technology in various forms in most classrooms, yet the usage of technology continues to be very traditional—teachers use it as another form of textbook or as a tool for direct instruction. Technology is not being used as a learning tool that permits students to initiate some of their own learning. The auditors were told that the district would expect to see Dr. Marzano’s *What Works in the Classroom* during classroom visits. If the data shown in the previous exhibits can be assumed to be typical of daily teaching, then the auditors concluded that teaching practices are not congruent with district expectations.

Finding 3.4: Direction for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum does not exist.

Finding 3.4 is a “perceptual” finding because the auditors were unable to find board policy, job descriptions, or a principal performance appraisal instrument that cites expectations for monitoring curriculum and instruction. This finding is based solely upon quotations received during the interview process. Supervision of curriculum and instruction can be an effective tool for improving teaching and learning. Systemic monitoring ensures that the adopted curriculum is being implemented and provides teachers with support and feedback to improve their teaching. Typical components of curriculum monitoring include activities such as regular review of lesson plans, frequent visits to classrooms, formal and informal observations, formal and informal conferences with teachers, and participation in staff, grade level, or departmental team meetings for curriculum discussions.

Board policy needs to provide direction for what is to be taught in the classroom, as well as expectations for curriculum monitoring and coaching across the system. The primary responsibility for monitoring curriculum delivery and instructional practices lies with the building principal. In addition, other district staff may assist in communicating expectations and in curriculum monitoring and coaching.

The auditors reviewed various documents to determine the expectations for monitoring in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, including principal job descriptions, principal performance appraisal instruments, District Improvement Plans, and NCLB Federal Programs Consolidated Grant Application for 2009-2010.

Principals, teachers, and district administrators were interviewed and school visits were made to determine the status of monitoring in the district. Auditors learned that classroom walkthroughs are the primary method of monitoring. The quality and frequency of walkthroughs vary widely among administrators.

The auditors found that there is generally a common understanding that principals are to visit classrooms and provide feedback to their teaching staffs. However, this understanding is largely based on oral communication and follow-up activities by key administrators. Only general expectations for monitoring are listed in various documents, which contribute to inconsistent practices.

Summary

Overall, principals at the various levels of the school district are engaged in curriculum monitoring activities of their own design. The type, frequency, and quality of these practices vary widely among principals. This situation has occurred because there is no direction in board policy, district level administration has not clearly defined expectations, and the principal appraisal system is not used to hold principals accountable for monitoring.

In summary, the “perceptual” finding is that direction for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum does not exist.

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 audit 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 audit 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 audit 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 Auditors Expected to Find in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District:

The auditors expected to find a comprehensive assessment program for all aspects of the curriculum, preK 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 Auditors Found in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District:

This section is an overview of the findings that follow in the area of Standard Four. Details follow within separate findings. Comprehensive student and program assessment planning provides a foundation for making decisions about the *effectiveness* of curriculum design and delivery, as well as that of instructional programs. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District lacked a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan. Consequently, the auditors referred to various district documents for evidence of assessment planning, including board policies, administrative regulations, the *KPBSD Student Assessment Results, 2009-2010 Large-Scale Assessments by Grade*, the *2009-10 School Development Plans*, and various assessment reports. Collectively, the documents met 3 of the 15 audit characteristics for student assessment and program evaluation plans, which did not satisfy the minimum audit standard.

The scope of student assessment refers to the presence of some form of state or district assessment for every course. Without assessment, the district has no data-based means of knowing if its curriculum is appropriate for students or if it is being implemented as intended in the classroom. The auditors examined various documents provided by the administration and available on district and state websites; in addition, they interviewed various district stakeholders. To meet the audit standard, 100 percent of courses in core content areas (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) must have some form of district-wide assessment. Auditors found the scope of assessment in core areas inadequate in that 55 percent of courses were assessed formally. Furthermore, none of the district's non-core courses had any form of district or state assessments, which did not meet the audit standard of at least 70 percent coverage in non-core areas. Assessment data complete the feedback loop from the taught curriculum to the written curriculum. Analyses of assessment data reveal any performance gaps in individual student learning, grade level deficiencies, and building level progress toward attainment of the district's curriculum goals and objectives, as well as state standards. Among other documents, auditors reviewed displays of disaggregated data prepared by district personnel and various reports generated by district personnel for communication with board members, staff, and the community. Overall, auditors found that passing rates on state assessments (SBA and HSGQE) have remained higher than the state average over time. However, the overall percentage of students scoring "proficient" or "advanced" on the SBA has increased little over a five-year period. Over time, passing rates of grade 10 students on the HSGQE have increased significantly in reading and slightly in mathematics, but have dropped substantially in writing. Cohort analyses indicate that SBA assessment scores have remained static over time. Despite overall student performance, achievement gaps for various subgroups have persisted over time. This was particularly the case among students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities. Among students taking the SAT or ACT, scores have remained at or very slightly above state and national averages over time.

Use of student assessment data from a variety of sources is essential for sound curriculum management and responsible decision making for various district functions, as well as for classroom instruction. Auditors reviewed district and school documents describing or making use of formative assessment and gathered interview data regarding the use of formative assessment system-wide, at the campus level, and at the classroom level. Availability and use of formative data was rated for adequacy based on five audit characteristics. Auditors found all five characteristics inadequate. Auditors sought to determine whether summative student achievement data were presented in such a way that teachers could use them instructionally. For the most part, summative data were used for student placement and determination of broad school-level trends. Auditors rated the use of summative assessment data against five adequacy characteristics; the district met none of the characteristics.

Furthermore, auditors found the district met none of the five Curriculum Management Audit characteristics of an adequate approach to presenting summative student data to teachers for their use. In the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, program reports tended to be compliance documents. No comprehensive program evaluation had been completed to assist in decisions regarding continuation, expansion, modification, or termination.

Finding 4.1: The district lacks a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan to provide direction for producing desired learning results.

In addition to curriculum management planning (see [Findings 1.2](#) and [2.1](#)), there is also a Curriculum Management Audit expectation that school systems be engaged in comprehensive student and program assessment planning to provide a foundation for making decisions about the *effectiveness* of curriculum design and delivery, as well as that of instructional programs. A system for assessment provides a school district's leadership with the means for determining how well programs and practices are producing the desired learning results. A well-designed assessment program gathers a variety of data, enabling school leaders to evaluate the instructional program and related efforts and judge how well the system's goals are being met.

To assess the quality of assessment planning, the auditors interviewed board members, administrative personnel, and teachers and reviewed multiple assessment-related documents provided by district personnel. Documents showing evidence of assessment planning included *2009-2010 Large-Scale Assessments by Grade*, *KPBSD Student Assessment Results 2008-2009* (and similar documents for several previous years), *2009-10 School Development Plans*, the District Review of School Development Plan form, sample AIMSweb reports, and common assessments for kindergarten and grade 1.

Overall, the auditors found few documents having to do with systemic planning for student and program assessment. Several documents alluded to various components of assessment plans, but none to the degree that they would fulfill the audit characteristics of a comprehensive assessment plan. Consequently, the auditors found assessment plan components, collectively, to be inadequate to provide direction for producing desired learning outcomes.

Summary

In summary, auditors did not receive a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan from the district. In lieu of a single document, auditors reviewed the various documents presented by the district, searching for evidence of the components of such a plan. Even so, auditors found adequate evidence of only three of the 15 audit characteristics of a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan. Lacking the components of a quality plan, student assessment and program evaluation are likely to be fragmented and will provide insufficient feedback for producing the desired learning outcomes.

Finding 4.2: The scope of student assessment is inadequate to effectively evaluate the taught curriculum and provide sufficient data for making sound curricular decisions.

A comprehensive student assessment program allows the district to measure the effectiveness of the taught curriculum in attaining the desired levels of student achievement. It rounds out the connection between the written, taught, and tested curriculum. Without assessment, the district has no data-based means of knowing if its curriculum is appropriate for students or if it is being implemented as intended in the classroom.

In audit terms, the scope of student assessment refers to the presence of some form of state or district assessment for every course. When reviewing assessment scope, auditors do not address the quality of those assessments or whether or not each curriculum objective for a given course is assessed. The audit expectation is that some form of assessment exists for 100 percent of courses in core content areas (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) and for at least 70 percent of all other courses. The auditors examined various documents provided by the administration and documents available on the district and state websites; in addition, they interviewed district administrators, principals, teachers, and parents to gather information about the scope of assessment in the district.

Summary

In KPBSD, 55 percent of core courses were assessed formally in some manner. This did not meet the audit standard of 100 percent assessment coverage in core content areas (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies). Furthermore, none of the non-core courses had any form of district or state assessments, which did not meet the audit standard of at least 70 percent coverage in non-core areas.

Finding 4.3: District assessment scores have remained above state and national averages but, for the most part, have not increased over time. Achievement gaps in gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, and special education status are likely to persist indefinitely without intervention.

Assessment data provide information for use by district personnel to determine the effectiveness of board-adopted curriculum and of instructional expectations in relationship to actual student performance. Assessment data complete the feedback loop from the taught curriculum to the written curriculum. Analyses of assessment data reveal any performance gaps in individual student learning, grade level deficiencies, and building level progress toward attainment of the district's curriculum goals and objectives, as well as state standards. Comparison of student achievement data to a set of standards or to other students at local, state, and national levels helps administrators, teachers, and board members determine the effectiveness of instructional programs. Analyses of data beyond that of the group as a whole help determine if all student sub-populations are achieving at the same level and, if not, which groups may need additional resources and programs to be successful. Analyses of achievement trends provide information on how assessment results change over time. In a system with effective quality control, performance for all students should improve over time, and performance gaps among student subgroup populations should reduce in size.

The auditors examined data provided by district administrators and found on the state website. Auditors reviewed documents including displays of disaggregated data prepared by district personnel and various reports generated by district personnel for communication with board members, staff, and the community. Among other data, auditors were provided five years of *KPBSD Student Assessment Results* with assessment results for the SBA, HSGQE, Analytic Writing Assessment, and TerraNova. They also received five years of the district's annual *Report Card to the Public*. In addition, auditors received copies of the district's most recent ACT and SAT data.

Overall, auditors found that passing rates on state assessments (SBA and HSGQE) have remained higher than the state average over time. However, the overall percentage of students scoring "proficient" or "advanced" on the SBA has increased very little over a five-year period. Over time, passing rates of grade 10 students on the HSGQE have increased significantly in reading and only slightly in mathematics, but have dropped substantially in writing. Cohort analyses indicate SBA assessment scores have remained static over time. Despite overall student performance, achievement gaps for various subgroups have persisted over time. This was particularly the case among students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities. Among students taking the SAT or ACT, scores have remained very slightly above state and national averages over time.

KPBSD conducted state-mandated assessment using a variety of assessment tools at various grade levels, including the Revised Kindergarten Developmental Profile (RADP); TerraNova; the Standards-Based Assessment (SBA) in mathematics, reading, writing, and science; the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE); and WIN/Workkeys (pilot project). It met federal mandates in assessing English language learners using the state English Language Proficiency (ELP) exam. The district also used AIMS tests of early literacy, Curriculum-Based Measurements in reading, MAZE, as well as either writing or mathematics Curriculum-Based Assessments (as identified in individual schools' School Development Plans). District-wide, students in several grades also completed an Analytic Writing Assessment. Auditors were informed that no district-developed common assessments were used in grades 2-12.

In summary, the average passing rates of KPBSD students on the reading, writing, and mathematics portions of the Alaska Standards-Based Assessments (SBA) were between 5 and 10 percent above the state average over the past four years. Four-year trend data showed slight improvement in all three areas. The percent of KPBSD students achieving proficient or advanced on the Science SBA was 15 percent more than the state average in 2009. Over a five-year period, KPBSD grade 10 students performed above the state average on the HSGQE; state and district scores in reading and mathematics trended upwards over that period, but both state and district scores in writing trended downward over the same period.

Achievement Gaps among Student Subgroup Populations

Conventional wisdom says that group differences in achievement are the result of disparate, inadequate, or ineffective educational experiences, rather than ethnic or demographic characteristics. There is an expectation in curriculum management auditing that poverty, race, gender, or other ethnic or demographic differences should not predict differences in achievement levels. Further, all such subgroups in the student population are expected to achieve at comparable levels—demonstrating parity (or equivalency in achievement), if not at the time of measurement, then at some reasonable future point in time, as a result of educational intervention.

Recognizing the *NCLB* goal of 100 percent of all students, including student subgroups, achieving proficiency by 2014, the auditors sought to determine the existence and magnitude of achievement gaps among student subgroups in KPBSD. In this section, auditors provide data displays of estimated “Years to Parity” to demonstrate the rate at which the achievement gap between students in various subgroups might be expected to close. Four grade levels were chosen for this analysis—grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. The analyses used SBA reading, writing, and mathematics passing rates (percentage of students in each subgroup achieving SBA scores of “proficient” or “advanced”). Auditors compared SBA passing rates among students of different genders, ethnicities, economic status, English language proficiency, and special education status. It should be noted that analyses were not performed when the subgroup population consisted of 10 or fewer students. Consequently, data were analyzed for two ethnic groups only—Alaska Native/American Indian and Caucasian.

To arrive at an estimated “Years to Parity,” auditors calculated the difference in the percent of students passing among the subgroup and the comparison group for each year (“Difference”). Next, they calculated the positive or negative change in that difference from one year to the next (“Year to Year Change”). The changes were then averaged, yielding a mean rate of change (“Average Year to Year Change”). If this figure was a positive number, auditors concluded that the achievement gap was closing, and the difference between the subgroup population and the comparison group at the final year was divided by the average rate of change. This yielded an estimated “Years to Parity”—the approximate number of years for the subgroup to reach parity with the comparison group, assuming no other interventions occurred. A negative “Average Year to Year Change” meant the achievement gap was widening; without intervention, one could assume the achievement of the subgroup would never reach parity with that of the comparison group.

In summary, across all three content areas, the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged and other students was closing at grade 8. At grades 3, 5, and 10, estimated years to parity were mixed. However, this was not the case for grade 10 students in writing and grade 5 students in mathematics; in both instances, achievement gaps were closing—although more slowly than at gaps at grade 8.

SAT and ACT

Most college-bound students in KPBSD take the ACCUPLACER, as required by the University of Alaska system. However, in the most recent years for which data were available, 238 students took SATs (2008) and 118 students took ACTs (2009). SAT Reasoning quartile data for 2008 showed KPBSD student mean scores hovered at or slightly above state and national mean scores. However, district means have remained flat over time. Over the past five years, out of a maximum score of 800 points each, KPBSD students’ Critical Reading mean scores have increased, on average, by 3.5 points per year, and Mathematics mean scores have increased by 1.3 points per year. With only three years of data, auditors did not calculate average yearly change for the Writing SAT. Most students taking SATs were Caucasian (87 percent), and only five percent were Alaska Native/American Indian (other ethnic groups were too small in number to make valid subgroup comparisons). Comparisons of 2008 performance locally and nationally showed both subgroups performed above the national average in Critical Reading, at the national average in Writing, and below the national average in Mathematics. Performance differences between the two KPBSD subgroups were marked. In Critical Reading, for example, the 2008 mean score for Caucasians was 541, as compared to that of Alaska Native/American Indians (N=11), which was 511. In Mathematics, the Caucasian mean score was 527, and that of Alaska Native/American Indians was 477. ACTs were a less popular option for college-bound students. In 2009, 118 students took the ACT. Among all district students taking the ACT in 2009, 39 percent met or exceeded the ACT College Readiness Benchmark of 21 points out of a possible 36 points on all four exams (English, Reading, Mathematics, and

Science). Over the past five years, the mean subtest scores of district students have remained slightly above the state and national averages. Over the five-year period, mean composite scores have remained flat. Despite slight fluctuation from one year to the next, the average year-to-year change was 0 points.

As with SATs, test-takers were predominantly Caucasian (83 percent). Fewer than seven percent were Alaska Native/American Indian. With only eight Alaska Native/American Indian students taking the exams, achievement comparisons among the two groups must be made cautiously. That being said, 42 percent of Caucasians and 13 percent of Alaska Natives met or exceeded the ACT College Readiness Benchmark for all four exams. College-bound KPBSD students taking one or more of the SAT, ACT, and ACCUPLACER exams tended to score at or only slightly above state and national averages. Differences in performance existed between Caucasian students and Alaska Native/American Indian students.

Summary

In summary, formative and summative student achievement data use in KPBSD is inadequate to inform curricular, instructional, and programmatic decision making. Administrators and teachers in effective school systems frequently ask if what they are doing is working, how they can do better, and whether or not they should be doing something else. Collecting and using data as feedback can provide answers to these questions. In KPBSD, formative data were available to a limited degree and their use was emergent. Summative data were available in a variety of formats, and summative data were used for various planning purposes at the district and campus levels. At the campus level, use of summative data for other decision making was at the discretion of principals and teachers. Data were not used to systematically evaluate program effectiveness and to inform decisions about implementation, continuation, expansion, modification, or termination.

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 PDK-CMSi Curriculum Management Audit 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 Auditors Expected to Find in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District:

While the attainment of improved productivity in a school system is a complex process, caused in part by the lack of a tight organizational structure (referred to as “loosely coupled”), common indicators of a school system meeting this audit 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 Auditors Found in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District:

This section is an overview of the findings that follow in the area of Standard Five. Details follow within separate findings. Expenditures that are guided by sound curriculum planning are the basis of a district’s ability to provide adequate educational programs and services. When expenditures are not aligned to educational priorities, a district’s ability to effectively deliver the district’s curriculum is diminished. The auditors found that the district’s revenues, expenditures, and general fund balance have increased considerably since 2004. The district has maintained a surplus budget during each of the last six years. While the financial condition of the district appears strong, two current trends could jeopardize the district’s productivity in the future. First, student enrollment has consistently dropped during the past 15 years, and it appears that it will continue to drop in the future. As enrollment drops, potential state funding will also decrease. Additionally, the district’s expenditures have markedly increased over the past six years, while student academic achievement has remained fairly static. A district’s productivity improves when clear linkages exist between the curriculum and the budget. The auditors did not find these clear linkages. The auditors found that a formula based approach was used for budget development, and no succinct processes were in place that tied student achievement or program performance feedback to budgetary decisions.

Effective program interventions contribute to school improvement and productivity. An intervention that sustains a positive impact is connected to district priorities and is well planned, adequately funded, and fully implemented. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District has a plethora of programs, initiatives, and strategies being used throughout the district. The auditors found a loosely coupled system regarding the selection, implementation, and evaluation of these programs and interventions. No system is in place to regulate, control, or align these interventions throughout the district.

Delivery of the written curriculum requires appropriate facilities that are clean and well maintained. The facilities should be appropriately designed to provide for the specific educational needs of the students, teachers, and the delivery of the curriculum. Additionally, facilities should address district goals and priorities. The district’s facilities were found to be clean and well maintained. However, the district lacks a comprehensive long-range planning document that meets audit criteria. While the auditors found policies that address facilities and facility planning, the district lacks an actionable plan to address capacity issues that have arisen due to a continual drop in enrollment.

Finding 5.1: Comprehensive annual financial reports (CAFR) reveal financial soundness; however, should current trends and projections continue, district productivity will be compromised.

Adequate revenues and prudent expenditures that are guided by sound curriculum planning are the basis of a district's ability to provide adequate educational programs and services. When revenue flow is uncertain or expenditures are not aligned to educational priorities, a district's ability to effectively deliver the district's curriculum is diminished. To determine the financial condition of the district, the auditors reviewed district policies, annual budgets, financial audits, the budget committee handbook, budget development handbooks, Annual Yearly Progress results, and other district and state documents related to budgeting and the allocation and disbursements of the school district's resources. Interviews were conducted with district administrative staff, the board of directors, teachers, parents, and community members. During the interviews, the auditors gathered data regarding the budget development process, the extent of stakeholder involvement in the process, and the district guidelines and procedures for disbursing the district's financial resources. The *Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports 2005 through 2009* showed the district to be financially sound. Since 2004, revenues, expenditures, and general fund balance have increased considerably. The district has maintained a surplus budget during each of the past six years. However, auditors noted two trends that could compromise the district's productivity. First, the state's funding formula is based on student enrollment.

The *Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Annual Budget 2009-10* reported that enrollment has dropped consistently during the past 15 years and will continue to drop over the next five years. As enrollment drops, potential state funding will also decrease. Second, the *Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Preliminary Budget 2011* and *District Annual Yearly Progress Worksheets 2004 to 2009* reported that expenditures have increased considerably over the past six years, but student academic achievement has remained fairly static.

District productivity occurs when student academic achievement increases within the same cost parameters.

Improvement in student academic achievement should occur over time within the same financial parameters. For schools, this equates to improving student achievement while maintaining a consistent level of expenditures. From 2005 to 2009, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District has experienced a 5.1 percent drop in enrollment. Since the state's funding formula is based on a per-student allocation, the reduction in enrollment has decreased the potential total revenue allocated to the district. During this same time frame, auditors found that expenditures have increased 35 percent, but student achievement has only increased 7.8 percent.

Summary

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School district has seen large increases in revenues, expenditures, and the general fund balance since 2004. Through the current budget development and management processes, the district has been able to maintain fiduciary control. However, there are trends that jeopardize the productivity of the district. Expenditures have continued to increase dramatically while student academic achievement has remained fairly static. Additionally, student enrollment is declining throughout the district and at individual sites. As student enrollment drops, realized funding will also decline.

Sub-Finding 5.1.1: The budget development process is comprehensive but is not linked to the district's curriculum.

A school district's productivity is enhanced when clear linkages exist between the curriculum and the budget. Cost-benefit analysis requires a clear delineation of costs compared to actual improvements made as a result of specific appropriations. Such linkage provides a budgetary process that is driven by curriculum needs, priorities, and goals. Connectivity between the budget and curriculum is critical. The final budget document is a representation of how the district allocates fiscal resources to support and implement its programs. Thus, the budget is the numerical expression of the curriculum and should mirror program expectations. Disbursement of resources guided by the district's mission and goals that are aligned with the design and delivery of the curriculum is the foundation of the district's ability to maximize its productivity. In highly effective, high-performing schools, the budget development processes establish a clear linkage between the district's mission, goals, and curriculum. Such linkages will ultimately improve the district's productivity. To determine if the district budget development process was linked to the district's policies, mission, goals, and curriculum, the

auditors reviewed district policies, annual budgets, budget committee handbooks, and other district documents related to budgeting. Interviews were conducted with district administrative staff, the board of directors, teachers, parents, and community members to determine the processes for budget development and implementation.

The auditors found that a formula-based approach was used in budgeting. While the budget development process follows board policies and administrative guidelines, linkages between the budget and the district's curriculum are not apparent. While the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District has developed a concise formula funding method to distribute revenues throughout the district, the auditors found that there are no concise processes in place for linking student achievement or program performance feedback to budgetary decisions at the site or district level.

Auditors reviewed the *Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Preliminary Budget 2010-11* and the *Budget Development Committee Handbook FY10* and found that budgetary allocations for campuses are based on formulas that are derived from student enrollment and are not linked to the district's curriculum.

Summary

The auditors found no evidence of district efforts to link student achievement or program performance feedback to budgetary decisions. For the most part, budgetary decisions are based on formula funding and staffing. For various reasons, the district has experienced a continual drop in student enrollment over the past 15 years, and this trend is projected to continue in the future. The drawback to formula funding for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is that certified and support staff and programs will be reduced and shifted without any linkage to the district's curriculum. When staff and programs are reduced globally, and not specifically based on the need to deliver the district's curriculum, district productivity will be compromised.

Finding 5.2: An excessive number of program interventions and initiatives impedes quality control and fragments system unity.

An intervention is an action taken by school district personnel to address and/or prevent an undesirable trend. An intervention that sustains a positive impact is connected to district priorities and is well planned, adequately funded, and fully implemented. Effective program interventions contribute to school improvement and productivity. Interventions are programs that support district learning goals and are selected and implemented to meet specific student needs.

Auditors are interested in a district's ability to obtain its desired results within the same or reduced resource parameters. Therefore, revenues that are allocated for program interventions need to be sustainable over long periods of time.

The audit team found an extensive number of programs, initiatives, and strategies being used within the district without any signs of continuity from grade to grade and/or campus to campus. Formal district-wide processes and procedures designed to promote effective selection, implementation, monitoring, assessment, and/or evaluation of the programs and interventions were not presented to the auditors. Auditors were not provided evidence of any intervention programs that had been evaluated against predefined goals for improving student performance. Intervention programming was deemed inadequate to consistently enhance student achievement when rated against Curriculum Management Improvement Model (CMIM) criteria.

Auditors reviewed board policies and determined that there is no specific guidance for selecting programs for intervention in response to identified student needs. The formal processes, practices, and procedures necessary to promote effective selection, implementation, and evaluation have not been established.

Summary

The audit team found that the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District has a loosely coupled system regarding the selection, implementation, and evaluation of programs and interventions. Policies and regulations do not control or align interventions throughout the district. Individual campuses and teachers are allowed to select, modify, and implement intervention programs as they so choose without consistent selection, monitoring, and evaluation criteria. Additionally, there are no processes in place to ensure that interventions are aligned to the district's curriculum, goals, or objectives. While staff members discussed the effectiveness of their particular

intervention programs, no documentation was provided to auditors to verify the efficacy of these programs. Furthermore, no evidence was provided to demonstrate that an intervention program was eliminated because it did not accomplish the program's intended results.

Finding 5.3: Long-range facility planning is inadequate and ignores problems of under-enrolled and over-enrolled facilities.

Delivery of the written curriculum requires appropriate facilities that are clean and well-maintained. The facilities should be appropriately designed to provide for the specific educational needs of the students, teachers, and the delivery of the curriculum. Additionally, facilities should address district goals and priorities. School buildings should foster a positive learning climate that supports student achievement and does not impede or interfere with the effective delivery of the overall instructional program. Comprehensive facilities planning, monitoring, and evaluation are essential to maintaining an efficient and productive school system. It is paramount that district personnel are able to make valid projections during the planning process. Long-range planning should effectively address the current and future needs of the students and the district. The plan must also consider how facilities will be funded. Facility planning should consider enrollment trends, curriculum needs, special program requirements, instructional practices, technology requirements, technology advancements, community expectations, age of facilities, repair versus replacement costs of facilities, and cost/energy efficiency. To provide for the efficient expenditures of funds for facilities, the district must be able to anticipate future instructional needs and enrollment trends over an extended period of time.

Auditors visited each of the district's school sites and a majority of the classrooms to gather data concerning the learning climate and facilities. The auditors focused on overall maintenance and custodial care, physical atmosphere, accessibility, technological and instructional equipment, safety concerns, and capacity and use of the buildings and equipment. Auditors also interviewed board members, district and site administrators, and various personnel throughout the district. Board policies, the facility plan and programs, job descriptions, and other district documents were reviewed to determine the extent of the district's long-range facility planning process when compared to audit standards. The audit team found that most schools and offices were clean and well-maintained. Features and the quality of the facilities varied between sites, particularly between different communities and facilities of different ages. Auditors found board policies and plans that addressed the construction of new buildings, the maintenance of existing facilities, the planning of school facilities, and the closing/consolidation of facilities. However, the district lacks an adequate comprehensive long-range planning document that meets audit criteria. Additionally, short- and long-term capacity issues become apparent as the district considers that enrollment projections show a continuing decline over the next five years.

School Capacity

Auditors found that school capacity issues are problems within the district. Several documents addressed the reconfiguration, closing, and consolidation of campuses. *Board Policy 0530: Criteria for Closing Schools* and the *Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Long Range Plan 2007-2012* both use student enrollment as one of the criteria for altering the use of school facilities. The *Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Long Range Plan 2007-2012* stated that future needs based on student enrollment should be determined. Additionally, the district is to develop a long-range school consolidation plan. [Exhibit 5.3.5](#) shows each school's capacity, projected enrollment, and the percent of the school's capacity that is actually being used.

Summary

The district's facilities were mostly clean and well-maintained. While the comprehensive long-range planning documents failed to meet audit criteria, the district has the state's required planning documents in place. The district's current facilities did appear to support the learning environment of the district adequately. The district does face productivity issues related to capacity. Almost 30 percent of the buildings are operating below 50 percent of their documented capacity. While the district has board policies in place that address facility closings and consolidation due to changing enrollment patterns, no action plans were provided to the auditors.

Unless issues surrounding building capacities are addressed, the district's efficiency and productivity will be compromised.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PDK-CMSI CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AUDIT TEAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Based on the three streams of data derived from interviews, documents, and site visits, the PDK-CMSi Curriculum Management Audit Team has developed a set of recommendations to address its findings shown under each of the standards of the audit. In the case of the findings, they have been triangulated, i.e., corroborated with one another. In the case of the recommendations, those put forth in this section are representative of the auditors' best professional judgments regarding how to address the problems that surfaced in the audit. The recommendations are presented in the order of their criticality for initiating system-wide improvements. The recommendations also recognize and differentiate between the policy and monitoring responsibilities of the board of education, and the operational and administrative duties of the superintendent of schools.

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

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

Recommendation 1: Adopt and implement updated, revised, or new board policies or related administrative regulations to provide clear direction for educational programs and operational functions and to clarify expectations regarding organizational planning and decision making.

The most critical need in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is to provide clear direction for educational programs and operational functions, and to clarify expectations regarding organization and decision making. This will allow the district to bring curriculum development, revision, assessment, interventions, evaluation, and professional development under system control. The history of inadequate control has resulted in a "system of schools rather than a school system," with employees often functioning as independent contractors working in isolated schools. Auditors observed a patchwork of programs and interventions going in many directions, but without clear evidence that any given program was effective or that it was being implemented with fidelity (see [Finding 5.1](#)). Individual loyalty to a program was often more a function of proximity to and familiarity with the program than of its effectiveness. Wide ranging choices fragment the system and complicate a coherent vision and identity, leaving both parents and the professionals who serve them confused and insecure as to what curriculum quality means and how it is best designed and delivered. The current menu of program options may be unsustainable as the district is experiencing declining enrollment and diminishing resources. Frequent changes in central office leadership and high mobility of leadership in some schools have further exacerbated the fragmentation and permitted many programs to morph from their original mission. Furthermore, auditors determined that current accountability systems in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District are inconsistently applied and ineffective in ensuring that programs and/or personnel are meeting acceptable standards.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education:

G.1.1: Direct the superintendent to draft for board review and adoption current policies that meet the curriculum management characteristics for sound quality control as identified in [Finding 1.1](#).

G.1.2: Direct the superintendent to prepare a policy for board review and adoption requiring that all program initiatives be aligned to the district long-range plan (see [Finding 1.4](#)).

G.1.3: Direct the superintendent to establish and maintain up-to-date job descriptions.

G.1.4: Direct the superintendent to (through systematic program evaluation) report on which district programs and initiatives should be continued, modified, or discontinued (see [Finding 5.1](#)). This evaluation should not only be on whether the program has been implemented with fidelity, but on whether or not students are learning and making appropriate progress towards academic achievement benchmarks.

G.1.5: Direct the superintendent, based upon the evaluations described in **G.1.4**, to prioritize and budget only for those programs that provide the desired results.

G.1.6: Direct the superintendent to prepare a policy for board review and adoption to differentiate clearly between decisions that are made at the campus, those made at the central office, and those that are shared, thus centralizing decision making for better oversight of district functions.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Superintendent:

A.1.1: Draft for board review and adoption current policies that meet the curriculum management characteristics for sound quality control.

A.1.2: Prepare a policy for board review and adoption that requires all program initiatives to be aligned to the district's long-range plan.

A.1.3: Through systematic program evaluation, report to the board on which district programs and initiatives should be continued, modified, or eliminated. This evaluation should not only be on whether the program has been implemented with fidelity, but whether or not students are learning and making appropriate progress towards academic achievement benchmarks and goals.

A.1.4: Propose a prioritized budget that only includes those programs that provide the desired results.

A.1.5: Prepare a policy for board review and adoption to differentiate clearly between decisions that are made at the campus, those made at the central office, and those that are shared, thus centralizing decision making for better oversight of district functions.

By implementing all of the components of this recommendation the district can take critical steps to bring the district curriculum and program management and all related functions under system control and into alignment. Furthermore, there will be a viable accountability system in place to ensure that curriculum and program alignment efforts come to fruition. Initial policy development and revisions should be completed within the first nine months of implementation.

Recommendation 2: Revise the district's long-range plan and align all district planning efforts to provide clear direction for district initiatives, enhance system connectivity, and increase student learning.

The goal of every school district is to provide quality instruction to each student. In order to achieve this goal, a district must focus time, energy, and the necessary resources to ensure that each student within the district has equal access to a quality education. Revising the district's long-range plan and aligning all district planning efforts to provide clear direction for district initiatives will enhance system connectivity and strengthen efforts to improve student learning. A comprehensive curriculum management plan allows the district to focus resources and efforts toward the goal of increased student achievement for all students through a systemic means for the design, delivery, and alignment of the curriculum. Curriculum management planning also provides for coordinated leadership with clear role responsibility for the creation, implementation, and evaluation of the plan.

Include in the revised district long-range plan a quality curriculum document is based on a written, taught, and tested curriculum that is aligned in content, context, and cognitive type. Comprehensive alignment of the written with the taught and tested curriculum only occurs when that alignment is present in all three dimensions. This means that how and with what cognitive processes a specific skill or task is to be performed is written in the curriculum in a manner congruent with how it is assessed on external tests. It must also be written specifically enough to inform teachers how such skills and tasks must be mastered in the classroom to ensure success on those tests. When a quality curriculum is in place, learning is not left to chance but becomes an intentional

focused effort with clear direction for teachers and access to the same learning for all students throughout the district. A consistent format for curriculum documents across grade levels and content areas further ensures that the key components of an aligned curriculum are included: objectives that are clear and specific, assessments that match district and state performance evaluations, prerequisite skills and knowledge needed for learning, instructional resources and texts that match the objective, and specific classroom strategies for each objective taught.

In Kenai Peninsula Borough School District auditors found that some curriculum planning components were present in varying stages in the core subject areas; however, a comprehensive curriculum management plan is not currently in place. Board policy specifically speaks to having a written curriculum for all subject areas current policy does not address the need for curriculum planning.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education:

G.2.1: Develop policies that define the roles and responsibilities of the board, district and/or school site administrators and teachers in the district's long-range plan regarding curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation.

G.2.2: Direct the superintendent to develop new policies for board review that specifically require written curriculum with clear goals and objectives for student outcomes for all subjects taught in the district. These policies should include the expectation that teachers will implement the curriculum so that all students have equal access to the district curriculum. The policy should include the criteria listed in [Exhibit 2.2.1](#) as well as the following:

- A clear framework for the development of curriculum, which is aligned with the State of Alaska Education and Early Development guiding document *Alaska Content Standards*;
- A requirement for deep alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum;
- Procedures for the design and implementation of the curriculum, including expansion of the curriculum development and review cycle;
- An expectation that all courses offered within the district will be supported by written curriculum documents;
- A process for the integration of technology with instructional strategies and resources for the purpose of enhancing student learning;
- A common format for all curriculum documents across subject areas and grade levels; and
- Formal board adoption of all curriculum documents prior to implementation.

G.2.3: Direct the superintendent to require that school site planning be linked to the implementation of the district's curriculum management plan and district goals (see [Finding 1.4](#)).

G.2.4: Direct the superintendent to align professional development to support teachers' quality delivery of the curriculum.

G. 2.5: Direct the superintendent to annually review and report on the effectiveness of the implementation of the curriculum management plan.

G.2.6: Direct the superintendent to establish standards, expectations, and processes for curriculum monitoring across the district (see [Finding 1.3](#)).

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Superintendent.

A.2.1: Prepare an administrative regulation that revises the long-range plan to include written curriculum with clear goals and objectives for student outcomes for all subjects and grade levels taught in the district.

A.2.2: Design and implement a comprehensive curriculum management plan to include the following:

- The district's philosophical approach to the curriculum, which establishes a foundation for curriculum format and access, district and campus respective roles, and the responsibility of the district to the student in providing quality education for all based on the State of Alaska Education and Early Development *Alaska Content Standards* booklet.
- Adherence to a curriculum review cycle for all disciplines that ensures that every content area and grade level is addressed, with updates to meet changing state standards and high stake assessments, and that includes timing, scope, team membership, and procedures;
- A consistent curriculum guide format, establishing a common design with common components for curriculum documents and incorporating design components allowing for user-friendly online access;
- Staff roles and responsibilities for curriculum management, delineating which tasks and responsibilities are primarily classroom-based, which are school-based, which are district-based, and which are board-based;
- Expectations for curriculum delivery in the classroom that establish the requirement that all teachers must teach the adopted curriculum;
- A professional development program based on the curriculum and curriculum delivery, which provides on-going teacher training to facilitate student learning through deeper understanding of content and use of research-based classroom strategies;
- Common curriculum monitoring processes and procedures for principals and other responsible staff setting expectations and establishing processes for continuous monitoring of the implementation of the adopted curriculum;
- Selection procedures for instructional resources that determine how the materials designed to support the adopted curriculum will be selected and reviewed for effectiveness;
- A process for integrating technology into the curriculum, setting the expectation that technology will be incorporated into classroom settings to enhance student learning; and
- A process for communicating curriculum revisions to the board, staff, and community, thereby establishing information sharing procedures.

A.2.3: Building upon existing district documents, formalize and implement a curriculum review cycle that includes a model for the design of curriculum documents as follows:

Organizational preparation:

- Revise the long-range plan to build upon the curriculum documents previously developed in the core subject areas, expanding them to meet the audit criteria. Gradually expand curriculum development to include all other courses taught within the district;
- Select a consistent, district-wide model format for curriculum documents and other online resource materials that is functional and user friendly;
- Re-establish a timeline for developing, evaluating, and revising curriculum documents for each subject and course offered;
- Select a curriculum design team and provide extensive training in curriculum and assessment design to this small group of individuals; and
- Select a curriculum review team to analyze the curriculum documents as they are drafted by the design team. In addition to teachers who teach the discipline under review, the review team should include: a principal and teachers trained in technology, special education, gifted education, and education for English language learners.

Curriculum design:

- Review the latest research and expert thinking in the discipline;
- Assess existing curriculum documents' strengths and weaknesses based on research and the audit criteria in [Exhibit 2.2.1](#);
- Review existing goals and objectives and edit as needed for the discipline to ensure linkage to district goals and alignment to the Alaska State Academic Standards;
- Include the following components of a quality curriculum document:
 1. A clear statement of what skills/concepts should be learned, when and how they should be performed, and the amount of time or emphasis given to each objective;
 2. Linkages between each objective and district and state assessments;
 3. Specific delineation of prerequisite skills/concepts;
 4. Linkages to adopted texts and other instructional materials; and
 5. Specific examples of how to teach the key concepts and skills in the classroom using a variety of proven instructional techniques.
- Include strategies for differentiating instruction to meet the needs of English language learners, special education, and gifted students;
- Integrate instructional technology into the curriculum;
- Obtain feedback from the curriculum review team; and
- Use external consultants to critique the process and products during the design phase.

Curriculum implementation:

- Field test the curriculum;
- Pilot the resource materials, assessments, and instructional strategies;
- Evaluate the curriculum's effectiveness in relation to student achievement;
- Revise field-tested curriculum documents based on feedback and student achievement data;
- Submit curriculum documents for adoption by the board;
- Require the availability of written curriculum documents for all teachers teaching the designated subjects; and
- Remove all outdated or unaligned curriculum documents and resources from the district.

A.2.4: Establish procedures to ensure that school, departmental, and district efforts are designed to support implementation of the district curriculum (see [Finding 1.4](#)).

A.2.5: Establish procedures to monitor curriculum implementation across schools, subject areas, and programs.

A.2.6: Establish and communicate clear expectations for administrators and teachers with regard to use of the written curriculum.

A.2.7: Annually evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum management relative to the achievement of all students and all student subgroup populations.

A.2.8: Provide financial resources within the budget to accomplish the elements of curriculum design, implementation, and ongoing evaluation noted in this and other recommendations.

Planning efforts that focus on setting a clear direction for the district regarding curriculum design and development should begin during the first six months after the receipt of this report.

Recommendation 3: Create a comprehensive curriculum management plan to provide system-wide direction for the design, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of the curriculum.

A clearly defined curriculum management system is critical to the sound design, delivery, and evaluation of a school district's educational program. Such a system is directed by board policy, communicated in management documents, and based on a process that delineates roles and responsibilities at district and building levels. When the procedures and timelines of such a process are adhered to, school district personnel are able to be proactive in meeting local, state, and national challenges in providing a quality educational program for all students.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District did not have a curriculum management plan in place at the time of the audit. There was no board policy that required such a plan (see [Finding 1.1](#)). Therefore, auditors reviewed board policies, administrative regulations, the *Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Long Range Plan*, and the *Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Professional Development Plan Certified Personnel* for attributes of a curriculum management plan (see [Finding 2.1](#)). In combination the documents met 47 percent of the audit standards. The eight areas not meeting the outlined criteria in [Exhibit 2.1.2](#) were format and components of all curriculum, assessments, and instructional guide documents; backloaded or frontloaded approach to addressing state and national standards; focused set of precise student objectives; objective content in relation to multiple context and cognition types; differentiation of instructional approaches and selection of student objectives at the right level of difficulty; procedures for conducting formative and summative evaluations; procedures for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum; and a communication plan for design and delivery of the curriculum.

Further, the district curriculum guides were not adequate in scope as all core subject areas did not have curriculum guides at the time of the audit (see [Finding 2.2](#)). The quality of the existing curriculum guides did not meet minimum or deeply aligned criteria (see [Finding 2.3](#)). Comprehensive student and program assessment did not exist to provide formative and summative data that could provide alignment with the written-taught-tested curriculum (see [Finding 4.1](#)). The delivery and monitoring of the district's curriculum was inconsistently transmitted across the district (see [Findings 3.3](#) and [3.4](#)).

The personnel of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District needs to design and implement a comprehensive plan for curriculum management. It should be directed by school board policy and be used to direct the design and delivery of the curriculum, professional development, monitoring practices, and systematic assessment of student achievement.

The auditors provide the following recommendations to strengthen and manage the design and implementation of an aligned curriculum aimed at improved student achievement.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Board of Education of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District:

G.3.1: Review and revise *Board Policies 6000* and *6141* and create new policies to provide specific direction to coordinate and delineate the board's expectations regarding curriculum development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Establish a process to monitor the implementation of and compliance with the updated board policies.

G.3.2: Develop board policies to meet the audit criteria found in [Exhibit 2.1.2](#). In particular, address the missing or incomplete components in the current curriculum management plan outlined below:

- Presents the format and components of all curriculum, assessments, and instructional guide documents.
- 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.

- 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.
- Directs that curriculum documents not only specify the content of the student objectives/student expectations, but also include multiple contexts and cognitive types.
- Directs curriculum to be designed so that it supports teachers' differentiation of both their instructional approaches and their 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.
- Outlines procedures for conducting formative and summative evaluations of programs and their corresponding curriculum content.
- Presents procedures for monitoring the delivery of curriculum.
- Establishes a communication plan for the process of curriculum design and delivery.

G.3.3: Align board of education goals with district goals, the district long-range plan, and the curriculum management plan (see [Findings 1.2](#) and [2.1](#)).

G.3.4: Direct the superintendent to draft a policy for board approval and adoption that clearly expresses district expectations regarding classroom instructional practices (see [Recommendation 5](#)).

G.3.5: Direct the superintendent to establish expectations and processes for monitoring of curriculum implementation across the district and within each school and program (see [Recommendation 5](#)).

G.3.6: Direct the superintendent to annually review and report to the board the effectiveness of the implementation of the curriculum management plan.

G.3.7: Commit adequate resources to the curriculum management process including curriculum development, implementation, evaluation, and the revision cycle (see [Findings 2.1](#), [2.2](#), [2.3](#), and [5.2](#)).

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District:

A.3.1: Revise *Board Policies 6000 and 6141* and develop new board policies to coordinate with audit findings and provide direction for all future district planning documents. Submit to the board for approval and adoption. Monitor the implementation of these policies when approved.

A.3.2: Develop administrative regulations for new and revised policies as appropriate.

A.3.3: Develop a curriculum management plan (see [Finding 2.1](#)). Include missing or incomplete criteria contained in **G.3.2** as well as the essential components that follow:

- Coordinate the curriculum management plan with all other district plans, including but not limited to the district's long-range plan, district technology plan, and the professional development plan. Require school improvement plans to complement and coordinate with the curriculum management plan (see [Finding 2.1](#)).
- Update the current curriculum development process to align with the curriculum management plan.
- Design a K-12 scope and sequence for all student learning objectives across all grade levels and subject matter.
- Provide a process for integrating technology into the curriculum.
- Include in the current needs assessment that occurs at the beginning of each review cycle an assessment of the current status of the curriculum, relevant student achievement data, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of instructional materials in use.
- Provide a process within the curriculum management plan to update contents and policies as needed.

A.3.4: Develop job descriptions to reflect curriculum management responsibilities (see [Finding 1.4](#)).

A.3.5: Update the administrator evaluation instruments and include in the new teacher evaluation instruments curriculum management responsibilities.

A.3.6: Conduct professional development across all segments of district and building level personnel in the area of curriculum design. Differentiate the training as needed for personnel responsible for curriculum design and curriculum committee personnel. Mandate this training.

A.3.7: Conduct professional development for all district personnel, including both administrators and teachers, in newly developed curriculum guiding documents as they are developed. Communicate district expectations and the philosophy of what curriculum actually is; for instance, textbooks and resource materials support the district curriculum, but they are not the district curriculum. Mandate this training.

A.3.8: Communicate and monitor district nonnegotiable requirements, such as the use of the district curriculum and adopted materials. Communicate clearly to all district personnel what is loosely held by the district and what is tightly held.

A.3.9: Provide the necessary budgetary resources to accommodate the curriculum management process, including the periodic revision cycle.

The process of developing a curriculum management plan from initial design to full implementation generally takes about three years. This process should begin during the first year.

Recommendation 4: Develop and implement aligned curriculum guides that reflect knowledge and skills congruent with district intent, define and support desired instructional practices, and provide for instructional quality control.

A comprehensive written curriculum coordinated through all district, department, and site plans enables a district to achieve and maintain a quality, aligned curriculum. In an effective school system, the curriculum development process is directed by board policy and clearly communicates development and maintenance procedures. The curriculum management process culminates in providing teachers with quality guiding curricular documents for every course offered in a school district.

Effective teaching begins with teacher access to quality curriculum guides that direct planning and are aligned and coordinated across subject matter, grades, and schools. Quality guides identify objectives, align objectives with student assessments, include prerequisite skills, designate instructional resources, and delineate teaching strategies. Appropriate curriculum guides include a reasonable number of clear, precise goals and objectives that provide teachers with content and methods to address diverse learners and eliminate inequities in student learning opportunities (see [Findings 2.3](#) and [3.1](#)). When a quality curriculum is in place, learning is not left to chance but becomes an intentional, focused effort with clear direction for teachers and access to the same learning for all students across the district. A centrally designed written curriculum promotes district-wide cohesion by ensuring horizontal coordination and vertical articulation and improves the likelihood of all students having access to the intended learning. Effective implementation of the written curriculum requires thorough, ongoing professional development and consistent monitoring (see [Recommendation 5](#)).

At the time of the audit, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District curriculum guides and course descriptions were inadequate in scope (see [Finding 2.2](#)). Curriculum guides did not meet basic quality standards and were inadequate in quality to direct teaching (see [Finding 2.3](#)). Discrepancies were present when comparing curriculum guide objectives to assessments and instructional strategies in content and cognition. The redundancy analysis illustrated that even if objectives were covered as intended, student expectations might not be extended as intended across all grade levels. Core areas were not inclusive of all national standards. Lastly, objectives were inconsistent in addressing a variety of all cognitive types.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District personnel needs to develop quality curriculum guides for all core subject areas (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) that promote alignment and depth to the content, in a consistent document format for district-wide use. Further, Kenai Peninsula Borough School

District personnel need to establish curriculum documents for all non-core subject areas utilizing the same format with the goal of system-wide quality control.

The auditors provide the following recommendations for the design, implementation, and evaluation of an aligned written curriculum.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education:

G.4.1: Direct the superintendent to implement previously referenced board policies for curriculum management (see [Recommendation 3](#)) to ensure the development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and regular review and revision of the school district's written curriculum.

G.4.2: Direct the superintendent to implement board policies referenced in [Recommendation 5](#) for revision of the district-wide professional development plan to provide for the management and linkage of all professional development activities including individual staff member selections, campus activities, and district-wide initiatives.

G.4.3: Direct the superintendent to implement the board policies referenced in [Recommendation 5](#) for delineation of expectations for monitoring the district's curriculum.

G.4.4: Require the superintendent to develop a communication plan to report to the board of education on the progress of the curriculum revision and development process. Include a review of progress in relation to student achievement once the curriculum has been revised and thereafter.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Superintendent:

A.4.1: In accordance with [G.4.1](#), prepare a revision draft of *Board Policy 6141* and develop any additional policies necessary for curriculum guide development. Present to the board for review and adoption.

A.4.2: Revise administrative regulations to support board policies once adopted.

A.4.3: Build on existing district documents and procedures to formalize a model for the design of curriculum guides as follows:

Organizational preparation:

- Build upon curriculum guides and flowcharts in the core subject areas, expanding them to meet the audit criteria (see [Exhibit 2.3.1](#)). Gradually expand curriculum development to include all other courses taught within the district;
- Select a consistent, district-wide model format for curriculum documents and other resource materials that is functional and user friendly. Require that all curriculum guides adhere to this format;
- Review and/or revise a timeline for developing, evaluating, and revising curriculum documents for each subject and course offered;
- Review the current curriculum review process and revise as appropriate;
- Select a curriculum design team and provide extensive training in curriculum and assessment design to this small group of individuals; and
- Select a curriculum review team to analyze the curriculum documents as they are revised or drafted by the design team. In addition to teachers who teach the discipline under review, the review team should include a principal and teachers trained in the following areas: technology, special education, gifted education, and English language learners.

Curriculum design:

- Review the latest research and expert thinking in the discipline;
- Assess existing curriculum documents' strengths and weaknesses based on research and the audit criteria in Exhibit 2.3.1;
- Review existing goals and objectives and edit as needed for the discipline to ensure linkage to district goals and alignment to the Alaska Standards. In particular, address the deficiencies outlined in the frames of analysis in Finding 2.3. Require that all district goals and objectives be consistently named and written in a clear and well defined manner. Avoid multiple content requirements in one objective;
- Include the following components of a quality curriculum document:
 1. A clear statement of what skills/concepts should be learned, when and how they should be performed, and the amount of time or emphasis given to each objective;
 2. Linkages between each objective and district and state assessments;
 3. Specific delineation of prerequisite skills/concepts;
 4. Specific linkages to adopted texts and other instructional materials; and
 5. Specific examples of how to teach the key concepts and skills in a classroom using a variety of proven instructional strategies. Refer to the process outlined in Recommendation 5 and use the instructional strategies that have been developed.
- Include strategies for differentiating instruction, in particular to meet the needs of special education, gifted, and English language learners;
- Integrate instructional technology into the curriculum; and
- Obtain feedback from the curriculum review team and revise as necessary.

Curriculum implementation:

- Field test the curriculum as it is revised;
- Pilot the resource materials, assessments, and instructional strategies once they are developed (see Recommendation 5);
- Evaluate the curriculum's effectiveness in relation to student achievement;
- Revise field-tested curriculum documents based on feedback and student achievement data; and
- Remove all outdated or unaligned curriculum documents and resources from the district.
- Develop curriculum guides for every course offered in the school district using this process.

A.4.4: Develop a course catalog for every course offered in the school district. Determine what courses will be offered and the content for each using the curriculum design process described above. Require that all courses offered in the school district be consistent with the catalog name and the curriculum guide content.

A.4.5: Submit the newly created curriculum guides for adoption by the board of education.

A.4.6: Require the availability of written curriculum documents for all teachers teaching the designated subjects.

A.4.7: Establish and communicate clear expectations for administrators and teachers with regard to use of the written curriculum (see Recommendation 5).

A.4.8: Establish procedures to monitor curriculum implementation across schools, subject areas, and programs (see Recommendation 5).

A.4.9: Annually evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the written curriculum in increasing achievement for all students and all student subgroup populations, and use the data to inform curriculum revision actions in the review cycle.

A.4.10: Annually provide professional development and training in use of the written curriculum to support new teacher orientation to expectations and to ensure fidelity in implementation of the curriculum (see [Recommendation 5](#)).

A.4.11: Provide financial resources within the budget to accomplish the elements of curriculum design, implementation, and ongoing evaluation noted in this and other recommendations.

The timeline for implementing a program for developing and revising a written curriculum initially takes about three years. Following that initial period, the curriculum revision process is ongoing.

Recommendation 5: Revise the professional development plan to direct coordinated training in the essential competencies necessary for effective delivery of the written curriculum, including institutionalization of expectations for instructional best practices and for monitoring.

The primary purpose of professional development is to provide all staff members with the knowledge and skills to deliver the curriculum effectively, thereby improving student achievement. Professional development is a key factor in ensuring the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. A coordinated professional development program provides for the implementation of the district's curriculum, integration of the teaching strategies to appropriately deliver the curriculum, and evaluation of the professional development approaches and content to determine if student achievement has improved based on those practices. Successful professional development is closely monitored and coordinated at the district level. Quality and consistency of all training activities ensures that district goals and objectives are supported across all levels of the organization.

Quality school districts have a process to communicate and institutionalize the system's philosophy of instructing students. School district belief statements come alive with board policies and administrative regulations that set expectations for instruction in district classrooms and tie these practices to student achievement. District guiding principles must be transferred to all classrooms, making them dynamic, more than statements for display. Professional development links to these expectations by providing instructional personnel with the training necessary to effectively deliver the district's curriculum.

Monitoring, feedback, and continuous evaluation must take place to determine if instructional practices are meeting the needs of all student groups. Communicating expectations of curriculum delivery and providing professional development that supports the district curriculum implementation afford school district personnel the opportunity to adjust for learner differences, thus impacting student achievement results. The absence of any of these procedures leaves curriculum delivery to individual teacher interpretations of district goals.

At the time of the audit, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District had a comprehensive professional development plan in place. In combination with other district documents, it was adequate in guiding the professional development program of the district (see [Finding 3.2](#)). The expectations outlined in the professional development plan had not been fully implemented, however. Inconsistency in training content and strategies, lack of connectivity between building and district professional development, and absent ties between professional development and student achievement and teacher behavior existed.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District had policies in place that spoke to the development, adoption, and evaluation of the curriculum. There was an expectation that teachers were to align their teaching to the district curriculum. Board policies also included references to providing stimulating and integrated learning opportunities for students. Teaching strategies were not included in the majority of district curriculum guides, however (see [Finding 2.3](#)). The district's long-range plan called for a list of best practices to be created. At the time of the audit, this had not occurred. Interview information with administrators and principals indicated that Marzano's strategies were the preferred instructional methods. District leadership had received training in those strategies. However, if snapshot data were representative of the daily instructional strategies used by district teachers, few Marzano strategies were in use (see [Finding 3.3](#)). Monitoring expectations in board policy related to the utilization of formal evaluation programs for employees. Board policy included a general statement

that the superintendent was to oversee that staff members accomplished district goals. Specific procedures to monitor the use of professional development training in the classroom and curriculum delivery were not present in any district document presented to auditors (see [Finding 3.4](#)). Interview information indicated that principals most often referred to evaluation instruments when discussing monitoring procedures. The current teacher evaluation system was under revision at the time of the audit, and training was being conducted with district leadership in the new process.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education:

G.5.1: Direct the superintendent to develop and/or revise existing board policies, in particular, *Board Policies 0210, 2120, 6000, and 6141*, to meet professional development program audit criteria, define the district instructional practices, and set expectations for monitoring curriculum delivery. Align all board policies with the 18 CMIM Staff Development Criteria found in [Finding 3.2](#) as well as the following characteristics:

- Clarify individual, building, and organizational professional development responsibilities and accountability procedures at all levels of the school system (board of education, superintendent, district administrators, building administrators, building professional development liaisons, teachers, and support staff members). Define roles and responsibilities to coordinate professional development efforts to prevent duplication and inconsistency.
- Require that professional development trainings be evaluated in terms of improved student achievement and demonstrated teacher competence in the classrooms.
- Formalize the connection between the district's written curriculum and instructional practices and professional development activities.

G.5.2: Direct the superintendent to oversee the revision of the district's professional development plan in congruence with the 18 audit criteria (see [Exhibit 3.2.1](#)) and coordinate it with all district and school plans.

G.5.3: Direct the superintendent to provide focused and mandated professional development for the development and implementation of the revised district curriculum documents (see [Recommendation 4](#)), the development and support of district instructional strategies, and the monitoring of classroom practices.

G.5.4: Direct the superintendent to revise *Board Policy 0210* and develop new policies for consideration and subsequent adoption by the board in regard to instructional strategies. In particular, accomplish the following:

- Describe the district's philosophical approach to instructional practices.
- Prescribe the nature and characteristics of instruction sought in the district's classrooms. Clearly define all instructional strategies to provide for consistent implementation across the district. Include specific expectations as noted in [Finding 2.3](#) for strategy quality.
- Require mandated professional development for all employee groups in the district instructional strategies once they are developed. Resist using train the trainer methods for disseminating this content.
- It is vital that the district expectations be clearly defined and presented to all employees responsible for delivery of the district's curriculum.
- Direct and require that curriculum be delivered as designed to provide for consistency throughout grade levels, schools, and across the district.
- Determine responsibilities for monitoring in regard to the delivery of the curriculum. Identify specific roles and responsibilities and revise as needed over time.

G.5.5: Commit adequate resources to support instructional strategy acquisition and monitoring training for all administrators to provide feedback to teachers for the continued improvement of instructional practices.

G.5.6: Require a report to the board on a yearly basis of the professional development progress, the improvement of instruction in relation to student achievement, and monitoring practices in relation to professional development use and curriculum delivery.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Superintendent:

A.5.1: Recommend to the board policies that reflect a comprehensive professional development, instructional, and monitoring program for all employees to support the design and delivery of the district curriculum. In particular, revise *Board Policies 0210, 2120, 6000, and 6141*. Monitor the implementation of the newly developed and refined board policies when approved.

A.5.2: Write or revise administrative regulations to be congruent with revised and/or new board policies.

A.5.3: Revise the district's professional development plan to meet the audit criteria. The plan should include all of the criteria of a sound professional development plan found below and particularly address the deficiencies outlined in [Finding 3.2](#):

- Has policy that directs staff development efforts.
- Has a plan that provides a framework for integrating innovations related to mission.
- Has a staff development mission in place.
- Is built using a long-range planning approach.
- Fosters a norm of continuous improvement and a learning community.
- Provides for organizational, unit, and individual development in a systemic manner.
- Is for all employees.
- Expects each supervisor to be a staff developer of those supervised.
- Focuses on organizational change—staff development efforts are aligned with district goals.
- Is based on a careful analysis of data and is data-driven.
- Focuses on proven research-based approaches that have been shown to increase productivity.
- Provides for three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.
- Is based on human learning and development and adult learning.
- Uses a variety of staff development approaches.
- Provides follow-up and requires on-the-job application necessary to ensure improvement.
- Requires an evaluation process that includes multiple sources of information, focuses on all levels of the organization, and is based on actual changed behavior.
- Provides for system-wide coordination and has a clearinghouse function in place.
- Provides necessary funding to carry out staff development goals.

A.5.4: Determine mandatory professional development for all employee groups and hold every employee accountable for attendance and implementation of the practices supported by the professional development program.

A.5.5: Design professional development to implement the written curriculum content, integration of district instructional strategies, and monitoring of curriculum delivery. Implement fully the differentiated training as noted in the current professional development plan and provide opportunities for practice and feedback.

A.5.6: Require principals and supervisors to be staff developers of those employees they supervise including, but not limited to, observing, coaching, providing feedback, and allotting a professional development budget.

A.5.7: Implement the methodology as outlined in the current and/or updated professional development plan to be utilized in conducting professional development trainings. In particular:

- Determine the required training content and organize the training process for every employee group in the school district. Account for new teachers and administrators, trainer and teacher mobility, and late or mid-year hires. Mandate attendance for curriculum content and delivery trainings.
- Use training strategies that model competencies and methodologies that teachers are to utilize with students including follow-up application of learned skills or strategies.
- Supervise the trainers' presentation of content and methodology. Require comprehensive training evaluation data from participants and trainers.
- Revise training content and strategies as the written curriculum is updated.
- Utilize the Avatar system to its full capabilities, including pre- and post-tests for participants to encourage differentiation in trainings. Ensure that all building level training is reported through this system. Include support staff professional development documentation in the system.

A.5.8: Include a process to update the professional development plan and training components with the use of student achievement and classroom monitoring data.

A.5.9: Prescribe the nature and characteristics of instruction sought in the school district's classrooms. Require instructional strategies to meet the quality analysis review found in [Finding 2.3](#). In particular, reference the following:

- Describe the district's philosophical approach to instructional practices.
- Prescribe the nature and characteristics of instruction sought in the district's classrooms. Clearly define all instructional strategies to provide for consistent implementation across the district. Include a process to review and update instructional strategies on a periodic basis in relationship to written curriculum development and/or review.
- To develop these district instructional strategies, devise a committee comprised of an inclusive cross section of the district including administrators and teachers from a representation of all geographic locations; grade levels including elementary, middle, and high schools; subject matter; and departments such as special education, gifted, and ELL.
- Align all strategies to the district's written curriculum as it is developed and reviewed.
- Direct and require that curriculum be delivered as designed to provide for consistency throughout grade levels, schools, and across the district.
- Formalize the adopted best practice teaching strategies in all district plans, curriculum documents, job descriptions, and evaluation instruments. In particular, ensure that the new teacher evaluation system is linked to specific and defined expectations for instructional strategy use.

A.5.10: Develop the district philosophy of monitoring curriculum delivery. Appropriate monitoring is more than a checklist. Determine the necessary components as well as the role of the building principal as the instructional leader.

A.5.11: Determine the specific responsibilities for monitoring in regard to professional development and the delivery of the curriculum. Identify roles and responsibilities and revise as needed over time. Determine procedures that will be utilized as monitoring strategies for building administrators. Train and spend appropriate time in feedback, observations, and practice. Design continued training for new administrators as they join the district.

A.5.12: Design professional development for administrators in monitoring the delivery of the written curriculum. Consider a comprehensive process that includes the following characteristics:

1. It is a research-based model that addresses the difference in the skill level of teachers through direct, dependent, and independent responses.
2. It utilizes frequent short classroom observations.
3. It is not dependent upon an activity checklist.
4. It provides for reflective thought and dialogue.

A.5.13: Mandate district-wide training for all supervisory personnel in curriculum and district monitoring techniques and procedures. Hold all personnel accountable for the implementation and maintenance of a consistent, systematic monitoring program for professional development and instructional strategy implementation.

A.5.14: Utilize organized administrator and principal meetings to refine monitoring skills and practices.

A.5.15: Develop a comprehensive communication plan to assist staff in understanding the necessity of coordinated curriculum implementation, delivery, and monitoring.

A.5.16: Update district plans, curriculum documents, job descriptions, and appraisal instruments to define and require professional development, instructional, and monitoring expectations for the delivery of the district's curriculum.

A.5.17: Report to the board of education on at least a yearly basis the progress of the professional development program, instructional strategies, and monitoring procedures, and the impact on student achievement.

During the first six months following the release of the report, a committee needs to complete a professional development needs assessment using the assessment data. Using the assessment data, a professional growth plan for the district can be prepared.

Recommendation 6: Design, implement, and support instructional delivery system to provide equitable programs, services, and opportunities to achieve academic success for all students.

A well-managed school system provides all students equitable access to the programs, services, and opportunities provided by the district. Fairness to all students is not apparent in areas such as access to challenging course offerings, placement in special programs, access to technology, and consistency in disciplinary actions. School districts that serve heterogeneous communities have students that require differentiated resources if all learners are to be given an equal opportunity to experience success in the educational program.

The auditors found that Kenai Peninsula Borough School District's board policies and planning documents do not provide goals and strategies for addressing inequalities and inequities (see [Findings 1.1](#), [1.2](#), and [3.1](#)). A challenge for the district will be to develop the policies and plans necessary to address equal access to comparable programs, services, and opportunities for student success. Despite the intention to meet the needs of all students, the district includes instances of inequalities and inequities. Inequalities exist on the basis of ethnicity in the participation of students in special education and the talented and gifted programs (see [Finding 3.1](#)). In addition, inequalities are also related to the inability to deliver an Advanced Placement program throughout the district. This is not just a problem for students in the outlying communities and the small schools; it also exists for students in the Central Peninsula area. In addition, inequalities exist in opportunities for high school students to participate in vocational programs. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is aware of the issues that the small schools face related to delivering a quality program. Efforts have been made to ameliorate this issue with additional staffing and additional allocation of resources, especially in the area of technology. However, assessment data are generally not considered in staffing allocations or in the budget process.

In order to not perpetuate, but overcome, the relative disadvantages that some students bring to the educational system, the following recommendations are presented to the board and superintendent.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District's Board of Education:

G.6.1: Involve stakeholders in developing definitions of equal access and equity. Establish and communicate through board policy a commitment to provide equal access to programs and services.

G.6.2: Adopt a policy that makes a commitment to end the achievement gap based on ethnicity.

G.6.3: Adopt a policy that makes a commitment to reduce the high school failure/dropout rate. Direct the superintendent to continue to work with principals and other administrators on strategies to help students experience success in the district's educational program.

G.6.4: Require congruity of board policy intent with administrative 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.6.5: Direct the superintendent to review curriculum areas, programs, and interventions to determine equality of access and equitable distribution of resources using achievement data, program participation numbers, and cost/benefit analyses.

G.6.6: Direct the superintendent to revise the recruiting plan to attract minority and male teachers to the district and to retain them.

G.6.7: Direct the superintendent to explore options to assure participation in Advanced Placement courses throughout the school district.

G.6.8: Direct the superintendent to provide frequent and annual updates regarding efforts and progress in eliminating inequalities and inequities within the district.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District's Superintendent:

A.6.1: Work with the board, district staff, local businesses, community agencies, and foundations to develop a proposal for a major initiative that will increase student enrollment and provide an incentive for students to graduate.

A.6.2: Assist the board in obtaining stakeholders' commitment to equal access and the equitable allocation of resources. Take steps to ensure that all students can succeed regardless of ethnicity or mobility. Establish linkage to the budget process.

A.6.3: Prepare drafts of the suggested policies for board review, critique, and approval.

A.6.4: Ensure that all reports, budgets, planning documents, assessments, programs, and interventions ascertain the equitable treatment of all students at all school sites and alignment with district direction.

- Require regular analysis of disaggregated data pertaining to all district practices (e.g., program enrollment, course offerings, and disciplinary actions) to determine disparities and inequities. Use these analyses for equitable and rational program and instructional decision making.
- Continue to review discipline procedures throughout the district. Determine the cause for the increase in discipline referrals at the middle school level.
- Continue to focus on the graduation rate and the retention of students. Determine causes related to the decline of students from ninth grade to twelfth grade. Is this the result of competing programs that the district offers, such as Connections?
- Provide annual reports to the board that report progress on the demonstrated equitable treatment of all students.

A.6.5: Continue to explore the recommendations of the graduation/dropout rate action committee described in the NCLB District Improvement Plan for the 2007-08 school year. Continue to develop strategies to increase secondary student attendance and reduce the high school failure/dropout rate. Include the following:

- Staff training in cultural diversity, differentiated instruction, and student engagement.
- Ongoing administrator support and monitoring to ensure that skills presented during training are applied in the classroom.

- Development of common definitions of differentiated instruction, student engagement, and accountability for implementation.
- Evaluation of suspension procedures. Analyze data on disciplinary actions by school to determine consistency in suspension practices.
- Accountability for student success by administrators and teachers.
- Availability of relevant programs (e.g., high school vocational programs) for students in the district.

A.6.6: Monitor placement in special programs for disparities in participation among subgroups.

A.6.7: Monitor accessibility of Advanced Placement classes for all students. Find alternative methods to provide these classes for all students in the school district. Online courses, videoconference classrooms, and itinerant Advanced Placement teachers and other options need to be explored and delivered to students.

A.6.8: Supervise and monitor the implementation of the intended curriculum and of expected instructional strategies so that all students have access to comparable instructional and curricular experiences.

A.6.9: Expect that all administrators will support and monitor the required walk-through protocol.

A.6.10: Address the inequities that have resulted from the federal stimulus allocations and the purchase of technology in the various buildings. Students should not be shortchanged because they have principals and teachers that are not interested in or lack the knowledge of how technology can impact instruction and therefore did not apply for these funds. If the school district has a goal to provide their students with 21st century work skills, then all students should benefit from this goal. Develop a plan for the implementation of these technologies and programs.

A.6.11: Address the issue of inadequate bandwidth in outlying communities and schools.

Recommendation 7: Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for student assessment and program evaluation that will provide meaningful data for decision making supporting improved student achievement. Require systematic evaluation of programs and interventions, including by classroom, school, and system, linked with evidence of student learning to provide feedback for decisions regarding their continuation, expansion, modification, or termination.

Develop and implement a comprehensive plan that addresses student assessment and program evaluation and provides school system leaders with quality information to make rational and intentional decisions about the design of curriculum, the delivery of instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the effectiveness and efficiency of all district functions. Such a plan communicates to the public the methods of measurement and accountability used by the district's leadership.

In KPBSD, the auditors found board policies and administrative regulations to be inadequate to direct student assessment and program evaluation design and use district-wide (see [Finding 1.1](#)). The district has no comprehensive, systematic planning for evaluation and data use (see [Finding 1.2](#)). The district's job descriptions, as found in policy for the superintendent and in Notices of Vacancy for all others, lacked an explicit discussion of roles and responsibilities for implementation of student assessment and program evaluation processes and did not discuss decision making throughout the system based on data (see [Finding 1.4](#)). The district lacks a curriculum management plan to which assessment should be linked (see [Finding 2.1](#)). Auditors' review of the quality of curriculum documents indicated that linkages with assessment were weak or missing entirely (see [Finding 2.3](#)).

Despite efforts by the KPBSD board and staff, inequities persist in access to programs, services, and other learning opportunities for students (see [Finding 3.1](#)). Professional development efforts related to assessment data collection, analysis, and use have been insufficient to ensure staff expertise and consistent, sustainable use (see [Finding 3.3](#)). Without a comprehensive plan for student assessment and program evaluation (see [Finding 4.1](#)), the district lacks critical linkages with the curriculum (see [Findings 2.1](#) and [2.2](#)) and, therefore, direction for producing desired learning outcomes. The scope of student assessment is inadequate to evaluate the taught curriculum and provide sufficient data for making sound curricular decisions (see [Finding 4.2](#)). Trend data show

district assessment scores have remained above state and national averages, but analysis of achievement gaps among students in subgroups with their peers persist (see [Finding 4.3](#)). KPBSD is a data-rich school district, but data are inconsistently used to inform decision making at all levels of the system (see [Finding 4.4](#)). Programs and interventions abound in KPBSD, but they lack coordination (see [Finding 5.2](#)), and programs are not evaluated consistently to inform decisions about their continuation, expansion, modification, or termination (see [Finding 4.4](#)). The leadership of KPBSD needs to consider as a priority the design and implementation of a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan or planning process. Having an assessment process in place can serve as a means to acquire, organize, and analyze the information needed to guide instructional planning; inform teachers about student learning; assess program effectiveness; and make critical decisions regarding the educational program, district practices, and resource allocations. This is particularly important prior to moving ahead with the adoption of new or revised curriculum documents, as well as decisions regarding the continuation, expansion, modification, or termination of programs.

Auditors recommend the development or expansion of appropriate policies within six months. A comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan should be developed in the next nine months. Full development and implementation of all recommendations in this area should be completed within the next two to three years.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the members of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District School Board:

G.7.1: Direct the superintendent to present to the board for review and adoption of a policy that provides a framework for a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan and includes, at a minimum, the following:

- A description of the philosophical underpinnings for the design of the student assessment and program evaluation plan;
- Direction to the superintendent to prepare and maintain such a plan;
- An expectation that district assessments be aligned with the district's curriculum;
- An expectation that a variety of assessments be used to determine the effectiveness of the written and taught curriculum;
- An expectation that formative and summative data be used to analyze group, school, program, and system student trends; and
- An expectation that assessment and program evaluation data will be reported to the board on a regular basis.

G.7.2: Direct the superintendent to prepare for board review and adoption a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan as described in policy under action [G.7.1](#).

G.7.3: Commit adequate resources to support the implementation of comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation planning and interventions.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District:

A.7.1: Assist the school board in developing a policy that provides direction for the development and implementation of a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan as described in governance action [G.7.1](#).

A.7.2: Develop a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan containing the following elements:

- The philosophical framework for the design of the student assessment plan;

- Explicit direction for both formative and summative assessment of the curriculum by course and grade in congruence with board policy. Provision for formative and summative program evaluation at all levels of the system;
- Provision for frequent diagnostic (formative) instructional assessments aligned to district curriculum, which teachers use to make ongoing decisions including differentiation of instruction;
- Provision of a list of assessment tools, purposes, subjects, type of student tested, timeline, and related information;
- Identification of and direction on use of diverse assessment strategies for multiple purposes at all levels—district, school, and classroom;
- Specification of roles and responsibilities of central office and school-based staff for assessing functions and operations of the system;
- Specification of the connection(s) between district, state, and national assessments;
- Specification of the overall assessment and analysis procedures used to determine curriculum effectiveness;
- Requirement that aligned student assessment examples and tools be placed in curriculum and assessment documents;
- Specification of how equity issues will be identified and addressed using data sources, as well as controls for possible bias;
- Identification of the factors, processes, and structures of program assessment and how data will be used in determination of continuation, expansion, modification, or termination of a given program;
- Provision for appropriate trainings for various audiences on assessment and the instructional use of assessment results;
- Delineation of responsibilities and procedures for monitoring formative and summative student assessment and program evaluation;
- Establishment of a process for communicating and training staff in assessment procedures, interpretation and use of assessment data, and trends in student assessment; and
- Provision of a means to use data in program-based cost-benefit analyses.

A.7.3: Assign responsibility for the development and implementation of formalized procedures for systematic student assessment and program evaluation aligned with the curriculum management plan.

A.7.4: Expand training in formative and summative data access, analysis, and use in facilitating teaching and learning. Extend this training to all instructional staff and administrators and provide systems to connect this training to district-wide efforts to increase student achievement.

A.7.5: Expect all program evaluations to provide a cost-benefit analysis and recommendations for continuation, expansion, modification, or termination.

A.7.6: Establish clear expectations for administrators and teachers in board policies, job descriptions, and personnel appraisal systems on the use of assessment data for diagnosing student needs, evaluating student progress, determining curriculum and program effectiveness, and making decisions in all district operations.

A.7.7: Further efforts to implement technology to facilitate ease of data collection and use; provide training in its use to ensure its effective implementation system-wide.

These recommendations, if implemented, should give the district a means of ensuring consistent, appropriate use of data to assess student progress and evaluate programs, analyze results, and ensure that such results are used to make sound decisions about curriculum, instruction, and programs. Additionally, assessment and evaluation

data will be available for use in informing students, parents, and other stakeholders of the effectiveness of district staff in educating their students.

Recommendation 8: Develop and implement a plan that aligns district and building level resources with curricular goals and strategic priorities. Include systematic cost-benefit analyses to assure that expenditures are producing desired results.

Linkage between the budget and the district’s curricular goals and strategic priorities is vital. When expenditures are fully aligned to the educational priorities of the district, the ability to effectively deliver the district’s curriculum is greatly enhanced. Such alignment provides a system that promotes the efficient attainment of desired results. A comprehensive, curriculum-based, systemic budget development process helps ensure that the budget represents the district’s priorities for student learning. Additionally, a thorough evaluation system based on intended results allows for an annual opportunity to reallocate funds as needed to enhance the attainment of curricular goals and strategic priorities.

The auditors found that the Kenai Peninsula Borough School district has seen large increases in revenues, expenditures, and the general fund balance since 2004. Through the current budget development and management processes, the district has been able to maintain fiduciary control. However, the auditors found no evidence of district efforts to link student achievement or program performance feedback to budgetary decisions. For the most part, budgetary decisions are based on formula funding and staffing (see Sub-Finding 5.1). Over the past six years, district expenditures have continually increased while student academic achievement has remained virtually static (see Finding 5.1). Additionally, student enrollment is declining throughout the district and at individual sites (see Sub-Finding 5.1). Since school funding is based on student enrollment, as student enrollment drops, future state, local, and federal funds will also decline. The continual drop in student enrollment has also created issues related to building capacity (see Finding 5.3). Almost one-third of the buildings are currently operating at or below 50 percent of their documented capacity. While the district has board policies in place that address facility closings and consolidation due to changing enrollment patterns, no action plans related to closing or reconfiguring campuses were provided to the auditors.

The audit team found that the selection, implementation, and evaluation of interventions/programs were similar to the budget development processes. A loosely coupled system prevails in the absence of specific policies and regulations (see Finding 5.3). There are no processes in place to ensure that interventions are aligned to the district’s curriculum, goals, or objectives. Furthermore, no evidence was provided to demonstrate that an intervention program was eliminated because it did not accomplish the program’s intended results. The auditors recommend several steps to bring the budget development process in line with expectations for a curriculum-driven, program-focused budget that can improve linkage to the district plans, goals, and priorities. They also provide recommended actions related to long-range facility planning and program/intervention selection, implementation, and evaluation.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education:

G.8.1: Hold the superintendent accountable to ensure that *Board Policy 3000*, to “guide the expenditure of funds so as to derive the greatest possible educational returns,” and *Board Policy 0520* that requires the district to analyze and revise the “school’s budget so that the school allocates its resources more effectively to the activities most likely to increase student academic achievement” are the foundation for all decisions regarding the budget processes.

G.8.2: Direct the superintendent to present draft policies for board review, modification as needed, and adoption that:

- Require ongoing needs assessments of curriculum and supplemental programs based on goals and on results as indicated by student performance and other feedback data;
- Require a systematic process that links budget proposals to the district’s curriculum, support programs, and planned interventions;

- Require a system of fee-for-services in instances of district support being provided to charter schools; and
- Require a system that provides reimbursement to neighborhood campuses for serving charter and home school students on campus. The reimbursement should be static, based on the amount of time the student is served at the campus, and not based on the program the student is attending.

G.8.3: Require the superintendent to direct the preparation of a long-range financial plan that incorporates all revenue sources for supporting district operational needs over the next five years.

G.8.4: Require the superintendent to develop a cost/benefit criterion and an action plan to close and/or consolidate any campuses that are no longer financially viable, due to declining and shifting enrollment patterns.

G.8.5: Require the superintendent to develop cost-benefit analysis related to any charter school applications.

The analysis should include financial costs as well as educational opportunity costs for students attending neighborhood campuses.

G.8.6: Require the superintendent to establish guidelines that ensure alignment between the budget and the district's curricular goals and strategic priorities.

G.8.7: Require reports that communicate how effectively the budget is meeting the district's curricular goals and strategic priorities, based on predetermined evaluation data.

G.8.8: Through policy, require the superintendent to establish a plan that will lead to the successful implementation of curriculum-based budgeting.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Kenai Peninsula School Superintendent:

A.8.1: Design or revise board policies as noted in **G.8.1** and **G.8.2** for board approval and adoption.

A.8.2: Revise the budget development process (see **G.8.6**) to ensure that the budget development processes are focused on curricular goals and strategic priorities. Clear connections must be maintained between students' performance data and the written, taught, and tested curriculum. The following steps will increase the linkage between the district's curricular goals and strategic priorities:

- Require district and campus level administrators to develop budgets that show a tight linkage to the district's established curricular goals and strategic priorities.
- Establish program performance expectations that can be analyzed by predetermined, data-driven evaluations.
- Establish regularly scheduled meetings between district level and campus level budget managers to provide ongoing communication regarding budget information, achievement data, and program evaluations.
- Use a planned approach in the transition to a curriculum-driven budget by setting reasonable and sequential timelines to address the change.
- Require budget request forms that include an explanation of how the expenditure will achieve the goals, objectives, and priorities of the district in measurable terms.
- Link all budget requests to performance data and curricular program evaluations.
- Report monthly reviews of expenditures and quarterly evaluations of progress on goals and objectives to the building administrators, staff, and board for program modifications as warranted.

A.8.3: Provide training and consultation to all budget managers during the transition toward a curriculum-driven budgeting process. Special and extended training is advisable since curriculum-driven budgeting requires that both financial and programmatic effectiveness be monitored simultaneously.

A.8.4: Develop an action plan (see **G.8.4**) to close or consolidate schools that are not financially viable, where geographically feasible.

A.8.5: Develop a policy that requires that all program/interventions be district-wide initiatives. These programs should be closely aligned with the district's written, taught, and tested curriculum. Formative and summative evaluation criteria should be determined before the implementation of any program/intervention. A plan to terminate a program/intervention should be based on a predetermined, data-driven evaluation system that was developed before the program was implemented.

A.8.6: Develop a policy that correlates staffing patterns to the district's curricular goals and strategic priorities.

Staffing patterns should be data-driven. District productivity associated with the staffing protocol should be determined through a cost-benefit analysis.

V. SUMMARY

A Curriculum Management Audit 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 audit standards. Recommendations are then provided accordingly to help the district improve its quality in the areas of noted deficiency.

The auditors subjected the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District to a comparison of predetermined standards and indicators of quality, and discrepancies were noted. These constitute the findings of the audit. The auditors then provided recommendations to help the district ameliorate the discrepancies noted in the report. The recommendations represent the auditors’ “best judgment” about how to meet the discrepancies disclosed in the report. It is expected that the superintendent and his staff and the board may demur with the recommendations. However, they form the starting point for a discussion of how to deal with the documented findings.

Normal audit practice is the board of education receives an audit; they do not accept it. After review of the audit report, the board requests the response of its superintendent of schools. When the superintendent’s response is received, then the board is in a position to act upon these two sets of recommendations. In this manner, the superintendent and the board are always accountable for what occurs in the school system after an audit report.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is unique in that it is dependent upon other agencies to approve its budget. With some notable exceptions, many U.S. systems can independently exercise their taxing authority to provide a stable revenue stream upon which to construct organizational constancy via a strategic or long-range plan. This situation is simply not present in Kenai Peninsula Borough. The system’s fiscal dependency, and the ever present possibility of fiscal veto or budgetary rescission, has created an atmosphere of uncertainty among some of its leadership team. To remedy this situation there is a need for a visible and functional plan that unifies district operations, one which will connect various organizational units and services into a cohesive whole. At the present time, this type of planning is lacking.

Many campuses within the school district are “silos of excellence” and are isolated from other schools as well as district services. Kenai Peninsula Borough educational leaders, as well as members of the Kenai Peninsula Borough Board of Education, expressed a desire to bring greater clarity and connectivity to their schools; however, the evidence present in this report indicates that this is not happening. Central office staff members rarely spend meaningful amounts of time in some of the remote sites. For this reason, the auditors have recommended the creation and implementation of a six-year plan that is commensurate with the city and state planning cycles and will support the increased monitoring of the district’s support services, particularly in remote areas of the district. Increasing the level of services to the remote school sites will begin to help remediate the current inequities within the system and support the improvement of student achievement across the school district. Tighter linkages are required within the crucial functions of the school system involved with curriculum development, assessment, program evaluation, staff development, technology, and budget development. The glue that will integrate, coordinate, and connect these functions together is: 1) a revised and more functional set of board policies with new requirements for a different set of system and individual responses and 2) a six-year educational plan that becomes the basis for defining, integrating, measuring, and improving internal focus, cohesion, and productivity