



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Audit Findings and Recommendations regarding the

### Fayette County Public Schools

### English Language Learner and Gifted and Talented Programs

#### FINDINGS

##### STANDARD ONE

**Finding 1:** District planning must be strengthened to direct district decision making and the management of curriculum and programs. The auditors found no written plans relevant to leading and supporting the delivery of the Gifted and Talented and English Language Learner programs.

**Finding 2:** The Fayette County Public Schools organizational structure needs greater cohesion of curriculum management functions to provide sound organizational management for Gifted and Talented and English Language Learner programs. Staffing formulas have not kept pace with growth in the ELL program and superintendent turnover has severely impacted continuity toward district-wide improvement.

##### STANDARD TWO

Under Standard Two, auditors examine the scope, quality, and alignment of the ELL and GT curriculum within the school system. An educational system meeting Standard Two demonstrates clearly established learner expectations and definitions of instructional content for effective teaching and learning.

**Finding 2.1:** The auditors found there needs to be a curriculum management plan to direct curriculum design and delivery for Gifted and Talented (GT) and English Language Learner (ELL) programs.

**Finding 2.2:** The scope of the written curriculum must be expanded to support Gifted and Talented (GT) and English Language Learner (ELL) program delivery.

**Finding 2.3:** The minimum basic components and specificity of the written curriculum documents must be developed to direct classroom instruction and support the differentiation critical to the success of English language learners and the learning of gifted and talented students.

##### STANDARD THREE

Under Standard Three, auditors review the design and delivery of the educational program to determine equity, connectivity, and overall alignment. A successful school system meeting Standard Three will demonstrate a highly-developed, articulated, and coordinated curriculum (programs and services) in the organization that is effectively monitored by the administrative and supervisory staffs at the central and site levels.

**Finding 3.1ELL:** English language learners (ELLs) need equal access to content and services in Fayette County Public Schools for equity to be realized. Allocation of ELL teachers must be increased and made more consistent and driven by student need to be adequate. As a result of the inequitable educational opportunities, ELL students are overrepresented in special education programs and underrepresented in Gifted and Talented programs.

**Finding 3.1GT:** Students served in the Gifted and Talented (GT) program do not represent the demographics of the Fayette County Public School district as a whole. Teacher allocation for the GT program must be more consistent, and former practices by schools have resulted in a myriad of service delivery models. As a result, GT students do not have equal access to GT services and the benefits of the GT program.

**Finding 3.2 ELL:** The design of programs and services for the English language learners (ELL) population must be clearly and specifically designed to direct delivery and access to services across all schools.

**Finding 3.2 GT:** The design of programs and services for GT are widely varied need greater definition to assist schools in delivering effective programs. Students have unequal access to services across the district.

**Finding 3.3 ELL:** Classroom instruction inadequately addresses specific language needs of ELLS and does not reflect district [and state] expectations. Language objectives not observed during classroom observations.

**Finding 3.3 GT:** Classroom instruction did not differentiate for GT students' needs and learning styles in the regular classroom. The auditors did not see system-wide evidence of enrichment, depth, and complexity in student activities.

**Finding 3.4 GT:** Monitoring of instruction for effective strategies and approaches for GT students is critical to assuring improved student learning opportunities. Professional development for teachers regarding GT strategies has been offered but not required.

**Finding 3.4 ELL:** Monitoring of effective English language learner instructional practices is inconsistent and delivery of services rests inordinately with the ELL teacher(s) in the building. Professional development for quality instructional approaches is in the evolving phase, but still partially inadequate.

## **STANDARD FOUR**

Under Standard Four, the auditors examine the overall scope and quality of the assessment system in providing data (feedback) for use in decision making at all levels of the system: classroom, building, and district. A school system meeting Standard Four 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.

**Finding 4.1:** The scope of the student assessment program must be expanded to effectively monitor Gifted and Talented and English Language Learner student achievement, and to provide sufficient data for making sound curricular decisions.

**Finding 4.2 GT:** Assessment trends show consistent high academic performance for Fayette County Public School Gifted and Talented students; however, downward trends were noted. Performance disparities exist with Gifted and Talented students in Title I (high poverty) schools.

**Finding 4.2 ELL:** Assessment trends show a significant achievement gap between English Language Learner (ELL) students and their non-ELL peers, and this gap not narrowed on any former measures of assessment.

**Finding 4.3:** Program direction and evaluation for the district in general and the ELL program specifically have not been formally implemented, monitored, or evaluated for long-term effectiveness system-wide.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:** Develop and implement coordinated planning processes that will result in Gifted and Talented (GT) program and English Language Learner (ELL) program plans congruent with the anticipated District Strategic Plan and that support greater equity in access to services and improved effectiveness in classroom instruction.

**Recommendation 2:** Develop and implement a comprehensive curriculum district-wide that supports classroom differentiation of content, the development of language skills, and the implementation of student-centered and cognitively engaging activities to better serve the needs of ELLs and GT students.

**Recommendation 3:** Specifically define the vision for Gifted and Talented instruction and corresponding program models for delivering Gifted and Talented (GT) services in Fayette County Public Schools. Improve the delivery of services to GT students across the district and assure equity of access to those services.

1. Define service delivery models considered effective
2. Establish a system to monitor student identification and inclusion practices and improve identification at schools with high percentages of students eligible for F/R price lunch and with English language learner populations.
3. Expand and revise identification processes to improve equity of access to GT services and to ensure all students with GT potential are identified and supported.
4. Improve student-teacher ratios and clarify roles and responsibilities of those serving GT students' needs
5. Train all teachers in effective differentiation of curriculum and instruction and on increasing rigor and problem solving in the classroom.
6. Develop GT curriculum for Talent Pool experiences, extra-curricular projects, and co-curricular activities.
7. Integrate GT differentiation suggestions into the regular curriculum, for both acceleration and enrichment.

**Recommendation 4:** Improve and expand delivery of English Language Learner (ELL) services. Establish a clear direction that targets the English language development and proficiency in English for ELLs to be successful across all content areas and that ensures equity for all students. Revise and define the service delivery options recommend to implement the most effective ELL program.

1. Define service delivery options considered effective.
2. Establish a newcomer center and coordinate with community-based services in meeting the needs of newcomers.
3. Establish expectations for effective communication with ELL families and monitor adherence to those expectations by every school.
4. Improve student/teacher ratios (1:20-25, depending on student characteristics)
5. Train ALL teachers in SIOP strategies.
6. Incorporate expectations and suggestions for differentiation in district curriculum to support SIOP strategies, English language development, and culturally-relevant instruction.
7. Coordinate ELL services with existing world-language programs, where possible.

**Recommendation 5:** Establish a student and program assessment system, in conjunction with a data warehouse, to monitor ELL and GT student achievement and progress and to assure equity. Incorporate multiple tools to measure student progress in their learning so teachers and program leaders have adequate information to guide program-level decision making.