



Pam Stewart, Commissioner

## 2013-2014 DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT AND ASSISTANCE PLAN

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### 20 - Gadsden

Mr. Reginald C James, Superintendent  
Sam Foerster, Region 1 Executive Director

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## District Improvement Planning

### District Leadership Team

Provide the following contact information for each member of the district leadership team, including the position dedicated to leading the turnaround effort at the district level.:

#### Reginald C. James

**Title** Superintendent of Schools

**Email** jamesr@gcpsmail.com

**Phone** 850.627.9651

**Function & Responsibility**

The District Superintendent is the chief administrator who performs all tasks necessary to make sound recommendations, nominations, proposals, and reports required by law to be acted upon by the District School Board.

#### Rosalyn W. Smith

**Title** Deputy Superintendent

**Email** smithr@gcpsmail.com

**Phone** 850.627.9651

**Function & Responsibility**

Assists the Superintendent by providing leadership to ensure the effective operation of the School District and to facilitate the best possible educational programs throughout the school system.

#### Dr. Sylvia Jackson

**Title** Director of PK-12

**Email** jacksons@gcpsmail.com

**Phone** 850.875.9651

**Function & Responsibility**

Provides leadership and oversight for Pre-K-12 curriculum and instructional programs in the District. Support and supervise school principals.

#### Dr. Pink Hightower

**Title** HR Director

**Email** hightowerp@gcpsmail.com

**Phone** 850-627-9651

**Function & Responsibility**

Responsible for personnel issues and professional development.

**Sharon Thomas****Title** ESE Director**Email** thomass@gcpsmail.com**Phone** 850-627-9651**Function & Responsibility** Supervises exceptional students' education and services provided by program specialists, school psychologists, and school counselors.**Allysum Davis****Title** Dropout Prevention Coordinator**Email** 850-627-9651**Phone** davis@gcpsmail.com**Function & Responsibility** Works with traditional and non-traditional school site leaders, parents, and the community to improve graduation rate.**Rose Raynak****Title** Federal Programs Director**Email** 850-627-9651**Phone** raynakr@gcpsmail.com**Function & Responsibility** Monitors the use of Federal Programs funds and program support staff.

## Plan Development

**Summarize the process used to write this plan including how parents, school staff, and others were involved. If applicable, describe the Community Assessment Team's (CAT) role in the development of this plan, pursuant to Section 1008.345(6)(d)**

The Gadsden County School District developed a comprehensive approach for partnerships between the schools, parents, and the communities. The comprehensive approach fosters positive attitudes about the school, parents and community members because it respects the varying capacities of the school population as a whole. Parents are encouraged to share information through surveys, workshops and parent meetings on ways to reach out, create and the strengthen partnerships and assist with the development of the District and Parent Improvement Plan.

The District organized and conducted Title I parent meetings at each of the thirteen community schools. Parents were encouraged to provide written input on school policies, budgets, facilities, school vision, curriculum, and extra curriculum. A District-wide parents' meeting was held at one of the middle schools to encourage collaboration between parents, resource agencies, the community, and schools. A Parent Resource Center is also provided at each school for both resource information and space for parents to consult with each other on developing plans to address their areas of concerns for their child's school. It is commonly acknowledged that one of the most important components of student achievement and success is parent involvement. Today's parents—and families—are bombarded with growing demands, but regardless of their background or circumstances, overwhelmingly parents want what is best for their children. Parents are vital partners in their child's education and life success. Gadsden County Parents Services encourages parental involvement through programs such as "Parents as Partners", "Parent of the Month Club", "Three for Me", parent booster clubs, ESOL parent programs, parental strategy sessions, and parent workshops.

Each department of the District's leadership is afforded an opportunity to contribute to the plan. Peer Reviews were organized to ascertain school site improvement needs, strengths, and suggestions for district-wide improvement strategies. Assessment data, both at the school site level and district-wide, are reviewed to determine the District's overall academic focus. A representative of the School Board is aligned to Curriculum and Instruction to ensure that the Board is aware of curricula issues and to offer advisement from the perspective of our District's Governing Board.

**MTSS/RtI****Describe your district's data-based problem-solving processes for the implementation and monitoring of your DIAP and MTSS structures to address effectiveness of core instruction, resource allocation (funding and staffing), teacher support systems, and small group and individual student needs**

The effectiveness of core intervention is assessed by analyzing student performance on measures such as the FAIR, as well as, through weekly classroom assessments. As a rule of thumb, at least 70% of the students should be achieving at or above grade level expectations. Within an MTSS framework, student data is inputted into such programs as Engrade and Skyward where the class average for each student is computed automatically. Consequently, classroom performance can be easily analyzed. Retention information, FCAT scores, FAIR data, and district benchmark assessments are all analyzed to determine which students need additional support. The progress of struggling students is monitored and trend lines indicate whether or not student performance is improving, regressing or plateauing. The gap between the students' performance and that of their peers is also analyzed to determine the level of support that students require.

Teachers receive support through a Multi-tiered System of Supports because they are a very integral part of the Student Study Team meetings that are held to determine which supports and resources are necessary in order to meet the needs of individual students. Teachers receive guidance from a group of professionals and related service providers who collaborate (along with the student's parents) to determine interventions, resources and services that will appropriately meet student needs.

**Describe the function and responsibility of each member of the district leadership team as it relates to MTSS and DIAP.**

Function and responsibility of district leadership team as it relates to MTSS:

The district provides professional development for teachers and administrators to ensure understanding and proper implementation of the MTSS system. Professional development is provided to faculty/staff members as a whole, then in smaller groups such as grade groups. On-going professional development includes support (coaching and assistance), data support (data sources and technology), and leadership support (policies, procedures, expectations and evaluation). District support also includes the development of a MTSS procedures manual that includes a description of each Tier along with activities (problem solving actions) that should occur at each tier. District forms (including MTSS Action Plan forms) are included in the manual. Checklists are used to document fidelity as part of the problem-solving process. In addition, staff members are encouraged to use the Florida Department of Education's Instructional Review for Differentiated Accountability Elements with Indicators Guide. Section IV of the Indicators Guide is especially helpful in Data Analysis, Progress Monitoring and Problem-Solving.

**SUPERINTENDENT** – Establishes the tone and tenor for the District's vision and mission as they relate to student achievement. Expectations are communicated during Executive Management Team (EMT) meetings and District Leadership Team (DLT) meetings.

**DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT** – Coordinates the services that district leadership provides to the school sites.

**ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, FINANCE** – Ensures that district financial resources are appropriately used to support teaching and learning.

**K12 DIRECTOR** – Works closely with school site principals, assistant principals for curriculum, and core content academic coaches/lead teachers to ensure appropriate materials are available for instruction and to monitor effective classroom instruction.

**HUMAN RESOURCE/PD DIRECTOR** – Ensures that each school site is appropriately staffed and facilitates/monitors needed professional development.

**EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING DIRECTOR** – Works closely with district leadership, site leadership, and teachers to ensure that multiple layers of support are provided to all learners.

**TITLE I – DIRECTOR** – Works closely with district leadership and school site leadership to ensure appropriate supplemental services and resources are available to Title I schools.

TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR – Works closely with district leadership, school site leadership, media specialists, and technology support personnel to ensure the technology needs of the schools are met.

ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR – Facilitates district formative assessments. Works with site assessment counselors to administer and monitor all State mandated summative assessments

ESOL COORDINATOR – Works with teachers and parents of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) students to ensure those ESL students' instructional needs are being met.

PARENT SERVICES COORDINATOR – Works with closely with the community, parents, and school site leadership to foster community support and involvement for teaching and learning.

DROPOUT PREVENTION COORDINATOR - Works with school and community leaders to improve graduation rate.

VPK Coordinator - Supervises Pre-K instructional staff and programs.

### **Describe the systems in place the leadership team uses to monitor the district's MTSS and DIAP**

The Gadsden School District has established a district-based leadership team (DBLT) to guide the successful implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). The primary function of the DBLT is to ensure that funding, professional development, infrastructure (e.g., data supports), and implementation supports (e.g., coaching, technical assistance) are available to reinforce implementation at school sites.

Using performance data and monitoring learning through the MTSS, administrators can make important instructional decisions to meet the needs of students from different backgrounds, learning styles, and levels of attainment.

The DBLT periodically reviews district policies and programs to ensure they are sufficiently addressing the instructional and behavioral needs of all students at every level of need. It also assists school based teams in making data-based decisions that will promote intense and focused instruction and intervention, as well as, working with the staff development office to provide professional development to ensure fidelity of implementation of the MTSS and the Common Core State Standards.

The district's plan utilizes a specific, data-driven problem-solving process to identify and analyze academic and behavioral difficulties; and to plan for all students' progress, using scientific, evidence-based instruction and intervention. This is accomplished through the following:

- Providing a multi-tiered model of instruction and intervention
- Utilizing a collaborative problem solving approach
- Implementing a research-based Core Curriculum (aligned with Florida's Standards)
- Monitoring student progress to inform instruction
- Using data to make instructional decisions
- Using assessments for three purposes: universal screening, diagnostics, and progress monitoring
- Engaging parents and community partnerships

### **Describe the data source(s) and management system(s) used to access and analyze data to monitor the effectiveness of core, supplemental, and intensive supports in reading, mathematics, science, writing, and engagement (e.g., behavior, attendance)**

Currently, Gadsden County uses Performance Matters (PM) as one of its data sources to allow teachers and administrators to monitor the effectiveness of core, supplemental, and intensive supports in reading, mathematics, science, and writing. The PM system allows schools to review and assess state and local tests taken by students in grades K-12. Strand comparison reports, school proficiency growth, and students' performance by standard are just a few of the data that PM is capable of producing.

Skyward is the student management system used by Gadsden County. Skyward allows school level personnel to update and track a student's behavior, attendance, and academic performance, to name a few.

### **Describe the plan to support staff's understanding of MTSS and build capacity in data-based problem solving**

Staff participate in professional development to ensure their understanding of MTSS and to build capacity in data-based problem solving. Professional development is on-going and teachers receive support from individuals who have extensive training in the problem-solving process. These individuals include the district's School Psychologists who are assigned to each school's Problem-solving (Student Study Team).

The School Psychologists coach teachers (and members of the Student Study Team) through the process of using data to assess individual student's performance at each Tier, to help determine what interventions are needed/appropriate and to determine the effectiveness of the interventions.

Professional development is on-going as teachers take advantage of opportunities during grade group meetings to disaggregate data of individual students and problem-solve. Teachers review data gathered and problem-solve (with trained professionals such as School Psychologists, Reading Coaches, Math Coaches) to determine what strategies and interventions may be appropriate for individual students.

**Describe the plan for "increased learning time" or "extended day" as defined in paragraph (2)(m) of Rule 6A-1.099811, F.A.C., in your district's Priority schools. Include a description of the specific activities and number of total minutes each will contribute**

The district priority schools that are funded with School Improvement Grant (SIG) 1003g include Chattahoochee Elementary and George W. Munroe Elementary. They each are offering 1/2 hour daily for all students to provide additional time for all subject areas in an effort to improve academic proficiency for 90 hours of regular school activities. School activities include remediation in reading, math, writing, and/or science as the individual student needs dictate for all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. In addition to this, they each have a 21st Century Community Learning Center (one with the district as fiscal agent and one with a community based organization as a vendor) that provides an additional 12 hours per week, 6 to 8 Saturdays, and a 6 week summer program each year for an additional amount of increased learning time of at least 600 hours of academic and enrichment support - mostly in project based learning to engage students in the learning process. The typical day has 1 and 1/2 hours of focused project based learning in reading and content level reading taught along with enrichment activities that infuse reading and math designed to be fun and engaging for all students participating in the program. The focus schools in the district are being provided additional support through a district education transformation office and ongoing professional development with reading, math, and science specialists. Many of them also have 21st CCLC programs and/or another community afterschool program providing additional hours of academic support. Title I provides additional support through the services of an external consultant who meets with the schools quarterly about their school improvement plans to help them plan, develop, and/or revise the plans as necessary to meet their goals. Title II provides each of the focus and priority schools with an instructional reading coach onsite to assist with data analysis and modeling strategies in differentiated instruction for classroom teachers, based on data and student needs.

## Alignment of Strategies and Resources

### Strategies and Support

#### AMO Data:

**AMO Target: Reading, All Students (Target: 47, Actual: 40)**

#### **What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

- 2013 – 47; 2014 – 52

International Center for Leadership in Education says: “Students in the same classroom have different levels of reading proficiency, yet all of them are typically reading the same materials. The result is a mismatch for many students, who cannot learn enough from textbooks they cannot read. For them, this means lower comprehension, lower test scores, and less progress on attaining proficiency, not just in reading, but across the curriculum in math, science, social studies, and all other subjects...Students need textbooks they can read – especially in middle school and high school where there is a heavy reliance on textbooks as the primary instructional resource and source for learning...Reading demands increase dramatically for students around 4th grade, when learning relies more on the textbooks. The vocabulary encountered is less familiar because it contains more specialized or technical terms. Syntax becomes more complex. Greater reliance must be placed on inferential thinking and prior knowledge. More independent learning is expected than in lower grades. When reading becomes the primary vehicle for learning, the demands on readers and the strategies they need to use in reading change. Unfortunately, just when the reading load increases and students shift from learning to read to reading to learn, [limited] corresponding instruction in reading is provided to students. The scaffold of systematic and focused reading instruction diminishes...Student performances in reading begin to widen, and increasingly, schools begin to use more single-source instructional materials...” (Daggett, 2003)

The District made modest improvements in reading. However, there remains a need to more effectively focus district resources on Early Literacy so that more students are reading proficiently by third grade. This will reduce the amount of time spent teaching students to read in grades 3-12; as opposed to teaching them to learn (content) using their reading skills. The District may also attribute modest improvements in reading to increasing NGCARPD training to content area teachers. NGCARPD strategies allow content text to be more accessible to students. However, current funding has only accommodated about 50 teachers out the approximate 450 instructional staff in the District.

#### **Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Several factors contribute to lack of student success: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt scripted instructional programs; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; 3) summer regression learning; 4) need to more effectively focus district resources on Early Literacy so that students are "reading to learn" by third grade; and 5) the need to provide on-going explicit training to all teachers on content area reading.

Teacher professional development is ongoing to raise teacher quality to the new Florida standards and facilitating a paradigm shift to differentiated and centers instruction. However, there is also a lack of and ineffective use of resources to appropriately address learning deficiencies that are indicated by both formative and summative assessments. Limited financial resources result in lower salaries for teachers; which result in high turnover of instructional staff; which results in a constant need to train and re-train instructional staff.

**AMO Target: Mathematics, All Students (Target: 58, Actual: 50)****What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

- 2013 – 58; 2014 – 62

University of Michigan, School of Education 2008 says: "...Mathematical competence is no longer needed only by some; knowing and being able to use mathematics is increasingly seen as an essential form of literacy. Additionally, some occupations will continue to require even higher levels of mathematical skill...Despite continuing decades of critique and attempts at reform, U.S. mathematics has changed relatively little over the last 50 years...Significant inequities exist in educational resources and opportunities with resulting disparities in mathematical proficiency. Mathematical failure is disproportionately associated with race and family income. The proportion of African American and Latino eighth graders scoring above the basic level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress is less than two-thirds that of their white counterparts. The mathematical underachievement of minority students and students living in poverty remains a pervasive problem in the United States....The role played by mathematics as a critical tool for civic engagement and opportunity makes these inequities a matter of urgency...change has been difficult...Teaching is what matters. The development, or adoption, of particular curriculum materials has been the main strategy in attempts to improve mathematics learning...however...teachers exercise substantial discretion in their use of curriculum, making decisions about what to emphasize, augment, and omit...teachers' own knowledge of mathematics influences their interpretation of the textbook...and thus shapes their use of the material...Effective instruction demands...adaptation between teachers and their students..." (Teaching and Leadership 2008)

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Elementary students (K-5) appear to have met targets established for mathematics performance. However, middle and high continue to struggle. Again, this may be attributed to several factors: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt more explicit instructional programs/strategies; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; and 3) summer regression learning. Teachers and administrators have also made improvements in monitoring students' performance but there is a need for training in rubric development so that students can clearly see the targets they are aiming for with each standard that is taught. All teachers need training on how to use formative assessment data to redirect instruction so that areas of weakness are re-taught. To a large degree K-5 have figured out how to provide students with multiple exposures to the standards they need to learn and how to focus instruction on standards that are not mastered by students. Training middle and high school teachers to do this remains a challenge, especially now that there are not content area specialists (math and science) working full-time with site administrators to help monitor data and provide on-going academic coaching to address the learning needs of students.

**AMO Target: Reading, Asian (Target: 75, Actual: )****What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

n/a

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

n/a

**AMO Target: Mathematics, Asian (Target: 83, Actual: )**

**What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

n/a

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

n/a

**AMO Target: Reading, Black/African American (Target: 45, Actual: 38)**

**What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

- 2013 – 45; 2014 – 51

According to the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning in Washington State 2008:

“...success for African Americans is too often elusive. Our society still bears the legacy of a long history of racism, exclusion and low expectations for African American children, and our public education system has not adequately responded to remedy this situation...low rates of high school graduation lead to less employment, higher rates of incarceration, ill health, substance abuse, and intergenerational poverty. No failure is more costly than the failure to educate our African American children...the [legislators] identified five key areas of education that contribute to both the challenges and the solutions of the achievement gap for African American students. 1. Teacher quality – knowledgeable professionals who effectively meet the academic, cultural and social needs of students; 2. Teaching and learning – structured, rigorous and culturally responsive curriculum and instruction; 3. School and district leadership – a commitment to high achievement for all students that intentionally guides policies and practices; 4. Student support – academic, social, psychological and cultural resources students need to succeed; 5. Family and community engagement – partnerships that inform and support academic achievement. Closing the achievement gap will require more than implementing a particular program or two. It will require commitment, political will, deliberate actions and the alignment of efforts across the education system...”

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Several factors contribute to lack of student success: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt scripted instructional programs; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; 3) summer regression learning; 4) need to more effectively focus district resources on Early Literacy so that students are "reading to learn" by third grade; and 5) the need to provide on-going explicit training to all teachers on content area reading.

Teacher professional development is ongoing to raise teacher quality to the new Florida standards and facilitating a paradigm shift to differentiated and centers instruction. However, there is also a lack of and ineffective use of resources to appropriately address learning deficiencies that are indicated by both formative and summative assessments. Limited financial resources result in lower salaries for teachers; which result in high turnover of instructional staff; which results in a constant need to train and re-train instructional staff.

**AMO Target: Mathematics, Black/African American (Target: 55, Actual: 47)****What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

- 2013 – 55; 2014 – 60

According to the Journal of Educational Controversy from Woodring College of Education in Western Washington University: "..., One of the many controversies in education is the academic condition of African American students in our schools. The system of education as we know it was not designed with minority groups in mind. Don't forget that it was against the law for Blacks to read or be educated. James Comer talks about the devastating shocks of the Black experience of slavery, the effects of which are even now not fully understood (Comer, 1998). The first shock was the disruption of a close-knit African kinship structure that was at the core of all political, economic, and social functioning. The second was the Middle Passage and the brutality of the slave trade. The third was two-and-a-half centuries of slavery with its imposed dependency, inferior status, and no opportunity for improvement. The fourth was the release of slaves into a hostile environment in both the North and the South that stripped African Americans of what paltry protection slave masters provided them as valued property, leaving them neither slaves nor citizens, but outcasts in a land not of their own choosing.

Since effective civil rights legislation was not enacted until the mid-1960's, it has been necessary for African Americans to move from a status of uneducated and unskilled to a status of highly skilled in just one generation. This is in sharp contrast to the three generations of educational acceleration available to other immigrant groups who came voluntarily to the US. The argument that these many complex structural forces could be overcome by school integration and other civil rights legislation in 30 years – with no significant economic power – was patently unrealistic and painfully naive. It was simply an effort to avoid taking responsibility for the illegal, irresponsible, and immoral acts imposed on African Americans in the past and their currently lingering effects. Many institutions such as colleges, universities, banks, insurance companies, etc., are beginning to research and acknowledge their role in the practice of slavery and offer apologies and restitution. The reparation movement has been activated the past few years with very limited success. Our school systems continue to be riddled with prejudice, racism, inequities, unfairness, and an overwhelming belief that most African Americans cannot learn at high levels.

The unique needs of other ethnic groups are part of the equation for program improvements but not for African American students. How can this problem be such a challenging issue, but little to no state or federal focus is brought to bear on it? The data are compelling and the societal impact of neglecting such evidence is beyond measure. We proceed with conversations and discussions about needed changes in our education system, but often minimize the chronic nature of the educational circumstance that African American students face. Because there is such a long, extensive, and painful history contributing to the problems, we have a very difficult time dealing with the present-day manifestations of the historical reality of the mis-education of African Americans in this state and the nation at large (Irvine, 1990).

Of all the ethnic groups in this country, African Americans are the only ones who came involuntarily. We are descendants of people who were kidnapped from our native Africa and enslaved in this country for more than 350 years under the worst possible human conditions. Our people were stripped of everything: language, dignity, religion, family units, wealth, customs, culture, history, and other measures of humankind. The United States Constitution made slavery a legal practice until being repealed by the 13th amendment, which was ratified December 6, 1865. Our plight cannot be compared to any other group who have since come to these shores, regardless of the criteria used. Even in light of the great experiment of desegregation, African American students suffered the greatest burden and losses of this failed reform and again find themselves the target of educational politics as to their location and the schools they attend.

Once again state standards have been imposed without attention to the particular educational inequities that surround African American students, leading to a new generation of equity lawsuits. African American children are, again, held accountable for not learning while the system is not

accountable for not teaching. The phrase “educational malpractice” was the label given to an earlier 1976 San Francisco court case wherein a student had spent 12 years in public schools and had graduated with only a 5th grade reading level (Standler, 2000).

In the face of educational reforms, backed by state and federal monitoring, the miseducation of African American students remains statistically conspicuous and substantively persistent. This persistent miseducation is evidenced by

Over-representation in

- special education programs
- juvenile justice system as offenders
- incarceration rates
- poverty rates
- unemployment during times of economic boom
- discipline referrals, resulting in suspensions and expulsions

Under-representation in

- programs for the gifted and other advanced courses
- school activities other than sports
- teaching; as counselors and administrators in P-12 system and of African American faculty and administrators in post-secondary institutions
- graduation rates
- Science and technology classes; higher level mathematics.

All the indicators point to the fact that African American children are in dire academic difficulty. While many of them are doing very well in school, the majority of our children are not. The systemic neglect and structural inequalities have led to social and economic injustice for too many of our people. Why the focus on just African American children when many others also underachieve? The Honorable Augustus F. Hawkins, Founder of the National Council on Educating Black Children (NCEBC) and a former congressman, stated it very well when he said, “Black children are the proxy for what ails American education in general. And so, as we fashion solutions which help Black children, we fashion solutions which help all children” (NCEBC, 1986, p. 35).

### **Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Elementary students (K-5) appear to have met targets established for mathematics performance.

However, middle and high continue to struggle. Again, this may be attributed to several factors: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt more explicit instructional programs/strategies; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; and 3) summer regression learning.

Teachers and administrators have also made improvements in monitoring students' performance but there is a need for training in rubric development so that students can clearly see the targets they are aiming for with each standard that is taught. All teachers need training on how to use formative assessment data to redirect instruction so that areas of weakness are re-taught. To a large degree K-5 have figured out how to provide students with multiple exposures to the standards they need to learn and how to focus instruction on standards that are not mastered by students. Training middle and high school teachers to do this remains a challenge, especially now that there are not content area specialists (math and science) working full-time with site administrators to help monitor data and provide on-going academic coaching to address the learning needs of students.

**AMO Target: Reading, Economically Disadvantaged (Target: 46, Actual: 39)****What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

- 2013 – 46; 2014 – 51

John Hopkins School of Education says: “The large-scale research with the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) program revealed the following:

#1) Most disadvantaged students have normal to high levels of intellectual ability.

#2) The key learning problems of disadvantaged students are very different in grades K-3 as compared to grades 4-8, and require totally different approaches. The biggest learning problem after grade 3 is that students do not understand 'understanding.'

The biggest learning problem after the third grade is that disadvantaged students do not understand how to deal with ideas, generalizations, or abstractions as a result of a lack of experience in talking with adults about ideas. They have so little sense of how to deal with ideas in general that they do not understand what it means to understand. The lack of a 'sense of understanding' becomes a problem in grades 4-8 because the curriculum becomes more complex and requires more advanced forms of thinking. Indeed, a recent analysis of differences between white and black and Hispanic/ Latino high school students by Ronald Ferguson of Harvard, concluded that the only significant difference was that the minority students were twice as likely to report that they did not understand what the teacher was saying or what they were reading.

#3) Until a sense of understanding is developed, the cognitive wall prevents the majority of disadvantaged students in grades 4-8 from succeeding in quality content instruction—even though they have the potential to succeed.

So little has been written about the 'understanding' gap that people do not realize how profound it is. For example, it takes at-risk students in grades 4 through 8 three to four months of daily work just for students to understand the difference between guessing and using a strategy or a system to solve a problem. As a result, well intentioned progressive efforts to place disadvantaged students into thinking-in-content, problem solving courses will not succeed unless and until students first have developed a sense of understanding.

#4) In order to develop disadvantaged students' ability to succeed in problem solving content after the third grade, and to maximize test score gains, you must first develop their general sense of understanding.

#5) Developing a sense of understanding in most disadvantaged students in grades 4-8 takes almost 2 years of specially designed conversation activities in a small group setting for 35-40 minutes a day, 4-5 days a week, with a good teacher.

A sense of understanding cannot be produced via casual effort and occasional thinking experiences. The large-scale research around the use of the HOTS program, with many systematic variations tried over the years, has shown that it takes 1-2 years of 35 minutes a day of intense daily conversation and reflection, in which students verbalize sophisticated ideas to develop a sense of understanding. Students then spontaneously apply their thinking skills to regular content learning.

It takes this much time because the prior deficit of home conversation described earlier that causes the understanding gap results is so extensive. As a result, you cannot develop a sense of understanding by teaching a set of skills. Rather, it is developed from extensive accumulated student experience in verbalizing thoughtful responses to complex questions, and obtaining feedback as to how adults process their ideas. It is a cultural process that takes time for sufficient experience to occur to compensate for the earlier conversation gap.

In addition, given the huge prior conversation gap, the intervention has to be intensive for the 1.5-2 year period. It requires small groups, with teachers constantly asking questions and probing student responses. In classrooms with a large number of educationally disadvantaged students it is impossible to provide each student the extensive interaction opportunities needed to develop the sense of understanding in the context of a full sized classroom—just as it is impossible to have in depth conversations with 30 guests at a party.

The biggest problem in creating the needed learning environment is that the students involved are initially, understandably, reluctant to verbalize, and that teachers want to compensate by telling rather than asking. When HOTS teachers first begin to engage Title I students in Socratic dialogue, the students seem genuinely puzzled as to what the teacher is up to. It's as though this is the first time these youngsters have encountered this way of interacting with adults - and it may well be. It takes quite a bit of time for students to gain confidence and sufficient experience to verbalize spontaneously. For example, it takes about 4 months before students will give a reason for a response without first being asked and about 6 months before they will disconfirm a prior answer. During the early acclimation period teachers need to patiently ask questions and probe the tentative responses. Teaching by asking is difficult, the education equivalent of heart surgery in medicine. It is very hard for teachers to hold back and not direct the student process of making meaning and over talking. Complicating matters further, is that for this process to work the curriculum must pose problems that students are interested in so that they will exert mental energy; energy which can then be channeled by the conversation environment as described earlier. . ."

### **Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Several factors contribute to lack of student success: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt scripted instructional programs; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; 3) summer regression learning; 4) need to more effectively focus district resources on Early Literacy so that students are "reading to learn" by third grade; and 5) the need to provide on-going explicit training to all teachers on content area reading.

Teacher professional development is ongoing to raise teacher quality to the new Florida standards and facilitating a paradigm shift to differentiated and centers instruction. However, there is also a lack of and ineffective use of resources to appropriately address learning deficiencies that are indicated by both formative and summative assessments. Limited financial resources result in lower salaries for teachers; which result in high turnover of instructional staff; which results in a constant need to train and re-train instructional staff.

**AMO Target: Mathematics, Economically Disadvantaged (Target: 58, Actual: 50)****What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

- 2013 – 58; 2014 – 62

Per the article Improving educational outcomes for poor children by Brian A. Jacob and Jens Ludwig from the University of Michigan and University of Chicago "...According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, only 16 percent of fourth grade students eligible for free lunch score at proficient levels in reading, compared with 44 percent of fourth graders whose family incomes are above the eligibility cutoff for free lunch. The disparity in math scores between those above and below the eligibility threshold for free lunch is even larger. Equally large disparities in achievement test scores are observed between whites and minority racial or ethnic groups, with test score gaps that show up as early as three or four years of age. In fact, the black-white test score gap among twelfth graders may not be all that different in magnitude from the gap observed among young children when they first start school...Disagreements about how to improve schooling outcomes for poor children stem in part from different beliefs about the problems that underlie the unsatisfactory outcomes in many of our nation's public schools. Broadly speaking, critics tend to invoke, at least implicitly, one of the following explanations for why children in high-poverty schools are not performing as well as we would like: 1. Schools serving poor and minority students have fewer resources than they need...2. High poverty schools lack the capacity to substantially improve student learning, independent of financial resources...3. High poverty schools do not have sufficient incentives or flexibility to improve instruction...Schools matter only so much. The real problem rests with the social context in which schools operate – namely, the family, neighborhood, and peer environments that under this perspective make it difficult for low-income children to take advantage of educational opportunities...we believe that there is likely some truth to each of these major explanations; schools confront no single problem that can be addressed with just one solution..."

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Elementary students (K-5) appear to have met targets established for mathematics performance. However, middle and high continue to struggle. Again, this may be attributed to several factors: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt more explicit instructional programs/strategies; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; and 3) summer regression learning. Teachers and administrators have also made improvements in monitoring students' performance but there is a need for training in rubric development so that students can clearly see the targets they are aiming for with each standard that is taught. All teachers need training on how to use formative assessment data to redirect instruction so that areas of weakness are re-taught. To a large degree K-5 have figured out how to provide students with multiple exposures to the standards they need to learn and how to focus instruction on standards that are not mastered by students. Training middle and high school teachers to do this remains a challenge, especially now that there are not content area specialists (math and science) working full-time with site administrators to help monitor data and provide on-going academic coaching to address the learning needs of students.

**AMO Target: Reading, English Language Learners (Target: 37, Actual: 33)****What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

- 2013 – 37; 2014 – 43

According to the National Center for Education Statistics 2009: "...Culture, ethnicity and race have all been used to characterize learner differences. Children develop certain learning preferences and ways of learning, in part, because of their experiences within their cultural or ethnic group. Race, as a subgroup, is often used to characterize a learner difference...test results of students whose dominant language is not English tend, as a group, to reflect lower percentages of proficient performance than students whose dominant language is English. However, not all English Language Learners fail to meet proficiency standards. The reality is, regardless which subgroup students belong to, every student comes to school with wide variations in background knowledge, strengths and preferences, skills and levels of family support and involvement. Not all learners within a particular subgroup will learn best in the same way...early identification and targeted instruction has clearly been shown to make large differences in student success..."

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Several factors contribute to lack of student success: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt scripted instructional programs; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; 3) summer regression learning; 4) need to more effectively focus district resources on Early Literacy so that students are "reading to learn" by third grade; and 5) the need to provide on-going explicit training to all teachers on content area reading.

Teacher professional development is ongoing to raise teacher quality to the new Florida standards and facilitating a paradigm shift to differentiated and centers instruction. However, there is also a lack of and ineffective use of resources to appropriately address learning deficiencies that are indicated by both formative and summative assessments. Limited financial resources result in lower salaries for teachers; which result in high turnover of instructional staff; which results in a constant need to train and re-train instructional staff.

**AMO Target: Mathematics, English Language Learners (Target: 62, Actual: 53)****What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

- 2013 – 62; 2014 – 66

What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target? According to the National Center for Education Statistics 2009: "...Culture, ethnicity and race have all been used to characterize learner differences. Children develop certain learning preferences and ways of learning, in part, because of their experiences within their cultural or ethnic group. Race, as a subgroup, is often used to characterize a learner difference...test results of students whose dominant language is not English tend, as a group, to reflect lower percentages of proficient performance than students whose dominant language is English. However, not all English Language Learners fail to meet proficiency standards. The reality is, regardless which subgroup students belong to, every student comes to school with wide variations in background knowledge, strengths and preferences, skills and levels of family support and involvement. Not all learners within a particular subgroup will learn best in the same way...early identification and targeted instruction has clearly been shown to make large differences in student success..."

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Elementary students (K-5) appeared to have met targets established for mathematics performance. However, middle and high continue to struggle. Again, this may be attributed to several factors: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt more explicit instructional programs/strategies; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; and 3) summer regression learning. Teachers and administrators have also made improvements in monitoring students' performance but there is a need for training in rubric development so that students can clearly see the targets they are aiming for with each standard that is taught. All teachers need training on how to use formative assessment data to redirect instruction so that areas of weakness are re-taught. To a large degree K-5 have figured out how to provide students with multiple exposures to the standards they need to learn and how to focus instruction on standards that are not mastered by students. Training middle and high school teachers to do this remains a challenge, especially now that there are not content area specialists (math and science) working full-time with site administrators to help monitor data and provide on-going academic coaching to address the learning needs of students.

**AMO Target: Reading, Hispanic (Target: 48, Actual: 44)****What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

- 2013 – 48; 2014 – 54

According to U.S. Department of Education: "...effective schools serve Hispanic students in four ways: Effective, aligned, standards-based programs. Effective schools for Hispanic students and ELLs offer standards-based curriculum, appropriate assessment, and sufficient time for all students to learn. Teaching, curricula, materials, tests, and instructional schedules are aligned and mutually reinforcing. Whatever the language of instruction, all students have a chance to learn what schools are supposed to teach them.

Enhanced professional and organizational capacity. Effective schools for Hispanic students develop the organizational capacity to meet the needs of their students. They offer professional development geared to new demands on faculty skills and knowledge, adopt governance structures that enhance collective learning, acquire the equipment and materials they need to implement their programs, and adjust the school environment to support their work. To the general knowledge and skills that might have worked with other students in other settings, faculty members regularly add new competencies specifically geared to Hispanic students' needs.

Engaged family and community resources. Effective schools for Hispanic students bring the resources of families and the broader community to bear on student success. They make Hispanic students and their families feel welcome and help students succeed. Strategies for collaboration surmount barriers posed by differences in language,

Sturdy foundations for postsecondary options. Effective schools for Hispanic students keep paths to postsecondary options visible, attainable, and inviting. They help Hispanic students and their families see the long-term personal, social, and economic benefits of high academic achievement, culture, and social class..."

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Several factors contribute to lack of student success: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt scripted instructional programs; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; 3) summer regression learning; 4) need to more effectively focus district resources on Early Literacy so that students are "reading to learn" by third grade; and 5) the need to provide on-going explicit training to all teachers on content area reading.

Teacher professional development is ongoing to raise teacher quality to the new Florida standards and facilitating a paradigm shift to differentiated and centers instruction. However, there is also a lack of and ineffective use of resources to appropriately address learning deficiencies that are indicated by both formative and summative assessments. Limited financial resources result in lower salaries for teachers; which result in high turnover of instructional staff; which results in a constant need to train and re-train instructional staff.

**AMO Target: Mathematics, Hispanic (Target: 65, Actual: 58)****What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

- 2013 – 65; 2014 – 69

According to the National Center for Education Statistics 2009: "...Culture, ethnicity and race have all been used to characterize learner differences. Children develop certain learning preferences and ways of learning, in part, because of their experiences within their cultural or ethnic group. Race, as a subgroup, is often used to characterize a learner difference...test results of students whose dominant language is not English tend, as a group, to reflect lower percentages of proficient performance than students whose dominant language is English. However, not all English Language Learners fail to meet proficiency standards. The reality is, regardless which subgroup students belong to, every student comes to school with wide variations in background knowledge, strengths and preferences, skills and levels of family support and involvement. Not all learners within a particular subgroup will learn best in the same way...early identification and targeted instruction has clearly been shown to make large differences in student success..."

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Elementary students (K-5) appeared to have met targets established for mathematics performance. However, middle and high continue to struggle. Again, this may be attributed to several factors: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt more explicit instructional programs/strategies; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; and 3) summer regression learning.

Teachers and administrators have also made improvements in monitoring students' performance but there is a need for training in rubric development so that students can clearly see the targets they are aiming for with each standard that is taught. All teachers need training on how to use formative assessment data to redirect instruction so that areas of weakness are re-taught. To a large degree K-5 have figured out how to provide students with multiple exposures to the standards they need to learn and how to focus instruction on standards that are not mastered by students. Training middle and high school teachers to do this remains a challenge, especially now that there are not content area specialists (math and science) working full-time with site administrators to help monitor data and provide on-going academic coaching to address the learning needs of students.

**AMO Target: Reading, Students With Disabilities (Target: 40, Actual: 24)****What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

Students with disabilities often experience difficulties learning and using strategies commonly employed by more experienced learners. Successful learners develop routines for learning new information and integrating it with previously learned information. For example, when presented with a new story, proficient readers nearly automatically map the story's features to features they remember from previous stories. Evidence suggests, however, that developing and using these stories pose difficulties for students with disabilities because they use the strategies inefficiently, are unable to adjust the strategies under new contexts, and often do not recognize when to apply strategies (Wong, 1991).

Do in part to the difficulties they experience with memory and strategy use, research suggests that students with disabilities also have difficulties in vocabulary development. Because vocabulary is dependent on memory skills, many learners are unable to learn the meanings of words and retrieve those meanings in the context of reading. Difficulties with reading generally and with vocabulary in particular often result in less reading and less exposure to text. The result is even less opportunity to learn new words.

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Several factors contribute to lack of student success: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt scripted instructional programs; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; 3) summer regression learning; 4) need to more effectively focus district resources on Early Literacy so that students are "reading to learn" by third grade; and 5) the need to provide on-going explicit training to all teachers on content area reading.

Teacher professional development is ongoing to raise teacher quality to the new Florida standards and facilitating a paradigm shift to differentiated and centers instruction. However, there is also a lack of and ineffective use of resources to appropriately address learning deficiencies that are indicated by both formative and summative assessments. Limited financial resources result in lower salaries for teachers; which result in high turnover of instructional staff; which results in a constant need to train and re-train instructional staff.

**AMO Target: Mathematics, Students With Disabilities (Target: 49, Actual: 36)****What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

Many different disabilities can affect children's math learning and performance, but none more than disabilities that affect cognition—mental retardation, traumatic brain injury, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and learning disabilities, to name a few. Several specific areas of disability are clearly connected to math learning difficulties. Visual processing, visual memory, and visual-spatial relationships all impact math proficiency in that they are threads in the fabric of conceptual understanding and procedural fluency (Kilpatrick et al., 2001). Specific math learning difficulties also can affect a student's ability to formulate, represent, and solve math problems (known as strategic competence). The term learning disabilities (LD) certainly appears throughout the literature on math difficulties. This is not especially surprising: LD is the most frequently referenced disability affecting math learning and performance, with a well-documented impact on the learning of 5% to 10% of children in grades K-12 (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2002; Garnett, 1998; Geary, 2001, 2004; Mazzocco & Thompson, 2005). We know a great deal about effective math instruction for students with disabilities, especially students who have LD. There have been five meta-analyses on the subject, reviewing a total of 183 research studies (Adams & Carnine, 2003; Baker, Gersten, & Lee, 2002; Browder, Spooner, Ahlgrim-Delzell, Harris, & Wakeman, 2008; Kroesbergen & Van Luit, 2003; Xin & Jitendra, 1999). The studies combined in these meta-analyses involved students with a variety of disabilities—most notably, LD, but other disabilities as well, including mild mental retardation, AD/HD, behavioral disorders, and students with significant cognitive disabilities. The meta-analyses found strong evidence of instructional approaches that appear to help students with disabilities improve their math achievement. We now also have the National Mathematics Advisory Panel Report (2008) that further investigates successful mathematical teaching strategies and provides additional support for the research results.

According to these studies, four methods of instruction show the most promise. These are:

- Systematic and explicit instruction, a detailed instructional approach in which teachers guide students through a defined instructional sequence. Within systematic and explicit instruction students learn to regularly apply strategies that effective learners use as a fundamental part of mastering concepts.
- Self-instruction, through which students learn to manage their own learning with specific prompting or solution-oriented questions.
- Peer tutoring, an approach that involves pairing students together to learn or practice an academic task.
- Visual representation, which uses manipulatives, pictures, number lines, and graphs of functions and relationships to teach mathematical concepts.

Of course, to make use of this information, an educator would need to know much more about each approach.

The National Research Council's "Concept of Mathematical Proficiency"

"The integrated and balanced development of all five strands of mathematical proficiency should guide the teaching and learning of school mathematics."

- Conceptual understanding—comprehension of mathematical concepts, operations, and relations
- Procedural fluency—skill in carrying out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and appropriately
- Strategic competence—ability to formulate, represent, and solve mathematical problems
- Adaptive reasoning—a capacity for logical thought, reflection, explanation, and justification
- Productive disposition—habitual inclination to see mathematics as sensible, useful, and worthwhile, coupled with a belief in diligence and one's own efficacy (Kilpatrick, et al., 2001)

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Elementary students (K-5) appear to have met targets established for mathematics performance. However, middle and high continue to struggle. Again, this may be attributed to

several factors: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt more explicit instructional programs/strategies; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; and 3) summer regression learning. Teachers and administrators have also made improvements in monitoring students' performance but there is a need for training in rubric development so that students can clearly see the targets they are aiming for with each standard that is taught. All teachers need training on how to use formative assessment data to redirect instruction so that areas of weakness are re-taught. To a large degree K-5 have figured out how to provide students with multiple exposures to the standards they need to learn and how to focus instruction on standards that are not mastered by students. Training middle and high school teachers to do this remains a challenge, especially now that there are not content area specialists (math and science) working full-time with site administrators to help monitor data and provide on-going academic coaching to address the learning needs of students.

**AMO Target: Reading, White (Target: 64, Actual: 58)****What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

- 2013 – 64; 2014 – 68

According to the Harvard Graduate School of Education: “For decades now, educators, researchers, and policymakers have puzzled over so-called achievement gaps—the disparities in academic performance by race and ethnicity that consistently show up on standardized tests, grade-point averages, and a host of other measures. The No Child Left Behind Act seeks to narrow these gaps by mandating standards-based tests in elementary, middle, and high school, and holding schools accountable for raising scores not just overall, but among racial and ethnic subgroups. A growing body of research, however, suggests that any serious effort to eliminate disparities at the primary and secondary school levels must also address what some researchers call the school readiness gap—the variations in academic performance and certain social skills among children entering kindergarten and first grade.

Recent studies document specific dimensions of this gap:

- On average, black, Hispanic, and American Indian students demonstrate significantly lower reading, math, and vocabulary skills at school entry than white and Asian American children.
- According to a seminal 1995 study by Betty Hart and Todd Risley, 3-year-olds whose parents are professionals have vocabularies that are 50 percent larger than those of children from working-class families, and twice as large as children whose families receive welfare.
- Using data from the U.S. Department of Education’s Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS), University of California researchers have shown that fewer than 20 percent of California kindergartners from non-English speaking backgrounds score above the 50th percentile on reading and mathematics tests, a finding echoed in other states.

Many researchers today still cite an analysis in the 1998 Brookings Institution book *The Black-White Test Score Gap*, in which researchers Meredith Phillips, James Crouse, and John Ralph estimate that about half of the black-white test score gap at twelfth grade is attributable to gaps that exist at first grade. Researchers have since made similar claims about gaps existing among other ethnic groups. Analyzing eight national studies of racial differences in school performance, Phillips, Crouse, and Ralph pose a bold challenge: “We could eliminate at least half, and probably more, of the black-white test score gap at the end of twelfth grade by eliminating the differences that exist before children enter first grade.”

Most researchers agree that socioeconomic status—closely associated with race and ethnicity—is one of the strongest predictors of low skills at school entry. In a 2002 study, Valerie E. Lee and David T. Burkam of the University of Michigan found that at kindergarten entry, cognitive scores of children in the highest socioeconomic group were 60 percent higher than those of the lowest group.

“Most if not all early gaps are due to economic disadvantage,” says Katherine Magnuson, an assistant professor of social work at the University of Wisconsin–Madison who has extensively studied the issue. Magnuson and others have argued for broad-based policies addressing parental poverty and education levels. But she and her colleagues also believe that improving all children’s access to high-quality prekindergarten programs could do a great deal to narrow early learning disparities.

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Several factors contribute to lack of student success: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt scripted instructional programs; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; 3) summer regression learning; 4) need to more effectively focus district resources on Early Literacy so that students are "reading to learn" by third grade; and 5) the need to provide on-going explicit training to all teachers on content area reading.

Teacher professional development is ongoing to raise teacher quality to the new Florida standards and facilitating a paradigm shift to differentiated and centers instruction. However, there is also a lack of and ineffective use of resources to appropriately address learning deficiencies that are indicated by both formative and summative assessments. Limited financial resources result in lower salaries for teachers; which result in high turnover of instructional staff; which results in a constant need to train and re-train instructional staff.

**AMO Target: Mathematics, White (Target: 73, Actual: 60)****What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup not meeting target?**

Studies show that learning disabilities do not fall evenly across racial and ethnic groups. For instance, in 2001, 1% of white children and 2.6% of non-Hispanic black children were receiving LD-related special education services. The same studies suggest that this has to do with economic status and not ethnic background. Learning disabilities (LD) are not caused by economic disadvantage, but in low-income communities there is increased risk of exposure to harmful toxins (lead, tobacco, alcohol, etc.) at early stages of development.

Boys outnumber girls by about three to one in the LD category. Some researchers have suggested that the prevalence of learning disabilities among males is due to their biological vulnerability. However, others have suggested that “the higher prevalence of learning disabilities among males may be due to referral bias.” They suggest that “academic difficulties are no more prevalent among boys than girls, but that boys are more likely to be referred for special education when they do have academic problems because of other behaviors, such as hyperactivity. Research on this issue is mixed” (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2003, p. 155).

While deficits in math are central to Mathematics Learning Disabilities (MLD), it is also important to study those math skills that are intact. Variations in the patterns of assets and deficits demonstrate how dissociable skills in mathematics may be from one another, which facilitates identification of unique and related mathematical processes, thereby identifying the varied routes to MLD. Children with 22q11.2 deletion syndrome (22q11DS) show considerable difficulties in mathematics that involve impairments in procedural calculation, math word problem solving, and understanding and representing numerical quantities despite preserved math fact retrieval [see De Smedt et al., 2009]. Children with spina bifida meningocele (SBM) demonstrate relative strengths in basic number knowledge, and weaknesses in single digit arithmetic, counting strategies, geometry, estimation, and word problem solving [see English et al., 2009]. Girls and women with Turner syndrome show age appropriate number comprehension and processing skills, including magnitude judgments and single digit arithmetic, yet are slower than their peers on many of these tasks, and are both slower and less accurate than their peers on complex calculations and numerical estimation [see Mazzocco, 2009]. Compared to their peers, females with fragile X syndrome are as quick and as accurate when performing tasks such as reading numerals, reciting common math facts, and naming decimals, but show weak numerical understanding [see Murphy, 2009]. In persons with Williams syndrome, the pattern of assets and deficits varies with development such that abstract representations of quantity appear intact during infancy and yet fail to show the typical developmental trajectory during childhood, whereas preverbal approximate number skills are deficient throughout the life course [see O’Hearn and Luna, 2009]. In other developmental disorders, a profile of math strengths and weaknesses is less clear. Math deficits in children with NF-1 include math calculations and math word problems [see Moore, 2009]. However, because some children with NF-1 have highly developed math skills, there is no apparent group pattern of relative or absolute assets and deficits. Math deficits (whether measured by absolute age-based standings or by discrepancy with intelligence) are apparent in children with very low birth weight or very preterm birth (VLBW/VPTB) on a range of math tasks, even when excluding children with mental retardation or neurosensory disorders [Taylor et al., 2009].

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

Elementary students (K-5) appear to have met targets established for mathematics performance. However, middle and high continue to struggle. Again, this may be attributed to several factors: 1) high turnover in instructional staff, which results in the need for constant training and re-training and the need to adopt more explicit instructional programs/strategies; 2) lack of or inability of the home to effectively support teaching and learning; and 3) summer regression learning.

Teachers and administrators have also made improvements in monitoring students' performance but there is a need for training in rubric development so that students can clearly see the targets they are aiming for with each standard that is taught. All teachers need training on how to use formative assessment data to redirect instruction so that areas of weakness are re-taught. To a large degree K-5 have figured out how to provide students with multiple exposures to the standards they need to learn and how to focus instruction on standards that are not mastered by students. Training middle and high school teachers to do this remains a challenge, especially now that there are not content area specialists (math and science) working full-time with site administrators to help monitor data and provide on-going academic coaching to address the learning needs of students.

**Additional Data:****Additional Target: Mathematics, American Indian**

**What does research suggest about the specific learning needs of this subgroup?**

N/A

**Why did the previous plan not sufficiently meet these needs?**

N/A

## Goals Summary

- G1.** Improve math proficiency district-wide
- G2.** Improve reading proficiency district-wide

## Goals Detail

### G1. Improve math proficiency district-wide

#### Targets Supported

- Math (All Students, American Indian, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic, White, English-Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged, Other Subgroup)

#### Resources Available to Support the Goal

- Title I/II funding to pay for a District Mathematics Specialist; Strong middle school principals who have also had success at the elementary level.

#### Targeted Barriers to Achieving the Goal

- 1) Children entering school not ready to learn; 2) Math teachers lack of skills for differentiated instruction and scaffolding instruction; 3) Lack of District Mathematics Specialist

### Plan to Monitor Progress Toward the Goal

Classroom observations

#### Person or Persons Responsible

K12 Director, School Administrators

#### Target Dates or Schedule:

On-going

#### Evidence of Completion:

Observation feedback sheets; formative assessment results; summative assessment results

### G2. Improve reading proficiency district-wide

#### Targets Supported

- Reading (All Students, American Indian, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic, White, English-Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged, Other Subgroup)

#### Resources Available to Support the Goal

- Resources: Funding for Training (Title I/II and RTTT Grant); District Reading Specialist; School Site Reading Coaches

#### Targeted Barriers to Achieving the Goal

- Barriers: 1) Children entering school are not ready to learn.
- 2) Content area teachers lack of skills to teach content area reading.

## Plan to Monitor Progress Toward the Goal

Review of formative and summative assessments

**Person or Persons Responsible**

K12 Director, RTTT Coordinator, VIP Coordinator, District Reading Specialist

**Target Dates or Schedule:**

On-going

**Evidence of Completion:**

Assessment print outs

## Action Plan for Improvement

### Problem Solving Key

**G** = Goal

**B** = Barrier

**S** = Strategy

### G1. Improve math proficiency district-wide

**G1.B1** 1) Children entering school not ready to learn; 2) Math teachers lack of skills for differentiated instruction and scaffolding instruction; 3) Lack of District Mathematics Specialist

**G1.B1.S1** The District will implement an Early Literacy Campaign to provide parents and the community with information about early literacy, school readiness skills, and resources available to them in the community.

#### Action Step 1

Work with contracted staff to provide differentiated instructional training to middle and high school math teachers

#### Person or Persons Responsible

Acaletics service provider; CCSS District and State Trainers

#### Target Dates or Schedule

On-going during the school year and summer recess

#### Evidence of Completion

Improvements in formative and summative assessments

### Plan to Monitor Fidelity of Implementation of G1.B1.S1

Training sign-in sheets, training feedback sheets, and instructional audits feedback

#### Person or Persons Responsible

K12 Director

#### Target Dates or Schedule

On-going

#### Evidence of Completion

Improved assessment results

## Plan to Monitor Effectiveness of G1.B1.S1

Instructional audits, review of formative and summative assessment data

### Person or Persons Responsible

K12 Director

### Target Dates or Schedule

On-going

### Evidence of Completion

Improved assessment results

**G1.B1.S2** Elementary teachers have become more proficient with differentiating math instruction; hence, more elementary students are scoring proficient in math. Differentiating math instruction remains a growth area for middle and high school teachers. Even though we do not have a District Math Specialist, via contracted services the District is working with middle and high school math teachers to improve their ability to assess student learning quickly and re-teach; and to improve their scaffolding techniques

### Action Step 1

Work with contracted staff to provide differentiated instructional training to middle and high school math teachers

### Person or Persons Responsible

Acaletics service provide; CCSS District and State Trainers

### Target Dates or Schedule

On-going during the school year and summer recess

### Evidence of Completion

Improvement in formative and summative assessment

## Plan to Monitor Fidelity of Implementation of G1.B1.S2

• Training sign-in sheets • Training feedback sheets • Instructional Audits

### Person or Persons Responsible

K12 Director

### Target Dates or Schedule

On-going

### Evidence of Completion

Improved assessment results

## Plan to Monitor Effectiveness of G1.B1.S2

- Instructional Audits • Review formative assessment data

### Person or Persons Responsible

K12 Director

### Target Dates or Schedule

On-going

### Evidence of Completion

Improved assessment results

## G2. Improve reading proficiency district-wide

### G2.B1 Barriers: 1) Children entering school are not ready to learn.

**G2.B1.S1** The District will implement an Early Literacy Campaign to provide parents and the community information on early literacy, school readiness skills, and resources available to them in the community. The District will provide training to increase teachers' capacity to use reading to teach content.

### Action Step 1

District Early Literacy Team will meet to discuss early literacy and school readiness needs and to develop resources for parents and educators.

### Person or Persons Responsible

K12 Director, District Reading Specialist, VPK Coordinator, K-5 ETO Reading Specialists

### Target Dates or Schedule

Beginning of the year, mid-year, and end-of-the-year

### Evidence of Completion

-Early Resources -Meeting Notes

### Facilitator:

K12 Director

### Participants:

K12 Director, District Reading Specialist, VPK Coordinator, K-5 ETO Reading Specialists

### Plan to Monitor Fidelity of Implementation of G2.B1.S1

Monitor instructional Audits and review formative assessment data

#### Person or Persons Responsible

K12 Director, District Reading Specialist, VIP Coordinator, ETO K-5 Reading Specialists

#### Target Dates or Schedule

Beginning of year, middle of the year, end of the year

#### Evidence of Completion

Assessment results; feedback from parents and teachers

### Plan to Monitor Effectiveness of G2.B1.S1

Review of Formative Assessment Data

#### Person or Persons Responsible

K12 Director, District Reading Specialist, VPK Coordinator, and ETO K-5 Reading Specialists

#### Target Dates or Schedule

Beginning, middle, and end of the year

#### Evidence of Completion

Assessment data

### G2.B2 2) Content area teachers lack of skills to teach content area reading.

**G2.B2.S1** The District will provide NGCARPD, Reading Endorsement, and CCSS training to teachers.

#### Action Step 1

Use RTTT incentive dollars to encourage teachers to become NGCARPD and Reading Endorsed certified

#### Person or Persons Responsible

K12 Director, RTTT Coordinator, District Reading Specialist

#### Target Dates or Schedule

On-going

#### Evidence of Completion

Formative and Summative Assessment Results

### **Plan to Monitor Fidelity of Implementation of G2.B2.S1**

Review of training sign-in sheets, training feedback sheets, and instructional audit feedback sheets

#### **Person or Persons Responsible**

K12 Director, District Reading Specialists

#### **Target Dates or Schedule**

Sign-in Sheets: Quarterly Training Feedback: Quarterly Instructional Audit Feedback: Monthly

#### **Evidence of Completion**

Sign-in sheets, training feedback sheets, audit summary sheets

### **Plan to Monitor Effectiveness of G2.B2.S1**

Review of Instructional Audit data and formative assessment data

#### **Person or Persons Responsible**

K12 Director, RTTT Coordinator, and District Reading Specialist

#### **Target Dates or Schedule**

On-going

#### **Evidence of Completion**

Audit summary sheets and formative assessment data (beginning, middle, and end of the year)

## Alignment of Needs and Resources

**Based on school and student performance data at your Focus and Priority schools, describe the process the district will use to align strategies, initiatives, and resources to ensure schools demonstrating the greatest need receive the highest percentage of resources**

Because increasing reading proficiencies is a district-wide priority, each school site is staffed with a full-time reading coach who works closely with the instructional staff to ensure reading is used effectively to teach content. Students scoring level one and two on the FCAT assessment are provided additional instructional support in reading. Eleventh grade students who have not passed the PERT reading and math assessments or earned concordant scores on comparable assessments are enrolled in college readiness reading and math classes during their senior year. Title I funding is used to purchase intervention curriculum that compliment the core reading and mathematics instructional materials:

K-8 Reading Successmaker, Accelerated Reader, Read 180 (6-8)

K-8 Math Successmaker, Acaletics, Adaptive Curriculum

9-10 Reading Achieve 3000

9-10 Math Acaletics Algebra and Geometry, Adaptive Curriculum

School Improvement funding provides academic coaches for math and science in the two targeted schools. RTTT funds a district science coordinator and STEM coordinator to assist school sites with development of science labs, lesson study training, development of STEM courses, and dual enrollment. The Gadsden County School District's Head Start/Prekindergarten uses the DLM Early Childhood Express curriculum. This curriculum has been aligned with the Common Core Standards, the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, and the Florida Volunteer Prekindergarten (VPK) Standards.

DLM is an integrated curriculum that focuses on helping children see the relationships among what they are learning. It encourages both factual knowledge and conceptual understanding. In addition to language/literacy, mathematics and other content areas (science, social studies, etc.) it focuses on social and emotional skills to encourage behaviors that allow learning to occur. It has a family engagement component that provides weekly letters and take-home books for use at home. A monthly activities calendar for home use is also provided.

Each teacher follows a focus calendar which has been developed and distributed by Head Start district staff. It includes a weekly focus question, a language and mathematical objective and Head Start indicators (codes) that represent each objective. Additionally, each classroom has a focus wall that displays the focus question, the language and math objective and the vocabulary words for the week. There are 3 assessments used to determine each child's progress with the LAP-3 and Individual Student Assessment given 3 times per year. The VPK assessment is given at the beginning and ending of each school term with the exception of the low-performing schools which are assessed 3 times per year. The LAP-3 assessment measures developmental growth in seven developmental areas and is administered to each child individually by the classroom teacher. The Individual Student Assessment measures basic academic skills and is administered by Head Start district staff. The VPK assessment measures four academic areas and is administered by head Start district staff. This assessment is considered to be an indicator of how children will score on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. Data from each of these assessments is shared with parents 3 times per year and is used by the classroom teacher to individualize instruction in order to meet each child's needs.

The Gadsden County School District's ESOL Program focuses on providing supplemental instruction to ESOL students especially at our focus and priority schools. The ESOL Program provides an Intensive English After School Program that focuses on Reading and Math. This after school program is funded through Title III. The ESOL Program assures that all after school personnel are highly qualified and experienced ESOL teachers.

These ESOL teachers work with all students, providing necessary interventions, and homework help in the student's native language. ELL students struggle during the school day because they miss valuable instruction due to their language deficit. Although teachers implement ESOL strategies and provide the appropriate accommodations during the school day, ELLs still need additional academic support.

The ESOL Program also provides supplemental instructional materials such as: listening centers along with books on CD, Oxford Bilingual Picture Dictionaries, Oxford Content Area Picture Dictionaries, manipulatives, etc. The ESOL staff works closely with each school to assure that the needs of all ELLs are met with experience, compassion and fidelity.

Students with special needs are provided services and resources that provide the necessary supports required to ensure that the students receive maximum benefit from their educational day. Specialized instruction and services are provided to students in the setting that is most appropriate and identified in the student's Individual Educational Plan. A continuum of service is provided that ensures that each student with special needs receives FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education).

Students with special needs are provided supplemental materials and resources that support their learning needs. Supplemental materials and resources are in place based on the students' individual needs. In addition to supplemental materials and resources, students receive services from support personnel. The services may include (based on the students' needs) therapy, counseling, additional support in the classroom, additional pull-out support or additional support throughout the entire school day. Students receive support in the areas of academics, social/emotional/behavior, independent functioning, communication, and health.

Services to students with special needs are provided by qualified and trained staff members who work collaboratively and responsibly in the development and implementation of the students' educational programs and plans. The needs of the individual students are assessed and the resources are aligned to meet the individual needs.

## Reading Resources

**The district has an approved K-12 Comprehensive Researched-Based Reading Plan**

Yes

**Web Address:**

[http://app1.fldoe.org/Reading\\_Plans/Narrative/CompleteReport1415.aspx?DID=20](http://app1.fldoe.org/Reading_Plans/Narrative/CompleteReport1415.aspx?DID=20)

## Writing Resources

**List and describe the core and supplemental writing programs the district will use at the elementary, middle, and high school levels:**

The recent K-6 ELA adoption is closely aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and incorporates writing into daily instruction for all grades. In addition, RTTT allocation is being used to provide NGCARPD training to content area teachers. Reading teachers model and provide strategies for use of Comprehension Instructional Sequence (CIS) strategies to content area teachers. The CIS strategies includes writing as a part of content area instruction. Writing instruction for grades 4, 8, and 10 is more explicit. The District is working to train these grade group teachers to provide more in-depth instruction in writing and to develop rubrics for writing proficiency aligned to anchor papers provided by the State. Based on 2012/13 assessment results, writing is a growth area for the District.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ADOPTIONS**

**GRADE**

**CORE ADOPTIONS**

**INTERVENTION RESOURCE(S)**

**K-6**

**Florida Journeys Common Core  
SuccessMaker**

**7-8**

**Glencoe Literature FL Treasures  
SuccessMaker, R180**

**9-12**

**Glencoe Literature FL Treasures  
Achieve 3000**

**The supplemental resources include:**

**Write Score - all grade levels**

**Accelerated Reader - all grade levels**

Write Score: A tool used to formatively assess students writing proficiency throughout the school year.

Accelerated Reader: A supplemental resource used, along with school site specific incentives, to encourage students to read and summarize their understanding of what has been read.

**The district's master plan of inservice activities, created and submitted in accordance with Section 1012.98(4)(b)4., F.S., supports the writing programs listed above**

No

## Mathematics Resources

List and describe the core and supplemental mathematics programs the district will use at the elementary, middle, and high school levels:

**Go Math Florida!-K-5**  
**Glencoe Math Connects**  
**Glencoe Algebra**  
**Glencoe Geometry**  
**Prentice Hall Geometry H**  
**Prentice Hall Pre-Calculus**  
**Prentice Hall Calculus**  
**Acaletics**  
**SuccessMaker**  
**Adaptive Curriculum**  
**EdHelper - ACT Prep**

The District follows the State's recommended timeline and procedures for textbook adoptions. Recent adoptions purchased by the District have included expendible and web-based resources for instruction and intervention.

GRADE LEVEL

CORE RESOURCE

INTERVENTION RESOURCE

K-5

Go Math

Acaletics, SuccessMaker, Adaptive Curriculum

6-8

Glencoe Math Connects

Acaletics, SuccessMaker, Adaptive Curriculum

Algebra

Glencoe FL Algebra

Glencoe FL Pre-Algebra

Prentice Hall Algebra I Honors

Acaletics, Adaptive Curriculum

Algebra 2

Glencoe Algebra 2

Glencoe Algebra 2 Honors

Ed Helper – ACT Prep, Adaptive Curriculum

Geometry

Glencoe Geometry

Prentice Hall Geometry Honors

Ed Helper – ACT Prep, Adaptive Curriculum

Pre-Calculus

Prentice Hall

Calculus

Prentice Hall

**The district's master plan of inservice activities, created and submitted in accordance with Section 1012.98(4)(b)4., F.S., supports the mathematics programs listed above**

No

## Science Resources

List and describe the core and supplemental science programs the district will use at the elementary, middle, and high school levels:

**Pearson Interactive Science**  
**Pearson Florida Comprehensive Science**  
**Prentice Hall Chemistry**  
**Prentice Hall Environmental Science**  
**Prentice Hall Physics**  
**Adaptive Curriculum**  
**Brain Pop**  
**Gizmos**  
**Edument**

The District follows the State's recommended timeline and procedures for textbook adoptions. Recent adoptions purchased by the District have included expendible and web-based resources for instruction and intervention.

GRADE LEVEL

CORE RESOURCE

INTERVENTION RESOURCE

K-5

Pearson, Florida Interactive Science

Adaptive Curriculum

Brain Pop

6-8

Pearson, Florida Comprehensive Science

Adaptive Curriculum

Edument

9-12

Pearson /Prentice Hall, Biology (AP)

Prentice Hall, Chemistry

Prentice Hall, Environmental Science

Prentice Hall, Physics

Gizmos, Adaptive Curriculum

**The district's master plan of inservice activities, created and submitted in accordance with Section 1012.98(4)(b)4., F.S., supports the science programs listed above**

No

## Curriculum Alignment and Pacing

**The district's instructional pacing guides are aligned to Florida's standards for reading, writing, mathematics, and science. Pacing guides will be made available upon request**

Yes