



PDK Curriculum Management Audit

Executive Summary

January 23, 2012

Dr. John Murdoch, Lead Auditor

The Board of Education, Superintendent Donna Hargens, and district and school based employees are to be commended for the open and forthright manner in which they provided auditors access to district documents and personnel, parents, and patrons for interviews. All requests were honored in a timely manner. Dr. Lynne Wheat and her staff worked tirelessly to ensure auditors were provided everything necessary to complete this report.

Even with their deep understanding of the challenges facing JCPS, auditors found (after having visited the vast majority of the district's classrooms) no reason for public abandonment of their public school system. On the contrary, there is strong evidence of the board, administration, and public's firm determination to acknowledge deficiencies and work together to ameliorate them. (from Finding 1.1)

The Curriculum Unity Model



Audit Principles

- **The Principle of Technical Expertise**
- **The Principle of Independence**
- **The Principle of Objectivity**
- **The Principle of Consistency**
- **The Principle of Materiality**
- **The Principle of Full Disclosure**

Data Sources of the Curriculum Management Audit

Documents included written board policies, administrative regulations, curriculum guides, achievement data, memoranda, budgets, state reports, accreditation documents, and any other source of information that would reveal elements of the written, taught, and tested curricula and linkages among these elements. (Approximately 530 documents / categories of documents were reviewed by auditors)

Data Sources of the Curriculum Management Audit

Interviews were conducted by auditors to explain contextual variables that were operating in the school system at the time of the audit.

School Visits: all building sites were toured by the PDK-CMSi audit team. Site visits reveal the actual context in which curriculum is designed and delivered in a school system.

Five Audit Standards

The five standards employed in the PDK-CMSi Curriculum Management Audit in the Jefferson County Public School District were:

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

The Concept Behind a Deficit Audit

- Patrons expect their school district to do a good job e.g. “No one cheers when the train is on time.”
- An underlying concept of the audit is that in education, “One does not have to be sick to get better.”
- Audits simply report discrepancies and formulate recommendations to ameliorate them.

Compelling Reason

As one elected official observed, “The City of Louisville and Jefferson County cannot prosper without a strong public school system.”

Jefferson County Public Schools

Dr. Donna Hargens's 90 Day Plan

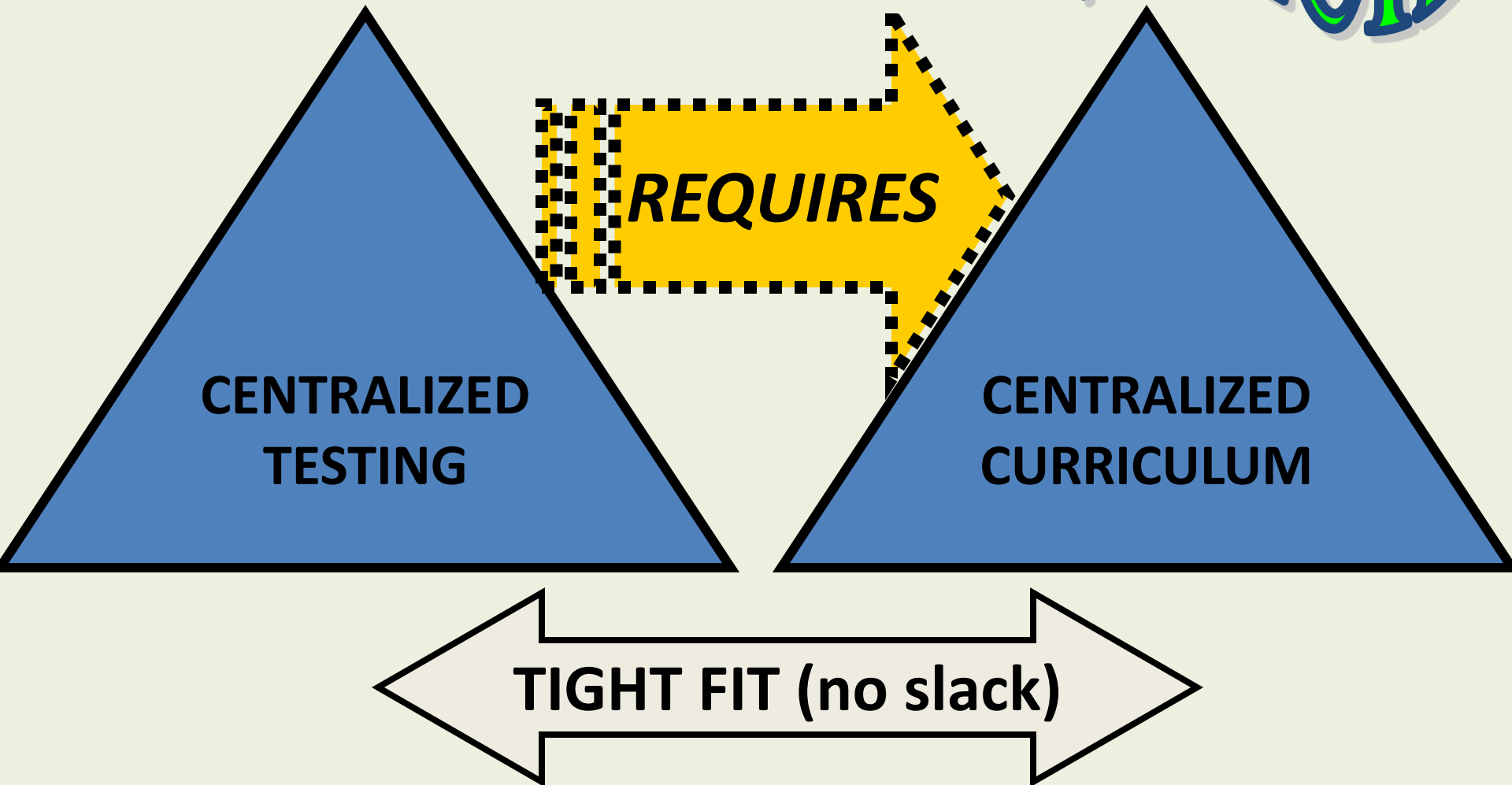
Goal 1—Strategy 4:

“Conduct an external Curriculum Management Audit™, i.e., a “systems” approach to educational improvement.”

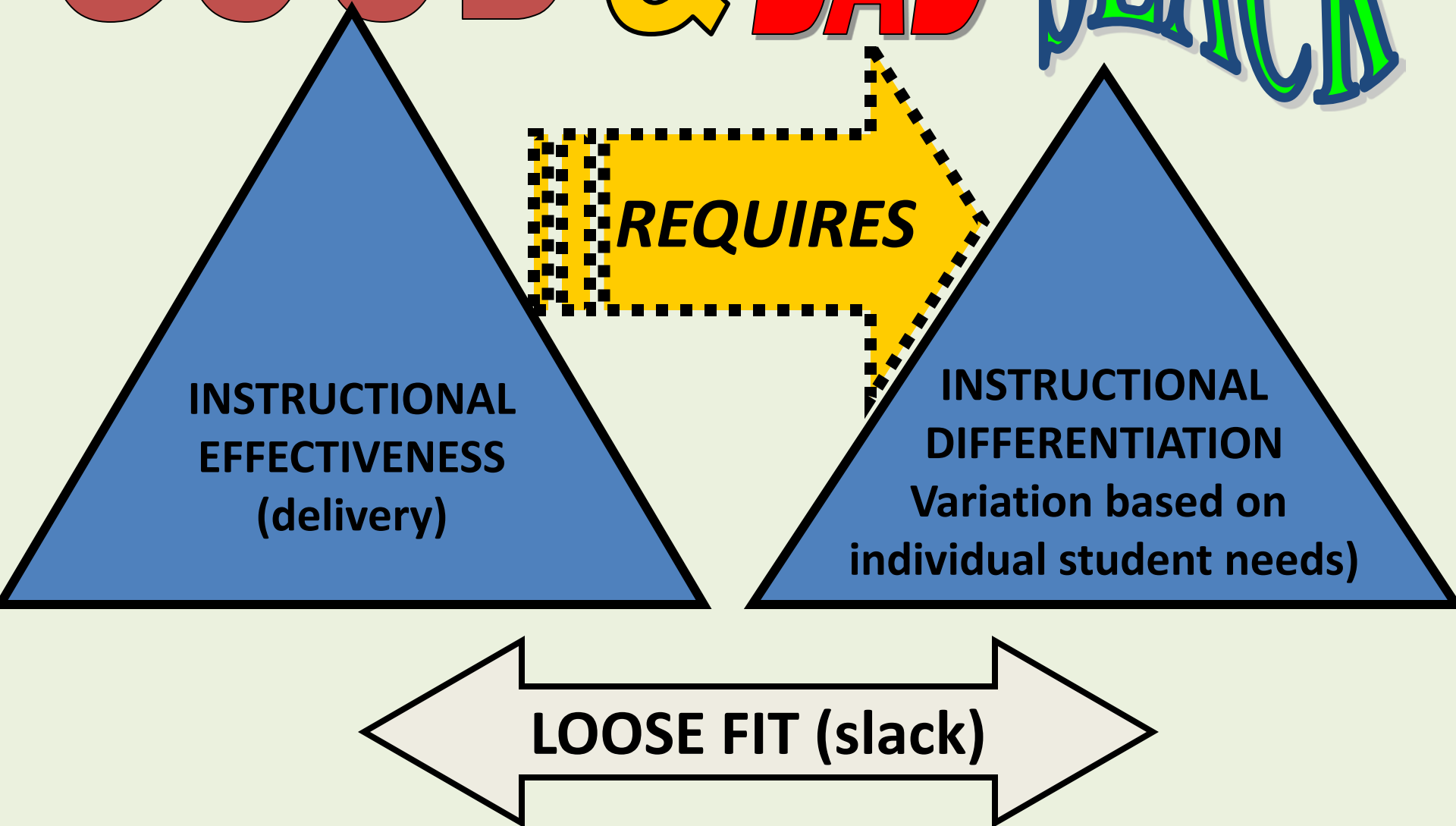
District's Reason for Conducting this Audit

We are asking for this review in order for us to know exactly what we need to improve to support student achievement. This review process is not being imposed by the state or any other agency. It is something we want in order to establish an objective, reliable baseline of where we currently are in areas that specifically impact students. Implementing and monitoring an aligned curriculum can result in measureable increases of student achievement.

GOOD & BAD SLACK



GOOD & BAD SLACK



What Auditors Found

Standard One: Control

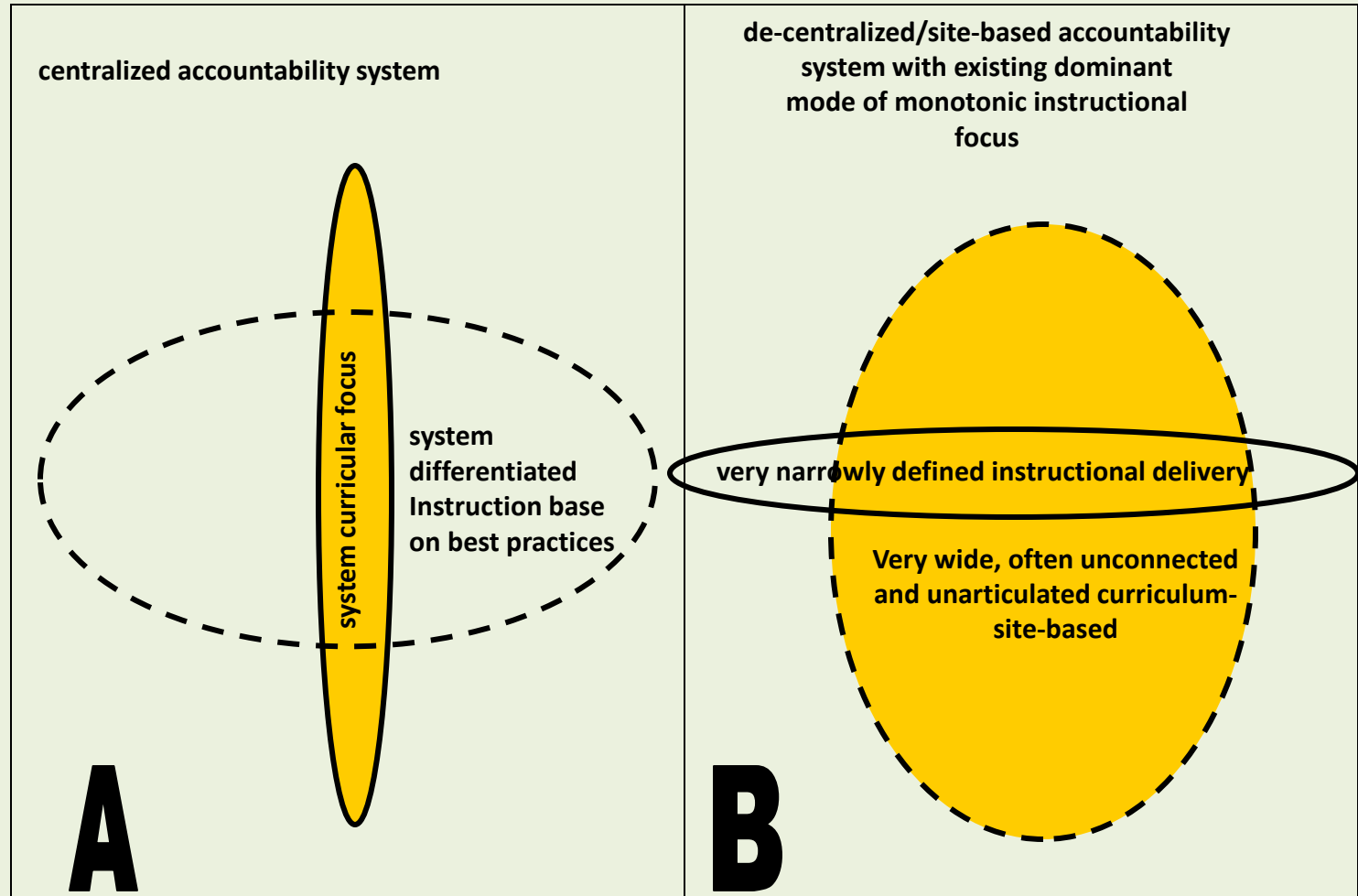
Finding 1.1:

The perceptions of school personnel and the public show a lack of trust in the district's ability to effectively design and deliver a high quality curriculum to students.

Finding 1.1 Detail

- JCPS schools are generally better than the public thinks.
- The net effect of governing through oral traditions (rather than by policies and regulations) is that JCPS has become a system of schools rather than a school system.
- There is a lack of credibility of the district administration.
- While auditors found variation in the understanding of the roles and responsibilities of SBDM Councils, their overall sense was that there was not significant conflict and that, in fact, there was a genuine recognition by SBDM Councils of the need for strong district support and the desire to partner with district leadership.

What NCLB Requires



System "A" not "B"

Finding 1.1 Detail

- A review of district level program evaluations completed over the past five years revealed that these evaluations were not linked to system results and were inadequate to inform decision making for program continuation, refinement, or termination.
- Data showed that “the least experienced teachers were teaching in the most high risk schools” and “two-thirds of teacher transfers were out of low wealth schools.”
- The district has not been able to fully honor diversity, provide a consistent and equitable educational program, and at the same time provide school choice in an autonomous school-based decision-making model. The perception is that schools of choice with their selective enrollment policies often exclude low SES students.

What Auditors Found

Standard One: Control

Finding 1.2

Board of education policies and administrative regulations, along with the model policies provided by district staff to support implementation of School-based Decision Making (SBDM), do not provide adequate guidance needed for effective management of curriculum and related district functions, consistency in organizational operations, or system quality control.

What Auditors Found

Standard One: Control

Finding 1.3

Evidence of planning and plans were found in the Jefferson County Public Schools, but planning processes, plans, strategies, and action steps to promote desired change are inadequate at both the system and site levels.

What Auditors Found

Standard One: Control

Finding 1.4

Most job descriptions reviewed met audit quality standards for design.

However, the generic nature of some job descriptions limited their usefulness as tools to inform employees of their specific duties.

What Auditors Found

Standard One: Control

Finding 1.5

The design of the organizational chart is inconsistent with the principles of sound management. Positions are not logically grouped, spans of control are excessive, some supervisory relationships are unclear, essential positions are missing from the chart, and relative levels of responsibility are not accurately portrayed.

What Auditors Found

Standard Two: Curriculum

Finding 2.1 The Jefferson County Public School District does not have a comprehensive plan or a documented process to coordinate and direct the design, delivery, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum, resulting in non aligned curriculum delivery.

What Auditors Found

Standard Two: Curriculum

Finding 2.2:

The scope of the written curriculum in core academic areas is adequate at the elementary level and inadequate at the middle and high school levels. Overall the scope of the written curriculum in the Jefferson County Public Schools is inadequate to direct teaching and learning.

What Auditors Found

Standard Two: Curriculum

Finding 2.3

The quality of curriculum guides is inadequate to direct delivery of the written, taught, and tested curriculum in the district.

What Auditors Found

Standard Two: Curriculum

Finding 2.4

Curriculum resource documents are inadequate to support effective instruction and students' success on high stakes tests; they lack specificity, feasibility, and congruent alignment (the matching of content, context, and cognition).

What Auditors Found

Standard Two: Curriculum

Finding 2.5

The taught curriculum does not consistently align with the written curriculum in either content or cognitive type.

What Auditors Found

Standard Three: Consistency & Equity

Finding 3.1

Inequalities exist in access to comparable programs, services, and learning opportunities. Resource allocation practices have contributed to some inequities.

What Auditors Found

Standard Three: Consistency & Equity

Finding 3.2

Numerous professional development opportunities are offered, but a process is not in place to coordinate and align their implementation, and as a consequence, their effectiveness is unknown.

What Auditors Found

Standard Three: Consistency & Equity

Finding 3.3

Expectations for curriculum delivery are not clearly defined and do not provide consistent direction for instructional practices.

What Auditors Found

Standard Three: Consistency & Equity

Finding 3.4

The instructional monitoring process is not formalized to provide for consistent feedback to guide curriculum delivery and improve student achievement.

What Auditors Found

Standard Three: Consistency & Equity

Finding 3.5

Teacher and building administrator evaluation procedures are defined and allow for constructive feedback. However, the implementation of the evaluation process is inconsistent in providing specific recommendations for professional growth. Quality control of school leadership and personnel management decisions is compromised by ineffective implementation of the principal evaluation process.

What Auditors Found

Standard Four: Use of Results

Finding 4.1

The district has an evolving system of formative and summative assessments but lacks a comprehensive planning approach to student assessment and program evaluation to provide direction for producing expected learning results.

What Auditors Found

Standard Four: Use of Results

Finding 4.2

The scope of assessment is inadequate for core and non-core K-12 courses to guide curriculum and instructional decision making. Summative assessment is adequate for core courses measured by state assessments but is inadequate for all other courses. Formative assessment is adequate for basic core courses in reading/English K-12, mathematics grades K-12, science grades 1-11, and social studies grades 3-11, but inadequate for all other core and non-core courses.

What Auditors Found

Standard Four: Use of Results

Finding 4.3

While some formative and summative data are available, the district lacks a system of data use for key functions such as planning, curriculum management, professional development, program evaluation, budgeting, and facility management.

What Auditors Found

Standard Four: Use of Results

Finding 4.4

Student performance on state assessments has remained lower than the state average at the elementary and middle school levels but near the state average at the high school level; substantial achievement gaps exist among subgroup populations, and trend analyses indicate gaps are likely to persist barring intervention.

What Auditors Found

Standard Four: Use of Results

Finding 4.5

Evaluation processes have not been adequately established to guide the district in adopting, implementing, and analyzing instructional programs for cost-benefits or for their effectiveness in meeting the system's desired outcomes.

What Auditors Found

Standard Five: Productivity

Finding 5.1

Comprehensive financial audits report that the district is fiscally sound. However, budgetary decisions are based on tradition and are formula-driven. The current budget development and decision-making process are not tightly linked to the district's curricular goals and strategic priorities. Additionally, there are no cost benefit budgetary analyses in place to ensure district productivity.

What Auditors Found

Standard Five: Productivity

Finding 5.2

Long-range facility planning is adequate; however, the design of the existing student distribution plan compromises the efficiency of facility usage, resulting in many crowded classrooms and instructional activity being hampered by inadequate space. School facilities are generally clean and adequately maintained to support a quality learning environment.

What Auditors Found

Standard Five: Productivity

Finding 5.3

The design of the district level technology plan is adequate; however, most school improvement plans do not consistently align with the district technology plan. Technology is available for instructional use, but its use is generally limited to teacher-centered activities. Lack of coordination at all levels of the organization exacerbates the ability to deliver a cohesive approach to the selection, adoption, implementation, and evaluation of technology systems and software used to improve organizational effectiveness.

What Auditors Found

Standard Five: Productivity

Finding 5.4

Program interventions to improve student achievement are not systematically selected, monitored, and evaluated for long-term effectiveness.

(Note: Auditors were presented with over 800 program titles)

Recommendation 1

Organizational Structure

- **Adopt policies governing the management of the table of organization and related job descriptions.**
- **Revise the table of organization consistent with sound management principles.**
- **Through the use of a Level II analysis, reconfigure personnel to ensure that all essential functions are covered—especially those relating to curriculum design, delivery, assessments, data management and analysis, and program evaluation.**
- **Prepare and adopt a set of quality job descriptions and related appraisal instruments for all personnel.**

Recommendation 2

Polices / Regulations

- **Review, revise, adopt, and implement board policies to provide for a sound local system of curriculum management and control.**
- **Review and revise Site-based Decision Making (SBDM) sample policies to be consistent with board policy.**

Recommendation 3

System-wide Planning

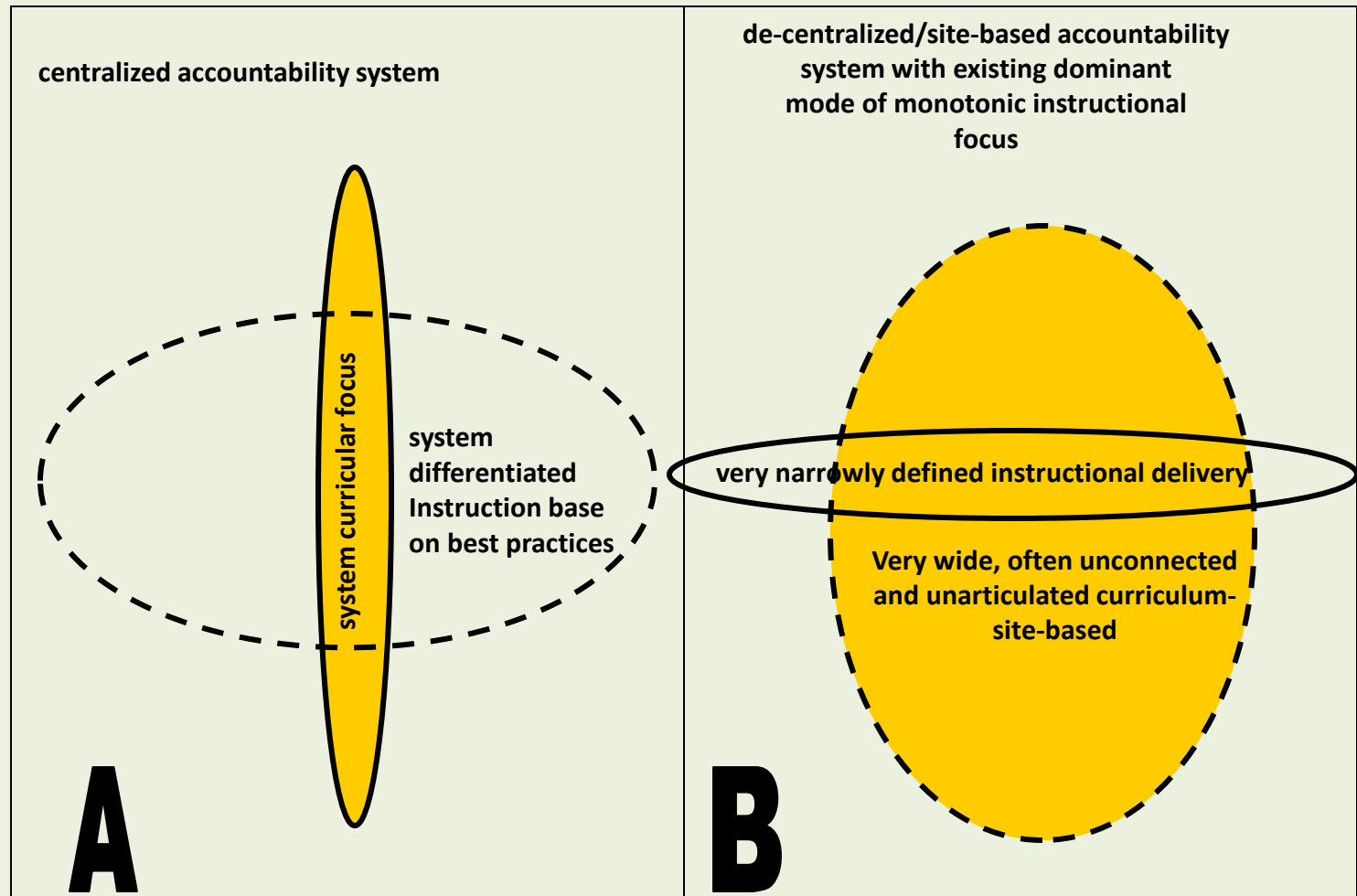
- **Redesign the planning process to provide a coherent focus and improved system connectivity in the district to facilitate fulfillment of the vision of the board of education and new leadership.**

Recommendation 4

Curriculum Alignment

- **Design and implement a comprehensive curriculum management system that integrates curriculum development, staff development, and staff appraisal and provides continuity and consistency across all grade levels and schools. Consolidate curriculum guides and resources for all courses offered in the district, integrating curriculum expectations for special populations within the documents.**

What NCLB Requires



System "A" not "B"

Recommendation 5

Assessment / Program Evaluation

- **Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for student assessment and program evaluation that requires data use at district and site levels to close the achievement gaps persistent among subgroups, to raise the level of achievement for all students, and to provide feedback for decisions regarding curriculum management and program adoption, implementation, continuation, expansion, modification, or termination.**

Recommendation 6

Instruction

- **Institutionalize instructional best practices for the effective delivery of the district's written curriculum.**

Recommendation 7

Monitoring Instruction

- **Require procedures for monitoring of district instructional practices to promote consistency across all levels of the school district.**

Recommendation 8

Professional Development

- **Design and implement a coordinated, system-wide professional development program that supports the district curriculum and focuses on improved student achievement.**

Recommendation 9

Equity

- **Provide equal access to comparable programs, services, and opportunities to impact student achievement.**
- **Eliminate the achievement gap between ethnic and socioeconomic student groups.**
- **Take further steps to allocate resources based on student needs.**

Recommendation 10

Financial Management

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

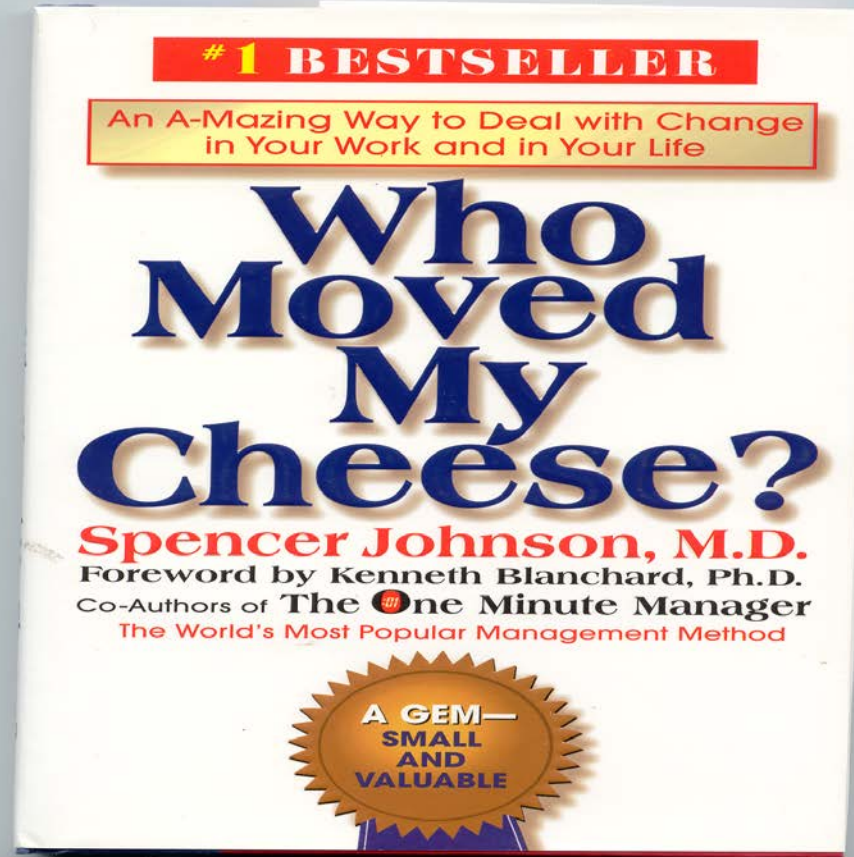
Summary of Recommendations

1. Reorganize administrative services and reconfigure personnel to ensure that all essential functions are covered. Write job descriptions specifically detailing duties and evaluate against those duties for accountability.
2. Review, revise, adopt, and implement board policies to provide for a sound local system of curriculum management and control.
3. Redesign the planning process to provide a coherent focus and improved system connectivity.
4. Design and implement a comprehensive curriculum management system.
5. Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for student assessment and program evaluation.

Summary of Recommendations Cont.

6. Institutionalize instructional best practices for the effective delivery of the district's written curriculum.
7. Require procedures for monitoring of district instructional practices.
8. Design and implement a coordinated, system-wide professional development program that supports the district curriculum and focuses on improved student achievement.
9. Provide equal access to comparable programs, services, and opportunities to impact student achievement. Eliminate the achievement gap between ethnic and socioeconomic student groups. Take further steps to allocate resources based on student needs.
10. Implement a program based budget which reflects priorities based upon program efficacy.

Understanding Change



Understanding Change

Time is a Variable

1. **Denial** – feeling there is no need to change.
2. **Anger** – feelings of unfairness / injustice.
3. **Negotiations** – what should the new JCPS look like and what must I do (recommendations can provide guidance).
4. **Change** –actual point of implementing the agreed upon changes.
5. **Acceptance** – feelings of I can make this work.

Even with their deep understanding of the challenges facing JCPS, auditors found (after having visited the vast majority of the district's classrooms) no reason for public abandonment of their public school system. On the contrary, there is strong evidence of the board, administration, and public's firm determination to acknowledge deficiencies and work together to ameliorate them.

(Finding 1.1)

It is sincerely hoped by the Jefferson County Public School District's Curriculum Management Audit™ team that this report will provide the stimulus for the board, administration, teachers, and community to take stock of their present situation and unite together to accomplish these very doable tasks. The audit team is optimistic that given proper attention to the areas requiring improvements in the district, as cited by this audit, the expectation of the board and professional staff for further betterment of a system will be met. The Curriculum Management Audit™ will provide direction on how to continue to develop and maintain the focus that is necessary for maximizing student learning and for closing the achievement gap among students and schools as well as challenging those students who already demonstrate high levels of performance—best wishes.