2020-2021

Mt. Diablo Unified School District

Systemic Instructional Review

ccee

California Collaborative
for Educational Excellence

Direct Technical Assistance

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I. About the Report

What is the Systemic Instructional Review?

A systemic instructional review (SIR) is a diagnostic of an organization's instructional programs, practices, and implementation of initiatives (academic, behavioral, and social-emotional) from pre-K to 12th grade. A SIR is designed to guide sustainable practice that is grounded in a continuous improvement model and the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) defines MTSS as "a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based systematic practices to support a rapid response to students' needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision-making" (Title IX). Previously known as Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI2) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), MTSS provides the umbrella under which both live. MTSS consists of six critical components: Leadership, Communication/Collaboration, Capacity/Infrastructure, Data-based Problem-solving, Three-Tiered Instruction/Intervention, and Data Evaluation. The foundational work of the SIR has MTSS at its core.

The purpose of a systemic instructional review is to help support a local educational agency (LEA) identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) in the implementation of instructional initiatives and practices. Data is collected through focus group interviews, individual interviews, observations of all aspects of the instructional program, artifact reviews, and data analysis. Stakeholders at multiple levels (students, families, teachers, school site staff and administration, governance members, and district office leadership) are involved throughout the data collection process.

The SIR culminates in recommended action steps that are designed to assist districts in creating coherence throughout the system by supporting a strong focus on instruction, developing collaborative cultures, enhancing deeper learning, and establishing accountability throughout the system. These recommended actions are intended to serve the district as a roadmap to systemic instructional improvement.

Post SIR Steps

Once the SIR report is completed, the district's first step is to prioritize the action steps from the report and engage in cycles of continuous improvement with progress-monitoring data indicators and evidence to validate completion. CCEE can serve the district, if desired, in its role to advise and assist the district in this process and work with the district to identify supports needed to implement the SIR actions leading to student success.

Activities driven by the SIR should ideally align with a district plan with priorities, actions, and progress-monitoring data indicators. In its role, as defined in EDC 52072, to determine the capacity of the school district to implement the recommendations (identified as action steps within the SIR) and therefore will monitor and communicate the progress of the district implementation of SIR actions and recommendations to the County Office of Education (COE), State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI), and State Board of Education (SBE) twice a year (fall and spring).

The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence

The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) is a statewide agency that works to strengthen California's public-school system so LEAs can build their capacity to improve student outcomes. The CCEE partners with the California Department of Education (CDE), county offices of education, and other stakeholders, including a statewide network of experts who support LEAs under the System of Support and specialize in instructional practices targeting students with disabilities (SWD), English learners (EL), low-income students, and foster youth.

Project Inception

In December 2019, the 2018-19 school year accountability results for the CA Dashboard were released. This year marked the third year for the CA Dashboard, which enacted Education Code subdivision (g) of Section 52064.5 (CA School Dashboard) for three or more pupil subgroups identified pursuant to Section 52052 or, if the school district has less than three pupil subgroups, all of the school district's pupil subgroups, and fails to meet priority outcomes in three out of four consecutive school years, the district is eligible for support from CCEE. The following table demonstrates how Mt. Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD) met the criteria for Education Code subdivision (g) of Section 52064.5:

Student Groups	2017 Priority	2018 Priority	2019 Priority
African American Students	» Pupil Achievement » School Climate	» Pupil Engagement » School Climate	» Pupil Engagement » School Climate
Students Experiencing Homelessness	» Pupil Achievement » Pupil Engagement	» Pupil Achievement » Pupil Engagement » School Climate	» Pupil Achievement » Pupil Engagement » School Climate
Foster Youth	» Pupil Achievement » School Climate	» Pupil Achievement » Pupil Engagement » School Climate	» Pupil Achievement » School Climate » Outcomes in a Broad Course of Study

As a result of meeting the criteria, the CCEE SIR team met with MDUSD and Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) to present information about what a systemic instructional review involves, the needs of the district, and the overall timeline of the review. Data collection began in early 2020 however SIR activities were paused when the COVID-19 pandemic closed schools in March 2020. At the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year CCEE and MDUSD re-engaged in the SIR process as an opportunity to use the findings to provide direction for the district and its improvement efforts.

Data Collection

Data collection for this review began in January 2020 and consisted of a comprehensive document review of instructional artifacts and policy documents and individual interviews with leadership staff including governing board members. The collection process was then interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in the closure of schools and transition to virtual learning. Regular check-in meetings continued with the district and the COE to determine support needed and agreement was made to continue with the SIR process to help inform the district's strategic instructional efforts. Data collection resumed in January 2021 with interviews of individual stakeholders, focus groups with multiple stakeholder groups both inside and outside the district, and virtual classroom visits. Through this comprehensive approach, CCEE staff were able to triangulate multiple data points in an effort to validate the collected data set and individual items.

During January and February 2021, teams of CCEE staff members conducted virtual classroom visits in 14 schools and 127 classrooms. Staff visited six elementary schools, five middle schools, and three high schools. Teams had an opportunity to talk with site leaders and visited various grade levels and content areas. CCEE staff also observed social-emotional learning (SEL) and English language development (ELD) sessions as well as special education programs. It is important to note that the school site and classroom visits are an activity in the SIR process that normally occurs in-person. The CCEE acknowledges that MDUSD, like many districts across the state and nation, is working through the demands of distance learning as well as planning for students to return to school. The CCEE will visit school sites and classrooms after in-school instruction resumes. Data gathered at that point will be incorporated into the ongoing support and progress monitoring of the implementation of SIR actions.

Prior to site visits, CCEE staff reviewed all documents submitted by MDUSD to support instructional efforts. Additional documents were added and reviewed during the period of virtual school and classroom visits and interviews. Virtual school visits were conducted by CCEE teams working in pairs and visits typically began with a 20-30 minute interview of principals, during which they were provided an opportunity to give a general overview of their schools and present their site's areas of instructional focus. Focus groups (18) were conducted with various stakeholder groups including students, families, teachers, support staff, school administrators, labor partners, advisory committees and community committees/groups. Interviews (21) were conducted with individuals in various leadership roles (board members, district administrators, bargaining unit leaders, and teachers on special assignment) across the district. Throughout the rest of this document, the groups listed in the previous sentence will be referenced as stakeholders. All data collection was completed in a virtual format due to the pandemic.

Report Features and Layout

The report is organized according to the 12 CCEE instructional components. Each section includes:

a) a summary of the CCEE instructional component reviewed
b) the findings based on data collection and SWOT analysis
c) the discussion paragraphs detailing evidence based on the instructional component being reviewed
d) the SWOT analysis of the component (strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities); and
e) action steps

The report culminates with a summary that identifies themes impacting the work in MDUSD. In collaboration with the CCEE and CCCOE, the district will create and implement an action plan to prioritize and implement the action steps. Upon reviewing this report, it is recommended to have the CCEE Systemic Instructional Review Components (Appendix A) in hand to see the full details of each instructional component. Appendix B is a table with the action steps organized by theme.

II. Summary of Findings

Summary of Findings

Located in the Bay Area, Mt. Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD) is headquartered in Concord, CA and comprises 31 elementary schools, nine middle schools, five high schools, 16 alternative schools and programs, and two adult education programs, for a total of 63 schools. The district serves the Contra Costa County communities of Clayton, Concord, Pleasant Hill, portions of Martinez, Pittsburg, Walnut Creek, and the unincorporated communities of Bay Point, Lafayette, and Pacheco. The 2019-20 non-charter school enrollment was 30,724. In 2019-20, MDUSD had 13,144 students eligible for free and reduced-price meals (42.8% of total students) and 6,185 English learners (20.1% of total students). The primary second language of MDUSD students is Spanish (15.6% of total students) but there are 57 other second languages identified including Arabic, Farsi, Filipino, and Vietnamese. The Governing Board of Education consists of five elected area trustees. MDUSD's workforce is staffed by 1,699 certificated teachers, librarians, psychologists, nurses, speech pathologists, and special education staff. There are 1,359 classified support personnel and 174 certificated management staff members. The district is led by Superintendent Dr. Adam Clark who is new to MDUSD, joining in July 2020, but who has previous experience as a superintendent and as a school and district leader at multiple levels.

The purpose of the SIR report is to focus on the quality of instructional systems and accountability for improving student outcomes. As noted above, in MDUSD, the SIR's specific focus groups are African American students (AAs), foster youth (FY), and students experiencing homelessness (HY). While the achievement outcomes of those student groups served to initiate CCEE's partnership with MDUSD, once the SIR process began, the instructional review examined the progress of all students. The SIR process and ongoing progress monitoring is always done while paying particular attention to the focus groups. During the SIR data collection and analysis process four major themes emerged: **coherence, equity, accountability,** and **autonomy**. Those themes thread throughout the discussion within the 12 SIR instructional components and are further elaborated on in the conclusion. In addition, actions steps that are listed at the end of each SIR component are organized by the four themes in Appendix B.

Research shows continual change in leadership diminishes the ability to create long-term goals, see new policies and initiatives through to full implementation, and create positive student results. Furthermore, staff members and community constituents can easily become frustrated with the constant cycle of change in a district's direction and mission. Studies show a clear link between consistent district leadership and student achievement. There is an expectation of stakeholder accountability that extends to those supervising school operations and academic achievement. Across the country, unfortunately the increase in the number of superintendent positions has not resulted in an increased pool of candidates. Urban districts across the country have the same vacancies targeted at the same candidates, resulting in a shortage of candidates. High expectations, short (3-5 year) contracts, and difficult litigation have increased the pressure of occupying these positions (Nussbaum, 2007).

Superintendent Clark is the fourth superintendent to serve MDUSD since 2013. Dr. Clark has worked to improve relationships in the district, and is focused on: 1) achieving short and long-term financial stability, 2) continuing the district's equity work through the lens of student-centered decision-making, and 3) using data to identify achievement gaps to support student outcomes. However, it should be noted that Superintendent Clark arrived at MDUSD when relationships between the district and bargaining units, such as the Mt. Diablo Education Association (MDEA), remain challenging and need to be strengthened. In addition, MDUSD faces ongoing budget shortfalls.

Fiscally, and after spending down reserves for 5-6 years to provide services to students, MDUSD has now identified a structural budget deficit, and the district's budget is currently qualified. The district cites three reasons for the deficit: 1) a ten-year pattern of declining enrollment (a 10% reduction in enrollment since 2010, and enrollment declines of 1.7% in 2017-18 and .7% in 2018-19) that is projected to continue, 2) the increase in district contribution to employee pension funds, and 3) the need to divert general funds to meet special education state and federal mandates. In 2020, a tentative agreement (TA) with Mt. Diablo Educators Association (MDEA) was reached. By the time the district made the necessary reductions to afford the TA, the pandemic had hit and the state's cost of living adjustment (COLA) was reduced from 2.29% to 0%. The tentative agreement was subsequently voted down by the governing board. With the assistance of the CCOE, MDUSD was able to trim approximately $20 million from its budget in 2020-21 to meet the requirements of the proposed agreement. Part of this was met with the March 2020 MDUSD Board of Education Resolution No. 19/20-42, that called for a reduction of 117.04 certificated positions (FTEs) by no later than the start of the 2020-21 school year. Finally, it must be recognized again that MDUSD's work, just as all districts in the nation, was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis and a year of school closures that necessitated full transition to distance learning.

In spite of the challenges it faces, there are many noticeable strengths when examining MDUSD. Many stakeholders interviewed spoke of a renewed sense of optimism and belief that the district, led by a new superintendent, could meet those challenges. MDUSD serves a diverse group of geographic and socio-economic communities and that diversity is primarily viewed by stakeholders as an overarching strength. There was recognition among stakeholders that communication from the district has improved by using strategies such as the superintendent's Friday memo, which is shared with employees and available to families on the MDUSD website. Another strength is the professional development work led by the Equity Department to address issues of explicit and implicit bias. In speaking with stakeholders while collecting data for the SIR report, issues regarding explicit and implicit bias arose in terms of culturally responsive curriculum and teaching practices. This equity work is supported by a frequently expressed commitment among stakeholders to serve all students as well as the willingness to expand capacity to do so. In support of achieving progress, there is a measurable acknowledgement among stakeholders about the need to develop more aligned and coherent systems for deepening teaching, learning, and leadership development. In support of meeting that need, MDUSD does have a written plan of K-12 prioritized standards, scope, and sequence.

Central to the task of developing coherent systems is the need for a shared understanding and agreement among all stakeholders of MDUSD's instructional priorities, goals, and vision. This lack of shared understanding and agreement points to the need for a written instructional plan or framework that includes those instructional goals and also addresses the themes of **coherence, equity, accountability,** and **autonomy**. The SIR also revealed that this lack of understanding and agreement impacts the district's ability to support teachers' cross-cultural understanding to help them provide non-white students with culturally relevant and responsive curriculum and teaching practices. Many stakeholders interviewed were, to varying degrees, able to identify the district's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) goals but were less likely to articulate the district's specific instructional goals, (e.g., shared instructional priorities and strategies, and common structures and practices for ongoing professional learning). As previously noted, budget shortfalls have created deep budget cuts mostly in certificated management and teaching positions. The need for systemic procedures and practices is also inconsistent in: 1) practices and expectations for using data and assessment results, 2) collaboration in shared professional learning that is grounded in short cycles of continuous improvement, 3) consistency in curriculum implementation, and 4) student outcomes.

The issue of declining enrollment, a 10% reduction in enrollment since 2010, results in a fiscal threat that faces many Bay Area school districts. Student loss will be exacerbated in MDUSD if portions of the community separate from the district. Based on the data collected through the SIR process other concerns that continue to bear down on the district include: 1) a history of superintendent turnover, 2) perceived historical distrust between the central office and bargaining units, 3) technological infrastructure deficiencies, and 4) the challenges of serving its racially and linguistically nondominant students, foster students and families, and students and families experiencing homelessness.

MDUSD is poised to take advantage of a number of current opportunities identified in the SIR report: 1) the district has solid underpinnings to continue with equity work; and, at the secondary level, to expand the instructional alignment underway at the elementary level, and 2) to further address instructional coherence, there is an opportunity to create an expansion of the district's priority standards and scope and sequence into a more detailed instructional plan. An expanded foundational, comprehensive instructional plan should articulate student target goals or outcomes and include specific key performance indicators and benchmarks for the central office, schools, and classrooms. Such a plan should be grounded in continuous improvement practices and processes and place its focus on implementation of district-wide professional learning opportunities that teach, promote, and practice inclusivity, using structures at schools such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), Communities of Practice (CoPs), and Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) that include teachers.

The establishment of clear board policies and expectations and support of the district leadership regarding school autonomy is also an opportunity for clarity. Fullan and Gallagher (2020) call for districts to work toward a state of connected autonomy by rethinking "the system in terms of its three levels—local, middle, and top—so that each level could make a contribution individually and in combination with the other levels in order to transform the system dramatically for the better" (p. vii). The exploration of MDUSD's opportunities also presents a chance to expand its use of an MTSS approach. This includes a deepened commitment to accountability, the monitoring of data and data analysis at central office and school sites, further expansion and use of early warning indicators, and further extension of school-site collaborative learning grounded in short cycles of improvement using key performance indicators and benchmark goals for student outcomes. Finally, there is a strong need to set expectations and provide sustained training on implementing culturally relevant and responsive curricular and instructional resources as well as implementing targeted strategies to support students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, in particular for MDUSD's student focus groups: African American students, foster youth, and students experiencing homelessness.

Strengths:

- There is an atmosphere of hope about the new superintendent. Stakeholders feel that change is possible, and they expressed interest in making it occur.
- Educators in MDUSD voiced a desire to do what is needed to serve all students.
- The diversity of the community is viewed by all stakeholders (board members, district leaders, site leaders, community members, teachers, families, and students) as a strength.
- The Board Resolution on Equity, summer 2020, is viewed as a visible commitment to change.
- MDUSD has an Equity Department that has actively facilitated professional learning in multiple venues on issues of racism, explicit and implicit bias, white privilege, and reflective practices on those issues.
- Throughout district leadership there is a desire to focus on equity as a foundational strategy to improve the academic achievement of all students, especially students of color.
- Administrator Equity PLCs meet throughout the school year.
- There is a written TK-12 plan of prioritized standards, scope, and sequence.
- With teacher input, MDUSD has developed priority standards for TK-5, MS ELA and math, and HS ELA, math, HSS, and science.
- There is an acknowledgement of the need to develop more coherent systems for deepening teaching, learning, and leadership development.
- Stakeholders have voiced that the reorganization of central office personnel has provided clarity of roles and responsibilities to move the district forward, and placing elementary under one director and middle and high school under another director increases coherence. Additionally, there is confidence in those serving in these roles to lead the work.

Weaknesses:

- There is not a shared understanding and agreement on the district's instructional priorities, goals, or vision.
- While the effort to select priority standards is commendable, there is a possibility, based on virtual classroom observations, that the paring down of Achieve the Core priority standards in ELA has led to academic work at lower levels rather than promoting rigorous tasks.
- A culture of school autonomy exists that includes a belief that district initiatives are optional, which negatively impacts MDUSD's coherence as a system, its planning processes to provide school and student supports, and its practices.
- Elimination of the central office's homeless liaison administrator and the uneven staffing of the social work positions have resulted in a lack of overall consistency of comprehensive services for homeless youth and, in some schools, a lack of clarity on a district-coordinated effort to support homeless and foster youth.
- While stakeholders reported improvement in central office communications, especially external communication to stakeholders, family members and guardians who are not English speakers experience challenges in communicating with the district and participating in committees and advisory groups.
- Inconsistent use and understanding of data and assessments across the district has led to variance in collaboration using cycles of inquiry, curriculum implementation, and student outcomes.
- Student achievement data is not regularly discussed or used with cycles of inquiry, shared, nor acted upon across and within principal and other leadership meetings.
- There is a lack of systemic assessment and data review practices to evaluate teaching and learning, e.g., using Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) short cycles of improvement.
- At the board level, there is a lack of dialogue regarding using student achievement data to support board policies that provide focus on and support a clear instructional vision to guide teaching and learning across the district.
- There is a need to recruit and retain more Latinx and AA teachers to bring into closer balance the demographic percentages of teachers to students. In 2018-19, MDUSD had 42.5% Latinx students and 6.3% Latinx teachers.
- The lack of a regular curriculum adoption cycle has led to elements of the current curriculum not being in alignment with state-adopted standards, which negatively impacts the ability of teachers to engage in continuous cycles of improvement and results in a deficiency of culturally relevant curriculum resources.
- Lack of systemically shared values, beliefs, and practices negatively impacts the district's ability to support teachers' cross-cultural understanding and provide non-white students culturally relevant and responsive curriculum and teaching practices. It may also be a contributing factor to disproportionate outcomes by student groups.
- There is acknowledgment among stakeholders at various levels that teachers need more support in learning instructional strategies to better serve students of color and to address issues of implicit bias.
- Some teachers feel that professional development offerings do not meet the needs that they have presently (e.g., distance learning, culturally relevant instruction). Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs) have created resources for teachers, but there is no accountability mechanism to ensure that these materials are utilized during instruction.

Threats:

- Declining enrollment, (34,116 students in 2010-11 to 31,037 in 2019-2020) may exacerbate budget shortfalls necessitating ongoing reductions that might affect stability of staff and programs.
- The historic and ongoing perceptions of distrust between bargaining units and the central office hinders progress toward district goals and may limit the district's ability to generate and support change and improvement.
- The continued efforts of certain communities to secede from the district negatively impacts the ability to achieve a sense of unity and coherence as a system.
- The history of superintendent turnover is viewed by stakeholders as an impediment to reform and the accomplishment of shared goals for MDUSD's students.
- COVID-19 and the challenge of administering assessments in a virtual setting have increased the challenge of obtaining a clear and accurate picture of what all students know and are able to do.
- The current state of technology infrastructure, e.g., bandwidth and aging devices, impacts the district at multiple levels and hinders reaching desired student outcomes.
- Families from nondominant backgrounds (e.g., racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities, and homeless and foster families) are underrepresented in committees, associations, and advisory groups. As a result, district leadership may have an incomplete picture of the challenges in MDUSD. Additionally, leaders could be developing resources and systems that do not reflect the true needs of all of the families in MDUSD.

Opportunities:

- The current superintendent and board leadership team have an opportunity to establish strategic actionable district and LCAP goals.
- There is an opportunity to build on identified priority standards and scope and sequence to develop a unified instructional plan, grounded in continuous improvement practices and processes.
- MDUSD has an opportunity to provide a clear definition of school autonomy.
- There is an opportunity to build on alignment work at the elementary level to eliminate curriculum and teaching practices that are offensive to minority populations and increase the likelihood that teaching is culturally relevant and inclusive.
- There is an opportunity to leverage and scale the equity PLC groups that are happening among cohorts of administrators and to expand the program to other stakeholders (e.g., elementary teachers) to ensure that efforts are implemented in classrooms.
- There is an opportunity to build on the Equity

Department's implementation of the PBIS model across sites in a more coherent, consistent, and unified effort to meet the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students.

- There is an opportunity to set the expectation that MDUSD is continuing to build a culture of accountability that considers the whole child and is grounded in MTSS.
- The district has an opportunity to standardize expectations on the use of data to drive cycles of improvement throughout the system and hold itself accountable to improved student outcomes, particularly for FY, AAs, and HY.
- There is an opportunity to incorporate data and data analysis on a regular basis into pre-existing meeting structures (e.g., principal meetings) so that it occurs on a more regular basis.
- There is an opportunity to build upon site-specific and central office administrators who are more directly leading the work for special populations to monitor the academic behavioral, and social and emotional well-being of foster youth and students experiencing homelessness. There is an opportunity to build on site-specific best practices to build cohesive, centralized supports for vulnerable student populations.
- There is an opportunity to implement more targeted strategies to support students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. For example, Black Student Union groups have provided a space for student engagement, advocacy, and community service, but they are not at every secondary campus. The district could increase support for the formation of Black Student Unions and other identity-based affinity groups.

FOR THE MDUSD SIR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, PLEASE CLICK HERE.

III. SIR Instructional Components, Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, Opportunities, Analysis, and Actions

1. Culture, Coherence, and the Planning Process

(CCEE Instructional Component 1) The local educational agency (LEA) places a strong value on culture and climate for all stakeholders through the implementation of district-wide professional learning opportunities that teach, promote, and practice inclusivity and diversity. LEA members implement culturally reflective practices and policies designed to create coherence around an inclusive instructional mission and vision achieved through continuous improvement practices and processes. The LEA has a robust culture of accountability in regard to the academic, social, and emotional developmental of each child. Achievement outcomes guide coherent and collaborative work while fostering knowledge of expectations around teaching, learning, and accountability.

Finding 1a. Many stakeholders who were interviewed for the SIR, e.g., central office staff, principals, teachers, and families are generally hopeful that MDUSD has the district office leadership capacity to guide the district in addressing its challenges in the areas of instruction, culture and climate, inclusivity, and implicit bias.

Finding 1b. There is a need for the district to create an inclusive instructional plan or framework with clear indicators on how to implement culturally relevant practices and policies that are also grounded in specific continuous improvement practices and processes.

Finding 1c. Teachers need more support in learning instructional strategies to deepen their understanding of culturally relevant and responsive instruction, to better serve students of color, and to deal with issues of implicit bias.

Finding 1d. There is an opportunity for the Board to develop policies that provide a clear definition of school autonomy.

Discussion

MDUSD is a district with wide diversity and a geographic boundary encompassing an expansive variety of communities. An examination of evidence collected in the SIR process revealed a general agreement among stakeholders on the district's strengths and challenges in the areas of culture and climate but variety in responses as to how to address the challenges through continuous improvement practices and processes. In particular, it was noted by numerous stakeholders that MDUSD is in need of a unifying instructional plan or framework that includes a statement of what values the district holds as a whole. In the absence of Board policy and a unifying and publicly stated instructional plan or framework, individual schools are often left to undertake that work without collective purpose. According to stakeholders, district initiatives are often driven by individuals and recede when those driving the initiative change positions or leave the district. This impacts the continuity of the district's goals, exacerbating a lack of what Fullan (2015) describes as systemness, an "overall mindset...a commitment to contributing to, and benefitting from, the larger system" (Fullan, 2015, p.5).

This is not to say that the district's leadership team does not provide direction, guidance, differentiated support, and oversight for ensuring the health and wellness of the district. There was a noticeable spirit of hope expressed by many stakeholders. In interviews, stakeholders frequently mentioned a belief that MDUSD is poised to address its challenges in the areas of culture, coherence, and planning. Reasons given for this expression of hope often pointed to confidence in the ability of the new superintendent, a reorganization of the Educational Services Department with its accompanying changes in senior positions, and the ongoing work of the Equity Department in implementing district-wide professional learning opportunities that teach, promote, and practice inclusivity. Some, however, also expressed frustration with those who believe that equity work is solely that of the Equity Department. When queried about perceived strengths in MDUSD, respondents consistently pointed to its people, its human capacity, and many pointed out the district's student population diversity as a particular strength.

Across the system, multiple stakeholders at numerous levels spoke of a desire to meet the needs of all students, yet it was often accompanied by an admission that there are unconscious barriers of implicit bias that sometimes stand in the way. Many expressed a lack of understanding about why they are unsuccessful in educating students of color. Multiple stakeholders addressed this by stating that the common approach is to do what is good for all children, which does not reflect an understanding of what can be done specifically to help particular underperforming student groups. A number of stakeholders noted that teachers are sometimes challenged in being able to connect with nonwhite students. Reasons for this included a lack of training in instructional strategies specifically designed to meet the needs of MDUSD's diverse population, and less often, but still consistently mentioned, a culture of low expectations for students of color exhibited by some educators. It should be noted that in 2018-19, 76% of teachers were white and 71.6% of students were non-white.

There is a history of distrust that exists between the district and its bargaining units. This can negatively impact relationships between the district office (DO) and schools and diminish opportunities to focus on instruction and the needs of students. Perceptions also remain in place that there are "good" schools and "bad" schools, and those

perceptions often manifest into a culture of school autonomy in which district initiatives, e.g., on assessment and instruction, are seen as optional There is also a dynamic in which schools situated in more affluent communities are able, through parent/guardian funding organizations, to provide resources not possible in less affluent areas. This funding model, while bringing additional resources to some schools, further compounds a perception of inequity and the existence of a two-tiered system of "have" and "have not" schools.

Despite these significant challenges there is a general atmosphere of hope and belief that MDUSD can meet its challenges, and the district is positioned to take specific actions to leverage current opportunities. These opportunities can and should begin with a unified instructional plan or framework, grounded in continuous improvement practices and processes, that places its focus on implementation of district-wide professional learning opportunities that teach, promote, and practice inclusivity. Such an instructional plan, with its clear indicators, would accelerate the district's equity work, its clarification of the parameters of school autonomy, and its efforts to further develop its MTSS initiatives. It would also serve as an underpinning of expectations regarding how educators are to undertake professional learning of instructional strategies to better serve students of color, deal with issues of implicit bias, and cultivate a shared belief in the achievement of all students.

SWOT on Culture, Coherence, and the Planning Process

A. Strengths:
- Stakeholders generally reported the hope and belief that MDUSD is, with its new superintendent, Educational Services Department reorganization, and new Governing Board, able to meet the district's challenges.
- There is a measurable belief that educators in MDUSD want to do what is needed to serve all students.
- Many stakeholders shared that they believed the diversity of the district's student population is a strength.
- MDUSD has an Equity Department that has actively facilitated professional learning in multiple venues on issues of racism, explicit and implicit bias, white privilege, and reflective practices on those issues.

B. Weaknesses:
- There is not yet an inclusive instructional mission and vision identified through Board policy and embedded into an instructional plan or framework with clear steps to be taken by the central office, school sites, and within individual classrooms on how to implement culturally relevant practices and policies.
- There are not yet clearly articulated and generally understood expectations that consistent and specific continuous improvement practices and processes, e.g., short cycles of continuous improvement, are to be used to ground the work of school improvement.
- A culture of school autonomy exists that sometimes includes a belief that district initiatives are optional, which negatively impacts MDUSD's coherence as a system, its planning processes, and its practices.
- There is a perception that access to the district's advisory groups could be more welcoming and inclusive in order to attract balanced participation from the community. In particular, stakeholders called out a lack of access for families who spoke languages not typically supported by the district's translation

services or who did not have equitable use to digital communications.
- There is a perception, held by some stakeholders, that the work of inclusivity is primarily to be held by the Equity Department and not by all educators across the system. There was an acknowledgment among stakeholders at various levels that teachers need more support in learning instructional strategies to better serve students of color and to deal with issues of implicit bias.
- In some cases, the perception remains that MDUSD has "good" and "bad" schools based on the communities in which they reside, which perpetuates inequity from school to school.

C. Threats:
- The perception of historic distrust between the district and its bargaining units can threaten the district's potential to address identified weaknesses.
- The threat of certain portions of the community separating from the district negatively impacts efforts to achieve unity and coherence as a system.

D. Opportunities:

- There is an opportunity to craft and share a unified instructional plan or framework, grounded in continuous improvement practices and processes, that places its focus on implementation of district-wide professional learning opportunities that teach, promote, and practice inclusivity.

- The district has an opportunity to standardize expectations on the strategic use of data to drive cycles of improvement throughout the system and hold itself accountable to improved student outcomes, particularly for FY, AAs, and HY.

- While there is acknowledgement that external communications have improved, e.g., to families and established advocacy groups, there is the perception among many stakeholders interviewed that there is room for continued improvement in the area of internal communications.
- There is an opportunity to set the expectation that MDUSD is continuing to build a culture of accountability that considers the whole child and is grounded in MTSS.

- MDUSD has an opportunity to set policies and procedures that provide a clear definition of school autonomy in order to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the DO and schools in planning and engaging in activities that deepen the commitment to ensuring that all students attain educational success.

- There is an opportunity to build on the ongoing work of the Equity Department and set the expectation that this work will be generalized and shared by all district and school leaders and all teachers.

- The district has an opportunity to expand professional learning for teachers in learning instructional strategies to better serve students of color and deal with issues of implicit bias.

- MDUSD has an opportunity to build on the experience of a year of distance learning to promote effective pedagogy and student engagement in an adaptive world.

- The opportunity exists to build on the supports in place for monitoring the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional well-being of foster youth and students experiencing homelessness.

- There is an opportunity to use the internal model of monitoring the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional well-being of foster youth and students experiencing homelessness to build and further improve on a system for supporting the district's African American students.

ACTIONS:
Culture, Coherence, and the Planning Process

1A. Craft and share an instructional plan or framework that connects to other district plans and initiatives, grounded in continuous improvement practices and processes, that places its focus on implementation of district-wide professional learning opportunities that teach, promote, and practice inclusivity.

1B. Analyze the effects of existing school autonomies on student outcomes, perhaps with support from an outside partner, to inform the district's policy on school autonomy.

1C. Set expectations for a culture of continuous improvement at school sites based on regular implementation of short cycles of improvement grounded in data in order to create shared goals and common understanding.

1D. Build on the ongoing work of the Equity Department to deepen educators' understanding of explicit and implicit bias and develop a long term, district-wide plan to counter implicit and explicit biases across roles.

1E. Set the expectation that work to achieve equity and inclusion will be shared by all district and school leaders and all teachers.

1F. Expand professional learning for teachers in learning instructional strategies to better serve students of color and deal with issues of implicit bias.

1G. Expand professional learning for teachers to learn social and emotional learning (SEL) strategies to better serve students of color and deal with issues of implicit bias.

1H. Use the district's existing internal model of monitoring the academic, behavioral, and social and emotional well-being of foster youth and students experiencing homelessness to build and further improve a system for supporting the district's African American students.

2. Curriculum, Learning, and Support

(CCEE Instructional Component 2) The LEA has an MTSS framework that documents and assesses the implementation of all standards-aligned materials, curricula, learning, and social-emotional and behavioral supports (e.g., differentiation options, tiered support options, integrated aligned ELD supports). The LEA uses a coherent, standards-aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment system that is culturally and linguistically responsive and meets the needs of all learners (e.g., gifted, English learners, students with disabilities, and homeless and foster youth). Evidence-based programs and instructional materials reflect the diverse needs of the student population and provide equitable access for all learners.

Finding 2a. MDUSD has approached curriculum development and support by developing, with teacher input, priority standards and scope and sequence guiding documents for TK-5, middle school (MS) English language arts (ELA) and math, and high school (HS) ELA, math, history/social science (HSS), and science.

FInding 2b. MDUSD's lack of adopted standards-aligned curriculum in all areas—except elementary ELA, middle and high school mathematics (adopted in 2015), and the use of EngageNY for elementary math—makes curriculum alignment and support challenging due to the variance in instructional resources in use across the district.

Finding 2c. There is an urgent need for the infusion of more curricular and instructional resources that represent diverse cultural experiences, that are culturally responsive, and provide positive models for students of color.

Discussion

MDUSD has approached curriculum development and support by developing, with teacher input, priority standards and scope and sequence guiding documents for TK-5, MS ELA and math, and HS ELA, math, HSS, and science. However, it remains unclear how those guiding documents are used with fidelity across all school sites. Classroom observations revealed varied use of curricular resources. A factor that increases the challenge of implementing standards-aligned curriculum is the fact that MDUSD has not adopted a curriculum in a core content area since before the state's implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010, with the exception of elementary ELA, and middle and high school mathematics (adopted in 2015). The district has set the expectation that K-5 teachers are to use *EngageNY* for math instruction.

In elementary, the district has adopted a Program 3 Basic Biliteracy curriculum, *Wonders* (McGraw-Hill Education), that supports both ELA and English Language Development (ELD), and contains digital resources. Classroom observations at the elementary level revealed variance in the use of the adopted curriculum class-to-class and school-to-school. This is further evidenced by some elementary schools choosing to keep *Units of Study* (Lucy Calkins & The Reading and Writing Project) as their ELA curriculum. There are a number of supplementary curricular resources used across the district; some resources are provided by the district and some are purchased directly by schools or by the Mt. Diablo Education Foundation.

While the effort to select priority standards is commendable, there is a possibility that the paring down of *Achieve the Core* (Student Achievement Partners, 2020) has kept the expected ELA standards focused only on key ideas and details without focus on craft and structure and integration of knowledge and ideas, as well as on only writing to text types and purposes without research to build and present knowledge. This could leave most of the expected work at lower levels rather than promoting rigorous tasks that really incorporate deep dives into text and build confident readers.

In addition to the development of MDUSD's priority standards and scope and sequence documents and its instructional calendars, the district has undergone a reorganization that has led to an increase in its focus on curriculum development and support. Part of that focus has manifested in the district partnering with CCCOE and sending representatives to its curriculum committee and subcommittees. Multiple interviews with stakeholders revealed a general readiness on the part of DO and school leaders, and many teachers, to engage further in improving curriculum development and support.

Stakeholders interviewed generally reported that a lack of district-aligned curriculum across all content areas sometimes created challenges in instructional design, assessment of learning, and professional development. The impact on professional development arises because, without a common curriculum and a clear, written instructional plan, there is no basis on which to build collaborative professional learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). The lack of common curriculum also impacts the calibration of high expectations for students and the development of common, clearly identified learning goals that provide students a path to mastery of skills and concepts. It also leads to difficulty in creating common practices for the evaluation of student learning.

Stakeholders also frequently mentioned a lack of readily available culturally responsive literature and instructional materials. Those interviewed occasionally noted instances in which culturally insensitive materials were used in classrooms. Finally, budget shortfalls in the long-term will likely continue to impact district efforts to acquire new curriculum adoptions.

Comprehensive planning and design as evidenced by MDUSD's work in the prioritization of standards, especially with it being undertaken with teacher input, provides a solid beginning in one area of curriculum development and support. There is an opportunity to both deepen and widen these efforts by further alignment under an MTSS framework umbrella, which would be especially beneficial for clarifying differentiation options, tiered support options, and integrated, aligned ELD supports. The district also has an opportunity to further work to deepen teacher engagement in standards and curricular resource alignment through the use of PDSA cycles of improvement to explore problems of practice in that area.

SWOT on Curriculum, Learning, and Support

A. Strengths:
- With teacher input, MDUSD has developed priority standards and scope and sequence guiding documents for TK-5, MS ELA and math, and HS ELA, math, HSS, and science.
- Elementary schools have adopted a TK-5 ELA/ELD curriculum, McGraw-Hill's Wonders, that contains all print resources in digital form and uses an embedded approach to SEL competencies.
- MDUSD has developed instructional calendars for TK-5, MS, and HS that outlines scope and sequence expectations for core subjects.
- Reorganization of the Educational Services Department has increased the focus of DO efforts on curriculum alignment as evidenced by its February 2021 presentation to the board on a possible curriculum adoption calendar.
- Multiple stakeholders noted that MDUSD's DO leadership and school leaders are ready for the work of aligning instruction with an equity lens.
- MDUSD representatives are engaged with CCCOE's curriculum council and its subcommittees in order to build on a deepened understanding of best practices and to utilize the CCCOE's expertise.

B. Weaknesses:
- Other than in middle and high school mathematics, elementary ELA/ELD, and the expectation that elementary math will use *EngageNY*, there have been no curriculum adoptions since prior to state adoption of CCSS in 2010.
- There was a perception of limited face-to-face training for the *Wonders* curriculum, which stakeholders perceived as being especially impactful in their understanding of its digital components.
- Some elementary schools have elected to continue using *Units of Study* for ELA, which makes the ability of the DO to support curriculum-focused professional learning more challenging.
- There is not yet an adoption calendar or written plan for prioritization of resources, nor ongoing adoption of updated curricular resources. It should be noted that

MDUSD has begun this process with its February 2021 presentation to the board.
- There is no budget set aside for instructional materials or curriculum.
- Multiple stakeholders reported feeling challenged by relying on *EngageNY* math resources as a math curriculum.
- Based on classroom observations, there is variance in the way curriculum is used from school to school, including the elementary ELA curriculum Wonders.
- Multiple stakeholders reported a desire for more culturally relevant curriculum resources to be available and to be used by teachers, especially at the secondary level.
- Multiple stakeholders noted instances of curriculum and instructional resources being used that do not reflect African American students' experiences or portray them in a positive light.
- In some content areas, the lack of adopted curriculum that is aligned to standards negatively impacts the ability of teachers, especially in secondary schools, to design instruction that is standards-driven vs. content-driven.
- The lack of shared adopted curriculum aligned to standards negatively impacts the ability of teachers to engage in continuous cycles of improvement.
- Challenges remain in raising teacher awareness of the connection of ELD standards to the ELA Framework, which impacts MDUSD's efforts to deliver Designated and Integrated ELD instruction.

C. Threats:
- Long-term budget shortfalls will likely continue to make it difficult for MDUSD to invest in curricular and instructional materials.
- In the absence of a clear instructional vision and plan or framework, efforts to align curriculum to CCSS and MDUSD priority standards will likely remain challenging.

D. Opportunities:

- There is an opportunity to include in the curriculum review and adoption process district-wide conversations around issues of cultural sensitivity and implicit and explicit bias.

- There is an opportunity to more tightly align MDUSD's work on curriculum development and support within an MTSS framework that documents and assesses the implementation of all standards-aligned materials, curricula, learning, and social-emotional and behavioral supports, e.g., differentiation options, tiered support options, and integrated aligned ELD supports.

- In an effort to further achieve curriculum coherence, there is an opportunity for MDUSD to continue to build on implementation of MDUSD's core content scope and sequence plans.

- There is an opportunity to deepen teacher engagement in standards and curriculum alignment through the use of PDSA cycles of improvement in order to build shared understanding.

ACTIONS:
Culture, Coherence, and the Planning Process

2A. Align MDUSD's instructional work on curriculum development and support within an MTSS framework.

2B. Engage in a curriculum audit site-by-site to determine current practices in curriculum delivery and support. Include in this audit a review of their cultural relevance and sensitivity.

2C. Based on the curriculum audit, prioritize the sequence of new adoption for content areas by grade level and need.

2D. Establish an adoption cycle calendar with projected expenses as part of a board process for prioritization of resources and the budget development process.

2E. Integrate into the curriculum more culturally responsive literature and instructional resources, especially in terms of reflecting positive models for students of color.

2F. Continue to engage in work with the CCCOE's curriculum committee and subcommittees.

3. Instructional Practice and Strategies

(CCEE Instructional Component 3) The LEA has established and defined instructional practices and strategies that are culturally inclusive, differentiated, rigorous, coherent, and standards aligned. Instructional technology, project-based learning, and other experiences beyond the textbook are regularly utilized. Instructional practices and strategies positively support students in developing self-agency and building metacognitive skills. The LEA maintains a district-wide intentional focus on providing a rigorous teaching and learning experience that uses Universal Design for Learning principles for improving and extending differentiated instructional practices that increase student engagement.

Finding 3a. The MDUSD has a written plan of K-12 prioritized standards, scope, and sequence.

Finding 3b. There is a lack of shared depth of understanding and agreement on the district's instructional priorities.

Finding 3c. School autonomy without clarity of district instructional expectations has led to inconsistent implementation of the district's goals and initiatives.

Finding 3d. While there is recognition of the need for curricula and pedagogies that are culturally relevant, inclusive, and sustaining, there is little direction regarding how these resources will be identified or implemented.

Discussion

Stakeholder discussions revealed that MDUSD has a plan of K-12 prioritized standards, scope, and sequence. This is important foundational work for instructional alignment. The prioritization of standards at the elementary level is also evidence of MDUSD's work toward instructional alignment, as well as evidence of ongoing and collaborative work around developing a district-wide focus and plan on teaching and learning. While prioritization is a first step, data collection, including observations, focus groups, and individual interviews, revealed widespread variance in instructional priorities and teaching practices. There are many factors that contribute to this variance, including a lack of shared vision, common language, and agreed upon instructional practices for each grade level and course. Another factor that contributes to the variety of instructional priorities and practices is the culture of autonomy, whereby some teachers and administrators respond to site level needs but may not be aligned to the vision, direction, or mandate of the district writ large. The variety of priorities and practices can contribute to the variance of student outcomes. Establishing an instructional plan would increase coherence and could contribute to improved outcomes.

Many stakeholders expressed optimism about the growth of specialty programs throughout the district, including Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Career Technical Education (CTE). However, the degree to which these programs are being implemented and the degree to which they follow an established set of best-practices varies widely by program and by campus. Additionally, these offerings are not spread equally across the district. The role of data in driving the creation, administration, and diffusion of these programs is unclear. There exists a need for systematic, frequent, and ongoing measurement of student learning in these programs to ensure open access for all students. Additionally, there is a need to assess the extent to which these programs are including and meeting the needs of African American students, foster and homeless youth as well as other high-needs populations (e.g., English language learners, low-income students).

Specialty programs are not the only space where there is a need for more coherent practices around analyzing data for continuous improvement. Interviews and focus groups with stakeholders revealed that the use of continuous improvement data to celebrate growth and problem solve areas in need of targeted assistance varied greatly by site. Additionally, some teachers and administrators were unsure about how to use data to improve learning for African American students and foster and homeless youth. Educators were also unsure about how to use college and career data to influence decisions about CTE programs. Interviews also revealed that there was varied use of teacher collaboration time to engage in collaborative analysis of data and student work.

One area where there is a particular need for increased coherence is in the area of culturally relevant and responsive practices. Data gathered during the SIR suggest that students of color do not feel included in or represented by school curricula. In discussions with administrators and families, participants expressed instances where students were exposed to racially offensive content in classrooms. While there is no data to quantify these instances, the suggestion that curriculum may be anything less than inclusive is a concern that MDUSD must address as a district. Some principals spoke of taking their own efforts to update curricula and use it to reflect more contemporary perspectives on the experiences of African Americans and other students of color. While such site-level work is an encouraging sign, district-wide identification and implementation of evidence-based culturally relevant instructional practices is needed.

SWOT on Instructional Practice and Strategies

A. Strengths:
- Administrators express interest in diverse academic offerings and are developing structures to support these offerings (e.g., AVID, CTE, IB).
- MDUSD possesses a robust team of TOSAs with knowledge and skills on differentiated instructional practices. This team provides another layer of support for learning.

B. Weaknesses:
- There is a lack of clearly articulated expectations for curriculum implementation across each grade level and course.
- The lack of district priorities around a curriculum adoption cycle means that some curriculum is not aligned with adopted state standards.
- While there is an acknowledgement of the need for culturally relevant instruction, there is a lack of shared understanding among teachers and administrators around what instructional practices would be culturally relevant for MDUSD students.

C. Threats:
- High turnover due to the reduction in force (RIF) process means that teachers trained in new strategies may leave high-needs school sites or leave the district.
- Some teachers are experiencing low morale and burnout due to the inconsistency of instructional initiatives.
- The limited face-to-face time between teachers and students outlined in the distance learning Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may exacerbate the ability to implement post-pandemic learning loss mitigation strategies.

D. Opportunities:
- MDUSD has an opportunity to build on the sequencing and prioritization of elementary standards to ensure a similar process occurs at the secondary level.
- The district has an opportunity to build on existing structures for specialty programs, such as AVID, IB, and CTE, to provide differentiated learning and engagement opportunities for students.
- There is an opportunity to connect district and site-based TOSAs for increased depth of collaboration and increased alignment in the delivery of support. There is also an opportunity to leverage the presence of TOSAs to implement a coherent instructional framework.
- MDUSD has an opportunity to leverage the community and culture-building work being done by the Equity Department to create teacher-Professional Learning Communities (PLC) around culturally responsive pedagogy and other equity-oriented topics.

ACTIONS:
Instructional Practice and Strategies

3A. Develop clear expectations for common instructional practices across grade levels and courses, including expectations around the regular review of student work.

3B. Utilize data to identify what evidence-based instructional practices would meet the needs of special populations.

3C. Develop a shared framework for the role of TOSAs and create a systematic plan for using TOSAs to provide targeted instructional support. Adopt a coaching model for the TOSAs and other instructional support staff that can develop expertise and cultivate collective efficacy.

3D. Determine where specialty academic programs fit into MDUSD's instructional vision and continuum and clarify expectations of implementation for these programs.

3E. Develop a strategic plan to incorporate more African American, foster, and homeless youth into specialty academic programs.

3F. Create stability in teacher hiring and retention so that trained and skilled teachers stay at high-needs schools.

4. Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health and Development

(CCEE Instructional Component 4) The social-emotional and behavioral well-being of the whole child is a critical component in the LEA's mission and vision. Identified social-emotional learning (SEL) skills are integrated into the curriculum and instruction practices and resources identified for student support and school capacity building. SEL is embedded in the policy and practice and is modeled by adults LEA-wide.

Finding 4a. The history of siloed roles and responsibilities of the central office departments contributes to the lack of integration and inconsistent implementation of current district resources to support multi-tiered social-emotional and behavioral well-being.

Finding 4b. The principal equity cohorts are building capacity through an equity lens to implement social-emotional learning practices and supports. At select school sites this effort is enhanced with the implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) practices, utilization of an MTSS approach, and targeted support for students in greatest need, but implementation consistency across the district is less coherent.

Finding 4c. While the district has offered multiple training opportunities focused on supporting students' social and emotional well-being, specifically in the area of PBIS, equity, and AVID, there is an opportunity to strengthen these efforts by strengthening expectations and structures for all adults to engage in long-term refinement of these practices at individual school sites.

Discussion

MDUSD acknowledges the importance of emphasizing social-emotional learning to deepen learning and self-efficacy for both students and adults. Several artifacts provided evidence of its commitment to the social and emotional learning, support, and well-being of its students. The evidence included resources developed by a group of educators and families and implemented via distance learning at the beginning of the 20-21 academic year to provide mindfulness sessions for both students and staff. Additionally, the Equity Department and district counselors provide resources and professional development for administrators to develop the capacity to understand and implement systemic SEL within a PBIS Framework. Principals regularly meet in PLC cohorts to systematically deepen capacity to lead multi-tiered SEL practices with an equity lens.

The social-emotional well-being of students is an important foundation for learning and is often reflected in school climate indicators. In focus groups, students generally reported they felt supported by teachers and adults on their campuses. This is consistent with data reported on the California School Dashboard 2019 from the 2018 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), which indicated a high number of MDUSD elementary and secondary students felt highly or moderately connected with school peers and/or staff. There has been an emphasis on providing SEL support during distance learning and that effort appears to be effective for some students. Some families indicated that their children were more comfortable with distance learning than they were attending school in-person and would prefer to remain in distance learning. Some of the reasons for a distance learning preference included a perception that it provided more interaction with educators and a learning environment without some of the common distractions of in-person instruction.

Site leaders interviewed during the SIR also reported a commitment to the social and emotional learning and health of their students. What is less clear is the connections between the district's strong commitment to its programs and the ways in which they are grown and leveraged through continual cycles of improvement for all adults at all sites. Growth could be more fully manifested by leveraging and scaling the work already showing results at the district level and at individual select school sites. All sites fully embracing a district-wide Equity/PBIS/MTSS model would also support this work.

MDUSD established the Homeless Outreach Program for Education (HOPE) to provide educational and referral services for homeless students. Services include referrals to community resources, meals, and school transportation. Additionally, MDUSD has LCAP-funded staff (social worker, resource worker, and counselor) to coordinate and support foster youth services at the district level. What is less clear is how foster youth, homeless youth, and African American students are supported at the site level. There is an opportunity for the district to sharpen its focus and efforts on addressing the needs of its foster and homeless youth and African American students through spotlighting and expanding the work in equity, SEL, and PBIS. A district-wide coordinated MTSS model would support this work. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has required California school districts to drastically reimagine how they will provide students and families with ongoing social and emotional support. The implementation of innovative pedagogical practices such as mindfulness sessions for students and staff provides needed support during distance learning. There is a great likelihood that students, families, and adults working within the system will have increased social and emotional needs that have not yet been identified and this will provide additional challenges and need for services in the near future. It will also provide an opportunity to coordinate current staff (counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and behaviorists) to increase collaboration and alignment in the delivery of support.

SWOT on Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health and Development

A. Strengths:
- The implementation of mindfulness sessions for students and teachers during distance learning promotes the well being of both students and staff.
- There is evidence at many school sites of implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support in addition to support of students through site-coordinated CARE Teams.
- The equity assistant director, equity counselors, and Equity Advisory are raising awareness about the need for more equitable teaching, leadership, and counseling practices.
- The social-emotional and behavioral well-being of the whole child is identified as a critical component in the district's equity work.
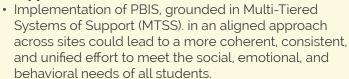
B. Weaknesses:
- While SEL may be valued across the district, the implementation of SEL appears limited to school sites where administrators and teachers are willing to work in this area.
- Elimination of the central office's homeless liaison administrator and the uneven staffing of the social work positions have resulted in a lack of overall consistency of comprehensive services for HY and, in some schools, a lack of clarity on a district-coordinated effort to support HY and FY.
- Though PBIS is implemented at many sites, there is a lack of clarity from site to site regarding expectations for implementation.
- There is evidence of social-emotional and behavioral support efforts, but they are siloed in departments. For example, behavior supports are provided by the Special Education Department, the Equity Department, and by school counselors but those services are not coordinated between programs and departments.
- There are disparate rates of chronic absenteeism and suspensions for the targeted student groups identified, foster youth, homeless youth and African American students.

C. Threats:
- Continued student disengagement as evidenced by chronic absenteeism and poor academic progress during distance learning may result in increased need for social-emotional support when students return to in-person instruction.
- A continued decline in enrollment will result in reduced funding and may affect the ability to provide the necessary support for students' social-emotional needs especially for under-resourced student groups.

D. Opportunities:
- Implementation of PBIS, grounded in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). in an aligned approach across sites could lead to a more coherent, consistent, and unified effort to meet the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all students.
- There is an opportunity to spotlight and build upon administrators who more directly lead the work for special populations (e.g., foster and homeless youth) to strengthen the work of counseling staff and provide tier 2 and 3 support.
- There is an opportunity to reorganize district counseling services by incorporating strategies developed as a response to the pandemic to make services available to students during the school day through office hours and other innovative ways.

ACTIONS:
Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health and Development

4A. Build on the SEL/equity work in the district to identify social-emotional practices, based on evidence of effectiveness, to make decisions on what practices should be scaled or expanded across schools in a coordinated and consistent implementation.

4B. Integrate and coordinate the work, communication, and collaboration of current departments (e.g., Equity, Special Education, Curriculum and Instruction) to align services and support to schools to better integrate strategies and sustain the social-emotional well-being and mental health of students and staff.

4C. Ensure that there is a continuum of social-emotional, behavioral and mental health supports/resources in MDUSD and the process for accessing it is clear so that all schools and families, including those with students experiencing homelessness and foster youth, know how to access them.

4D. Establish coordination between district departments and school sites to provide comprehensive and specific academic, social-emotional, and behavioral support to African American students, foster youth, and students experiencing homelessness.

4E. Develop an MTSS model using research-based strategies, such as PBIS, to decrease the disparate chronic absenteeism and suspension rates of the targeted student groups.

5. Assessment and Accountability

(CCEE Instructional Component 5) The LEA has a systemic process to measure and analyze student data—academic, behavior, and social-emotional learning—that drives the accountability system for all stakeholders (classroom to boardroom and home) and informs a continuous improvement process. The LEA's system of assessment ensures that all students are provided with, know, and understand clear learning targets in all courses and at all grade levels with the goal that each student comprehends precisely what and how to attain mastery of key skills and concepts. The system includes targeted and on-going assessment of ELs to ensure they are moving toward advanced levels of English, reclassification, and closing the academic language gap.

Finding 5a. MDUSD's central office has begun an effort to prioritize assessment literacy and accountability practices among its stakeholders that measure and analyze student data.

Finding 5b. It is unclear how deeply the district's assessment and accountability prioritization has reached into schools, especially high schools.

Finding 5c. While many MDUSD educators understand the benefits of developing assessment literacy, there is limited evidence that MDUSD has moved beyond an awareness level to an implementation level.

Discussion
MDUSD is engaged in developing and refining a systemic approach to measure and analyze student academic, behavioral, and social and emotional learning data. There is a recognition, shared by many individuals interviewed and stakeholder groups, of the need to keep focused on data-based decision-making. In an effort to deepen all stakeholders' understanding of MDUSD's assessment system, the Assessment, Research, and Evaluation Department has provided on its website multiple resources, e.g., written guidance for students and families on how to take California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Interim Assessments Blocks (IAB) at home. Benchmark assessments are in place and used at the elementary and middle school levels, and there is an opportunity to grow that work at the high school level. There are identified assessments at every grade level, but there is variance in how consistently they are being administered,

The district has taken steps to support the creation of a system where there is ongoing, multi-level measurement of learning and where students know and understand what is required to be successful. MDUSD has purchased the Illuminate Education Student Assessment System and is in the early stages of implementation and training. This system is designed to provide integration of multiple data sets, which then provide key performance indicators for educators and students. English learner (EL) students' progress toward academic achievement and reclassification is monitored regularly. For students with disabilities, the MDUSD 2019-2020 SELPA Special Education Plan (SEP), updated for 2020-2021, contains a comprehensive component that focuses the SEP team's planning, implementation, and monitoring strategies and activities completely on data review and analysis. The Student Services Department reported it regularly monitors data on its foster youth and students experiencing homelessness by monitoring the foster youth disposition list, Homeless Outreach Program for Education (HOPE) disposition list, and both student groups' population lists to evaluate students' potential needs.

The impact of the pandemic on student assessment is profound. While the initiatives and practices listed above are commendable, it is less clear how far systemic data review and analysis practices are embedded at MDUSD school site practices, and how consistent they are from school to school. One challenge to system improvement is the limited time in the established workday for teachers to engage in collaborative cycles of improvement as a group. A culture of strong data use to make instructional decisions is also negatively impacted in some cases by the perception among some educators that district assessment expectations are voluntary. There was also a perception, reported by some stakeholders at several levels, that there were instances when they felt educators were resistant to change in practices. Some stakeholders also reported there was a perception that the district was overtesting. Finally, MDUSD's ability to create a comprehensive assessment system will require protocols that generate early warning indicators of students failing to achieve at acceptable levels.

MDUSD has the opportunity to continue to re-imagine and refine its assessment policies and practices based on data indicating which assessment practices and strategies are impacting student learning. Many stakeholders recognize the benefits of educators continuing to develop data and assessment literacy, the ability to review and analyze assessment data, such as IABs, Focused Interim Assessment Blocks (FIAB), and iReady, individually and in groups. More importantly, this deepening assessment literacy must use that data to make decisions impacting instruction and resource allocation. The district has systems in place on which to build capacity in using data to support its students with disabilities, FY, and HY. There is a need and opportunity to do the same for its African American students.

SWOT on Assessment and Accountability

A. Strengths:

- The district has focused groups at the DO and Educational Services Department, and in the Elementary Collaborative, working to organize and structure assessment practices.
- The superintendent has set the expectation to use data to evaluate more than academic performance, expanding to measure climate and culture and 21st century skills.
- The district leadership team has a shared understanding of implementation steps that will be necessary to create district-wide shared assessment practices, e.g., common formative assessments (CFAs).
- MDUSD has assessment calendars tied to instructional windows for TK-5, MS ELA and math, and HS ELA and math.
- Elementary and middle schools use benchmark assessments, e.g., IABs, FIABs, iReady, CFAs.
- ELA in elementary and middle schools use a common writing assessment.
- The DO leadership is leading work at multiple levels (e.g., principals' meetings) in disaggregating data site-by-site, looking at attendance, academic achievement by student groups, and grades.
- The 2019-2020 SELPA Special Education Plan (SEP), updated for 2020-2021, focuses on the SEP team participating in data review and analysis and contains a comprehensive component that focuses the SEP team's planning, implementation, and monitoring strategies and activities completely on data review and analysis.

B. Weaknesses:

- There is a lack of systemic assessment and data review practices to evaluate teaching and learning, e.g., using PDSA short cycles of improvement.
- District expectations regarding data use and literacy results are perceived by some as optional, exacerbated by the fact that there is variance in the use of assessments and the resultant student data.
- Consistent data practices vary school to school, which impacts the level of educators' data literacy and shared meaning-making .
- High school use of benchmark assessments lags, which hinders MDUSD's ability to have a clear understanding of the state of students' learning and understanding.
- Inconsistent Student Study Team (SST) practices are also leading to inconsistent student growth and referrals for assessment for special education.

C. Threats:

- COVID-19 and the difficulty of administering assessments in a virtual setting has increased the challenge of obtaining a clear and accurate picture of what all students know and are able to do.
- Select stakeholder groups of teachers and some parents/guardians have influenced board policy on assessment platforms practices in the past. Assessment policies, going forward, should focus on the use of data indicating which assessment practices and strategies are impacting student learning.

D. Opportunities:

- Build on expectations for all levels to use data in short cycles of improvement to support increased data literacy.
- Build on expectations of site-level use of data to support short cycles of improvement and investigations into problems of practice to build confidence in the instructional strategies being used.
- As implementation of commonly agreed upon assessment practices builds, the opportunity exists to apply the work to instructional decision-making.
- The opportunity exists to accelerate data review and analysis in all areas including academic, behavioral, and social and emotional learning, for all students, with an emphasis on the needs of foster youth, students experiencing homelessness, and African American students.
- In order to maximize the focused use of resources, there is an opportunity to build on the use of data review and analysis at all levels for budgeting decisions.

ACTIONS:
Assessment and Accountability

5A. Clearly set the expectation that data and assessment literacy for all educators is a district goal and provide guidance/professional learning opportunities for school sites in order to implement this expectation.

5B. Establish the expectation that the development of assessment literacy, whether at the DO or school level, will be grounded in using short cycles of improvement to address problems of practice, e.g., PDSA cycles.

5C. Conduct an assessment audit at school sites to determine the assessments in actual use.

5D. Create an assessment continuum that identifies lead and lag metrics and that defines when they will be analyzed at the central office and school levels and reported to the board.

5E. Set the expectation for the use of benchmark assessments at all levels to capture a clear understanding of student learning, at a minimum, quarterly.

5F. Establish focused protocols that generate early-warning indicators for students failing to achieve at acceptable levels as a predictive measure.

5G. Implement data and assessment review protocols that specifically monitor the academic, behavioral, and social and emotional learning and development for foster youth, students experiencing homelessness, and African American students.

6. Student and Family Engagement

(CCEE Instructional Component 6) The LEA practices two-way communication that reflects the cultural and linguistic needs of families in the community and provides resources and activities that give students agency, promotes student leadership, and provides a space for active family and community engagement. The district has both systems and supports in place to successfully engage families and students in an adaptive learning environment (e.g., distance learning, blended learning, flipped classroom), internet connectivity, devices, orientation, and guidance on hybrid learning environments. Clear two-way communication is used with families and cultivates a clear understanding of steps and progress required for students to show mastery of skills, concepts, and grade-level and graduation requirements.

Finding 6a. The superintendent's Friday memo provides an example of clear, unified communication to families and other district stakeholders.

Finding 6b. Teachers leverage technology to engage in two-way communication with families.

Finding 6c. Families who are involved in advisory groups and associations feel like they have a direct line of communication to the Board and district leadership

Finding 6d. There is a need for greater engagement of students and families who are not primarily English or Spanish speakers. Although more than 57 languages are spoken in the district, this linguistic diversity is not well represented in committees or advisory groups.

Finding 6e. The elimination of the central office's homeless liaison administrator creates a missed opportunity for supporting students and families experiencing homelessness.

Finding 6f. Compared to in-person instruction, distance learning has made student engagement with peers and instructors difficult inside and outside of class.

Discussion

Stakeholders shared that with the change in leadership, communication in the district has felt more transparent. Both families and district employees shared that the superintendent's Friday Letter was an important tool in creating shared understanding around the work of the district. However, stakeholders' perspectives on two-way communication were less optimistic. Families who were involved in advisory groups or associations felt like they had a direct line of communication to the MDUSD School Board and to some members of district leadership, but they expressed concern about the district's engagement with families who were not connected to these groups. There is an opportunity to ensure that families who are less connected to such groups feel that their feedback is solicited and concerns addressed.

Families did note the existence of two-way communication between teachers and families. Teachers indicated that they connected to families through phone and email and that they also leveraged technology via Parent Square, Remind, Class Dojo, and Google Sites. Teachers noted that the use of these tools was beneficial at times but also overwhelming to manage. Some families noted that teacher use of tools was uneven, and while some instructors responded to digital messages, others did not. Other families expressed the need for more personalized communication about their child's performance. As the district seeks to encourage greater family engagement, there exists a need for clarity and alignment surrounding what families should expect in terms of communication and what teachers can manage. There also exists a need to build family capacity to use technology to communicate with teachers and to streamline teacher communication with families.

MDUSD may also consider taking inventory of which families feel engaged by the district and which families do not. The majority of focus group attendees outside of the District English Language Advisory Committee (DELAC), Mt. Diablo Black Educators Association (MDBEA), and African American family focus groups, were white. Nonwhite participants shared that they had been proactive in reaching out to the district, to mixed response. For example, members of DELAC indicated that they had taken steps to introduce themselves and the needs of their group to leaders throughout the district. While they found the existence of the DELAC group to be a beneficial space for them to receive support from other families, they felt that communication, particularly at the school site level, could be improved. Families particularly expressed a need for greater support with special ed students who were English

language learners. It is important to note that all of the participants in the DELAC meeting were either English or Spanish speakers. With over 57 languages spoken, MDUSD needs to make a more clear and concerted effort to engage families who speak neither English nor Spanish. The desire for greater resources in other languages emerged in student and family focus groups as well.

The Black Educators Association, which is composed of families, district members, and employees, also indicated that they had been working proactively and collaboratively with the district. Members of both groups acknowledged the district and superintendent's willingness to listen to their concerns. Members of the Black Educators' Association expressed optimism about the Board's recent equity resolution but were concerned that the work of the resolution may not actually shift the culture, change the instructional and leadership practices, or improve outcomes for African American students in MDUSD.

Another finding of our data collection was the need for a more systematic and streamlined set of processes around engaging and supporting foster youth and students experiencing homelessness. At the school site level, some teachers and counselors expressed that they were not always sure how to identify which students were foster youth or unhoused. Other counselors and teachers learned about these students through coordinated CARE team meetings. While stakeholders at all levels were involved in supporting homeless and foster youth, the work was siloed, contributing to confusion about expectations, duplication of effort, and missed opportunities. While the addition of counselors provides increased opportunities for support, the elimination of the central office's homeless liaison administrator leaves a void in terms of the coordination of support services for unhoused youth. MDUSD should consider how it might strengthen engagement with these students' families and also how it might work with homeless and foster youth advocates in the community to strengthen engagement with these populations.

Distance learning creates challenges for student engagement. In particular, students express that engagement with peers during distance learning is difficult, both inside and outside of class. During class, elementary students indicated that there were limited opportunities for them to express themselves or interact with peers. Secondary students indicated that instructors have relied heavily on lecture during online courses, making it difficult for students to participate. Outside of the school day, both elementary and secondary students expressed an interest in increased peer-to-peer interaction within the classroom setting as well as via clubs and extracurricular experiences.

SWOT on Student and Family Engagement

A. Strengths:
- The superintendent's Friday memo serves as an example of clear, unified district communication.
- Teachers have been engaging in two-way communication with families, particularly during the pandemic.

B. Weaknesses:
- The elimination of the central office's homeless liaison administrator creates a perception of missed opportunities for supporting students and families experiencing homelessness.
- Parents and guardians who are not English speakers experience challenges in communicating with the district and participating in committees and advisory groups.
- There is widespread variety in how teachers communicate with families, which can be confusing for families and difficult for teachers to manage.

C. Threats:
- Families from underserved backgrounds (e.g., racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities, and homeless and foster families) are underrepresented in committees,

associations, and advisory groups. As a result, district leadership may have an incomplete picture of the challenges in MDUSD. Additionally, leaders could be developing resources and systems that do not reflect the true needs of all the families in MDUSD.
- Student and family engagement needs will continue to grow as the pandemic persists. Even with a return to face-to-face instruction, some students and families will require virtual support and engagement. It is not clear that MDUSD has a plan for this that is coordinated and sustainable.

D. Opportunities:

- In focus groups, families suggested that there is an opportunity for the district to increase consistency of communication by encouraging principals to reiterate messages shared in the superintendents' Friday memo. Greater coordination in messaging between districts and school sites could be a way to promote coherence or clarity in the district.

- There are leaders throughout the district who are working effectively with foster youth. There is an opportunity to highlight the best practices that are used to support this population of students and to scale innovative practices. MDUSD might also strive to increase its collaboration with foster youth advocates as a way to generalize and align service delivery with community resources and programs that might benefit this population of students.

- The shift toward distance learning provides an opportunity to consider new ways to virtually engage students. This includes increasing professional learning around the types of instructional strategies that would maximize student engagement in virtual class sessions, as well as developing robust virtual extracurricular offerings to support students' needs for peer engagement.

- The shift toward virtual learning provides an opportunity to consider new ways to virtually engage families as well. The district might consider using technology to increase access to advisories, committees, and other family engagement opportunities. The district should also consider collaborating with parent liaisons to understand how these virtual engagement opportunities might impact access for underrepresented families, particularly those including foster youth and those experiencing homelessness.

- There is an opportunity to collect data about the effectiveness of support for homeless youth following the reorganization of that office.

- There is an opportunity to build on the work of the student board member's student advisory committee and continue to engage students from underrepresented communities. Along with creating formal mechanisms for student empowerment more broadly, the district might think of implementing more targeted strategies to support students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. For example, Black Student Union groups have provided a space for student engagement, advocacy, and community service, but they are not at every secondary campus. The district might increase its support for the formation of Black Student Unions and other identity-based affinity groups.

- MDUSD should continue to leverage the Black Educators' Association as a group of thought partners for improving academic and social-emotional outcomes for African American students. This particular group creates momentum to help MDUSD think of strategies for increasing two-way communication with African American families.

ACTIONS:
Student and Family Engagement

6A. Develop formal systems for students to share concerns and become co-collaborators in school and district-wide change initiatives (e.g., student advisory board). Ensure that this student advisory group includes representatives from various racial, ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

6B. Provide more engagement opportunities for linguistic minorities by collaborating with families and community leaders from these populations and providing translation services to increase access to participate.

6C. Develop offerings that would support students and families who have recently fallen into homelessness by collaborating and coordinating with teachers, counselors, social workers, administrators, and community leaders/partners.

7. School-based Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs)

(CCEE Instructional Component 7) Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) exist in every school in the LEA and are representative across grades and disciplines with members that make culturally responsive data-driven decisions to design instruction for all students and their needs. ILTs facilitate site-based professional learning and support the implementation of district and site programs and efforts. The LEA has written expectations for ILTs roles, responsibilities, and team membership and provides professional development on the purpose, process, facilitation, and outcomes for leadership teams.

Finding 7a. District schools have ILTs in place, but there is variance in their purpose, structures, membership, and level of focus on instruction and continuous improvement.

Finding 7b. Instructional leadership is a district goal, though expectations regarding instructional leadership teams (ILTs) within the district's instructional vision remain unclear.

Finding 7c. The development of ILT structures at school sites and training to build ILTs' capacity is not currently a specific focus of MDUSD.

Discussion

Instructional leadership teams (ILTs) are recognized as "powerful levers for making change in schools" (Stricker, 2019, p. 56), especially when there is intentionality about their organization, facilitation, and the support they receive. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (2018) called for supporting ILTs through best practices that include: 1) recruitment of a diverse group of teachers; 2) development of a common understanding of the team's purpose and role; 3) focusing on a problem of practice at a school; 4) setting of goals and engaging in professional learning; and 5) continuous use of data to measure the team's effectiveness.

In stakeholder interviews conducted during the SIR data collection process, there was minimal discussion of ILTs as a process or a structure. In MDUSD, ILTs exist at elementary schools, primarily as grade level leads. At the secondary level, the school leadership structure is in the form of department chairs, who meet districtwide quarterly. These quarterly leadership meetings are organized by content areas, including AVID. Quarterly meeting content is designed and facilitated by curriculum specialists and TOSAs. An analysis of sample agendas, minutes, and slide deck presentations revealed that the focus of meetings was on instruction and instructional resources, but development of ILT structures and skills at school sites was not a focus.

ILTs are not specifically called out under responsibilities in MDUSD's Instructional Support Department Organization Chart 2020-2021. Neither are they listed as an area of responsibility in its Curriculum & Organization Chart 2020-21. The district maintains an online sign-up for site principals to select professional development activities for staff, the MDUSD Principal Wednesday Staff PD Schedule 2020-2021. This sign-up document lists available training by various offices within Educational Services, but training on instructional leadership teams is not listed as an offering.

Various stakeholders spoke of the extreme workload that school administrators face. District-wide ILTs, integrating a common instructional vision, shared practices, and the inclusion of teacher leaders could support site administrators' efforts. With a clearer understanding of the purpose of ILTs, effective team structures, and the role of ILTs at school sites, this strategy could serve to build collective efficacy. In addition, instructional leadership teams with a diverse membership of teachers would be forums for integration of teacher voice, which could be a strategy to help mitigate historical distrust between teachers and management. Focusing on ILT membership diversity would also be an effective strategy to strengthen advocacy for ELs, SWDs, and the SIR's targeted students groups, HY, FY, and African American students.

SWOT on School-Based Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs)

A. Strengths:
- ILTs exist in some form at MDUSD school sites.
- ILTs meet regularly with MDUSD Educational Services personnel and minutes and agendas are shared.

B. Weaknesses:
- Written expectations do not exist for ILTs' roles, responsibilities, or team membership.
- It is unclear how ILT meetings at school sites are memorialized, e.g., with agendas and minutes.
- ILTs are not provided district professional development on the purpose, process, facilitation, and outcomes for leadership teams.

C. Threats:
- The lack of a qualified substitute teacher pool negatively impacts the district's ability to provide teacher leaders sufficient release time to engage in ILT work.
- Restrictions in collective bargaining agreements regarding professional development time negatively impacts the district's ability to build the capacity of ILT members.

D. Opportunities:
- Build on existing structures (e.g., quarterly meetings, etc.) within the Educational Leadership Department to expand professional learning for ILTs on the purpose, process, facilitation, and outcomes for leadership teams.
- Refine ILTs' roles in facilitating site-based professional learning.
- Refine ILTs' roles in coaching on instruction, assessment, and data-driven decision-making.
- Set the expectation that ILTs will be capable and empowered to use data to design culturally responsive instruction.
- Set the expectation that ILTs will be focused on supporting all educators in developing assessment literacy.
- Use or reconfigure ILTs to build teacher leadership capacity and develop a shared leadership culture.
- Set the expectation that ILTs will have diverse membership that represent key student groups, e.g., ELs, SWDs, FY, HY, and AAs.

ACTIONS:
School-Based Instructional Leadership Teams

7A. Formalize written expectations for ILTs' roles, responsibilities, and team membership.

7B. Provide ILTs professional development on the purpose, process, facilitation, and outcomes for leadership teams.

7C. Set the expectation that ILTs will be tasked with facilitating site level professional learning opportunities, including, for example, leading Professional Learning Communities, Communities of Practice, or short cycles of improvement.

7D. Set the expectation that ILTs will be developed to engage in coaching on instruction, assessment, and data-driven decision-making.

8. Administrative Coaching and Leadership

(CCEE Instructional Component 8) Infrastructures across the LEA support, promote, and enhance a collaborative culture for district and site administrator effectiveness in management and instructional leadership. Data (academic, social-emotional, and behavioral) are consistently used to monitor instruction and inform stakeholders' engagement. Consistent leadership coaching and mentoring provide principals the opportunity to reflect on, monitor, adjust, and increase effectiveness of their roles in strengthening instructional practices to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Finding 8a. There is a culture of site-level autonomy that contributes to inconsistent program implementation often not resulting in desirable student outcomes.

Finding 8b. Though the recent reorganization provides more coherence and clarity by placing a principal supervisor over elementary principals and a principal supervisor over secondary principals, there is still a need to provide professional learning that builds their capacity and expertise to provide coaching, guidance, and mentoring for school administrators to strengthen teaching and learning.

Finding 8c. Consistent leadership coaching and mentoring is not in place to provide principals the opportunity to reflect on, monitor, adjust, and increase effectiveness of their roles in strengthening instructional practices to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Discussion

Throughout the district, from all stakeholders, there is an atmosphere of hope about the recent change in leadership, specifically the new superintendent. Stakeholders feel that improvement is possible, and they expressed interest in making it occur. Even with this sense of hope, there was a persistent reference to the instability of the superintendent position, as some reported, "This is my fourth superintendent in three years," which has resulted in confusion about district initiatives, direction, and leadership expectations. This instability in leadership and a district culture of site leader autonomy is reflected in instructional programs that vary greatly from school to school. The current structure of administrative coaching and leadership within MDUSD is in a state of flux and relies on the newly reorganized roles of two principal supervisors, one for elementary and one for secondary schools. Though this new structure was repeatedly identified during interviews as an improvement, there are questions with how the structure will be able to adequately support a coordinated and systemwide adopted instructional plan. There is a need to assess and improve the district strategy for developing instructional leadership at the district and school levels.

Additionally, there is acknowledgement from district leadership that there is a culture of site autonomy that results in inconsistent program implementation often not resulting in desirable student outcomes. This leads to a range of issues related to collaboration, implementation priorities, and accountability expectations. District staff did not articulate consistently how expectations for school site administrators are formally determined and communicated. District staff provide support and help to develop effective instruction, but it is not clear how the support is based on student needs and school priorities.

Principals identified the need for communication across district departments and teams to prevent mixed messages and inconsistency of needed actions. Peer-to-peer coaching and advice from other principals was noted as the most frequently used strategy to get support and information to do their jobs, though given the recent changes in principal supervision structures, many noted they also use their supervisor. Even so, principals spend an extensive amount of time problem-solving and following up with individual departments at the district, for example, human resources and budget, instead of spending time in classrooms observing instruction and providing feedback to teachers. There is an opportunity to build on prior work to strengthen the instructional leadership capacity of principals, and there is evidence of practices that enhance that work. The All-Administrative Bootcamp in August 2020 provided a forum for instructional leadership consistency and included clarity on distance learning, priority standards work, equity, and other district initiatives for the 20-21 school year. Additionally, the differentiated structure of the elementary principal equity cohorts has been reported as a very useful and effective support for building leadership capacity. This is an opportunity to build on that work by developing and implementing a differentiated model of school leadership development, coaching, and supervision where the needs and experiences of principals are taken into consideration and guide their development. The district may want to consider an investment of the recent one-time funding sources to build and enhance leadership capacity.

SWOT on Administrative Coaching and Leadership

A. Strengths:
- There is an atmosphere of hope about the new change in leadership, specifically the new superintendent. Stakeholders feel that change is possible, and they expressed interest in making it occur.
- The district administrative staff are aware that the current coaching support system needs to change as it is not resulting in the desired outcomes for students.
- Across district leadership, there is an acknowledgement of the need to develop more coherent systems and structures for deepening teaching, learning, and leadership development.

B. Weaknesses:
- The district lacks coherence around it's vision and priorities and this negatively impacts the ability of principals to engage in continuous short cycles of improvement.
- Though some district infrastructures support effective instructional site leadership, expectations of the school site administrators as instructional leaders are not clearly communicated.
- Though communication has improved, there is a perception that communication within the district is top down, and there is not a system for district leadership to have input from site leaders regarding needed services, resource allocations, budget reductions, etc.
- There is a lack of coherent leadership to ensure targeted student groups (foster youth, students experiencing homelessness, and African American students) are provided services and support so they are not disproportionately suspended, chronically absent, and at risk for failure.
- There does not seem to be a leadership focus on the timely assessment of student progress necessary to support learning through a cycle of continuous improvement.
- Student achievement data is not regularly discussed, shared, or acted upon across and within principal and other leadership meetings.

C. Threats:
- The lack of instructional coherence in instructional goals and priorities may result in continued variance in student outcomes.
- Without a coordinated leadership development effort, variance in leadership capacity will continue, which may threaten coherence and implementation of district goals and priorities.

D. Opportunities:
- The principal equity cohorts are a great opportunity to build and scale instructional leadership work with an equity lens to all principals and school sites.
- There is an opportunity to develop the capacity of site leaders by developing a coaching and leadership framework that includes clear expectations, outcomes, and evidence to show improved student outcomes.
- The recent administrative reorganization is an opportunity for principal supervisors to spend a greater amount of time in schools observing instruction in both general and special education settings and providing strengths-based and actionable feedback to site leaders.

ACTIONS:
Administrative Coaching and Leadership

8A. Develop and implement a differentiated model of school leadership development, coaching, and supervision to support the district instructional vision and plan and take into consideration the needs and experiences of principals to guide their development.

8B. Provide support and resources so that principal supervisors spend a greater amount of time in schools observing instruction in both general and special education settings and providing strengths-based and actionable feedback to site leaders.

8C. Structure support and resources to build principals' capacity as instructional leaders so they can better support teachers around effective teaching practices, strategies, data literacy, and expected student outcomes.

8D. Clarify, innovate, and scale the work of principal equity cohorts to include all principals and school sites.

8E. Through an inclusive process that involves all stakeholders, develop the district's vision and priorities including the expectation of leadership to align district and site policies, practices, and procedures to support that vision.

8F. Align calendars to provide principals time to collaborate with feeder, grade span and/or like schools around common problems of practice as indicated by student outcome data.

9. Professional Learning and Coaching

(CCEE Instructional Component 9) There is a professional learning plan that cultivates the development of a teaching and learning culture through the eyes of a student and reflects the needs of all teaching staff. The LEA-wide data-driven professional learning plan designed for all stakeholders focuses on effective instructional practices that improve student academic, social-emotional, and behavioral learning. The data-based professional learning opportunities the LEA provides are grounded in student performance and foster collective responsibility for improving student outcomes. Instructional coaches support the implementation and improvement of the tiered instructional practices.

Finding 9a. There are many professional development and learning opportunities in the district for teachers.

Finding 9b. As leadership shifts, priorities for professional learning shift, creating a lack of clarity around instructional priorities. This in turn creates a lack of coherence around instructional practices and leads to divergent implementation of teaching strategies.

Finding 9c. There is emerging professional learning around equity and diversity in the district. Groups of administrators have engaged in PLCs around equity. Some school sites have also created equity PLCs.

Finding 9d. While schools shifted to emergency remote instruction and online learning, digital literacy may not have been an explicit districtwide focus.

Discussion

There are many professional learning opportunities in MDUSD. The pandemic has created an increased interest in digitizing professional learning, and there are multiple synchronous and asynchronous ways to engage with professional learning content. Resource files created by TOSAs and Professional Development (PD) archives on the Ed Services website are examples of the diversity of professional learning opportunities available in the district. One challenge educators face in the district is that when leadership changes at the superintendent level, professional learning priorities shift as well. A data-driven professional learning approach would ensure that professional learning meets the needs of the students, rather than the interests of the leaders. Teachers expressed uncertainty about what initiatives are still in progress and what initiatives have been abandoned by administrators. MDUSD needs to reestablish what its professional learning focuses are and communicate this to all stakeholders, especially teachers.

Many stakeholders highlighted the fact that there is emerging professional learning about equity and diversity in the district. They specifically cite the support of the Assistant Director of Equity as a central factor in their increased capacity to engage in reflection about white privilege and its role in teaching and in the curriculum. For many educators, this has sparked a renewed interest in culturally relevant teaching materials and courageous conversations around race in the classroom.

However, outside of the Equity Department, it is unclear as to whether stakeholders have a systematic approach to implementing practices rooted in equity in their respective spaces. Some district leaders are unsure about how to do equity work that extends beyond personal reflection. Some administrators have created professional learning communities around equity-related topics, and others have not. Some administrators have started to assess their sites for culturally relevant curriculum, and others have not. Many teachers are interested in doing this work but lack the bandwidth or professional support to systematically engage in equity work as it relates to culturally relevant instruction. All stakeholders expressed challenges in using data to make decisions around equity-oriented professional learning. A multiyear plan with clear benchmarks and progress monitoring tools would help stakeholders at all levels engage in professional learning that is differentiated for teacher needs and builds collective capacity.

The pandemic has brought many shifts to teaching and has produced new professional learning needs for educators. One of these needs is around online teaching, specifically online engagement strategies. Across the district, there is limited consistency around what student engagement looks like and what strategies will be used

to support it. This is an area where increased professional learning is needed. Further, MDUSD should identify what different student groups need from online learning during this time. For example, English language learner families expressed a need for more synchronous instructional time, greater writing support, and other opportunities for their students to practice their language skills. Homeless and foster youth, and other students who may be experiencing transience, may face challenges in using technology for learning. These challenges require a different approach, one that MDUSD educators have yet to explore en masse. African American students also have unique needs in regard to technology and online learning.

MDUSD should use research and its own internal data to identify the needs of underserved students and the teachers who serve them and develop a plan for professional learning that is aligned to these data. Even as in-person learning resumes, online learning will persist in some form, whether through hyflex models of instruction or fully online learning due to intermittent school closures. Even after a full return to in-person instruction, there will be a need to use technology in the classroom to promote digital literacy, which involves going beyond simply using computers to critically and creatively using technology to develop new artifacts that reflect higher-order thinking and 21st century skills. Given that digital literacy is important to college and career readiness, MDUSD would do well to shift some of its professional learning efforts in this direction.

SWOT on Professional Learning and Coaching

A. Strengths:
- MDUSD provides a variety of PD offerings in multiple formats (e.g., archiving of Ed Services website, resource files created by TOSAs).
- The use of standards prioritization as professional development is an example of professional development for continuous improvement.
- The amount of equity training for TOSAs is one way that the district leverages its resources to work on a shared goal.
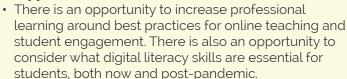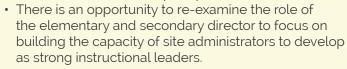
B. Weaknesses:
- Historically there has been a short shelf life for some professional learning initiatives, including those that lose momentum as leadership changes.
- There is a lack of targeted professional learning that focuses specifically on the needs of African American students and homeless and foster youth.
- There is a lack of differentiated professional development for educators, meaning that educators in the developmental stages of learning and those who need enrichment all receive the same training.
- Some teachers feel that professional development offerings do not meet the needs that they have presently (e.g., distance learning, culturally relevant instruction). TOSAs have created resources for teachers, but there is no accountability mechanism to ensure that these materials are utilized.

C. Threats:
- Perceptions of choice around professional development participation creates a two-tiered system of professional learning and contributes to disjointed implementation of new strategies and best practices.
- A lack of shared values and beliefs around the need for racial equity work in the district across all stakeholders around topics of race and equity may result in continued implicit bias or practices that are not culturally responsive.
- High teacher turnover at some sites means that when teachers leave the district, investments made in building instructional capacity are lost, which can adversely impact student learning outcomes.
- Limited professional learning in the area of distance learning, including online teaching and student engagement, means that the district continues to be unprepared to meet the unique challenges associated with distance learning. Even as the district returns to in-person learning, the learning loss that may have occurred due to gaps in distance learning poses a threat to the district.

D. Opportunities:
- There is an opportunity to increase professional learning around best practices for online teaching and student engagement. There is also an opportunity to consider what digital literacy skills are essential for students, both now and post-pandemic.
- There is an opportunity to re-examine the role of the elementary and secondary director to focus on building the capacity of site administrators to develop as strong instructional leaders.

ACTIONS:
Professional Learning and Coaching

9A. Determine a professional learning focus and create a multiyear professional learning and coaching plan. This plan should be rooted in the district's instructional plan, outcomes data, and should include implementation benchmarks and progress monitoring tools. MDUSD's highly skilled set of TOSAs should also be included in the professional learning plan to both give and receive support. To the extent possible, this plan should build off previous professional learning efforts to reduce initiative fatigue.

9B. Facilitate the development of data-driven PLCs at each school site and provide modeling, coaching, and support of best PLC practices and processes.

9C. Establish professional learning opportunities that focus specifically on the needs of homeless and foster youth and African American students.

9D. Develop a plan for hyflex teaching and online teaching that promotes students' digital literacy and ways in which technology can be used to engage students in real-world experiences to promote critical thinking and problem solving. Additionally, continue to provide professional learning in these areas.

9E. Provide professional learning and coaching for site staff about how to use data for continuous improvement on academics, attendance, and behavior.

10. Data Management and Use and Student Information Systems

(CCEE Instructional Component 10) The LEA has a student information system (SIS) that actively stores and tracks all individual student data (e.g., grades, attendance, discipline). The SIS provides LEA-wide appropriate access for teachers, administrators, and parents/caregivers, which allows for aggregate data use for school-based planning and also meets federal/state/local reporting requirements. The LEA has an early warning system for students' academics, behavior, and attendance at the district, school, and classroom levels. A suite of reports through the SIS that is readily available and customized for the end-user (e.g., principal, teacher, board member, assistant superintendent, parent/caregiver, etc.) and reflect the areas identified as needing improvement for each student.

Finding 10a. There does not appear to be uniform use of early warning systems for academics, behavior, and attendance.

Finding 10b. District-wide expectations around data collection, management, and use are unclear.

Finding 10c. The ways in which data are used to make decisions at the district and site level regarding support for special populations (students experiencing homelessness, foster youth, African American students) are unclear outside of the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

Finding 10d. Professional learning opportunities around data use vary by school site.

Finding 10e. There is a lack of shared expectations regarding data literacy and use across the district.

Discussion

The ways in which data are used to inform decision-making at both school site and district levels are unclear. For example, it does not appear that Student Information Systems (SIS) or other tools are being used as early warning systems for students with academic, behavioral, or attendance challenges. This contributes to other district and school site challenges around coordinating support for at-risk students. Additionally, the ways in which district and school site administrators collect and disaggregate data by population are unclear. Outside of the LCAP, there seems to be no uniform process for collecting and analyzing data about the performance of homeless and foster youth and African American students.

The lack of expectations around data use at the district and school-site level impact instructional practices and student support. Without clear, disaggregated data, teachers cannot make decisions regarding targeted instructional or behavioral interventions. For example, while PBIS has been cited by teachers and administrators as a tool for improving academic and behavioral outcomes for African American students, data collection on PBIS implementations and outcomes varies by school-site. As a result, it is difficult to assess the impact that PBIS or other interventions have on student outcomes.

There appears to be a greater need for data transparency and data literacy as well as increased opportunities for professional learning around data. While some school site administrators have been intentional about collaborating with teachers and other stakeholders around data-informed continuous cycles of improvement, other administrators lack the capacity for such work. Additionally, some stakeholders, including social workers, have indicated that they do not have access to data regarding specific populations, including African American students and foster and homeless youth. District-wide expectations around when, how, and why data should be used, as well as a district-wide push for data literacy among stakeholders, could increase the capacity of teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders to engage in data-driven decision-making. Toward this end, the superintendent has articulated a plan to update policies on data.

SWOT on Data Management and Use and Student Information Systems

A. Strengths:
- Student information systems are in use (e.g., Illuminate).
- Some sites are beginning to use more data points to inform decision-making (e.g., D/F rates at high schools, site-based assessments at elementary schools).
- At the secondary level, there is evidence of early stage usage of IABs and FIABs

B. Weaknesses:
- There is no uniform practice for utilizing an early warning system (EWS) for academics, behavior, and attendance.
- There does not seem to be a systematic district-wide process for using data to make decisions regarding suspension and discipline.
- There does not seem to be a systematic approach toward measuring the impacts of PBIS on academic and SEL outcomes.
- There is no systematic analysis of data across sites to identify common trends, including trends for grade spans and feeder schools. There is also no systematic analysis of data regarding trends for student groups, including African American students, foster youth, or students experiencing homelessness.
- The conversation about data is not advancing to the Board level.

C. Threats:
- Infrastructure challenges may prohibit access to information systems.
- The suspension of the state data dashboard does not allow for timely refresh on student performance data.

D. Opportunities:
- There is an opportunity to use SIS as early warning systems.
- There is an opportunity to review, analyze, and plan around district and site level data to inform instructional planning.
- There is an opportunity to use data to engage in short cycles of improvement.
- There is an opportunity to incorporate data and data analysis into pre-existing meeting structures (e.g., principal meetings).
- There is an opportunity to use data to inform the learning occurring in the equity PLC models.

ACTIONS:
Data Management and Use and Student Information Systems

10A. Build the capacity of technical support teams to provide training and support for the use of SIS for progress monitoring.

10B. Allot time specifically for teachers, principals, and school site staff to engage in professional learning about how to use data for continuous improvement based on attendance, academics, and behavior.

10C. Develop a well-articulated and operationalized set of expectations and routines for data use at the district and school-site levels. This also includes creating expectations around a continuous cycle of data collection, organization, and synthesis to support informed decision-making in classrooms and across the district.

10D. Develop training, support, and incentives for non-teaching staff to use data to support students.

10E. Establish interdisciplinary teams for analyzing and responding to data. These teams should include a range of stakeholders, including social workers, counselors, teachers, and administrators.

11. District and Leadership Capacity

(CCEE Instructional Component 11) The LEA contains strong multi-level (school and district leadership) organizational capacity and processes to make coherent, coordinated decisions that ensure goals and metrics are mission and vision aligned across sites and departments. District and school leadership develop and facilitate collaborative and transparent processes to implement shared goals regarding teaching and learning, effective leadership, and accountability and commitment to equity. Established processes ensure each member, regardless of position, is supported and can fulfill their role and responsibilities. Each department's strategic workflow, metrics, and benchmarks are verified with data, aligned with district goals and vision, and reviewed regularly.

Finding 11a. There is a lack of a coherent plan and expectation across the system regarding how the district's improvement initiatives are to be implemented at school sites.

Finding 11b. There is limited evidence of how district and school leadership develop and facilitate collaborative and transparent processes to implement and discuss progress on shared goals regarding teaching and learning beyond the development of the LCAP, accreditation reports, and SPSAs.

Finding 11c. The superintendent and senior leadership are perceived as being capable, and there is a perception that the district also has capable leaders throughout the system.

Discussion

The overriding theme from stakeholder interviews regarding district-level leadership is that the continual and frequent superintendent turnover has been a significant obstacle to progress and has interfered with major improvement initiatives. However, another recurring theme is that the current superintendent and district leadership team is focused on the right work, has the professional capacity needed to succeed, and that has given the organization a sense of optimism. This sentiment was summed up as having "the right people in the right chairs" at the district level.

MDUSD leadership hierarchy consists of the superintendent and four chief officers with specific responsibilities and assigned staff. It is evident from interviews with district leadership that their core values embrace equity, achievement, and accountability as essential components of their leadership and that is reflected in the work of the district.

Goals from the Mt. Diablo Unified Local Control Accountability Plan 2019-2020 serve as district roadmap and include: 1) all students will receive a high quality education in a safe and welcoming environment; 2) high quality, culturally proficient, and responsive staff will provide engaging instruction respectful of all students' background to ensure they are college and/or career ready; and 3) parents, family, and community will be informed, engaged, and empowered as partners to support student learning. However, the district does not contain strong multi-level (school and district leadership) organizational focus and processes to make coherent, coordinated decisions that ensure goals and metrics are mission and vision aligned across sites and departments. There is a lack of clarity about how district-wide initiatives connect with district goals other than in a broad and general sense and whether initiatives are to be fully implemented or not.

While MDUSD has strengths in its leadership and administrative support, there are also systemic issues that negatively impact the improvement process. For example, the understanding of the perceived culture of site autonomy varies across the system. This impacts the district's processes in making decisions that are coherent, coordinated, and aligned to district initiatives with consistent school implementation. Stakeholders shared that principals are expected to be leaders of learning, but often the lack of clear direction and support hinders leaders' ability to focus on instruction. Stakeholders also reported variance among sites in their use of data to verify alignment with district vision and goals. For example, district leadership provides site leaders support and tools for instructional improvement, but there are not clear expectations for leaders in the development of their assessment literacy. There also appears to be a greater need for clear expectations about site leaders leading cycles of improvement and outcome-focused accountability conversations to realize those improvement expectations.

In reaching system-wide coherence, a remaining challenge for MDUSD is the misalignment among stakeholders regarding which district initiatives on instructional practices are to be implemented. For example, the district has evidence of a focus on equity including culturally proficient teaching practices, social-emotional learning

including trauma-informed teaching practices, AVID, and PBIS. It has invested in professional learning for these initiatives, yet classroom observations across multiple sites found limited evidence of these practices in action. It is unclear whether those variances in implementation are based more on educators' understanding of them or on clear messaging of accountability and expectations. In either case, the facilitation of deepening coherence through common understanding requires leaders to build individual and collective capacity through leadership at all levels. There is an opportunity with the influx of one-time funding to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to invest in leadership capacity building.

SWOT on District and Leadership Capacity

A. Strengths:
- Throughout district leadership there is a desire to focus on equity of all students as a foundational strategy to improve academic achievement of all students, especially students of color.
- The current leadership team demonstrates a high level of capacity and a desire to develop clear, continuous improvement goals for the district.
- Although there is a perception that the district office departments are siloed, there is a desire, and examples of recent efforts, to create a more collaborative environment to provide clear and consistent support for school sites.
- The recruitment and retention of leaders from within the district, as evidenced by the number of years many principals have served, provides leadership stability and continuity.

B. Weaknesses:
- The current level of school site autonomy is inconsistent with a systematic approach to continuous instructional improvement.
- There is not a clear, consistent, and shared set of district goals and priorities to improve student learning outcomes for all students within the school district.
- It is unclear how district and site leaders make budget and resource decisions in regard to instructional goals for improvement.
- In the human resources department, the delays in hiring and providing support to schools evidence a lack of customer service.
- The lack of on-going assessment of district and school leadership culture, coherence, and professional learning hinders two-way communication with the superintendent to ensure district benchmarks and goals are met.
- There are not clear expectations and support for current and future leaders in the development of their assessment literacy and the role data plays in the improvement process.

C. Threats:
- The lack of central office personnel, given the size of the district, and the inconsistent support and supervision of school sites threatens the ability to provide a consistent, coherent educational program at all schools.

- The ongoing decrease in financial resources and the need to prioritize expenditures, without a clear focus on instructional goals, will hinder leadership's ability to implement academic and social-emotional supports necessary for improvement, especially for targeted student groups.

D. Opportunities:
- There is an opportunity with the recent administrative reorganization to collaboratively develop a set of shared instructional goals and priorities aligned to student achievement needs.
- There is an opportunity based on the elementary equity cohorts to increase equity work and change district and school policies, procedures, and practices to better meet the needs of all students.
- There is an opportunity with recent one-time funding to align additional fiscal allocations to leadership capacity, learning outcomes, and district goals.

ACTIONS:
District and Leadership Capacity

11A. Through an inclusive process that involves all stakeholders, develop the district's vision and priorities including a clear set of actionable goals that support the goals established in the LCAP and other plans.

11B. Develop a district instructional leadership team to assist in the development, implementation, and progress monitoring of a district-wide instructional plan and identify instructional needs and supports for school sites.

11C. Develop and implement a policy and framework to define the desired level of school site autonomy and communicate that expectation throughout the system.

11D. Seek to identify individuals, at all levels of the system, who can serve as exemplars of model leadership for improving student learning.

11E. Set the expectation that site leaders will lead their teams in cycles of improvement and outcome-focused accountability conversations.

11F. Clarify expectations for accountability and on-going use of data in a continuous cycle of improvement to inform instruction for identified groups at the district and site level.

11G. Identify and establish the key strategies and practices for providing effective and continuously improving teaching and learning (e.g., PBIS, MTSS, AVID), and the process and structures for coaching and supporting principals and school teams as well as monitoring implementation of district goals.

11H. Establish a process for the cabinet to model and engage in ongoing dialogue and review of data around key performance indicators and benchmarks aligned with district goals in order to increase the skills, knowledge, and leadership capacity of district and site leaders.

11I. Develop a written leadership succession plan (e.g., committees, community partners, advisory groups) to build the capacity and bench of potential leaders for both the school and district levels and to ensure that district mission, vision, and goals continue.

12. Governance Support with Instruction

(CCEE Instructional Component 12) The LEA's governing board has clearly established written policies, processes, and protocols to assist in the implementation of strong instructional practices and educational supports for each and every student. The board's policies support the goal that all students are provided with, know, and understand clear learning targets in all courses and at all grade levels.The district's governing board has a delineated function and members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in improving district, school, and student outcomes. The district's governing board members demonstrate conflict resolution, effective communication, and interpersonal respect for each other, the district leadership, staff, and the community they serve.

Finding 12a. The district's mission and goals are established in board policy; however, they are not clearly communicated, nor shared by all. There are no defined and calendared annual review processes for reporting progress to the governing board, schools, and the community. As a result, stakeholders are not clear what their responsibilities are to achieve the goals.

Finding 12b. The Board does not have practices in place that include structures to support the need to assure that instruction, curriculum, and assessment are at the forefront in their collective efforts as trustees to support the academic needs of students.

Finding 12c. It is not clear how the governance team and district leadership work to develop an organizational culture that supports continuous improvement and innovative instructional practices.

Discussion

An examination of MDUSD Board bylaws and policies provides evidence the Board has demonstrated an understanding of their function and role in improving district, school, and student outcomes by establishing policies that support the goals of the district. The MDUSD Board of Education has a history of reviewing board protocols and governance standards as evidenced by the Mt Diablo Unified School District Governance Handbook, which was last revised in 2019. Since that time, the board has transitioned to by-trustee elections, has two new board members, and a new superintendent. This new governance team provides an opportunity to review, revise, and reset operating procedures and protocols to govern more effectively.

In reviewing board policy and board governance written protocols, the board has identified the importance of: "Keeping learning and achievement for all students the primary focus" (District Governance Handbook, 2017, p 5). However, in review of MDUSD Board meeting agendas and notes of meetings, there is little evidence of this focus.

The California School Boards Association's (CSBA) document, "The School Board Role in Creating the Conditions for Student Achievement," is a review of recent research in effective school board practices. Research on effective boards, as defined by those resulting in high student achievement, report practices that focus on role clarity, protocols, and policy development that support district improvement. Effective factors include many of the practices that can be found in evidence in MDUSD Board Policy and in the past MDUSD board protocols. A foundational factor in effective governance is to maintain a focus on student achievement by setting and communicating a vision and establishing goals and aligning resources to realize that vision (CSBA, 2017).

As the board reviews the recommendation in this report, there is an opportunity through board policy to establish clear direction and focus throughout the organization on student learning and achievement to help the district align practices in a way that supports the staff to address the needs of students.

SWOT on Governance Support with Instruction

A. Strengths:
- The Board has supported equity and inclusion, e.g., in Board Policy (BP) 5001, BP 0411, and BP 6164.42, Equity and Disproportionality Policy, and in it's George Floyd Resolution, which also directed, among other actions, to reaffirm equity as a central guiding principle for district actions and policy-making.
- The Board recognizes the need to engage its community's constituents in support of all students.
- The transition to a by-trustee area election system in 2020 has provided a more inclusive representation of the school district.

B. Weaknesses:
- The instability of the superintendent position has created a perception that the district's governing board members function beyond their defined roles and responsibilities.
- The governing board has not held regular (e.g., 3 times per year) work sessions to provide deeper study into various instructional topics with appropriate staff.
- The district's governing board meetings do not provide regular opportunities to engage with staff and departments via presentations and reports regarding instructional initiatives and progress toward established goals.
- The board has not established a system to adequately ensure budget decisions are aligned to instructional goals.
- The board has not created policy that supports clear direction and focus to define instructional practices to support the needs of students.

C. Threats:
- Ongoing budget shortfalls threaten the ability of the board to focus on aligning resources to meet the academic needs of all students.
- Funding projections will necessitate spending reductions in the district for the next two or more years.
- Without renewed and additional efforts to address the strained relationship between the bargaining units and the district leadership, which manifests in a lack of trust, efforts to improve teaching and student learning will be compromised.

D. Opportunities:
- The new superintendent and new board members provide an opportunity to review board protocols and procedures and adopt practices that align with high-achieving, effective governance teams.
- The current superintendent and board leadership team have an opportunity to establish actionable district and LCAP goals.
- There is an opportunity with recent one-time funding to align additional fiscal allocations to learning outcomes and district goals.

ACTIONS:
Governance Support with Instruction

12A. Work collectively with district leadership to strengthen trust and develop a shared commitment, in principle, with labor partners that places improved student learning and closing achievement gaps as an explicit priority and develops the professional foundation for teaching and teacher leadership.

12B. Establish regular Board work sessions, in collaboration with the superintendent, to develop a shared vision of student achievement and to clarify roles and expectations for attaining this vision.

12C. Set policies that clarify and communicate the district's intended outcomes and a small number of instructional priorities and define autonomy so there is a common understanding, focused direction, and clear expectations regarding implementation of district vision, policies, and priorities.

12D. Review, revise, and update the Mt. Diablo Unified School District Governance Handbook 2019 to re-establish governance standards, protocols, and processes that define and distinguish board and staff roles to keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus.

12E. Establish a review process (e.g., two times per year) on the progress on SIR actions and ensure discussion and opportunities for Board input and that actions are added to the Board calendar of topics.

12F. Develop a process to review and prioritize improvement actions and align the COVID-19 funding sources to systemic instructional improvement actions.

IV. Conclusion

This SIR report was commissioned pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 52064.5 (CA School Dashboard) for three or more pupil subgroups identified pursuant to Section 52052. Although all student group performance is examined during the SIR process to ensure all students are meeting priorities for learning, MDUSD's African American students, foster youth, and students experiencing homelessness failed to meet progress for three consecutive years according to statewide data. In addition to statewide priorities data, the SIR report is a result of an analysis of artifacts submitted by the district as evidence along with extensive empathy interviews, individual interviews, stakeholder interviews, and virtual classroom visits. The discussions and respective SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) for each of the 12 SIR components provides the foundation for actions provided.

To gather data for this report, CCEE interviewed knowledgeable and dedicated educators and community stakeholders at all levels of the system. After using the SWOT process to analyze and triangulate data collected for each of the 12 components, four primary themes emerged: **coherence, equity, accountability,** and **autonomy**. Fullan and Quinn (2016, p 30) define coherence as "the shared depth of understanding about the nature of the work." In reference to a core component of coherence, stakeholders at many levels spoke about the lack of focused direction in the district. Data analysis revealed that there is not a shared understanding and agreement among stakeholders regarding the district's instructional priorities, goals, and vision. At the site level, there was a wide range of expressed priorities and goals and a broad set of strategies to achieve these goals. The diversity of philosophy, strategy, action, and progress reflects MDUSD's lack of a focused direction. Additionally, the culture of school autonomy contributes to a diffuse set of practices and outcomes, and negatively impacts system-wide coherence.

At the site level, the lack of coherence is reflected in the wide range of instructional processes and practices observed. Teachers and other site-level stakeholders noted that professional learning initiatives and priorities frequently shift in the district, and many were unsure about what the current district-wide instructional priorities are. While the district has invested in professional learning around social and emotional learning, trauma-informed teaching, and PBIS, the ways in which these are implemented vary widely. It is unclear as to whether or not the variety in implementation is a result of educators' understanding of these practices or a lack of accountability around implementation of these practices. Fullan and Quinn (2016, p 34) note that "reducing initiative clutter and focusing on two to three goals with a clear strategy builds coherence." MDUSD would benefit from clearly identifying instructional priorities and developing assessment and accountability measures for them. The racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the community is viewed by stakeholders as a strength. Stakeholders recognize that equity can be a foundational strategy to improve the academic achievement of all students. Lindsey et al. (2019) have long noted the importance of recognizing there are both personal and systemic barriers to changing how a school system meets the needs of all students, "Negative core values codified into school vision and mission statements or that are the default position of educator behavior are similar in failing to serve students equitably." (p. 7).

There are many signs of equity work throughout the district, most notably through the Equity Department, which has facilitated professional learning around racism, bias, and white privilege. Administrator Equity PLCs have formed to help site leaders continue to do this work. There is an opportunity for MDUSD to continue to build on this work and ensure that it further diffuses throughout school sites. Equity work at the site level is stymied by the lack of district-wide curricular and instructional priorities specifically around culturally relevant curriculum and instruction. Developing shared expectations, providing a shared set of resources, and coordinating support and training are all important for increased coherence of equity work at the site level. Additionally, MDUSD should consider the role of racial and ethnic representation among staff recruitment efforts to promote equity and improved learning outcomes. MDUSD might consider recruiting and retaining more Latinx and AA teachers to ensure that the demographics of district educators more directly reflect those of students. Finally, this report highlights a need for MDUSD to consider the importance of equity in terms of family engagement. Families from nondominant backgrounds (e.g., racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities, and homeless and foster families) are underrepresented in committees, associations, and advisory groups. Increasing family engagement across constituent groups will be an important part of MDUSD's equity work.

The theme of accountability also permeates many aspects of this report. At the district level, there is an opportunity for the current superintendent and board leadership to increase accountability by establishing actionable district and LCAP goals. At the site level, there is an opportunity to strengthen accountability surrounding the implementation of

professional learning and site-level initiatives. Specifically, site administrators should engage in progress monitoring around professional learning so that they can formally and systematically assess both the implementation of professional learning across classrooms and the impact of said implementation on student outcomes. The role of the District Office should be to create the structures to analyze and use student data as well as provide the training, guidance, and ongoing expectations of implementing data-based continuous improvement cycles to review and make decisions to support students and schools. Strengthening accountability in these ways will help the district ensure that there is meaningful evidence of alignment between values and practices.

Elmore discusses the relationship between external and internal accountability for greatest impact. "Coherent schools have systems for internal accountability….external accountability processes that purport to impact positively on the work of schools in fact rely on internal accountability being in place for those external measures to be effective." (Elmore, 2010). One way to support internal accountability is through the formation of professional learning communities. While PLCs exist for administrators, they are in varying stages of development across different school sites. Increasing coherence within and between PLCs can be a powerful way to support internal accountability within MDUSD. Additionally, teachers and administrators should use PLCs and other structures to create greater internal awareness and accountability around student data. Presently, there is a lack of systemic assessment and data review practices to evaluate teaching and learning. Engaging in short cycles of improvement is another way to increase accountability in the district.

Central to accountability is the use of data with cycles of inquiry to monitor progress and inform decision-making. Stakeholder conversations revealed many gaps in this area. Districtwide expectations around data collection, management, and use were unclear, and professional learning opportunities around data use vary by school site. Additionally, there was not uniform use of existing student information systems to provide early warning and inform interventions around academics, behavior, and attendance. Student achievement data is also not regularly discussed, shared, or acted upon across and within leadership meetings, and there is a lack of dialogue at the board level on how to connect student achievement data to district policy. It is important to note that these gaps in the systemic use of data adversely impact special populations. Outside of the LCAP, the ways in which data are used to provide district and site level support to foster youth, students experiencing homelessness, and African American students are unclear. In order for MDUSD to be internally and externally accountable for its equity work with special populations, the district must increase the capacity of stakeholders to gather and disaggregate data, to make decisions with it, and to monitor progress based on these decisions.

Perceptions of school autonomy have led to inconsistent implementation of the district's goals and initiatives. While some level of autonomy allows site leaders to be responsive to the needs of their campuses and teachers to be responsive to the needs of students, it also contributes to uneven implementation of policies and practices, which emerged as a theme of this report. Autonomy, particularly when coupled with a lack of unified vision, shared curriculum, or established set of best practices, can lead to widespread variance in implementation and student outcomes. Further, where there is increased autonomy without organizational coherence and accountability, equity gaps can persist and potentially widen. In an interview with Daniel Groenewald (2018), Fullan highlighted that an ideal culture within a school system is "connected autonomy: You want individuals with the freedom to rather than freedom from. Individuals contribute to and learn from the group, and the group, in turn, influences individuals. The goal is precision not prescription. Data from stakeholders suggests that there is an opportunity for MDUSD to establish policies and procedures that provide a clear definition of what autonomy should look like in the district and to consider how it can impact accountability, equity, and coherence as well as the district's other organizational goals.

Next steps after the completion of the report include the CCEE role to advise and assist the district in efforts to prioritize SIR actions/recommendations and engage in progress monitoring. The identification of the ongoing support the district needs to implement the SIR actions will also be discussed and determined. CCEE will provide the district, county superintendent, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction progress updates quarterly, at a minimum, on the implementation of the SIR actions/recommendations. MDUSD should consider how the themes of the SIR, coherence, equity, accountability, and autonomy, might be addressed in the district reopening plan.

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VI. Appendix A

SIR Instructional Components

Instructional Components	Characteristics
1. Culture, Coherence, and the Planning Process *LCFF/LCAP:* *Priority 6: School Climate (Engagement)*	The local educational agency (LEA) demonstrates a strong value on culture and climate for all stakeholders through the implementation of district-wide professional learning opportunities that teach, promote, and practice inclusivity and diversity. LEA members implement culturally reflective practices and policies that are designed to create coherence around an inclusive instructional mission and vision achieved through continuous improvement practices and processes. This is evidenced by the following characteristics: • A supportive and engaging culture and climate that is visible for stakeholders (e.g., teachers, leaders, staff, parents, students) and cultivated and evident across all district efforts. • A culture of accountability that considers the whole child (e.g., academic, social, and emotional developmental) and provides students multiple opportunities and alternatives for developing learning strategies that result in improved achievement and school performance. • A commitment to developing and refining a culture of teaching and learning that is based upon clear learning targets consistently assessed across multiple measures. • A clear understanding of the importance of using achievement outcomes to guide coherent and collaborative work while fostering knowledge of expectations around teaching, learning, and accountability. • Practices and planning processes that reflect an inclusive instructional vision and mission using a multi-tiered system of support that is sensitive to the diverse student community (e.g., gifted, students with disabilities, English learners, homeless and foster youth). • Professional learning opportunities are provided, from the boardroom to the classroom and home, that create and sustain a district-wide culture of inclusivity and celebration of diversity and language, as well as include culturally reflective practices and policies. • Student diversity is celebrated and recognized in a variety of units or school/ district-wide awareness campaigns (e.g., May is National Foster Care Month, October is Disability Awareness Month, November is National Homeless Youth Awareness month, and one week is designated as National Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week). • Continuous improvement practices and processes are utilized and shared to determine whether the instructional mission and vision are being attained. • Support and development of the use of technology that promotes effective pedagogy and student engagement in an adaptive world (e.g., blended learning, hybrid, flipped classroom). • A culture of clarity around the roles and responsibilities of central office and schools in planning and engaging in activities that deepen the commitment to ensuring all students attain educational success. • A District Leadership Team provides direction, guidance, differentiated support, and oversight for ensuring the health and wellness of the district.

Instructional Components	Characteristics
2. Curriculum, Learning, and Support *LCFF/LCAP:* *Priority 2: State Standards* *Priority5: Pupil Engagement* *Priority 8: Other Pupil Outcomes*	The LEA has an MTSS framework that documents and assesses the implementation of all standards-aligned materials, curricula, learning, and social-emotional and behavioral supports (e.g., differentiation options, tiered support options, integrated aligned ELD supports). This is evidenced by the following characteristics: • A coherent, standards-aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment system is in place that is culturally and linguistically responsive and meets the needs of all learners (e.g., gifted, English learners, students with disabilities, and homeless and foster youth). • Evidence-based programs, including supplemental and enrichment curricular and instructional materials, are provided and reflect the diverse needs of the student population and provide equitable access for all learners. A multi-tiered approach is used to align and allocate district resources and support based on students' and schools' needs across multiple measures (e.g., academics, suspension, attendance, grades). • A targeted focus on ensuring teachers hold high expectations for their students and have positive student-teacher relationships. • Clearly articulated learning goals, across all grade levels and content areas provide students a path to mastery of the strategies, skills, and concepts embedded in the curriculum. • Ensuring teachers are able to clearly articulate their concept of student progress and appropriately challenge surface, deep, and conceptual knowledge and understanding. • Assessment components of the curricula and instructional practices clearly support the evaluation of the learning of all students across multiple measures. • A written continuous improvement process exists and includes reviewing academic and social-emotional and behavioral performance data to identify and make decisions on curriculum and supplemental supports. • High-quality, stimulating, and rigorous instructional materials that engage English learners (ELs), students with disabilities (SWDs), foster and homeless youth, and accelerate grade-level content and language development. A clearly articulated and executed plan that ensures ELs across all levels of language proficiency can access, fully engage with, and achieve rigorous grade-level academic content standards. • An identified curriculum for designated ELD and non-graduation-bound SWDs is implemented with fidelity. Continuous improvement processes are used to routinely evaluate the fidelity of implementation of curricula and their respective quality. • Amply available curricular materials and support are available for all students (e.g., electronic devices, tiered, and differentiated instructional materials).

Instructional Components	Characteristics
3. Instructional Practice and Strategies *LCFF/LCAP:* *Priority: 1* *Basic Conditions* *Priority 2:* *State Standards* *Priority 7:* *Course Access*	The LEA has established and defined instructional practices and strategies that are culturally inclusive, differentiated, rigorous, coherent, and standards aligned. Instructional technology, project-based learning, and other experiences beyond the textbook are regularly utilized. Instructional practices and strategies positively support students in developing self-agency and building metacognitive skills. This is evidenced by the following characteristics: • A district-wide intentional focus on providing a rigorous teaching and learning experience that uses Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles for improving and extending differentiated instructional practices that increase student engagement. • Evidence-based instructional practices focus on providing students access to and experience with rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-aligned instruction and are responsive to the needs of all learners, including gifted students, culturally and linguistically diverse students, students with disabilities, homeless and foster youth. • Teaching practices emphasize the engagement of students in the learning process, clear articulation of the strategies of instruction, learning intentions, and the criteria for success. • District-wide instructional practices and strategies are actively cultivated, communicated, clearly documented, and evaluated. • Continuous improvement data are regularly used to celebrate growth and problem solve areas in need of targeted assistance. • Instructional practice and strategies ensure that the teachers of all student groups (gifted, culturally and linguistically diverse students, students with disabilities, homeless and foster youth) are included and participate in collaborative integrated planning for instruction. • Teachers regularly meet to share and review student work. • Instructional support staff provide in-class support for students needing additional support/remediation and extension. • Intensive support teachers deliver the most targeted instruction for students in small groups. • Instructional practices support the development of student agency for learning (i.e academic self-efficiency and self-regulation). • Students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment. • Digital learning and experiences beyond the textbook (e.g., project-based learning) and the classroom are used to actively engage students in learning, emphasize critical thinking skills, and adapt to a flexible world (e.g. synchronous and asynchronous). • Systematic frequent and ongoing measurement of student learning allows multiple means and modalities to demonstrate mastery. • Systematic use of school data to plan, design, and deliver culturally responsive instruction results in an increased rate of student growth across multiple measures (e.g. academic and social emotional and behavioral) • Teachers are provided with opportunities to serve as a peer resource for teaching and learning. • Regular communication and engagement provide opportunities for parents/caregivers to support their students' learning.

Instructional Components	Characteristics
4. Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health and Development *LCFF/LCAP:* *Priority 6:* *School Climate*	Social-emotional and behavioral (SEB) well-being of the whole child is a critical component in the LEA's mission and vision. Identified social-emotional and behavioral skills are integrated into the curriculum, instructional practices, and resources identified for student support and school capacity building. Social-emotional and behavioral health is embedded in LEA policies and practices and is modeled by adults. This is evidenced by the following characteristics: • Social-emotional and behavioral health of the whole child is supported/ substantiated within the written instructional vision, policies, and practices. • ystemic and strategically embedded instruction that includes explicit teaching of expected student behaviors appropriate to the development level. • Specific and differentiated social-emotional and behavioral strategies address students in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III. Specific metrics measure and refine the impact of the SEB instruction. • Rapid formative assessments are available for highly mobile students and are used to assess new students' abilities, recognize emotional needs, employ a variety of teaching strategies, arrange for students to complete homework at school, and provide individual or group tutoring. • Professional learning is provided to enable teachers to understand the nature of homelessness and foster care, to create positive experiences for homeless children, and to provide strategies for discussing this topic in the classroom. • A continuum of resources available at every site provides support to students whose behavior and well-being is of concern. • Meaningful outreach engages families and caregivers with the continuum of available resources. • Planned and intentional professional learning builds staff capacity in the use of Student Success Teams (SST) and Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS). • Social-emotional, behavioral, and health development is practiced and modeled by adults throughout the district. • A continuum of school-based social-emotional, and behavioral supports are identified and external partnerships are cultivated. • The school site culture among teachers and school leaders engages, challenges, and supports social-emotional, behavioral, and academic development. • Social-emotional and behavioral health and respective curricular programs are routinely evaluated and use data to ensure fidelity of implementation, quality of the selected curriculum, and to inform continuous improvement instructional decisions. • On-going professional learning opportunities provide a safe space for teachers and leaders to learn about the importance of SEB.

Instructional Components	Characteristics
5. Assessment and Accountability *LCFF/LCAP:* *Priority 2:* *State Standards* *Priority 4:* *Pupil Achievement*	The LEA has a systemic process to measure and analyze student data—academic, behavior, and SEL—that drives the accountability system for all stakeholders (classroom to boardroom and home) and informs a continuous improvement process. This is evidenced by the following characteristics: • A system of assessment that ensures all students are provided with, know, and understand clear learning targets in all courses and at all grade levels with the goal that each student comprehends precisely what and how to attain mastery of key skills and concepts. • Ongoing, aligned, systemic processes are in place for measuring how, what, and how well a student is learning (e.g., early warning system, universal screening, diagnostic, formative, summative). • Targeted and on-going assessment of ELs ensure they are moving toward advanced levels of English, reclassification, and closing the academic language gap. • The redesignation rate of ELs and the declassification rate and movement of service delivery (e.g., LRE) for students with disabilities are monitored, assessed, shared, and used to make instructional decisions for improved student outcomes. • Measures are used that promote resilience in foster and homeless youth and assess students' soft skills such as motivation, social adaptability, and interpretive abilities. • Assessment data are used to monitor the rate of growth for foster and homeless youth to ensure students are receiving differentiated and well-rounded support for academics, social-emotional, and behavioral health. • District-wide practices include intentional time for teachers and leaders to learn, digest, analyze, problem-solve, and plan for instruction that results in improved student outcomes for academics, behavior, and SEL (e.g., establish Professional Learning Communities, Communities of Practice, etc). • Progress monitoring of district culture, coherence, curriculum, and instructional and professional learning provides two-way communication with stakeholders and ensures district benchmarks and goals are met. • There is an established district-wide process (e.g., problem solving/continuous improvement protocols) for using assessment data to make instructional decisions at the student, classroom, school and district levels. The district's multi-tiered system of support has established decision rules that articulate entrance and exit criteria for students needing intensified instruction and intervention. • A functional student information system (SIS) is in place that readily provides data to inform continuous improvement and instructional decisions from the boardroom to the classroom. • Assessment and accountability data are regularly collected and shared throughout the school year and align with district formative and/or benchmark assessments (e.g., beginning, middle, and end of year).

Instructional Components	Characteristics
6. Student and Family Engagement _LCFF/LCAP:_ _Priority 3:_ _Parental Involvement_ _(engagement)_ _Priority 5:_ _Pupil Engagement_	The LEA practices two-way communication that reflects the cultural and linguistic needs of families in the community and provides resources and activities that give students agency, promotes student leadership, and provides a space for active family and community engagement. This is evidenced by the following characteristics: **Student Engagement:** • Student agency and voice are fostered to promote critical thinking and leadership that contribute to decisions being made. Students are able to articulate what they are learning and why. • Students are able to identify and use self-regulatory strategies for learning. • Students are able to self identify instructional strategies for their learning. • Students are provided with opportunities to self-assess. • Students are provided equitable access to digital learning platforms and devices **Family Engagement:** • The LEA actively seeks and acts upon two-way communication with students, families/caregivers, and underrepresented groups. • There are written protocols that delineate strategies and practices that promote and engage students and families. The district has both systems and supports in place to successfully engage families and students in an adaptive learning environment (e.g., distance learning, blended learning, flipped classroom), internet connectivity, devices, orientation, and guidance on hybrid learning environments. • Clear two-way communication is used with families and cultivates a clear understanding of steps and progress required for students to show mastery of skills, concepts, and grade-level and graduation requirements. • The cultural and linguistic needs of the community are reflected in the resources, engagement activities, and curriculum. Families/caregivers are active participants in PTA/PTO, school site council meetings, and other forums. The LEA provides support to schools to ensure family/caregivers and students are actively informed members and decision makers within the district system of support and school community. • Parent groups engage and collaborate with school and district leaders in prioritizing goals and providing LCAP input and feedback. • Universal use and provision of language translation and interpretation (e.g., written, oral language) is provided.

Instructional Components	Characteristics
7. School-based Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) _LCFF/LCAP:_ _Priority 6:_ _School Climate_	Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) exist in every school and are representative across grades and disciplines with members that make culturally responsive data-driven decisions to design instruction for all students and their needs. ILTs facilitate site-based professional learning and support the implementation of district and site programs and efforts. This is evidenced by the following characteristics: • Written expectations exist for ILTs roles, responsibilities, and team membership. • ILTs exist in every school and meet regularly with organized agendas and minutes. • ILTs are provided professional development on the purpose, process, facilitation, and outcomes for leadership teams. ILTs reflect cross grade and disciplinary representation of student groups including EL, gifted, homeless, foster, and students with disabilities. • ILTs have a clear vision that aligns with the LCAP goals, student needs, and data. • ILT members are capable and empowered to use data to design instruction based on the needs of each and every student. • ILTs include a focus on supporting all educators in developing assessment literacy. • ILTs are actively involved in facilitating culturally responsive data-driven decision making and creating the instructional supports necessary to deliver best first instruction that results in improved school-wide student outcomes. • ILTs facilitate site-based professional development and coaching on instruction, assessment, and data-driven decision making.

Instructional Components	Characteristics
8. Administrative Coaching and Leadership	Infrastructures across the LEA support, promote, and enhance a collaborative culture for district and site administrator effectiveness in management and instructional leadership. Data (academic, social-emotional, and behavioral) are consistently used to monitor instruction and inform stakeholders' engagement. This is evidenced by the following characteristics: **Leadership:** • Central office administration ensures expectations of the school site administrators are clear and district infrastructures exist to support, enhance, and develop effective instruction and managerial leadership. • Principal supervisors spend an extensive amount of time in schools observing instruction in both general and special education settings and providing strengths-based and actionable feedback to site leaders. • District administrators demonstrate consistent use of qualitative and quantitative school-based data to assess the rate of growth for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning and differentiate levels of support. • District leadership actively cultivates a growth mindset in a trusting and safe environment, in which personnel feel comfortable taking risks and actively contribute to decision making. • District infrastructures provide professional learning to support site administrators in developing their assessment literacy. • District leadership provides targeted coaching to site administrators that facilitates growth and development of assessment literacy for their respective instructional personnel. **Site Leadership:** • District infrastructures exist that support and enhance site administrators' effectiveness in instructional leadership. Consistent leadership coaching and mentoring provides principals the opportunity to reflect on, monitor, adjust, and increase effectiveness of their roles in strengthening instructional practices to meet the needs of diverse learners. • Administrators clearly demonstrate a balance of their time between building management and instructional leadership. • Administrative practices include targeted instructional coaching for staff to support and facilitate effective teaching strategies and practices that span all students—general education, special education, gifted and English learners, homeless and foster youth. • Administrators spend an extensive amount of time in classrooms, including special education, observing instruction and providing strengths-based and actionable feedback to teachers. • Administrators demonstrate a consistent use of qualitative and quantitative data to assess the rate of growth for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning for all students. • Administration actively cultivates a growth mindset and a safe environment for personnel to take risks, speak their truth, and contribute to decision making. • Administrators actively facilitate and engage parents/caregivers as welcomed partners in the school community/family.

Instructional Components	Characteristics
9. Professional Learning and Coaching *LCFF/LCAP:* *Priority 1:* *Basic* *Priority 2:* *State Standards*	There is a professional learning plan that cultivates the development of a teaching and learning culture through the eyes of a student and reflects the needs of all teaching staff. The LEA-wide data-driven professional learning plan designed for all stakeholders focuses on effective instructional practices that improve student academic, social-emotional, and behavioral learning. Instructional coaches support the implementation and improvement of the tiered practices. This is evidenced by the following characteristics: • There is a written comprehensive multi-year professional learning (PL) and coaching plan based on best practices for improving effective instruction for veteran and new principals, teachers, and staff (classified and certificated) and has clear expectations for implementation and monitoring. • District-led, highly effective, data-based professional learning opportunities are grounded in student performance and foster collective responsibility for improving student outcomes. • There is a relentless focus on developing the capacity of all teaching staff to deliver effective lessons that actively engage ELs and SWDs and advance their learning and language proficiency across the curriculum. • There is intentional focus on developing systemic implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). • The development of assessment literacy provides for continual analysis of student data that results in effectively raising achievement academically, socially-emotionally, and behaviorally. • There is a clear focus on digital literacy within an adaptive environment that provides opportunities to practice and build skills in this area (e.g. blending and online learning, flipped classrooms, maximizing the use of digital platforms and resources, synchronous and asynchronous). • A structure exists for school site professional learning that is focused on collaborative cultures, e.g. PLC, CoPs, ILTs. etc. • A data-driven professional development plan exists at each school site that is intentional and differentiated for the learning needs of teaching staff. • Professional learning feedback is regularly collected and shared to support continuous improvement. • A structure exists to support teachers' reflections and efforts to improve classroom practices for academics, social-emotional, and behavioral learning (e.g., instructional coaches and/or support personnel). • There is a written multi-year plan for engaging parents and other stakeholders in learning that is aligned to the district's strategies for improving academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning. • Regular professional learning and data-driven feedback is provided to the governing board.

Instructional Components	Characteristics
10. Data Management and Use and Student Information Systems	There is a student information system (SIS) that actively stores and tracks all individual student data (e.g., grades, attendance, discipline). The SIS provides LEA-wide appropriate access for teachers, administrators, and parents/caregivers, which allows for aggregate data use for school-based planning and also meets federal/state/local reporting requirements. This is evidenced by the following characteristics: • SIS data that support and align with the district's assessment and accountability system(s). • An early warning system (EWS) for academics (e.g., grades), behavior (e.g., major/ minor events), and attendance is developed, available at the district, school, and classroom levels, and has established criteria for each level. A suite of reports that is readily available and customized for the end-user (e.g., principal, teacher, board member, assistant superintendent, parent/caregiver, etc) and reflect the areas identified as needing improvement (e.g., EWS that can be disaggregated by student group, grade, gender, graduation rates, family/caregiver engagement, targeted indicators for ELs and students with disabilities). • The SIS communicates with other data systems that are required and maintained by other departments (e.g, special education, English learners, foster and homeless youth). • Regularly provide training on how to use and access SIS data. • Regular district monitoring and reviewing of data in an effort to support educator access and usage of the SIS. • Professional learning opportunities that unpack the need for and use of SIS data to drive student, school, and district improvement, inclusive of a continuous improvement problem-solving approach to help consumers analyze and act upon areas of need. • Data are regularly used, from the governing board to the classroom and parent/ caregiver levels, to monitor progress and ensure curriculum, instruction, and tiered support result in positive student outcomes in academics, social-emotional, and behavioral health. • District leadership utilizes SIS data regularly (e.g., quarterly) to monitor a variety of data points (D/Fs, EWS trends, referral rates for special education, etc). • School leadership utilizes SIS data on a regular basis to monitor school based EWS indicators (academic, behavior, attendance) and other data to include, but not limited to, SST referrals, the success of Tier 2 and 3 interventions, success of the implementation of curriculum, etc. • Longitudinal data are regularly provided and reviewed at the school and district level to track and report student progress. • Readily available data that support cross-departmental, classroom to school analysis to inform continuous improvement instructional decisions. • Decision rules are developed and socialized with teaching and learning personnel that provide entrance and exit criteria for robust and coherent tiered support for all students, including gifted, at-risk, English learners, and students with disabilities. Activities (e.g., PLCs, pairing of schools) that are organized using aggregated data and create opportunities for schools to collaborate and learn from and give each other feedback.

Instructional Components	Characteristics
11. District and Leadership Capacity	The LEA contains strong multi-level (school and district leadership) organizational capacity and processes to make coherent, coordinated decisions that ensure goals and metrics are mission and vision aligned across sites and departments. Established processes ensure each member, regardless of position, is supported and can fulfill their role and responsibilities. This is evidenced by the following characteristics: • Strong organizational capacity, dynamics, and processes exist to make coherent, coordinated decisions that improve the overall health and wellness of the district. • District and school leadership develop and facilitate collaborative and transparent processes to implement shared goals regarding teaching and learning, effective leadership, and accountability and commitment to equity and excellence across the district. • On-going assessment of district and school leadership culture, coherence, and professional learning provides two-way communication with the superintendent to ensure district benchmarks and goals are met. • Performance metrics aligned with district goals and vision are established across all central office departments and regularly reviewed for growth and sustainability using a continuous improvement model. • Each department's strategic workflow, metrics and benchmarks are verified with data, aligned with district goals and vision, and reviewed regularly. • Aligned, systemic processes, both qualitative and quantitative, are in place to measure how, what, and how well district and school leaders are functioning in their current roles. • On-going coaching is provided across the cabinet and superintendent that supports team cohesiveness and provides for individual growth and development. • School leaders are provided with professional learning and coaching opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. • A district instructional leadership team exists that continually assesses the needs of schools and provides differentiated support to sites. • There are clear expectations and support for current and future leaders in the development of their assessment and technological literacy. • A written leadership succession plan exists and is executed that works to build the capacity and bench of potential leaders for both the school and district levels. • Career ladder opportunities are provided that support the development of a leadership pipeline for future leaders.

Instructional Components	Characteristics
12. Governance Support with Instruction	The governing board has clearly established written policies, processes, and protocols to assist in the implementation of strong instructional practices and educational supports for each and every student. This is evidenced by the following characteristics: The district's governing board has policies and practices that support the focus that all students are provided with, know, and understand clear learning targets in all courses and at all grade levels. • The district's governing board has a delineated function and members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in improving district, school, and student outcomes. • The district's governing board members demonstrate conflict resolution, effective communication, and interpersonal respect for each other, the district leadership, staff, and the community they serve. • The district's governing board participates in ongoing professional learning on policy development, leadership, and practices for effective teams. • The district's governing board meetings provide regular opportunities to engage with staff and departments via presentations and reports. • Governing board work sessions are held regularly (e.g., 3 times per year) and provide deeper study into various topics of district need and interest and involve appropriate staff.

VII. Appendix B

Actions by Theme

	Theme 1: Coherence
1A	Craft and share an instructional plan or framework that connects to other district plans and initiatives, grounded in continuous improvement practices and processes, that places its focus on implementation of district-wide professional learning opportunities that teach, promote, and practice inclusivity.
1C	Set expectations for a culture of continuous improvement at school sites based on regular implementation of short cycles of improvement grounded in data in order to create shared goals and common understanding.
2A	Align MDUSD's instructional work on curriculum development and support within an MTSS framework.
2B	Engage in a curriculum audit site-by-site to determine current practices in curriculum delivery and support. Include in this audit a review of their cultural relevance and sensitivity.
2C	Based on the curriculum audit, prioritize the sequence of new adoption for content areas by grade level and need.
2D	Establish an adoption cycle calendar with projected expenses as part of a board process for prioritization of resources and the budget development process.
2F	Continue to engage in work with the CCCOE's curriculum committee and subcommittees.
3A	Develop clear expectations for common instructional practices across grade levels and courses, including expectations around the regular review of student work.
3C	Develop a shared framework for the role of TOSAs and create a systematic plan for using TOSAs to provide targeted instructional support. Adopt a coaching model for the TOSAs and other instructional support staff that can develop expertise and cultivate collective efficacy.
4B	Integrate and coordinate the work, communication, and collaboration of current departments (e.g., Equity, Special Education, Curriculum and Instruction) to align services and support to schools to better integrate strategies and sustain the social-emotional well-being and mental health of students and staff.
7A	Formalize written expectations for ILTs' roles, responsibilities, and team membership.
7B	Provide ILTs professional development on the purpose, process, facilitation, and outcomes for leadership teams.
7C	Set the expectation that ILTs will be tasked with facilitating site level professional learning opportunities, including, for example, leading Professional Learning Communities, Communities of Practice, or short cycles of improvement.
7D	Set the expectation that ILTs will be developed to engage in coaching on instruction, assessment, and data-driven decision making.

8A	Develop and implement a differentiated model of school leadership development, coaching, and supervision to support the district instructional vision and plan and take into consideration the needs and experiences of principals to guide their development.
8D	Clarify, innovate, and scale the work of principal equity cohorts to include all principals and school sites.
8E	Through an inclusive process that involves all stakeholders, develop the district's vision and priorities including the expectation of leadership to align district and site policies, practices, and procedures to support that vision.
9A	Determine a professional learning focus and create a multiyear professional learning and coaching plan. This plan should be rooted in the district's instructional plan, outcomes data, and should include implementation benchmarks and progress monitoring tools. MDUSD's highly skilled set of TOSAs should also be included in the professional learning plan to both give and receive support. To the extent possible, this plan should build off previous professional learning efforts to reduce initiative fatigue.
9D	Develop a plan for hyflex teaching and online teaching that promotes students' digital literacy and ways in which technology can be used to engage students in real-world experiences to promote critical thinking and problem solving. Additionally, continue to provide professional learning in these areas.
11A	Through an inclusive process that involves all stakeholders, develop the district's vision and priorities including a clear set of actionable goals that support the goals established in the LCAP and other plans.
11B	Develop a district instructional leadership team to assist in the development, implementation, and progress monitoring of a district-wide instructional plan and identify instructional needs and supports for school sites.
11G	Identify and establish the key strategies and practices for providing effective and continuously improving teaching and learning (e.g., PBIS, MTSS, AVID), the process and structures for coaching and supporting principals and school teams and monitoring implementation of district goals.
11I	Develop a written leadership succession plan (e.g., committees, community partners, advisory groups) to build the capacity and bench of potential leaders for both the school and district levels and to ensure that district mission, vision, and goals continue.
12A	Work collectively with district leadership to strengthen trust and develop a shared commitment, in principle, with labor partners that places improved student learning and closing achievement gaps as an explicit priority and develops the professional foundation for teaching and teacher leadership.
12B	Establish regular board work sessions, in collaboration with the superintendent, to develop a shared vision of student achievement and to clarify roles and expectations for attaining this vision.
12E	Establish a review process (e.g., two times per year) on the progress on SIR actions and ensure the discussion and opportunities for Board input and that actions are added to the Board calendar of topics.
12F	Develop a process to review and prioritize improvement actions and align the COVID-19 funding sources to systemic instructional improvement actions.

Theme 2: Equity	
1D	Build on the ongoing work of the Equity Department to deepen educators' understanding of explicit and implicit bias and develop a long term, district-wide plan to counter implicit and explicit biases across roles.
1E	Set the expectation that work to achieve equity and inclusion will be shared by all district and school leaders and all teachers.
1F	Expand professional learning for teachers in learning instructional strategies to better serve students of color and deal with issues of implicit bias.
1G	Expand professional learning for teachers to learn social and emotional learning (SEL) strategies to better serve students of color and deal with issues of implicit bias.
1H	Use the district's existing internal model of monitoring the academic, behavioral, and social and emotional well-being of foster youth and students experiencing homelessness to build and further improve a system for supporting the district's African American students.
2E	Integrate into the curriculum more culturally responsive literature and instructional resources, especially in terms of reflecting positive models for students of color.
3B	Utilize data to identify what evidence-based instructional practices would meet the needs of special populations.
3E	Develop a strategic plan to incorporate more African American, foster, and homeless youth into specialty academic programs.
3F	Create stability in teacher hiring and retention so that trained and skilled teachers stay at high-needs schools.
4A	Build on the SEL/equity work in the district to identify social-emotional practices, based on evidence of effectiveness, to make decisions on what practices should be scaled or expanded across schools in a coordinated and consistent implementation.
4C	Ensure that there is a continuum of social-emotional, behavioral and mental health supports/resources in MDUSD and the process for accessing it is clear so that all schools and families, including those with students experiencing homelessness and foster youth, know how to access them.
4D	Establish coordination between district departments and school sites to provide comprehensive and specific academic, social-emotional, and behavioral support to African American students, foster youth, and students experiencing homelessness.
4E	Develop an MTSS model using research based strategies, such as PBIS, to decrease the disparate chronic absenteeism and suspension rates of the targeted student groups.
5G	Implement data and assessment review protocols that specifically monitor the academic, behavioral, and social and emotional learning and development for foster youth, students experiencing homelessness, and African American students.

6A	Develop formal systems for students to share concerns and to become co-collaborators in school and district-wide change initiatives (e.g., student advisory board). Ensure that this student advisory group includes representatives from different (various) racial, ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds.
6B	Provide more engagement opportunities for linguistic minorities by collaborating with families and community leaders from these populations and providing translation services to increase access to participate.
6C	Develop offerings that would support students and families who have recently fallen into homelessness by collaborating and coordinating with teachers, counselors, social workers, administrators, and community leaders/partners.
9C	Establish professional learning opportunities that focus specifically on the needs of homeless and foster youth and African American students.

Theme 3: Accountability

5A	Clearly set the expectation that data and assessment literacy for all educators is a district goal and provide guidance/professional learning opportunities for school sites in order to implement this expectation.
5B	Establish the expectation that the development of assessment literacy, whether at the DO or school level, will be grounded in using short cycles of improvement to address problems of practice, e.g., PDSA cycles.
5C	Conduct an assessment audit at school sites to determine the assessments in actual use.
5D	Create an assessment continuum that identifies lead and lag metrics and that defines when they will be analyzed at the central office and school levels and reported to the board.
5E	Set the expectation for the use of benchmark assessments at all levels to capture a clear understanding of student learning at a minimum, quarterly.
5F	Establish focused protocols that generate early warning indicators for students failing to achieve at acceptable levels as a predictive measure.
8B	Provide support and resources so that principal supervisors spend a greater amount of time in schools observing instruction in both general and special education settings and providing strengths-based and actionable feedback to site leaders.
8C	Structure support and resources to build principals' capacity as instructional leaders so they can better support teachers around effective teaching practices, strategies, data literacy, and expected student outcomes.
8F	Align calendars to provide principals time to collaborate with feeder, grade span and/or like schools around common problems of practice as indicated by student outcome data.
9B	Facilitate the development of data-driven PLCs at each school site and provide modeling, coaching, and support of best PLC practices and processes.

9E	Provide professional learning and coaching for site staff about how to use data for continuous improvement on academics, attendance, and behavior.
10A	Build the capacity of technical support teams to provide training and support for the use of SIS for progress monitoring.
10B	Allot time specifically teachers, principals, and school site staff to engage in professional learning about how to use data for continuous improvement based on attendance, academics, and behavior.
10C	Develop a well-articulated and operationalized set of expectations and routines for data use at the district and school-site levels. This also includes creating expectations around a continuous cycle of data collection, organization and synthesis to support informed decision-making in classrooms and across the district.
10D	Develop training, support, and incentives for non-teaching staff to use data to support students.
10E	Establish interdisciplinary teams for analyzing and responding to data. These teams should include a range of stakeholders, including social workers, counselors, teachers, and administrators.
11F	Clarify expectations for accountability and on-going use of data in a continuous cycle of improvement to inform instruction for identified groups at the district and site level.
11H	Establish a process for the cabinet to model and engage in ongoing dialogue and review of data around key performance indicators and benchmarks aligned with district goals in order to increase the skills, knowledge, and leadership capacity of district and site leaders.
12D	Review, revise, and update the Mt. Diablo Unified School District Governance Handbook 2019 to re-establish governance standards, protocols, and processes that define and distinguish board and staff roles to keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus.

Theme 4: Autonomy	
1B	Analyze the effects of existing school autonomies on student outcomes, perhaps with support from an outside partner, to inform the district's policy on school autonomy.
3D	Determine where specialty academic programs fit into MDUSD's instructional vision and continuum and clarify expectations of implementation for these programs.
11C	Develop and implement a policy and framework to define the desired level of school site autonomy and communicate that expectation throughout the system.
11D	Seek to identify individuals at all levels of the system who can serve as exemplars of model leadership for improving student learning.
11E	Set the expectation that site leaders will lead their teams in cycles of improvement and outcome-focused accountability conversations.
12C	Set policies that clarify and communicate the district's intended outcomes and a small number of instructional priorities and define autonomy so there is a common understanding, focused direction, and clear expectations regarding implementation of district vision, policies, and priorities.

2020-2021
**Mt. Diablo Unified
School District**
Systemic Instructional Review

ccee
California Collaborative
for Educational Excellence

Direct Technical Assistance

Contact Us
T: (916) 619-7494