A.5.13: Develop an English language learner program plan to guide the district in following through on the focus and mission of the support program to accomplish increase ELL student achievement.

- Review, revise, and focus on a mission and vision for the English language learner program;
- Describe district and building organization and define job responsibilities related to the ELL program;
- Describe the linkages of the ELL program to the general curriculum;
- Define a movement toward Inclusion and Co-teaching;
- Provide for ongoing ELL services and training; and
- Incorporate an ELL education district and school committee with parents, teachers, community members, and students.

A.5.14: In addition to the positions required by the Unitary Status Plan, conduct a study to determine the staffing needs to implement the USP, especially needs of the directors required by the court, and present the required positions to the governing board for review, revision, and approval. Hire the required personnel when approved by the board.

This recommendation, if implemented, should give the district a means for ensuring equality and equity in the educational design and delivery and success for all students within the Tucson Unified School District. It should provide clear direction for special program development and instructional delivery and set goals for attaining improvement of subpopulation student achievement as necessary for programs to address diverse needs and for all students in the district to have equal opportunity to be successful. The recommendation should drive all program and intervention decisions using student achievement and equity data.

Recommendation 6: Develop a comprehensive district plan for student assessment and program evaluation aligned with the district’s strategic and curriculum plans that provides for the systematic collection, analysis, dissemination, and application of student achievement and program evaluation results to promote improved student achievement. Expand board policies to provide direction for formative assessment development and program evaluation and develop administrative procedures that formalize the process for developing high quality formative assessments, conducting program evaluation, and using disaggregated data to improve curriculum design and instructional delivery.

The auditors found that board policies and system plans were inadequate to provide direction to the school district, guide the use of data to address students’ instructional needs, and provide direction to teachers and administrators regarding the delivery of instruction (see Findings 1.1, 1.2, and 4.1). The design of the formative assessment program in the district is in the early stages of development. ATI is being used as the benchmark formative assessment, though questions have been raised in TUSD regarding the appropriateness of its use as a formative assessment (see Finding 4.3). TUSD does not have a comprehensive assessment system in place to guide the development of high quality, formative assessments of appropriate rigor and reliability at the district level (Findings 4.1 and 4.3). While district staff have prioritized the use of AIMs and ATI assessment data to make instructional decisions, the design and use of formative, diagnostic data are inadequate to inform instruction and improve student achievement (see Finding 4.3). No comprehensive assessment or evaluation plan exists in the district to guide the development of the formative assessments (Finding 4.1). The scope of student assessment was inadequate to evaluate the taught curriculum in core and non-core courses so as to provide sufficient data for making sound curricular decisions (Finding 4.2). Student achievement results from state and national assessments reflect some improvement in academic performance over recent years, but student achievement in Tucson still remains below state and national averages (see Finding 4.4). Programs are not formally planned, monitored, or evaluated for effectiveness. Use of data to improve student achievement outcomes is inadequate beyond the analysis step and is ineffective in solving curricular and instructional concerns (see Finding 4.3). No evidence was presented to the auditors that the district has used data to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs, and there were no confirmed reports regarding any decisions to keep or remove an instructional program based on evaluation results (see Finding 4.3).
Auditors recommend the development of district policies directing the design of a comprehensive student assessment plan to cover all core and non-core courses K-12 and to evaluate programs to improve student achievement and promote effective use of district resources. Board policy needs to direct the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of the formative assessment program implemented in TUSD. Delivery also needs to focus on professional development of principals and teachers administering formative assessments and how the from those assessments are used to improve curriculum and student achievement (Finding 3.4). The design and delivery of campus-based formative assessments also need to be covered under board policy and the design and delivery mechanisms for teacher development of those exams need to be written into administrative procedures (Finding 1.1 and 4.1). Auditors recommend the development of such policies, prior to the beginning of the next academic year.

The absence of a comprehensive plan for student assessment and program evaluation means the district lacks critical linkages with the curriculum (see Findings 2.1 and 2.3) and, therefore, direction for producing desired learning outcomes. Having an assessment plan and process in place can serve as a means to acquire, organize, and analyze information needed to guide instructional planning; inform teachers about student learning; assess program effectiveness; and make critical decisions regarding the educational program, district practices, and resource allocations. This plan should be in place prior to the beginning of the next academic year.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the members of the Tucson Unified School District School Board:

G.6.1: Direct the superintendent to present to the board for review and adoption policies that provide the framework for a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan and include the following:

- Develop a philosophical framework for the design of the comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan that is congruent with the strategic plan that is being developed by TUSD and that aligns with the curriculum management plan.
- Develop board policies that specifically provide direction to the superintendent and his staff to develop or select high quality assessments aligned with the district curriculum and accessible by all students. The board policies should provide direction for both formative and summative assessment of the curriculum by course and grade.
- Direct the use of data to analyze group, school, program, and system student trends.
- Include an expectation for ongoing formative and summative program evaluation, an explicit set of formative and summative procedures to carry out these expectations, and provisions for regular formative and summative assessment at all levels of the system (organization, program, and student).
- Require that formative, diagnostic assessment instruments be aligned to district curriculum and administered to students frequently to give teachers information for instructional decision making.
- Require that teachers developing formative assessments receive professional development that will enable them to develop valid and reliable formative assessments.

G.6.2: Direct the Superintendent to prepare for board review and adoption a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan as described in new board policies developed under action G.6.1.

G.6.3: Commit adequate resources to support implementation of comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation planning so that 75% of the plan’s goals and strategies can be achieved.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of the Tucson Unified School District:

A.6.1: Assist the school board in developing policies that provide direction for the development and implementation of a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan as described in governance action G.6.1.
A.6.2: Develop a comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan containing the following elements:

- The philosophical framework for the design of the student assessment plan and direction for both formative and summative assessment of the curriculum by course and grade, in congruence with board policy.
- Direction for use of data to analyze group, school, program, and system student trends.
- An expectation for ongoing formative and summative program evaluation, an explicit set of formative and summative procedures to carry out these expectations, and provisions for regular formative and summative assessment at all levels of the system (organization, program, and student).
- Requirement that formative, diagnostic assessment instruments are aligned to district curriculum and are administered to students frequently to give teachers information for instructional decision making.
- Inclusion of a list of student assessment and program evaluation tools, purposes, subjects, type of student tested, timelines, and so forth. Tools should make use of diverse formative and summative assessment strategies for multiple purposes at all levels.
- Specification of responsibilities of the central office staff and school-based staff for assessing all students using designated assessment measures, and for analyzing test data.
- Specification of connection(s) among district, state, and national assessments.
- Description of overall assessment and analysis procedures for use in determining curriculum effectiveness.
- Requirement that aligned student assessment examples and tools be placed in curriculum and assessment documents.
- Specifics regarding how equity issues will be identified and addressed using data sources, including controls for possible bias.
- Identification of components of the student assessment system to be included in program evaluation and specifics as to how these data will be used to determine continuation, modification, or termination of a given program.
- Requirement that principals and teachers as well as other appropriate staff are trained in the development of valid and reliable formative assessments that are aligned to the curriculum.
- Establishment of processes for communicating and training staff in the interpretation of results, changes in state and local student achievement tests, and new trends in the student assessment field.
- Provision for appropriate trainings for various audiences on assessment and the instructional use of assessment results.
- Delineation of responsibilities, procedures, and time frames for monitoring administration of the comprehensive student assessment and program evaluation plan and/or procedures.
- Description of creation of an assessment data system that allows for the attribution of costs by program, permitting program evaluations to support program-based cost-benefit analyses.

A.6.3: Assign responsibility for the development and implementation of formalized procedures for systematic student assessment and program evaluation aligned with the curriculum management plan.

A.6.4: Expand training in formative and summative data access, analysis, and use in facilitating teaching and learning. Extend this training to all instructional staff and administrators and provide systems to connect this training to district-wide efforts to increase student achievement.
A.6.5: Establish clear expectations for administrators and teachers in board policies, job descriptions, and personnel appraisal systems on use of assessment data for diagnosing student needs, evaluating student progress, determining curriculum and program effectiveness, and making decisions in all district operations.

A.6.6: Expect all program evaluations to provide a cost-benefit analysis and recommendations for continuation, expansion, modification, or termination.

A.6.7: Further efforts to use technology to facilitate ease of data collection and use; provide training in its use to ensure its effective implementation system-wide.

These recommendations, if implemented, should give the district a means for ensuring that the formative assessments developed by the district are valid, reliable and of high quality. These recommendations should secure the appropriate use of data to assess student progress and evaluate programs, analyze the results, and ensure that such results are used to make sound decisions about curriculum, instruction, and programs. Additionally, assessment and evaluation data will be available for use in informing students, parents, and other stakeholders of the effectiveness of district staff in educating its students. If this recommendation is not implemented, then the district will miss the opportunity to develop a comprehensive approach to assessing student instructional and teacher instructional delivery needs and will continue to support instructional programs without a strategy for determining if they are effective or not, thus potentially misusing district resources.

**Recommendation 7:** Develop a district staff development plan that incorporates an emphasis on growth in curriculum design and delivery, effective classroom strategies to engage the variety of learners, fulfillment of the Unitary Status plan, and ongoing professional growth among all employees focused on annual district student achievement goals.

The goal of a quality professional development plan is to increase student achievement. This is accomplished by developing the skills of teachers, administrators, and support personnel in the effective delivery of the curriculum, utilizing instructional strategies that meet the needs of all students. A comprehensive professional development plan is long-term, is focused on student achievement data, and is based on the curriculum and district goals.

The auditors found that there is locally developed policy that lacks specificity for the fulfillment of professional development in the Tucson Unified School District. Without policy and a formal plan, the district is unable to systematically meet the multiple requirements set forth by the district’s desegregation plan. Neither are they able to provide a district-focused program that stipulates needed staff growth to meet the academic needs of all students in the classrooms. Auditors also found that the current professional development activities are primarily site-driven and thus vary from campus to campus. The Tucson Unified School District does not have a comprehensive professional development plan to provide the direction for systemic development of all district staff (see Finding 3.4).

This recommendation provides for a comprehensive professional development plan with central administrative guidance to focus professional development activities based on district goals and coordination at all levels of the district.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Governing Board of the Tucson Unified School District.

G.7.1: Develop and adopt a local policy that describes the district’s expectation and goals and directs professional development efforts regarding the following:

- Assessing professional development needs in relation to student learning and requirements of the Unitary Status Plan;
- Planning, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating professional development activities in relation to student learning and the Unitary Status Plan; and