AB 519 Evaluation Annual Report: Year Two

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Executive Summary

Background

This is the second annual report on the evaluation of California's implementation of sanctions for school districts in Program Improvement Year Three (PI3) status under federal education regulations. The three-year independent evaluation was mandated by Assembly Bill (AB) 519 in 2008 and is conducted by the Center for Education and Evaluation Services at University of California at Davis and faculty at the University of Southern California. The first interim report submitted in October 2009 outlined the background and approach of the study, including analysis of the characteristics of the districts under sanction. This year's report focuses primarily on the 43 Cohort 1 districts that were assigned Corrective Action 6 and instructed to contract with a District Assistance Intervention Team (DAIT) in 2008. These districts were determined by the state to be most in need of external assistance to build district capacity and instructional coherence to address persistent student achievement problems.

Status of the Evaluation

In accordance with AB 519, the SBE has developed objective criteria to determine the pervasiveness and severity of performance problems among PI3 LEAs. The SBE has and will continue to apply these criteria to assign federal sanctions and differentiated technical assistance requirements, including a DAIT, to the LEAs. In this second year, the evaluation focuses on the 43 Cohort 1 LEAs that were assigned a DAIT.

This report includes a descriptive analysis of how Corrective Action 6 has been implemented at the district level from 2008 to 2010, and it provides preliminary findings regarding the impact of the approach on both district capacity and student achievement. Qualitative data from interviews and surveys have been coded and the research team is currently completing a more detailed coding of the interview data in preparation for combining the qualitative and quantitative data for next year's report.

Methods

A mixed-methods approach incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data analyses is being used to evaluate the implementation of Corrective Action 6 ("the intervention"). Qualitative data were collected and analyzed through DAIT capacity studies of the PI3 districts, interviews with DAITs and district leaders, and surveys. An average of two district leaders and two DAIT team members were interviewed separately from each district, for a total of 86 interviews. The survey data (response rate 100%) were analyzed via descriptive statistics, t-tests and Chi-square analysis. Student achievement data (California Standards Tests (CSTs)) were analyzed using Panel

Difference-in-Difference Regression approaches with school and district covariates and the clustering of standard errors at the district level to account for the nested structure of students within schools and districts. The triangulation of these quantitative and qualitative data provides an overview of the implementation of the DAIT intervention and the impact of the program. The subsequent section describes the findings from this evaluation.

Preliminary Findings

1. Did the DAITs and districts implement Corrective Action 6 as intended by the state and federal government?

Yes. The California Department of Education and *Education Code* (52059e) identified DAIT responsibilities and seven areas of district work on which DAIT should focus. There was strong emphasis on measuring and improving research-based "Essential Program Components" for high quality instruction and building the structures and practices at the district level to support those practices to improve student achievement (California Comprehensive Center, 2006). Although the level, focus and pace of their work varied, DAITs diagnosed district needs, made recommendations to improve the implementation and district capacity to support a coherent, aligned instructional program, and provided varying levels and types of technical assistance around implementing and monitoring reform efforts. Some highlights from related survey and interview data follow.

- Over 90% of DAITs and districts agreed that the DAIT (a) effectively diagnosed district needs and priorities, (b) provided support for the revision of the LEA plan/addendum, (c) was provided access and information necessary for an appropriate understanding of the district, and (d) was able to effectively engage the district leadership to address needed changes.
- Most districts and DAITs continued to work together beyond the first year.
- Most district and DAIT providers reported meeting together on a more or less monthly basis and having successfully established an open and cooperative relationship.

2. What factors either inhibited or enhanced the work of the DAITs and their districts?

Although district leaders and DAITs described many challenges to the process and some resistance to the intervention, the vast majority (92%) felt it was an effective strategy to build district capacity. We found that district context and "readiness" to change impacted both the ability of the DAIT to establish a productive relationship with the district and the pace and nature of the reform efforts over the course of the two years. Factors that influenced the effectiveness, pace, and outcomes of the DAIT work included:

- District leadership: For example, tenure of superintendent and cabinet, leadership's "buy-in" or willingness to fully engage in the reform process, and the existing relationships among district staff and between the district staff and the local school board, teacher unions, and community stakeholders. These factors not only impacted the initial readiness to

change, but also the reform efforts throughout the process – for example, a change in district leadership during the DAIT engagement can either facilitate or significantly impede improvement efforts.

- District context, history, and culture**:** This includes the extent to which school sites have traditionally been held accountable by the district for their instructional practices; the district/community's responsiveness to external pressures and mandates; history of student achievement, mobility, and demographics; location and size of the district; local school board stability and practices, and union contractual conditions. Existing teacher union contract provisions and the history of the union's negotiations with the district and/or board were frequently mentioned as important contextual factors.
- Local stakeholders: Local political climate and relationships among the various stakeholder groups is part of the district context discussed above but there was an additional component of how each stakeholder group (e.g., boards, civic leaders, parents, teacher unions, etc.) viewed the state's sanction, and their readiness to engage with the DAIT in terms of providing information, working to reach consensus, and supporting reform efforts.
- District resources, management, and structures: Districts' fiscal, human, and structural resources impacted their ability to implement reform. A districts' existing policies and systems – for example, data systems, communication systems and practices, organizational structure, etc. – could either facilitate or impede the implementation of DAIT recommendations.

3. What were the most significant changes reported?

All district leaders and DAITs interviewed were asked what they thought, overall, were the most significant changes since they began implementing their action plans. They most often named changes to governance, instructional resources and practices, fidelity of implementation, and supports for struggling students. These responses align well with the areas DAITs most recommended for improvement, and with the intent of the reform effort, indicating that overall, the participants view the intervention as achieving its intended outcomes in these areas. Although district priorities, needs and activities differed, they commonly reported making important, sustainable change in the following areas:

- Supports for under-performing students, especially for English Language Learners (ELLs), including new curriculum, interventions, and professional development, and related policies, especially diagnostic and English Language Development (ELD) entry/exit criteria.
- Instructional materials and quality in reading and math. This included updating the full curriculum and/or accelerated learning programs for struggling students, with a stronger emphasis on math in 2008-09. Additionally, most districts increased teacher and administrator professional development related to the curriculum.
- Teacher support. Many districts established strategies and structures to facilitate teacher growth (e.g., instructional coaches and professional learning communities) and improved their monitoring to examine fidelity of implementation of instructional practice (e.g., classroom walk-throughs).

- Data systems and the use of student data by district and school site staff to inform decision-making and instruction.

While the focus on instructional improvement and supporting under-performing students remained constant throughout 2008-2010, near the end of the two-year period, the subject area focus shifted in many districts from math to ELA, and from primarily focusing on ELL/ELD needs to include students with disabilities. Further, early activities tended to focus on building systems in many districts (e.g., data systems, accountability and alignment among school sites) while later efforts focused more on building school site leadership capacity.

4. Will changes be sustained?

Determining true sustainability requires long-term analysis. Although DAITs and districts report positive perceptions about the level and result of implementation of district and instructional reform, they are less certain about the district's ability to sustain the work they have begun. Given the current fiscal crisis in California's education system, many feared that increase in class sizes and reductions of both human and fiscal resources at the district and school level seriously threatened their ability to sustain the momentum they had managed to establish in the past two years. Professional development and coaching were frequently mentioned as ongoing needs that would likely be unmet due to budget constraints. Others feared that shifting priorities in state and federal policy that are moving the focus of improvement from the district back to the individual school site, would again weaken their efforts to improve district culture, accountability, and alignment.

5. Does the intervention impact student achievement?

Relating changes in student achievement to the intervention within the complex, fluid environments of struggling school districts is very challenging. Preliminary analysis of student achievement outcomes is promising but, again, a thorough analysis is not possible until the 2009-10 test data are available. Details of the quantitative methodology and rationale are in the report; here we present an overview.

(California Standards Tests (CSTs)) Proficiency Levels Over Time

In order to provide a general picture of changes over the two years, raw data (i.e., unadjusted for other covariates) on proficiency levels of 4th and 7th graders over five years (2005-06 to 2009-10) are displayed graphically in the report to demonstrate the extent to which performance in each of the district "types" has changed over time. Then a more nuanced analysis, controlling for student, school, and district characteristics was conducted, using difference-in-difference analyses, to examine student results at the end of the first year of implementation in the Cohort I districts and relate those results more directly to the intervention.

The more precise research question here is:

In the first year of the intervention, do students in the first cohort of districts that received DAITs perform better on CSTs than students in PI3 districts that received non-DAIT technical assistance?

To analyze trends in student performance over time, districts were divided into six categories: PI3 districts in Cohort I (a) assigned DAITs (the "intensive" category), (b) Cohort I districts considered "moderate" (who contracted with DAITs of their choosing), (c) Cohort I districts who were sanctioned but only required to access technical assistance (TA), rather than DAITs, (d) PI Year 2 districts, (e) PI Year 1 districts, and non-PI districts.

- Although all districts show a gradual increase in percent proficient/advanced over the five years in fourth grade math, the largest increase from 08-09 to 09-10 is among the intensive districts (districts assigned a DAIT). These districts also show the steepest decline in the percent of their students who test at far below basic levels. Results are similar, but less dramatic when examining fourth grade ELA test results, with the gap between the intensive and moderate category Cohort I districts narrowing, but less so than for math.
- Similar results are displayed in 7th grade math. Although the percent of students scoring proficient or advanced has not been increasing as steadily across all districts in 7th as it has in 4th grade, the "severe" districts again show the steepest gains over the past two years, in this case actually slightly outpacing the other Cohort I districts (both "moderate" and "TA") in 2009-10. ELA performance for 7th grade is similar, but not as dramatic as the math results, with the greatest improvements posted by the intensive districts.
- The intensive districts also show the steepest pattern of improvement in their API scores over the past four years, compared to the other five categories of districts.

However, it is important to recognize, that although the trends in the raw data are interesting, they do not tell the whole story of the impact of the intervention. In order to isolate the impact of the DAIT (or any other sanction), it is critical to control for as many other factors that may impact student outcomes as possible. More sophisticated quantitative analyses of the impact on student ELA and math achievement scores on CSTs used difference-in-difference analyses with student and district covariates and standard errors clustered to the district level. This methodology is used to best isolate the true impact of the DAITs on student achievement in the first year of the DAIT intervention for Cohort 1 districts.

- The difference-in-difference analyses show that students enrolled in districts with DAITs achieved statistically significantly higher math CST scores than did students enrolled in PI3 districts receiving non-DAIT Technical Assistance (TA). However, this impact was small, at approximately two to three percent of a standard deviation (1-2 points on the CST math scale score). Similar results were found for math achievement growth; students in PI3 districts with DAITs saw approximately a four percent of a standard deviation increase in their growth in math CST performance relative to students in PI3 districts without DAITs.

- The difference-in-difference analyses show that students enrolled in districts with DAITs do not perform significantly better or worse on ELA CSTs than do students enrolled in districts with non-DAIT TA In either achievement growth or levels.
- Districts with intensive technical assistance had significantly higher performance than moderate districts in changes in math achievement levels. Districts at a moderate level of technical assistance did not see significantly greater changes in achievement levels than those who only received financial resources and were not required to work with anyone. Both moderate and intensive technical assistance districts saw significantly greater math achievement growth than districts which only received financial resources and were not required to work with an external entity (light technical assistance category).

Preliminary Recommendations

Continue to Support District-Level Capacity Building and Technical Assistance. Changing systems, norms and instruction takes time. Many participants said that the real value the DAITs brought was "focus." This focus, when coupled with urgency and shared across stakeholders, will continue to drive the alignment that is key to a coherent standards-based instructional program. Nearly half of each respondent group also noted that reform takes more time and/or more money than what was provided to be both effective and sustainable. Organizational development research also indicates that institutionalization of reform requires several years of sustained effort.

Increase or Maintain Accountability: When asked how the state could help build capacity and implement program improvement efforts, a fairly large proportion of both DAIT and district respondents requested increased accountability for themselves and their partners – many stated that being held publicly accountable by the state provided district leaders the leverage and urgency they needed to enact change. Many DAITs emphasized that state-driven reform efforts which do not include clear accountability – benchmarks, reporting, and consequences – are unlikely to be implemented, much less sustained, in struggling school districts. Others mentioned the importance of having a good "match" between DAITs and their districts, as well as consistent training, oversight, and direction for DAITs from the state. Should the state stay with the DAIT initiative, there should be system to evaluate DAITs and identify areas of expertise.

Assess District Readiness and Match Interventions with Needs: When the DAIT is unable to adequately engage or assist a district within a few months, for whatever reason, the state should have mechanisms in place to assess the problem and address it in a timely manner. Districts may require different levels or types of intervention than others, depending on their openness to technical assistance, current issues and resources. The state has responded to some of these situations in the past year, assigning Corrective Action 3 (Trustee) and increasing SBE involvement and visibility in districts in which DAITs could not be effective due to a variety of issues beyond their control.

Educate Stakeholders: The state and its partners should continue, and increase if possible, efforts to educate the many stakeholders (superintendents, school boards, teachers, technical assistance providers, parents) involved in building district capacity. It is clear there remains a need for accessible resources and knowledge about board and district roles and responsibilities, how the state assesses districts' academic progress, the use of data to inform decision making, and how to support high quality instruction for all students.

Pave the Way for Districts to Improve Coherence: Reducing the number of competing mandates and duplicative reports were prominent among the recommendations of both district leaders and DAIT providers. Especially in the many small districts that are in PI3 and have little to no central office staff, it is a challenge to understand, enact and report compliance with so many ESEA Titles and state programs.

Summary

Preliminary data show that Corrective Action 6 has been implemented as intended, and the state has supported the building of district capacity to fully implement a standards-based, well-aligned instructional program. Although district leaders and DAIT providers report that there is more work to do in terms of institutionalizing reforms and insuring the sustainability of their initial efforts, overall they have improved systems to support student learning. Initial examination of student achievement data shows promising results: the raw data for both years suggest accelerated improvement, particularly in math and within the small number of intense districts (those assigned specific DAITs and designated by the state as needing the most support). However, these summary test results are not an accurate reflection of the actual impact of the intervention because they do not isolate the impacts of the DAIT work from the many other factors that also influence district-wide student performance. Careful statistical analysis of the initial year's test results (2008-09), controlling for those external factors, however, also finds a small but statistically significant positive improvement within the districts with DAITs in math (but not ELA) achievement. This is consistent with the qualitative analysis findings regarding stronger emphasis on improving math instruction and curricula during the initial implementation year. Next year's report will examine student achievement results in more detail and will include two years of data, allowing an examination of the impact of two years of DAIT engagement within the Cohort 1 districts, as well as an examination of the first year of implementation in the Cohort 2 districts.

Introduction

Corrective Action in California

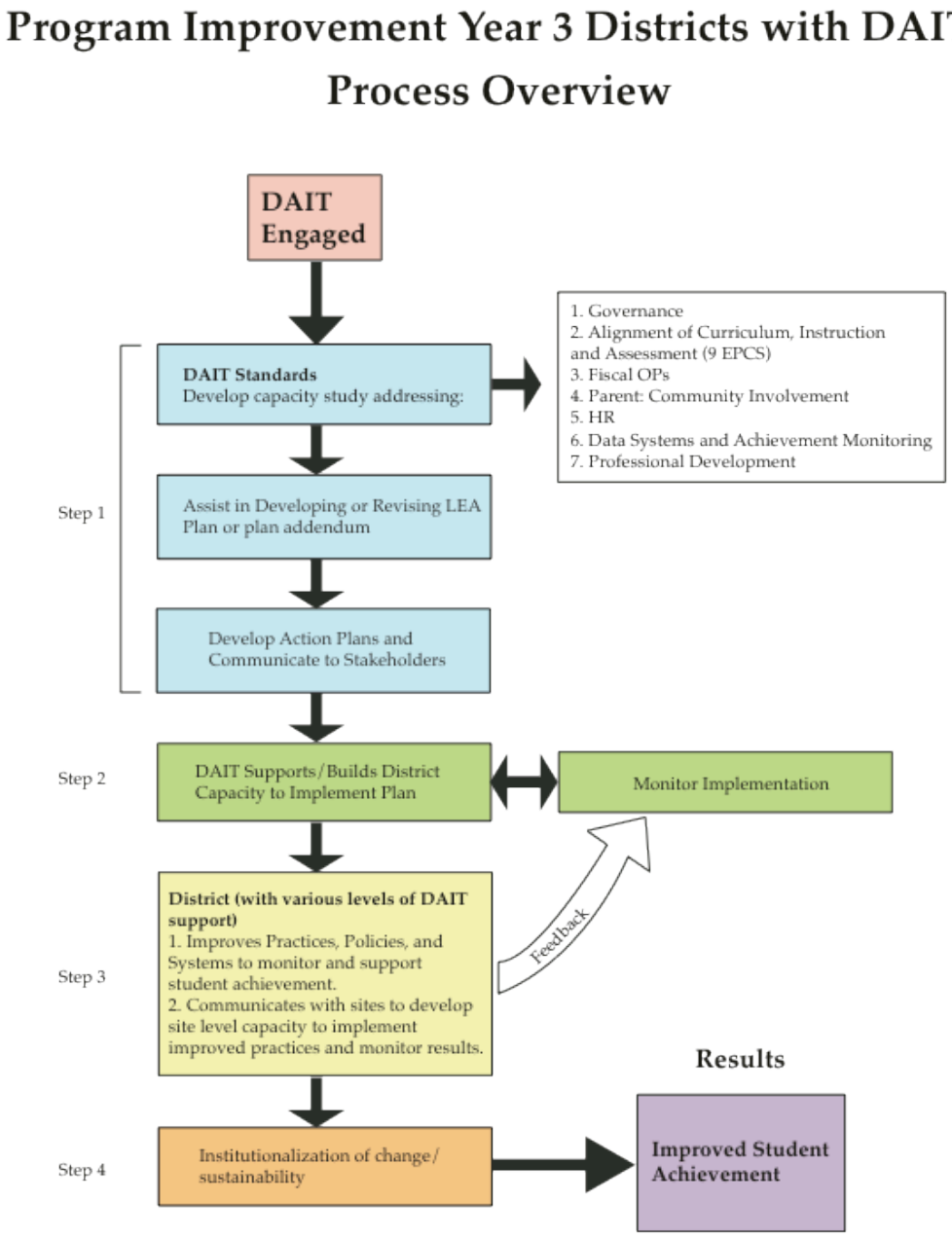
Since the passage of NCLB in 2001, states and their school districts are accountable for making progress at prescribed rates to attain academic proficiency for all students by 2014. When districts –

and specific subgroups within them -- fail to make this Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for three or more years, states must apply one of six corrective actions to them (NCLB 2001, US Public Law 107-110, Title I, Sec. 1116[c]). For purposes of this report, these districts are referred to as Program Improvement Year 3 (PI 3) Districts. Since March 2008, California's State Board of Education (SBE) has assigned Corrective Action 6 to all districts that have not made AYP goals for three or more years. Corrective Action 6 requires school districts to fully implement a new curriculum based on state academic content standards. Additional federal provisions require states to provide technical assistance while instituting corrective action (ESEA Section 1116(c)(10)(B)(iii)).

California has ranked and grouped these PI 3 districts (intensive, moderate and minor) and provided differentiated funding and technical assistance based on criteria adopted by the California State Board of Education. The "objective criteria" are intended to identify districts with the most need, and are described in the *Education Code (EC)* and in CDE documents (*EC* Section 52055.57(d); SBE Agenda 11/18/09, Item 9; SBE Agenda 3/12/08 Item 21). For those districts considered with either "intensive" or "moderate" needs, California has developed a formal technical assistance program, approving providers and establishing standards for their work. The providers, known as District Assistance and Intervention Teams (DAITs), are required to diagnose district needs with established rubrics (such the District Assessment Survey), assess their capacity to address those needs (the Capacity Study), and support them in implementing specific recommendations for change (*EC* Section 52055.57(d)[4]). Districts must incorporate the recommendations made by the provider into their LEA plan and submit those plans to the California Department of Education (CDE).

Although the California State Board of Education (SBE) has amended the objective criteria and its definition of "new curriculum" over time, it has consistently focused its language and actions on building district capacity to support schools in implementing a coherent, aligned and standards-based academic program. This strategy of improving district capacity and support for the aligned instructional program is expected to increase the academic performance of all students and schools as measured by AYP, and thus move districts out of Program Improvement (PI) status. Figure 1 below illustrates the process.

Figure 1: DAIT Process Overview



Evaluation of Corrective Action 6 Implementation

Overview of Evaluation Reporting

In 2008, the state legislature chaptered AB 519 which mandated an independent evaluation of the state's implementation of federal corrective actions. The state contracted with the Center for

Education and Evaluation Services, in the School of Education at UC Davis, and a faculty member at the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California to perform the evaluation over a three-year period. This is the second interim report of that evaluation. The first report, *AB 519 Evaluation Preliminary Progress Report*, was submitted to CDE in October 2009, and described the study's scope of work, research questions and methodology, and presented detailed demographic and achievement characteristics of PI3 districts. This second annual report focuses on how Corrective Action 6 was implemented in the first group of PI3 districts (Cohort 1) in the 2008-9 and 2009-10 school years, with emphasis on the 43 districts within Cohort 1 required by the state to work with District Assistance and Intervention Teams (DAITs), the "intensive" and "moderate" PI 3 districts. (Appendix A)[1] The report describes the implementation process, as reported by district personnel and DAITs, and presents preliminary outcomes in terms of both district capacity building and student achievement.

The report of findings is organized to roughly follow the sequence of events from initial engagement of the DAITs in their districts, to priorities and activities over the course of their work, and identifies barriers and facilitators to change encountered during the process. District and providers' perceptions of the impact of the intervention on district capacity are discussed, as well as the recommendations of both groups of key informants regarding the process and policy.

Although, during the timeframe under consideration in this report, districts had only implemented the DAIT intervention for a single year, this report also includes a quantitative analysis of the impact of DAITs on student achievement as measured by student performance on the (California Standards Tests (CSTs)) in the first year of implementation (2008-09). Because student level data for 2009-10 were not available at the time this report was prepared, an examination of student achievement response to interventions in the PI3 districts over the two years of the Cohort 1 engagement cannot be provided until the final report. As such, the student achievement analysis should be viewed as evidence of the short-term impact of DAITs on student performance in Cohort 1 PI3 districts receiving DAITs relative to PI3 districts not receiving the DAIT intervention.

The final report, due in November 2011, will examine student achievement outcomes in more detail, and will include Cohorts 1 and 2 in the analysis. It will also link the qualitative and quantitative data in a more detailed way to examine inter-relationships among the variables.

Research Questions

The qualitative results primarily address the following research questions:

A. How did Cohort 1 Districts with DAITs implement Corrective Action 6 ("the intervention") and what do they report as the outcomes of their activities? Sub-questions include:

[1] One cohort 1 district included in the Year 1 Report was moved to cohort 2, reducing the number of cohort 1 districts with DAITs from 44 to 43.

1. How did districts and DAITs view the intervention and their roles and responsibilities?
2. What weaknesses did DAITs most frequently observe in districts?
3. What recommendations were most frequently prescribed by DAIT providers?
4. What actions did districts take to implement the DAIT recommendations?
5. What changes in district practice, policy, and capacity were implemented during the two years?
6. What are the primary facilitators and barriers to implementing related action plans?
7. What changes do participants perceive as being most valuable and sustainable in terms of improved district systems and support for student achievement?

The quantitative analyses primarily answer the following research question:

In the first year of the intervention, do students in the first cohort of districts that received DAITs perform better on CSTs than students in PI3 districts that received non-DAIT technical assistance?

Methodology

A. Qualitative Methodology

Overview

The goal of the qualitative data collection was to ascertain what the intervention actually looked like at the district level– how did DAITs and districts work together, what facilitated and/or impeded their work, what changes did they make that improve district capacity to support a fully aligned curriculum, and which of those changes do participants believe will be sustained beyond the intervention. The evaluation team collected information from all 43 Cohort 1 districts in PI3 working with assigned or contracted DAITs. In order to gain a variety of perspectives and provide some triangulation, researchers conducted separate interviews and surveys with both district leaders and DAITs.

Qualitative Measures

The qualitative data were collected using the following instruments:

- Capacity Study content analysis coding rubric (Appendix B)
- Online surveys completed by DAIT providers and district leaders - superintendent and/or senior administrators (Appendix E)
- Semi-structured interviews with DAIT providers and district leaders (Appendix C)

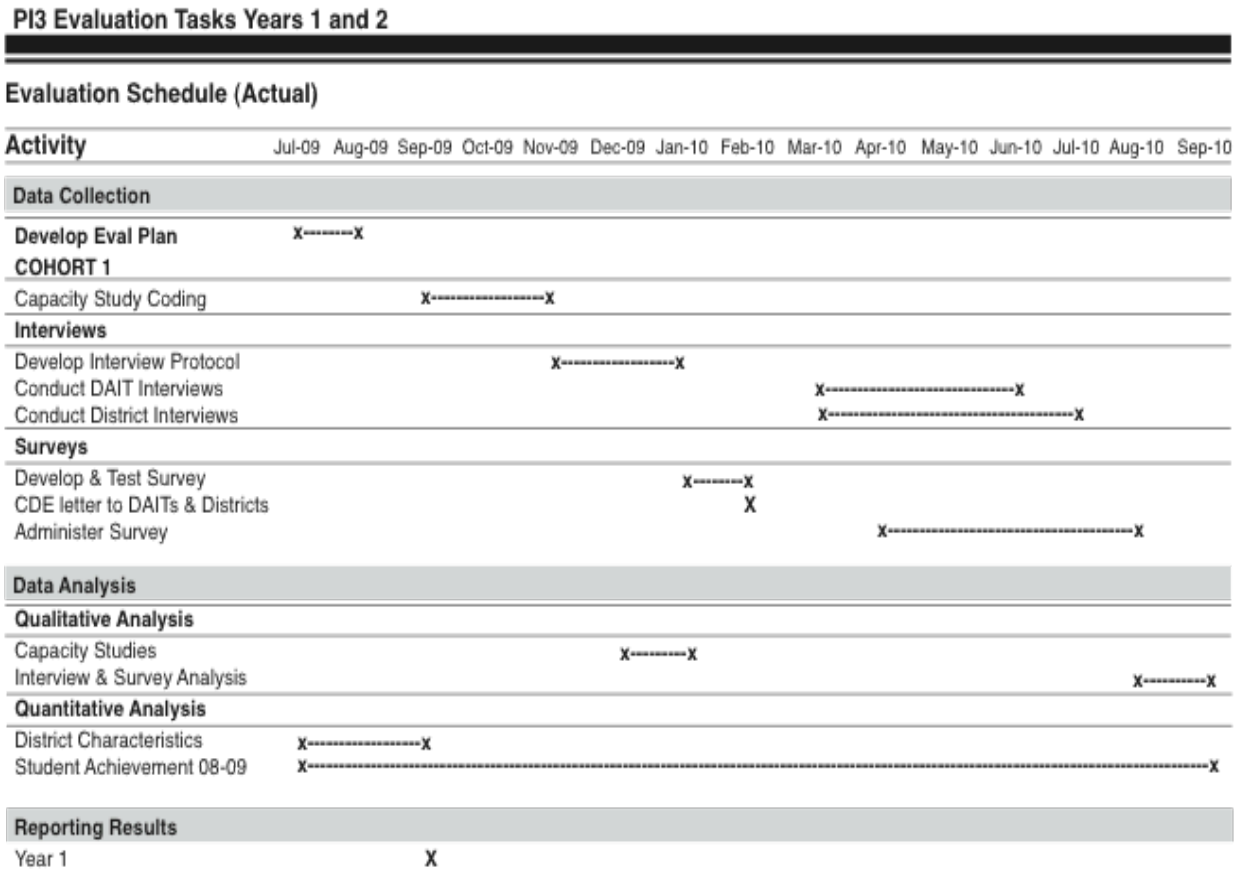
Instrument Development

The survey and interview instruments developed by the evaluation team drew on (a) existing research on district and school level improvement efforts, (b) the pilot study conducted by SRI (Padilla, Tiffany-Morales, Bland, & Anderson 2009) (c) testimony by PI3 superintendents and DAITs at SBE meetings, and, (d) interviews with state, county and evaluation personnel involved in the pilot project. The evaluators also attended the DAIT training in September 2009, reviewed extant documents related to the development and implementation of the PI3 sanctions and DAIT intervention, many of which are on CDE's website (http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ti/pilearesources.asp), and conducted extensive content analysis of the capacity studies filed by DAITs. Once developed, the interview protocols and surveys were reviewed by CDE staff and then pilot-tested with technical assistance (TA) providers and school district personnel in non-study districts.

Fred Balcom, Director of the District and School Improvement Division, sent letters to Cohort 1 PI3 superintendents and their DAIT providers in February 2010 to inform them of the coming interviews and surveys and urge them to participate (Appendix D). The researchers' process was to make initial email or phone contact with the DAIT lead and conduct a short interview, have them complete an electronic survey, then schedule a one-hour interview with the DAIT lead and any members of their team who wished to participate. The same process was repeated for the districts, with the initial contact being either the superintendent or a designated member of the district cabinet. The goal was to elicit detailed information about their process, implementation level and outcomes that would illuminate patterns and strategies that might later be correlated with

quantitative outcomes. The qualitative data gathered are rich in detail, and consequently, not all data have yet been coded in detail. A timeline illustrating the evaluation appears in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Evaluation Tasks Timeline



Qualitative Data Instruments and Analysis

1. Capacity Study Content Analysis Coding

Capacity Studies, prepared by the DAIT providers, included the recommendations that the districts were required to incorporate into their LEA plans or Addendums. The coding tool evaluators developed for analyzing the capacity studies was based, to a large extent, on the Academic Program Survey (APS), a CDE-developed instrument designed to measure the presence of nine Essential Program Components (EPCs) for high quality instructional programs that promote student achievement in English/reading/language arts (ELA) and math (Table 1).

Table 1. Essential Program Components (EPCs)

1. Use of State Board of Education (SBE)-adopted (kindergarten through grade eight) or standards-aligned (grade nine through twelve) English/reading/language arts and mathematics instructional materials, including intervention materials
2. Instructional time (adherence to instructional minutes for English/reading/language arts and mathematics (K-8) and high school access to standards-aligned core courses)
3. School Administrator Training Program- Assembly Bill (AB) 430 (Chapter 364, Statutes 2005) on SBE-adopted instructional materials
4. Fully credentialed, highly qualified teachers and AB 466 (Chapter 737, Statutes of 2001) (Senate Bill [SB] 472, pending) Professional Development Program on SBE-adopted instructional materials **a.** Fully credentialed, highly qualified teachers **b.** District providers teachers of English/reading/language arts and mathematics with the appropriate AB 466 (SB 472, pending) Professional Development Program through a SBE-authorized provider.
5. Student achievement monitoring system (use of data to monitor student progress on curriculum-embedded assessments and modify instruction)
6. Ongoing instructional assistance and support for teachers (use of content experts and instructional coaches)
7. Monthly teacher collaboration by grade level (K-8) and department (9-12) facilitated by the principal
8. Lesson and course pacing schedule (K-8) and master schedule flexibility for sufficient numbers of intervention courses (9-12)
9. Fiscal support: The general and categorical funds of the school or district are used appropriately to support the English/reading/language arts and mathematics program goals in the school plan.

Note: From http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/lp/vl/essentialcomp.asp

Evaluators coded each statement (observation) and recommendation written in each capacity study. Each observation or recommendation in the capacity studies was first assigned a broad "topic" code, which reflected its relevant EPC or other DAIT topic area, and also a more specific "sub-topic" in alignment with the APS. This method of coding increases flexibility of analysis: subdivided EPCs and other topic areas allow for the examination of a single aspect of a single EPC or topic area, related aspects of multiple EPCs/topic, or the collapsing of all aspects of a single EPC/topic. DAIT provider observations were additionally coded as indicating a strength or weakness of the district, or as neutral statement. The "neutral" code was renamed "neutral/mixed" to include statements that were neutral in nature as well as statements that indicated both positive and negative aspects of a district characteristic (mixed). Each capacity study was coded by a trained qualitative researcher and approximately half of the studies were double-coded.

DAIT providers varied greatly in their style of communication, with some repeating observations and recommendations in multiple sections and others making a single statement followed by an extensive justification. To account for this variation in reporting, quantitative analysis was not

performed on the simple count of observations and recommendations, but on the percentage of observations or recommendations within a given EPC and within the entire document. This standardizes the data and directly feeds into the foundational evaluation questions of the qualitative analysis.

2. Initial Interviews

The initial interviews with both providers and districts contained 20 questions and lasted about 15 minutes on average. They provided initial contact with districts and DAITs to identify DAIT and District Leadership Team (DLT) members and related expertise, dates of work, and changes in DAIT and or district leadership over the course of the engagement.

3. Implementation Surveys

Surveys were administered to DAIT providers and district leaders to collect data on the implementation of the DAIT intervention. These surveys were conducted using a web-based platform that provided opportunity for shared access among team members (i.e., a superintendent may have filled out some of the survey and then forwarded it to the head of curriculum to fill out certain questions). The survey addressed 14 topics with many scaled questions within each topic addressing the specific actions and changes in district capacity over the two years since the Cohort 1 districts were identified and sanctioned (2008-10). The questions focused on areas most cited as in need of improvement in the capacity studies: governance, curriculum implementation and monitoring, fiscal alignment, English Language Learners (ELLs), students with disabilities, data systems, and human resources; these areas were also a focus in the DAIT training and assessment tools developed by CDE and the California Comprehensive Center (tools and explanatory documentation at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ti/stateassesspi.asp and http://www.cacompcenter.org/cs/cacc/print/htdocs/cacc/esea-requirements.htm#tools).

Survey and interview response rates were strong (100%). Six districts were not asked to complete the surveys due to changing leadership and already extensive CDE reporting requirements. Five of the six districts that were not asked to complete the survey were in the "intensive" category and required to submit quarterly progress reports to CDE. Researchers coded survey implementation levels from these quarterly reports to CDE and LEA plans.

Table 2. Survey Response Rates

	Total Surveys Issued	Response Rate
Districts	36 [a]	100%
DAITs	43	100%

[a]Six districts were not administered the survey.

Respondents were asked to rate items relating to implementation level on a 4-point scale: none (value = 1), partial (2), substantial (3), or full (value = 4). For example, one item was "District has walkthrough processes in place to ensure that curriculum is implemented with fidelity" which was rated on the four point scale for both the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years. Respondents also rated

the district's capacity to implement and sustain improvements on a 4-point scale, ranging "no capacity" (value=1) to high capacity (value=4). Appendix E contains survey items and district and DAITs' detailed responses.

Researchers calculated an overall implementation rating for each year by averaging the ratings across all survey items relating to implementation. In addition, ratings for each area of capacity were calculated by averaging the ratings across all questions related to that particular area. These ratings were then used to examine the district's level of implementation by year, changes across the two years, and the relationship between current implementation level and capacity and the district's initial capacity as determined by scores from the capacity study.

5. Follow-Up Interviews

Follow-up interviews were conducted with district leadership and DAIT providers during the spring of 2010. These protocols contained open-ended questions and most interviews lasted about one hour (see Appendix C). Questions focused on participants' understanding of the DAIT role, how the DAIT and district worked together, barriers and facilitators in the DAIT process, changes in the district's focus and structure, areas of work considered the highest priority, and the most significant outcomes and suggestions for improvement of the process. Most interviews were recorded and conducted by two evaluation team members, both of whom took detailed notes. The notes of both interviewers were incorporated into a single form for coding. Coding of open-ended responses is not yet complete, but preliminary analyses are described in the results section of this report.

Because we obtained information from both District Leadership Team (DLT) members and DAIT providers in both our interviews and implementation surveys, we are able to contrast and compare the responses from each group. It is important to note that, although we spent many hours interviewing respondents, we still only interviewed 2-10 people per district, including both DAIT providers and district staff (Table 3). The number of respondents involved in any individual interview varied from 1 to 7. Each provider interview included at least the DAIT lead; however other DAIT members occasionally participated in the interview as well. Overall, 60 DLT members and 53 DAIT members participated in the interviews.

Table 3. Interview Respondents

	Number of DLT Members	Number of DAIT Members
Total N Interviewed	60	53
Avg. N Interviewed per district	2	2
Max N Interviewed per district	6	7
Min N Interviewed per district	1	1

Over half (51%) of our district interviews included the superintendent; however, various other district staff (most frequently assistant/associate superintendents and/or directors) participated in the interviews as well (Table 4).

Table 4. DLT Interview Respondents by Job Title

Job Title	No. Interviewed
Superintendents	20
Assistant/Associate Superintendents	20
Directors	11
Other District Personnel	6
Principals	2
Teachers	1

B. Quantitative Methodology

Overview

To examine the impact of the DAITs on student achievement, the CST scores of students in districts who received a DAIT were compared to the CST scores of students in districts that received non-DAIT technical assistance (non-DAIT TA). Our examination of student achievement consisted of two parts. First, we used raw data (i.e., unadjusted for other covariates) on the percent of students scoring at different levels of performance on the CSTs (far below basic, below basic, basic, proficient and advanced) to examine trends over time. Because looking at test scores alone without considering other confounding factors (student and district demographics, student achievement prior to the DAIT intervention, etc.) cannot accurately isolate the impact of the DAITs on student achievement, we focus our analysis on multivariate regression analysis that utilizes a difference-in-difference design to assess the impact of DAITs on student achievement relative to students in PI3 districts that received non-DAIT technical assistance, as described in more detail in the subsequent sections. Although, during the timeframe under consideration in this report, most districts had not implemented Corrective Action 6 long enough to determine its long-term impact on student achievement, this report includes a quantitative analysis of the short-term impact on student achievement as measured by student performance on the CSTs. It is important to note that DAITs are intended to build district capacity to improve student achievement. This Theory of Action of the DAIT intervention, as outlined in Figure 1, might suggest that a more accurate assessment of the impact of DAITs on student achievement would consider the long-term impacts of DAITs at the completion of the DAIT interaction with district leadership teams or in years following implementation, rather than after a single year of implementation.

Analytic Strategy: Isolating the Impact of DAIT

Identifying Comparison Groups – PI3 Districts with DAIT providers and PI3 Districts with "Non-DAIT" Technical Assistance

The intent of this analysis is to isolate the impact of DAITs on student outcomes. To determine the causal impact of DAITs on student achievement we would ideally like to have assigned DAIT treatment to districts randomly, or assigned students to districts with DAIT randomly, thus removing any systematic differences between students or personnel in treated versus non-treated districts. If the DAIT treatment was randomly assigned, then we could compare student achievement of treated to non-treated students to estimate the unbiased impact of DAITs. However,

because DAITs were assigned to districts precisely because of systematic differences in student achievement, a simple comparison of students in districts with DAITs relative to those without will return a biased estimate of the impact of DAITs on student achievement.

In the absence of randomization, we still want to compare student outcomes in districts that received DAITs to some *untreated* set of students. Ideally, we would compare the achievement of students in districts that received DAITs in the 2008-9 school year to the achievement of those *same* students in the *same* districts in the absence of DAITs in 2008-9. Clearly, this is not possible. As such, we must find a group of students to which we can compare students in DAIT districts that most closely resembles the counterfactual.

The Difference in Difference Method

To begin to solve these issues of bias in simple regression analyses that attempt to measure the effect of DAITs on student achievement, we effectively combine two comparison groups and use a set of *difference-in-difference* regressions that isolate the effect that the DAITs had on the students' ELA and Math CST scores before and after the implementation of the DAIT (in 2008-9). Essentially, we measure the difference in achievement outcomes between students in *TA vs. DAIT treatment in 2008-9* (the first year of DAIT treatment) *relative to the 2007-8 school year* (before the DAIT treatment). The treatment effect is estimated by subtracting the difference between students in districts with DAITs versus those in districts with non-DAIT TA in the 2007-8 school year from the difference between students in DAIT versus non-DAIT TA districts in the 2008-9 school year. If this treatment effect is positive, then it is likely that students in districts that received DAITs performed better than they would have without the DAITs, according to the pre-treatment difference. This type of estimation strategy, which is the difference of two differences, is aptly known as difference-in-differences (DD).

In other words, the difference-in-differences coefficient represents the *difference in the improvements in student achievement of the districts with DAITs and the improvement in the non-DAIT TA districts from 2007-08 to 2008-9*.

The DAIT intervention was implemented in the lowest performing districts in order to provide additional capacity to improve student achievement and, in a sense, "close the gap" in achievement between the lowest performing districts (districts receiving DAITs) and other, TA-only PI3 districts (districts that did not receive DAITs). In order to close this gap, districts with DAITs would need to experience larger improvements in achievement between the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years, compared to districts that received non-DAIT TA. A coefficient on the DD estimator of zero would indicate that both types of districts experienced similar changes in student achievement (either improvements or declines) and there was no change in the achievement gap. A negative coefficient on the DD estimator would indicate that the non-DAIT TA only districts experienced larger improvements in student achievement and the gap between the achievement in the DAIT districts and non-DAIT TA districts grew. Finally, a positive coefficient on the DD estimator indicates that the districts with DAITs experienced larger improvements in student achievement than did the non-DAIT TA districts and, correspondingly, that the gap in student achievement in DAIT and non-DAIT TA districts was reduced.

We are not only interested in the achievement *levels* of students in districts with DAITs relative to those in other districts (such as those that received non-DAIT TA) before and after the intervention, but we are also concerned with the achievement *growth* of students in districts with DAITs relative to those in districts without DAITs. As such, we perform a variation of the difference-in-difference method described above, this time comparing the growth in student achievement before the implementation of DAITs (from the 2006-7 to 2007-8 school years) to the growth into the first year of the implementation (2007-8 to 2008-9).

More details about this methodology, including the regression equation used to model the impact of DAITs on student achievement relative to students in districts that received non-DAIT TA, can be found in Appendix F. A few things are worthy of note, however, in the main discussion included in the body of the report:

First, we use as our outcomes in our models standardized ELA and Math CST test scores for individual students in a given school and district in the 2008-9 school year (the first year of DAIT intervention). In alternate specifications we use individual students' growth in CST scores between 2007-8 and 2008-9. We describe our method of standardization more completely in Appendix F. However, it should be noted that CSTs are criterion-referenced and are not vertically-aligned, such that they are not intended for use in longitudinal models over time. Nonetheless, there are no test scores available that are easily comparable over time. We believe that the best way to assess changes in student performance over time is by standardizing the test scores in each year and then comparing them over time. As described in the Appendix F, we are careful in our analyses to confirm our results using a number of different samples to standardize the test score outcome variables. As with any test score measures of student outcomes, CSTs inherently include some measurement error that cannot be removed from the model.

Second, we include controls for a number of student covariates in our models: binary indicators for minority and students receiving special education, and English language learners. We classify "minority" students as those who report being Black, Hispanic, or of "other" race or ethnicity. Our "non-minority" group included white and Asian students. Students are included in the special education group if they are classified as having a disability and have usable CST scores (i.e., no students with CAPA or CMA scores are included in the analysis). Students are included as English language learners if they report that English is not their primary home language. In addition, we control for school and district covariates, including binary indicators for small and large districts, urban districts, and high school and unified districts, and continuous measures of the percentage of minority students and the districts' number of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria. At the school level, we control for school enrollment, the proportion of minorities within the school, and indicators for high and middle schools (elementary schools are the reference category).We include these measures because it is likely that such factors influence student outcomes and would bias our estimates of the impact of DAITs. To begin to account for the hierarchical nature of the data, we cluster our standard errors to the district level.

Summary of Methodology

A mixed-methods approach incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data analyses was used to evaluate the implementation of the Corrective Action 6 in the first group of PI3 districts (Cohort 1) in the 2008-9 and 2009-10 school years. Qualitative data were collected through district capacity studies, interviews with DAIT providers and district personnel, and surveys. In addition, quantitative analyses examine the potential impact of DAITs on student achievement during the first year of program implementation. Together, the triangulation of these quantitative and qualitative data provides an overview of the implementation of the DAIT intervention and the impact of the program.

Limitations

Limitations of Quantitative Student Achievement Findings

There are a number of ways the results from these analyses may be biased. First, the DAIT intervention was first implemented in the 2008-09 school year. As such, we have only one year of achievement data. At best, then, we capture a first-year, short-term impact of the DAIT intervention on students in districts that receive DAITs versus those that receive non-DAIT technical assistance. In addition, we are only able to assess the impact of DAITs on students in *the first cohort of districts* that received DAITs (relative to those that received non-DAIT TA). CDE will provide the research team with data from the 2009-10 school year by November, 2010. At that point we will include a second year of implementation data for the districts that received DAITs in 2008-09 (Cohort 1) and we will be able to perform analyses examining year-one short-term impacts of DAITs on the second cohort of districts that received the DAIT treatment.

There are also numerous threats to the validity of any quasi-experimental analysis such as the difference-in-difference approach described above. We performed multiple specification checks, described in the Appendix F, to confirm that any results of our analyses can be attributed to DAITs rather than to other causes. Of course, there may still be other threats to the validity of our estimates that go unchecked.

Additionally, it is a well-known issue that the CSTs are not norm-referenced or vertically aligned. As such, it is difficult to compare student achievement on the CSTs over time. We attempt to address this issue in ways that are described in the section in Appendix F entitled *Test Score Outcomes Variables.*

Limitations of the Qualitative Data Findings

Much of the qualitative data is retrospective. Interviews and surveys were issued in the beginning of 2010, but were asking participants to recall actions that had taken place over the past two years. Additionally, some of the participants had changed districts or positions over the course of the work, and some had been active in 2008-09 but not 2009-10 or vice versa.

Lastly, despite the high response rate and range of respondents in the interviews and surveys, we cannot represent the results as an exhaustive examination of each district's experiences. Our perspectives are limited to the information we obtained from a fairly small number of respondents per district. However, since it was never the intention of the evaluation to prepare separate case

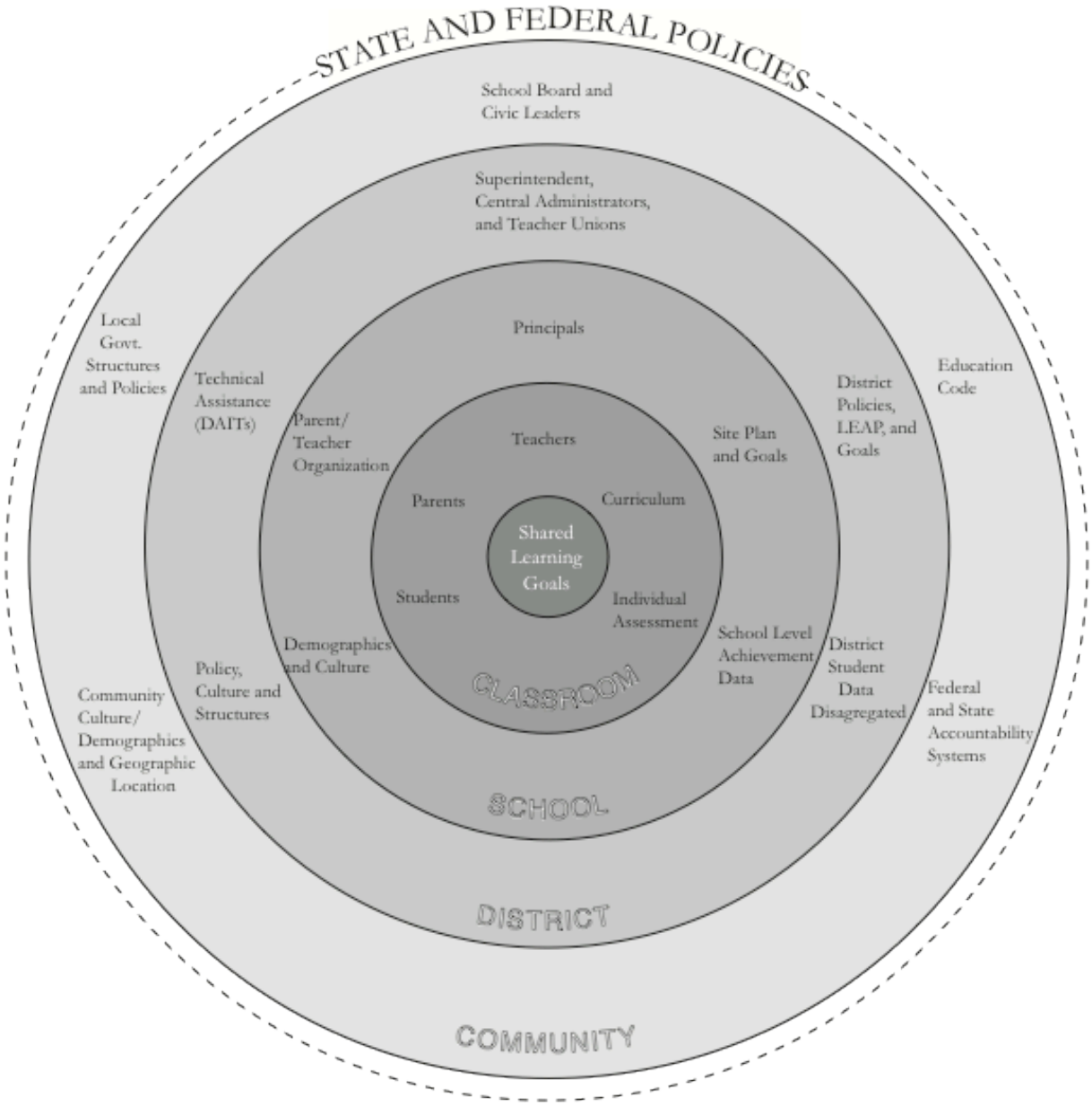
studies for each district, we feel that the triangulation provided is sufficient to support the generalizations presented in this report.

Contextual Factors Influencing District Reform

It is also important to bear in mind the complexity of codifying a federally mandated intervention in California's very diverse local communities. To some extent, the intervention's goal is to unite and align people and systems around common student achievement goals and measures, yet school districts are embedded within complex socio-economic cultures that influence both what goals and reforms are valued and how any reform effort will play out within the local context. Hence the task of the district and their providers of establishing these goals, forging agreement upon them and keeping them a primary focus within, among and around their schools, is challenging to say the least.

Similar to findings of the DAIT pilot study, this report finds that Cohort 1 PI3 districts' approach to building this focus and district capacity is very contextual, and thus the work of the DAITs and districts is difficult to generalize. To emphasize the importance of this, Figure 3 illustrates the layers of factors and stakeholders that influence local educational reform goals. Although some of these factors are well outside the boundaries of the study, each emerged as a variable that impacted the intervention in one or more districts: (a) the geographic location of the district (teacher and administrator recruitment challenges, population mobility), (b) local school boards and municipal structures (mayors, city managers or other civic leaders and/or their education policies may impact superintendent, board or cabinet selection and decision making), (c) local school and community culture (family involvement in education traditions, languages spoken and the related politics, the value placed on state assessments), (d) the central district office (communication norms and systems, leadership stability), (e) educational leaders' characteristics (management philosophy, experience, belief in reform), (f) the change efforts already underway in districts as well as at individual schools, and (g) the teachers and their union representatives.

Figure 3. Context of District Reform



Another critical contextual component is the severe economic downturn which occurred both nationally and in California in 2008-present. The first evaluation report (Strunk & Westover, 2009) and prior analyses (Crane, Huang, Derby, Makkonen, & Goel, 2008) demonstrate that PI districts serve the highest percentages of disadvantaged students, the very group whose families also bear the brunt of economic downturns. In other words, communities with the highest educational needs were the most likely to face significant erosion of local resources to support those needs. At the same time, due to significant declines in state educational funding, while the PI3 districts were attempting

to improve their ability to support these often high-need students, they were themselves faced with significant teacher and central office layoffs, higher than usual student mobility, especially in areas with high foreclosures and unemployment, and other budget reductions which limited their ability to purchase new curricula and/or pay for professional development, key components of the implementation of Corrective Action 6. Within this context of competing demands and declining resources we examine the implementation of California's program to support struggling districts and improve their capacity to respond the needs of their students.

Characteristics of Districts in PI3 Cohort 1 with DAITs and DAIT Providers

Two groups were the focus of the qualitative data collection in this report – Cohort 1 Districts and DAIT Providers.

1. Districts: Cohort 1

An extensive descriptive analysis of PI districts was completed in a report for IES by the Regional Education Laboratory West in 2008 (Crane, et al.). Their findings were confirmed and further details on the characteristics of Cohort 1 PI3 districts were described in our first report (Strunk & Westover, 2009). Here, to provide context, are summary findings from both sources:

- Districts in PI had different demographics from districts not identified for improvement, including higher proportions of Hispanic, African-American, English language learner, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students.
- PI Year 3 districts had more disadvantaged students than did districts that are not in PI or that were in earlier stages of PI, on average. Within PI 3 districts, those receiving DAIT intervention appeared to have the most disadvantaged students in California.
- Districts with assigned DAITs had a less qualified teacher workforce in terms of average and median experience levels and full credential certification rates than did TA-only districts.
- Districts with DAITs had significantly lower student outcomes, defined by API and proficiency rates as well as by API growth than do PI3 districts with TA-only.

Although the Cohort 1 PI3 districts with DAITs share some common student level features, they vary greatly in size, location, enrollment and the numbers of schools they serve that are in PI. This is important to note, as geographic distance and numbers of schools in PI can impact factors such as how much DAITs may have focused on district vs. site level work, accessibility for technical assistance providers and professional development, and the degree to which the district may need to address vertical and/or horizontal alignment. Additionally, many high schools function more independently and have different reform, curriculum focus, and intervention strategies than elementary schools. Appendix A has a complete list of the districts, their county, DAITs, gradespans and enrollment. Below are summary tables and figures to illustrate the highly varied contexts of the PI work.

Table 5. Cohort 1 PI3 District with DAITs - District Grade Span Summary

Grade Span	Percentage of Cohort
Elementary (K-8)	51%
High School (7-12)	7%
K-12	42%

More than half of the Cohort 1 PI3 Districts have fewer than five schools in PI, although a few large districts have many schools in PI3.

Table 6. Summary of Numbers of PI Schools in PI3 Districts

Number of PI3 Schools Within PI3 Districts	Percentage of Cohort
1 – 5	56%
6 – 10	21%
11 – 20	14%
21 – 30	5%
31 – 50	5%

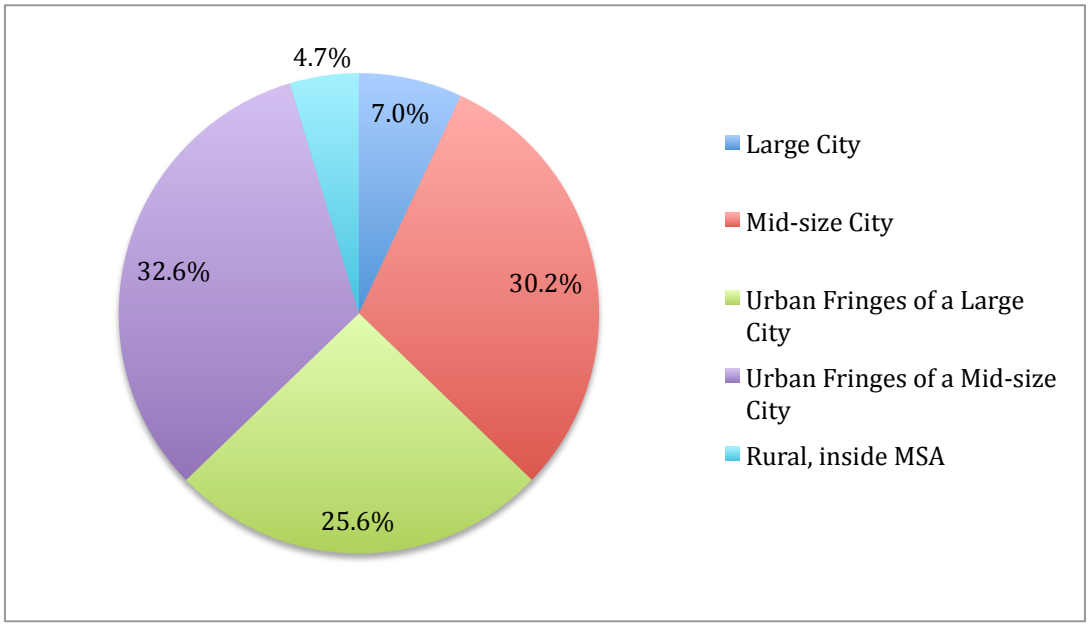
There is a fairly even distribution of size by student enrollment, showing the intervention is being applied in large and small districts, and must be flexible enough to address the range of strategies needed. For example, a DAIT in a small district with several schools in PI3 may focus more district systems and full curriculum implementation, whereas in a large district, they may focus more on certain grade levels or student populations (Table 7).

Table 7. Enrollment and Schools per District

	Percentage	Average Number of Schools per District	Percentage of Schools in PI
Student Enrollment			
700 – 2,500	20.9%	3.6	62.4%
2,501 – 5,000	23.3%	7.8	59.6%
5,001 – 10,000	14.0%	11.0	54.4%
10,001– 20,000	18.6%	23.0	39.5%
20,001 – 60,000	23.3%	40.4	46.5%

Cohort 1 districts with DAITs primarily reside in mid-sized cities and in the urban fringes of mid-sized and large cities (Figure 4). As defined by the US Census Bureau and California Department of Education a mid-sized city is characterized as "A central city of a Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) or Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), with the city having a population less than 250,000." Urban fringes" are defined as "Any incorporated place, Census Designated Place, or non-place territory within a CMSA or MSA of a Mid-size City or Large City and defined as urban by the Census Bureau." (http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/si/ds/fspubschls.asp)

Figure 4. Location of Cohort 1 PI3 Districts (N=43)



The 43 districts with DAITs in Cohort 1 reside in 19 counties throughout California; there is a concentration of districts in central and southern California with Kern County (18.2%) and Los Angeles County (15.9%) having the greatest percentage of Cohort 1 districts in PI 3. (For a map of the districts in the state, please see SBE Agenda November 2009 Item 16 Addenda http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr09/agenda200911.asp)

2. District Assistance Intervention Teams (DAITs)

CDE is responsible for identifying and training technical assistance providers known as DAITs. Potential providers apply to be on a state-approved list from which either the state (in the case of assigned DAITs in intense category districts) or the district (in the moderate category) can choose. Applicants are required to demonstrate expertise in leadership, academic subject areas, meeting the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities, and building district capacity. Government agencies, primarily County Offices of Education, as well as for-profit and nonprofit organizations, were approved as DAIT providers. In Cohort 1, 25 districts worked with County Offices of Education and 18 worked with private or non-profit organizations (see Appendix A for detailed list).

Preliminary Results

The results are reported below in the order of the intervention activities as described in Figure 1. We remind readers that our analysis is as yet incomplete, and findings may change as all data is incorporated and future analyses are completed. This section is organized in the following order:

- DAIT entry and initial activities
- Districts' capacity at entry
- Recommendations made by DAITs
- Actions taken by DAITs and districts, including action plan priorities
- Implementation, including ratings by the district and DAIT providers and correlations between district capacity and implementation level
- Findings from the quantitative analyses examining the impact of the DAIT on student achievement
- District personnel and DAIT providers' perceptions of the districts' ability to sustain changes
- Participants' satisfaction with the process
- Participant recommendations for improving the intervention

DAIT Entry and Initial Activities

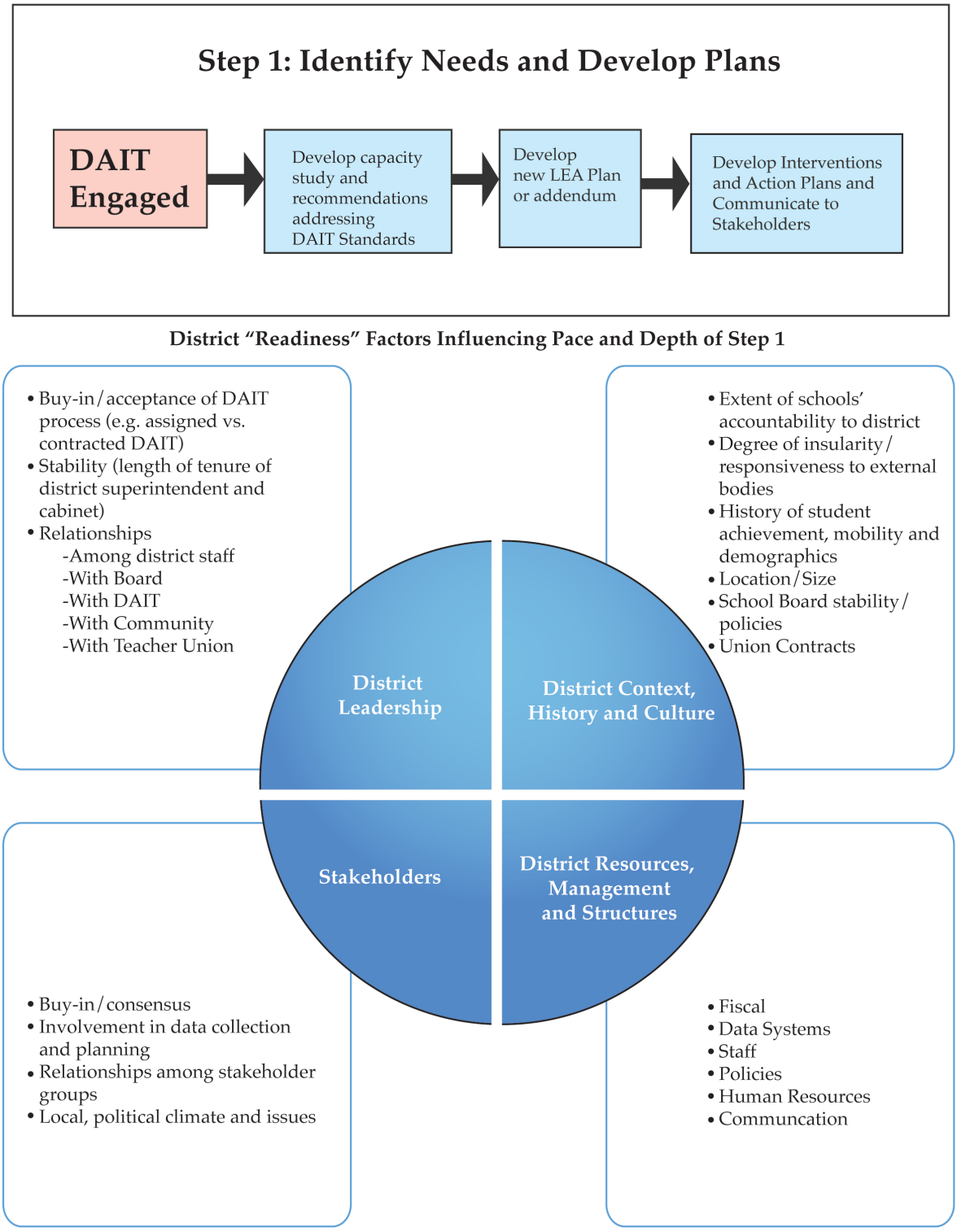
The first year of the intervention had a very aggressive timeline. Most DAITs and districts had to establish and build relationships, complete diagnostics, make recommendations for change, and revise plans for systemic change in just a few months' time. Many districts, though notified of their PI status for years, reported in interviews that they were taken by surprise by their rank in CDE's system and they lacked clarity as to the details of what actions they were required to take. Though it appears that the reform work began in earnest in March 2008 (in the Spring of the 2007-8 school year), for most districts this first year was one of building trust, assessing and planning, with the deeper implementation to take place in 2009-10.

In spring and summer of 2008 (before the start of the 2008-9 school year), districts formed a District Leadership Team (DLT), the district and the DAIT gathered information from and provided information to stakeholders, the DAIT prepared a Capacity Study (submitted to CDE) outlining both their recommendations and the data upon which those recommendations are based, and the district and DAIT prepared an LEA plan, plan revision, or plan addendum. Those plans were then submitted to CDE for review, possibly revised as per CDE recommendations, then posted at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ti/leaplanpiyr3.asp.

Figure 5 is a schematic of the first stage of the work and a summary of the various contextual factors that influence the nature and effectiveness of the entry activities and relationship development between districts and their DAITs. For example, conflicts or misunderstandings among district stakeholders (e.g., the school board, district staff, teachers' union, school site staff, etc.) significantly slowed the process of gathering data for the capacity study, preparing action plans, building consensus, and communication of needed changes to policy and practice. Similarly,

in districts where the communication or data systems were not well developed or in transition (e.g., changing vendors), gathering or sharing information, may have been significantly slower than in districts with established, well functioning systems. These factors, all of which are part of organizational and individual "readiness" for change, will be examined in more detail and linked to outcomes in the final report.

Figure 5. DAIT Entry and Readiness



Start dates and prior relationships

Many of the DAITs had worked with their district in the past and nearly all were still engaged with the district at the time of our interview, nearly two years later (Table 8). The majority of the PI3 districts with DAITs began their engagement in 2008. There are three districts in PI3 Cohort 1 with DAITs that were also in a pilot project; two of these three districts indicated earlier start dates (2005 and 2006/07) while one indicated a later (2009) start date, due to having changed DAIT providers. Among those who indicated a 2008 start date, the initial month ranged from January through December but most were between April and July of 2008.

Table 8. District and DAIT's Prior and Current Relationship

	District (N = 39)	DAIT Provider (N = 43)
District and DAIT worked together in the past	71.8%	69.8%
District and DAIT are still working together	97.4%	97.7%

Source: District and DAIT Initial Interviews

DAIT and District Leadership Teams

The DAITs worked with DLTs to gather information for capacity studies, prepare the LEA Plan or Addendum, and organize their work with the districts. The size of the DLT ranged from 2 to 16 for most districts (a few had larger teams), with an average of around 8-9 members (Table 9). In most of the districts (86%), the superintendent was a member of the DLT and in around half of the districts, there was a teacher union representative. Teachers (other than union representatives) were DLT members in about 30-35%[2] of the districts and principals were included in around 60-64% of the districts.

However, we learned that there were many variations in how the DLT was conceptualized and composed. In some districts the superintendent and his/her cabinet members were one DLT group, while a larger group with more diverse representation (e.g., board members, principals, teachers, etc.) was convened for some DLT meetings and it was difficult for respondents to know who to "count" as DLT members since the group size and composition varied over time and tasks. In other districts the superintendent and one or two assistant superintendents were the entire DLT, while in still other districts the DLT was considered to include all the primary district staff as well as all school principals and a variety of other stakeholders. Further, because different districts followed different organizational structures and job title conventions (e.g., an assistant superintendent in one district might be the equivalent of a director in another), it was difficult to accurately judge the levels of responsibility of the district staff involved. Finally, in several districts there was a complete reorganization of the district staff and/or the DLT at some point during the DAIT engagement.

[2] Ranges in the percentages are due to discrepancies in the district and DAITs' reports of DLT members.

Table 9. District Leadership Team Size and Composition

	District (N = 39)	Provider (N = 43)
Number of Members on DLT		
Average	9	8
Minimum	3	2
Maximum	15	17
Job Title		
Superintendents	87.2%	86%
Other District Personnel	37.8%	43%
Other Dir/Coordinators	22.9%	9.3%
Teacher (not Union rep)	35.9%	30.2%
Teacher Union Rep.	48.7%	55.8%
Principal	64.1%	60.5%
Parent Organization Rep.	10.3%	16.3%
Board Member	25.6%	9.3%
Class. Union Rep.	17.9%	7%

Source: District and DAIT Initial Interviews

Similarly, when describing the size and composition of the DAITs, the districts and DAIT members' responses did not always exactly match, although it is clear that the average size of the DAIT was 5-6 people, and most DAITs had members with substantial district leadership experience (Table 10). According to the DAIT providers, over half had members with expertise in curriculum, ELL students needs, English language arts (ELA), math, finance or budgets, the needs of students with disabilities (SWD), and technology or data systems.

Table 10. DAIT Size and Composition

	District (N = 39)	Provider (N = 43)
Number of DAIT Members		
Average	5.08	6.60
Minimum	1	2
Maximum	10	10
DAIT Member Expertise (%)		
Former Superintendent	15.4%	48.8%
Former Asst. Sup.	28.2%	55.8%
Curriculum	41%	55.8%
ELL	51.3%	76.7%
ELA	35.9%	60.5%
Finance/Budget	30.8%	51.2%
HR	25.6%	48.8%
Interventions	23.1%	25.6%
Math	33.3%	51.2%
Org. Development	23.1%	30.2%
PD	17.9%	34.9%
Scheduling	12.8%	9.3%
SWD	35.9%	58.1%
Tech/Data Systems/IT	23.1%	48.8%
Other (consultants)	59%	34.9%

Source: District and DAIT Initial Interviews

District representative respondents sometimes had difficulty identifying who was and was not on the DAIT because DAITs might bring specific consultants into the district at various times to address specific needs (Table 11). Somewhat more than half of both district and DAIT respondents indicated that they sometimes called upon additional resources. Finally, although only about half of the DAITs reportedly included teacher union representatives, most districts (97%) and a good proportion of DAITs (67%) indicated that there was union involvement in the DAIT and DLT work, even if not in a formal sense of serving on the DLT, over the course of the engagement. It is not clear why there was so much difference between the DAIT and district perspectives on teacher union involvement in the overall reforms but it is likely that the district took the lead on keeping union representatives informed and negotiating with them around proposed reforms.

Table 11. Need for Additional Expertise, Team Changes, and Teacher Union Involvement

	District (N = 39)	DAIT Provider (N = 43)
Reported that there were additional problems requiring the team to seek additional expertise to supplement the DAIT	51.3%	55.8%
Reported that the team has been the same size and composition throughout the process	82.1%	76.7%
Reported that teacher union reps were involved in DAIT or DLT work	97.4%	67.4%

Source: District and DAIT Initial Interviews

Understanding of the Role of the DAIT

Because the Cohort 1 PI3 districts were the first to be sanctioned and because there were some ambiguities at the beginning of the process, we asked both sets of respondents about their initial understanding and expectations of the role of the DAIT. Over a 75% of both groups responded that they had a clear understanding of the DAIT's role (Table 12). Interestingly, when asked directly if the respondent believed that there was shared understanding between the DAIT and district on the roles and authority, there was some divergence. Many more district respondents thought there was shared understanding than was true of providers (84% vs. 56%). Only half of the DAIT:district pairs agreed on this item. Similarly, when asked if understanding of the DAIT role and authority had changed since the initial engagement, over half of DAIT providers said it had, compared to only 23% of district respondents. This is not surprising since most of the district respondents (76%) did not report an initial lack of understanding. It is not clear why there is this difference between the respondent groups but we suspect that it is related to the relative perspectives of the two groups – districts may have understood the broad parameters of the sanction at entry while DAITs held a more nuanced understanding of the tasks and reforms to be addressed during their engagement and may have felt that they had to "educate" the district about what actions were needed. It may also be that DAITs had more frequent communication with CDE staff supporting the work.

Table 12. Initial Understanding of DAIT Role and Authority

Answer Categories	District[1] (N = 38)	Provider[1] (N = 43)
Entered w/clear understanding of their role	76.3%	79.1%
Roles unclear initially to DAIT	23.7%	20.9%
Entered as advisory, no authority to require recommendations adoption	5.3%	11.6%
Entered with understanding that recommendations would be included in the LEA plan (required)	7.9%	16.3%
Entered unclear about expected length of work	5.3%	4.7%
Entered expecting to assist with LEA plan but no further engagement	0.0%	4.7%
Entered expecting to remain engaged post-plan	5.3%	9.3%
DAIT and district shared understanding of DAIT role	84.2%	55.8%
DAIT and district have come to a common understanding of roles and authority	23.1%	53.5%

[1] *Percents do not sum to 100% because responses are not mutually exclusive*
Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

Initial Resistance to DAIT

We asked our respondents whether the DAIT process met any initial resistance and, if so, from what group and what they did to address it. Over two-thirds of both district and DAIT respondents reported that there was at least some resistance to the DAIT (Table 13).

When asked about the source of resistance, both groups mentioned teachers (44% of providers and 63% of districts) and teacher unions (35% of providers and 37% of districts) most often. Interestingly, almost a fourth of the providers (23.5%) mentioned the superintendent as a source of resistance while only 7% of the district respondents mentioned resistant superintendents. It is probably no coincidence that 25.6% (N=11) of the districts changed superintendents during the course of the DAIT engagement, and in five of these districts, the DAITs said the superintendents were sources of resistance. In next year's analysis we will be linking detailed coded interview and survey data to achievement data to examine these relationships. Similarly, DAIT providers were much more likely than districts to identify cabinet members (21%) or the DLT (12%) as a source of resistance than were districts (7.4% for each group). Again, when a superintendent is replaced frequently the cabinet staffing also changes as the new superintendent often brings in new people and/or re-assigns existing district level staff. Table 13 shows the source of resistance for the districts in which resistance was reported.

School boards were identified as "resistant" by about 20% of both respondent groups. Principals were another group which both sets of respondents tended to identify as a source of resistance (26% of providers and a third of district respondents).

Table 13. Resistance to DAIT

	District (N = 39)	DAIT Provider (N = 43)
Resistance Reported		
Yes	69.3%	76.8%
No	30.8%	23.3%
Nature of Resistance[a]		
Superintendent	7.4%	23.5%
DLT	7.4%	11.8%
Cabinet Members	7.4%	20.6%
Teachers' Union (CBU)	37.0%	35.3%
School Board	18.5%	20.6%
Teachers	63.0%	44.1%
Principals	33.3%	26.5%

[a]Reported only for those districts in which resistance was reported
Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

We learned, through listening to our respondents' descriptions of how their DAIT engagements began, that some Cohort 1 districts were "surprised" by their sanction. Some respondents reported that the district was "in denial," whereas others described districts, or some stakeholders within districts, as "angered" or "shocked." Resistance from boards, for example, might have been characterized as board members being unaware of the problems with student achievement or regarding the arrival of a DAIT as a threat to their autonomy and authority. Resistance from superintendents or cabinets tended to reflect similar issues of "denial" or feelings of having their authority compromised. Sometimes we were told that the superintendent and DAIT lead had "philosophical" differences, other times we were told that the DAIT was "too autocratic" and lacked appreciation for the unique issues of that district.

Teacher, union, and principal resistance, on the other hand, tended to revolve around themes of general resistance to change (or fatigue with multiple or changing reforms), lack of a culture of shared responsibility for all students (e.g., "those" schools or students are the problem, not my school or class), or reflections of on-going conflict between district leadership and either site or union leadership.

When directly asked if employee union contracts impacted reform efforts, half of the district personnel and DAIT providers cited indicated teacher union contracts had impacted their reform efforts (Table 14). According to district personnel, the primary union contract issue impeding their reform plans were work rules around the length of the school day, including limitations on time of instruction, time for interventions, scheduling changes, and the number of class periods allowed in a day. This was particularly challenging because so many of the districts needed to add interventions for low-performing students, as well as improve teachers' ability to differentiate instruction and better address the needs of ELL students. Each of these things requires changes to schedules and teachers' already often tightly-paced days and lesson plans. Additional issues of contention in some districts were contractual issues regarding the amount of time allotted for teacher collaboration time

and professional development with pay, especially outside of the school day, according to district personnel. This is not surprising given that DAITs recommended significant amounts of professional development, and a key part of the initiative – implementing new curriculum and/or instructional practices - requires professional development time. Additionally, improving alignment often requires that teachers work across schools and grades. This is time-intensive, often novel work, so it is a given that organizations who work, in part, to protect teachers' time were sometimes at odds with this process.

Table 14. Impact of Employee Union Contracts on Reform Efforts

Have employee union contracts impacted the reforms the DAIT/Leadership team has tried to implement?		
	District (N = 39)	DAIT Provider (N = 43)
Yes	51.3%	55.8%
No	48.7%	44.2%
In which employee union contracts?		
	District (N = 20)	DAIT Provider (N = 23)
Teachers	100%	100%
Classified Employees	0.0%	4.3%
Which specific work rules?		
	District (N = 20)	DAIT Provider (N = 20)
Length of school day	65%	35%
Collaboration time/meeting time	50%	25%
PD time and stipends	30%	30%
Teacher evaluation & monitoring	10%	20%
Teacher transfers, seniority clauses	15%	5%
General resistance to reforms	0%	20%
Other	5%	5%

Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

Some DAIT providers and district personnel also mentioned issues around teacher evaluation and monitoring due to provisions in teacher union contracts preventing classroom observations, including walkthroughs, lesson plan reviews, and district power to terminate or transfer teachers to underperforming schools. A fifth (20%) of the DAIT providers indicated a general resistance among teachers to reforms, including refusal to adopt benchmark assessments and new curricula.

According to some district leadership team respondents, the need to negotiate with union leadership was necessary for several reform efforts. In about half of the districts, a union representative was

included in the DLT, which helped to establish a positive relationship. Providers also mentioned that working directly with union leadership, and/or having a union representative on the district leadership team, allowed for constructive meetings to review findings and recommendations and addressing union concerns. According to providers, also having supportive superintendent and assistant superintendents with strong negotiation skills was helpful. Some providers also mentioned that, even in cases where the teacher bargaining unit worked well with the district, they still refused to compromise on allowing teacher performance to be tied to student achievement (an issue that is hardly restricted to the PI3 districts). Some district respondents were particularly critical of union restrictions which impeded their efforts to improve and monitor the level of instructional practices in classrooms and to reassign or discharge ineffective teachers. A number of both providers and district respondents indicated that good cooperation with the union either already existed or was instrumental in implementing recommended reforms. Providers indicated that when teacher unions felt they had no voice and no involvement in decision-making, and thus no ownership in the systems, there was more resistance and conflict among all parties.

In the interviews, we also asked if there were specific DAIT recommendations that met initial resistance. Approximately 42% of the providers and 28% of the district respondents answered "yes" to this question. For the most part, these issues appear to have centered around the lack of district resources to fully implement or sustain suggested reforms due to the high costs associated with some of the recommendations – for example, providing instructional coaches - or to a general environment of fiscal constraint. Sometimes the resistance to recommendations was more around a change in curriculum or policy (for example, around students with disabilities, scheduling for intervention classes), other times it was centered on teacher contract issues, as outlined above (e.g., collaboration time required outside of regular school hours).

Response to Resistance

Respondents were asked what they did to resolve initial resistance. The vast majority (85-90%) discussed using meetings to explain the process and sanction and to build consensus and buy-in (Table 15). Sometimes they indicated that this communication effort was led by the district staff (usually the superintendent), other times it appeared to be primarily led by the DAIT or to be a combined effort. Somewhat less than half of the respondents mentioned using "data," which sometimes meant that the leadership team or DAIT provider helped establish a sense of urgency and buy-in by insuring that all stakeholders understood the nature and severity of the student achievement shortfalls. Some respondents described intensive data-driven efforts that involved providing every principal, and sometimes every teacher, with detailed student level data to assist them in identifying where they needed to focus their attention and/or to "prove" that there was a problem. Finally, around a quarter of both groups of respondents mentioned professional development as a strategy to reduce resistance. Sometimes this meant formal training (e.g., curriculum or English Language Development (ELD) training) for teachers and/or principals, other times it meant "educating" or "coaching" individuals (e.g., principals) or groups (e.g., school boards) so they could better understand what needed to change and how to implement those changes.

Table 15. Methods used to Address Resistance[a]

	District (N = 27)	DAIT Provider (N = 31)
Meetings	85.2%	90.3%
Used data	48.1%	38.7%
Professional development	25.9%	29.0%

[a]Reported only for those districts in which resistance was reported
Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

While a substantial proportion of both districts and their providers indicated significant resistance among district stakeholders at the beginning of the DAIT engagement, most respondents in both groups reported that resistance had decreased over time (85% of providers and 89% of district respondents; see Table 16).

Table 16. Change in District Resistance to Reforms

	District (N = 28)	**Provider (N = 33)**
Resistance decreased	89.3%	84.8%
Resistance from mentioned sources about the same	7.1%	9.1%
Resistance increased	3.6%	6.1%

Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

Furthermore, when asked how they would characterize their current working relationships with one another (e.g., providers and districts) the majority of districts and DAIT providers (81-92%) indicated that their current relationship was open and cooperative (Table 17), indicating that most or all of the initial resistance to the DAIT was overcome over the course of the two years of their work together.

Table 17. Current Climate of the Working Relationship Between District and DAIT

	District (N = 39)	**Provider (N = 42)**
Open communication and cooperation	92.3%	81.0%
Mostly good communication and cooperation	5.1%	16.7%
Not good communication/cooperation	2.6%	2.4%

Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

DAITs' Initial Process and Role

Data regarding the initial conditions and early work of the DAITs were also collected via close-ended items in the implementation survey. Both providers and districts were asked about DAIT activities (e.g., assessing district culture, diagnosing needs, supporting LEA plan preparation, and needs assessments). There were survey items regarding whether DAITs were provided full access to people and resources and if they were able to successfully engage the DLT. Finally, we asked if the resulting LEA plan was aligned with state and federal requirements and if fiscal policies were aligned with the plan (Table 18).

Table 18. The DAITs' Process and Role

	District (% reporting "to a great extent" or "somewhat")	Provider (% reporting "to a great extent" or "somewhat")	Provider - District Agreement[a] (%)
DAIT assisted in assessing the district culture	58.4	66.7	55.6
DAIT effectively diagnosed district needs and priorities	90.4	97.5	87.5
DAIT provided support in the revision of the LEA plan	90.4	92.8	90.2
DAIT provided support in the revision of the budget or identified appropriate technical assistance to support revision of the budget	63.1	64.3	45.9
DAIT convened and coordinated all external technical assistance providers in the district	64.1	76.7	48.7
The DAIT was provided with access and information necessary for an appropriate understanding of the district	97.5	97.6	97.5
The DAIT was able to effectively engage the District Leadership Team (DLT) in all 9 EPCs	90.2	92.8	90.0

[a]Percentage of districts in which both the district and the provider reported either "to a great extent" or "somewhat" or both reported either "minimally" or "not at all."

Source: District and DAIT Implementation Surveys

Survey responses indicated that almost all providers and district respondents agreed that the DAIT was able to engage with the DLT and was given access to the information they needed to effectively

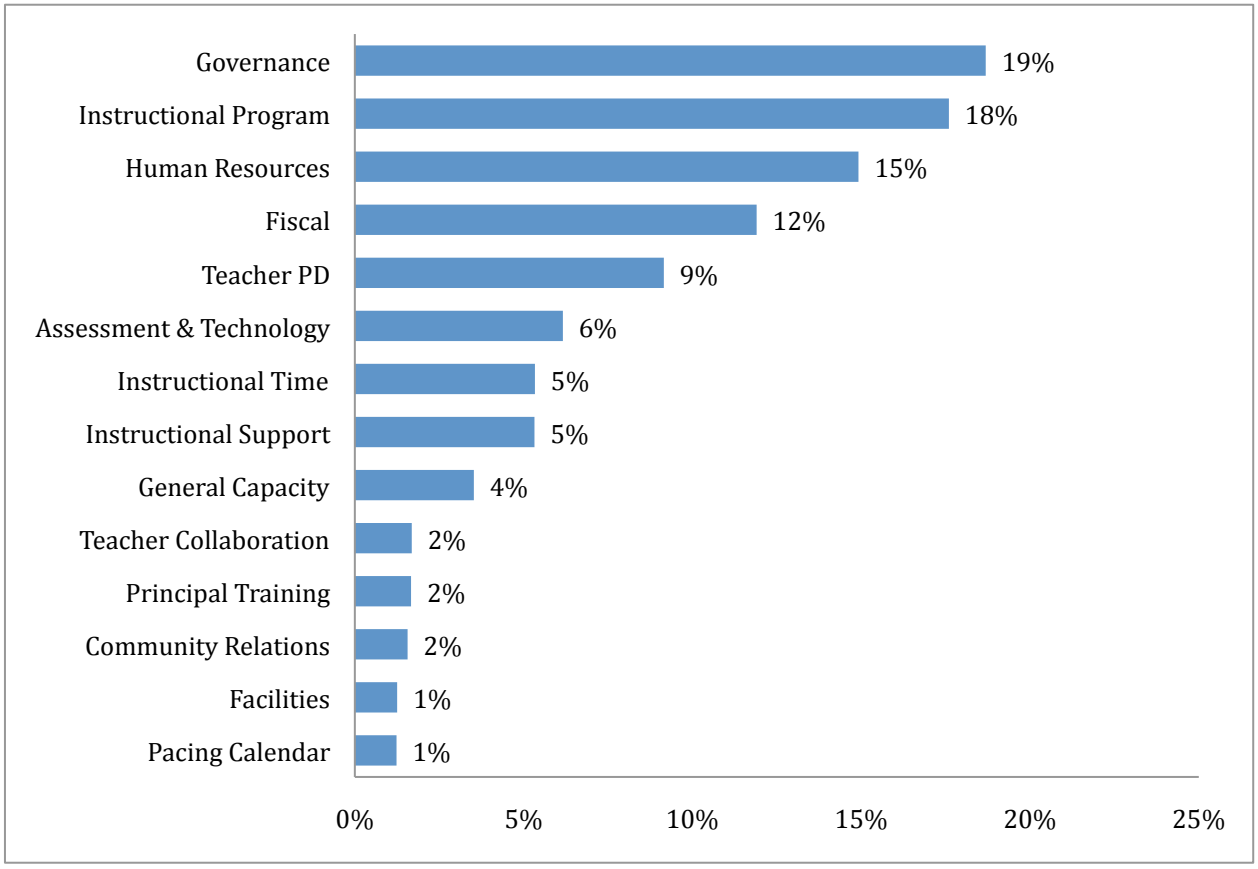
diagnose district needs and support LEA plan revisions. Similarly, over half of the DAITs appeared to address district culture, budgets, or coordination of other external technical assistance providers. Consequently, regardless of the barriers encountered and differences in district "readiness" identified during interviews, it appears that most DAITs and their districts were able to negotiate any initial difficulties and successfully engage in collaborative efforts to build district capacity.

Districts' Initial Capacity: Content Analysis of Capacity Studies

DAIT Provider Observations

Based on the capacity studies and interviews, it is possible that some DAITs were reluctant to submit highly critical reports of their districts; the capacity studies were typically worded with great diplomacy. It is possible that this strategy was grounded in the recognition of the need to establish positive and collaborative relationships between DAITs and their districts. Analysis of the capacity studies for each of the 43 Cohort 1 PI3 districts with DAITs indicated that, on average, 38% of DAIT provider observations described weaknesses in the district, 17% of the observations described strengths, and 44% of DAIT provider observations were neutral or mixed. The 38% of DAIT district weaknesses were divided among the EPC-based codes as illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Observed District Weaknesses by Area



Source: Capacity Studies

On average, observations regarding Governance, Instructional Program, and Human Resources comprised more than half (52%) of the weaknesses noted by DAIT teams. As these areas cover a variety of district programs and functions, further analysis was performed to pinpoint subareas of particular concern.

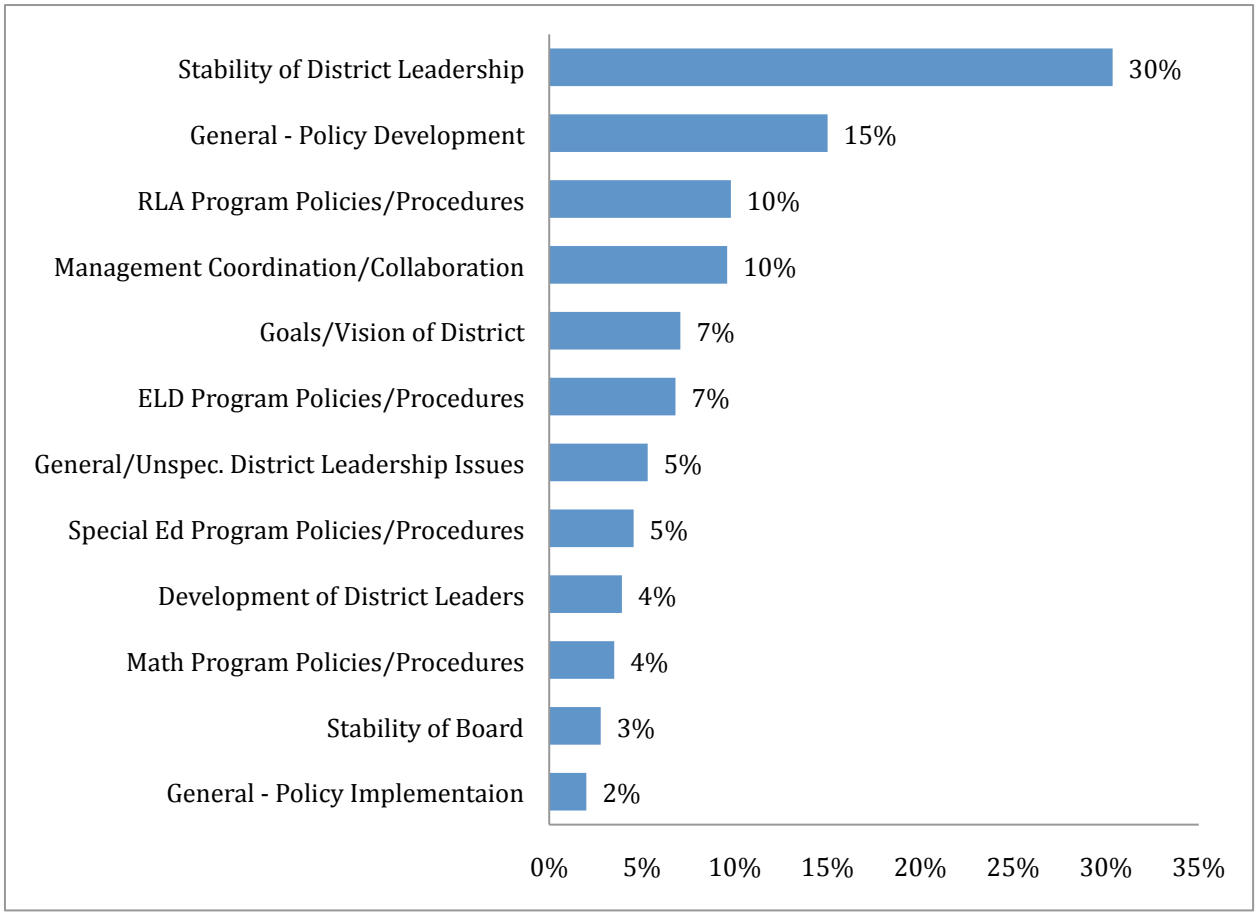
Observed Weaknesses: Governance

In the area of Governance (19% of all "weaknesses"), there was indeed a single, clearly evident area of concern – the stability of district leadership (Figure 7). On average, nearly 1/3 (30%) of districts' observed weaknesses in Governance addressed the area of stability in district leadership. The importance of this issue is described in the following provider comment:

> *Based on information gathered through staff and community interviews, district leadership has been problematic for many years. Within the past five years, there have been three superintendents… As a result, district leadership has not been sufficient to inform, direct, support, and monitor school instructional programs*.

Instability at the highest levels likely contributes to the second most observed governance-related weakness, policy development. Items comprising the "General – Policy Development" code dealt both with how districts construct policies and the need for the development of policies or procedures (other than those related specifically to ELD, math, ELA, or special education, which were coded separately). An example is the comment, "The Single Plans for Student Achievement (SPSA) are not viewed as important documents to drive the goals of each school; because of this, they are never quite finished and never used to drive the school focus on student learning." This comment suggests a lack of necessary district policies and procedures to utilize a mandatory and potentially beneficial management tool. One might speculate that without stable leadership at the district level to craft and promote it, sound and comprehensive policies are indeed likely to be an area of weakness.

Figure 7. Observed Weaknesses in Governance

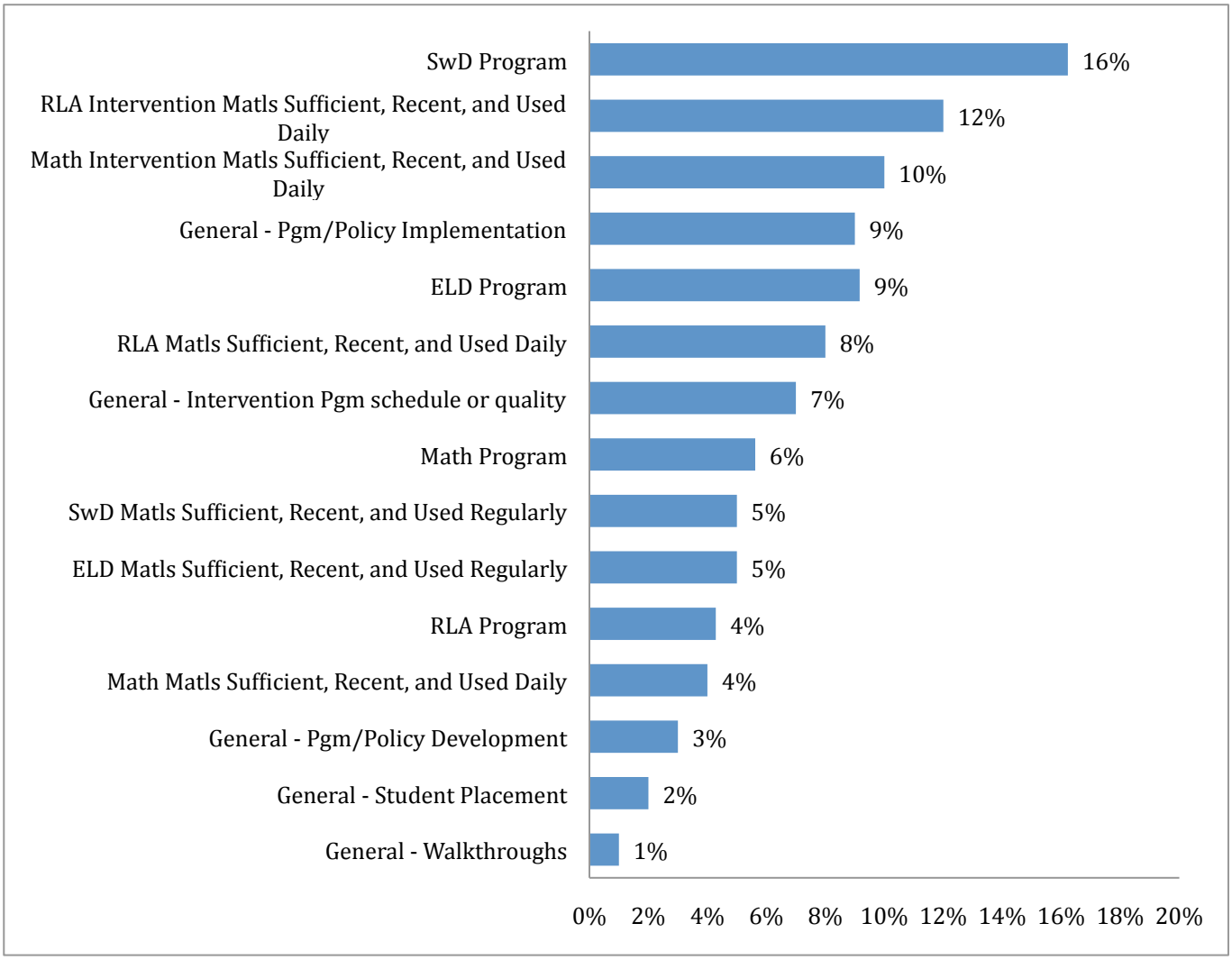


Source: Capacity Studies

Instructional Program

After governance, the highest average percent (18%) of district weaknesses fell into the area of Instructional Program (Figure 8). On average, DAIT providers made the most observations of instructional weakness in the area of the district program for students with disabilities (16%). Programs for other high-risk students also garnered a high proportion of the instructional weaknesses – intervention materials for ELA and Math are also noted as weak areas.

Figure 8. Observed Weaknesses in Instructional Program



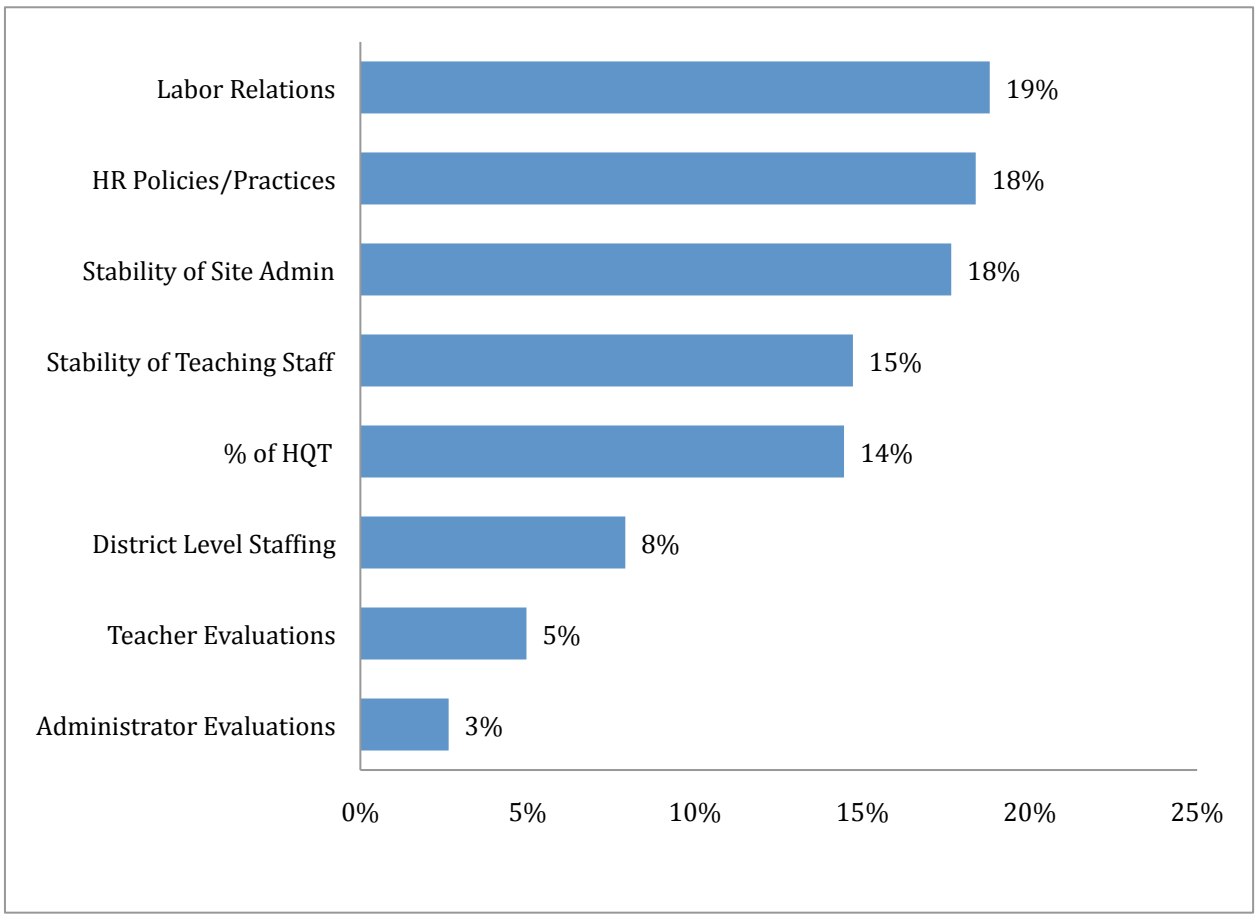
Source: Capacity Studies

Human Resources

Finally, "Human Resources" was the third highest area of observed weaknesses (15%). Figure 9 illustrates the sub-codes within this category. On average, more than half (55%) of the observed

weaknesses in the area of Human Resources addressed Labor Relations (19%), HR Policies/Practices (18%), and Stability of Site Administrators (18%). Labor Relations concerns comprised contentious dealings with teacher unions, such as the comment, "Tension exists between the district administration and the certificated collective bargaining unit." However, Labor Relations also included internal relationships between district supervisors and their staff: "There was a high number of certificated and classified grievances during 2007-08, impacting working conditions and staff morale."

Figure 9. Observed Weaknesses in Human Resources



Source: Capacity Studies

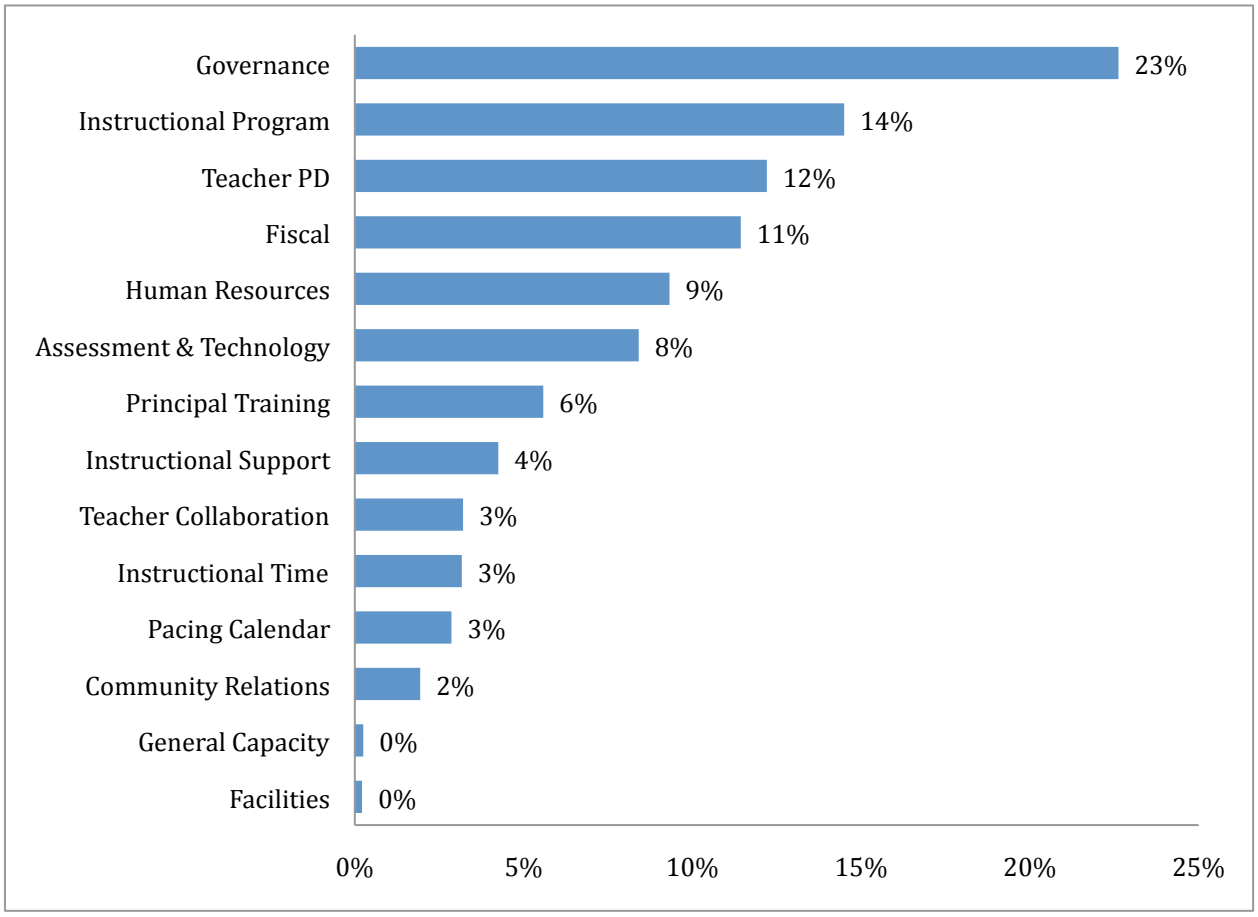
Strained working relationships are also reflected in the subsequent areas of observed district weakness: the stability of site administrators (18% of observed HR weaknesses) and the stability of teaching staff (15% of observed HR weaknesses), which will impact the percent of Highly Qualified Teachers (14% of observed HR weaknesses). The other frequently observed weakness in HR, department policies and practices, mainly dealt with issues of department management and organization, as exemplified by the comment, "The district's Title II plan to ensure an equitable distribution of highly qualified and experienced teachers and information about the plan was

unavailable." Other comments related to the absence of HR policies and procedures, such as the comment, "There are no Board policies/administrative procedures to ensure that potential hires are evaluated and properly certified for HQT compliance before being employed."

DAIT Provider Recommendations

The recommendations made by DAIT providers were divided among the EPC-based codes and are illustrated in Figure 10. On average, observations regarding Governance, Instructional Program, and Teacher Professional Development comprised nearly half (49%) of the recommendations made by DAIT teams. As these areas cover a variety of district programs and functions, further analysis was performed to pinpoint subareas of particular concern.

Figure 10. DAIT Recommendations by Area



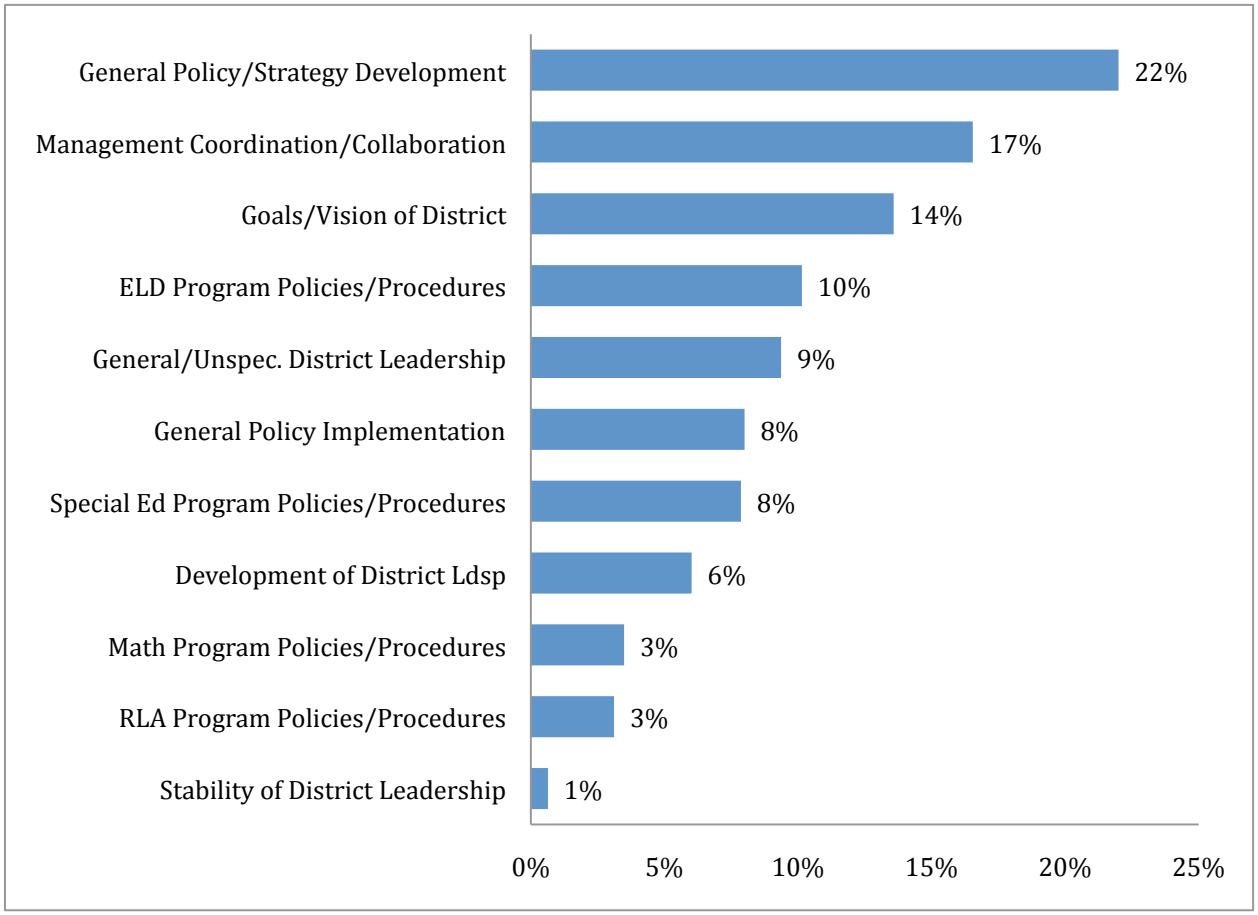
Source: Capacity Studies

Governance

In the area of Governance (23% of all recommendations), DAIT providers primarily addressed the need for district leaders to develop constructive working relationships and work in a common manner toward common goals (Figure 11). On average, 22% of the Governance-related recommendations dealt with how the district generally develops its policies and strategies. For

example, one provider recommendation read, "The district will utilize and interpret data to inform classroom instruction, school site decision-making, and district policies and practices." Many other recommendations in this category dealt with the need for district policies to be consistently updated, such as the provider that directed, "The local governing board will annually evaluate policies and practices to promote systemic reform, innovative leadership, and high expectations with an impact on student achievement." Some recommendations dealt with common district practice that must be reformed in order to create a high-functional administration: "Procedures and expectations for returning emails, phone calls, and other forms of communication are essential." DAIT provider recommendations focused heavily on the establishment of formal expectations for conduct and instruction within the district.

Figure 11. DAIT Recommendations in Governance



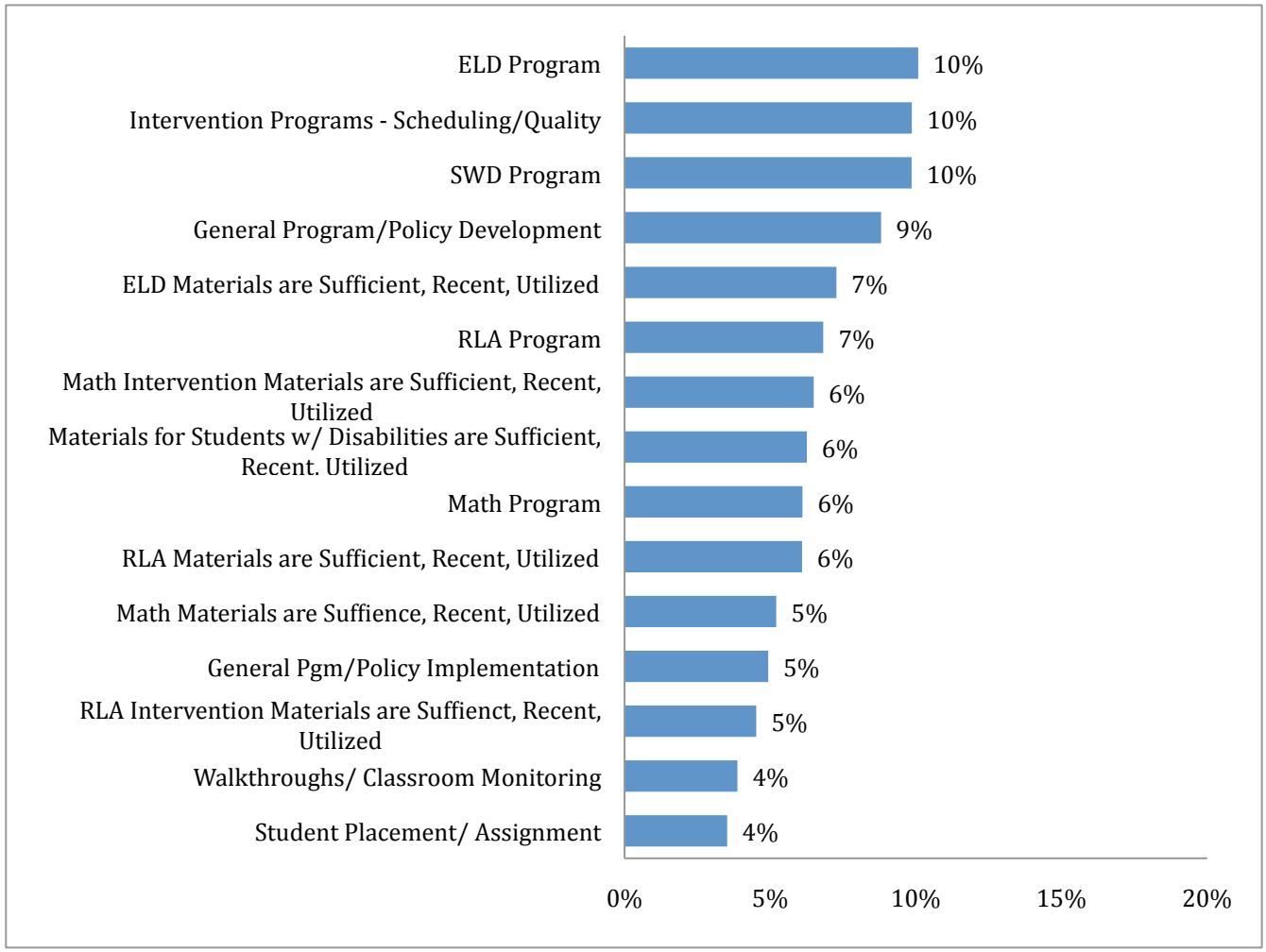
Source: Capacity Studies

Instructional Program

Outside of the the management issues addressed under Governance, DAIT providers were most likely to recommend ways to improve the instructional program, comprising 14% of all recommendations (Figure 12). It is not surprising that the three most commonly addressed programs

were ELD, Interventions, and Students with Disabilities/Special Education, as these are the populations which pose the most significant challenge in meeting AYP for many PI3 districts.

Figure 12. DAIT Recommendations in Instructional Programs

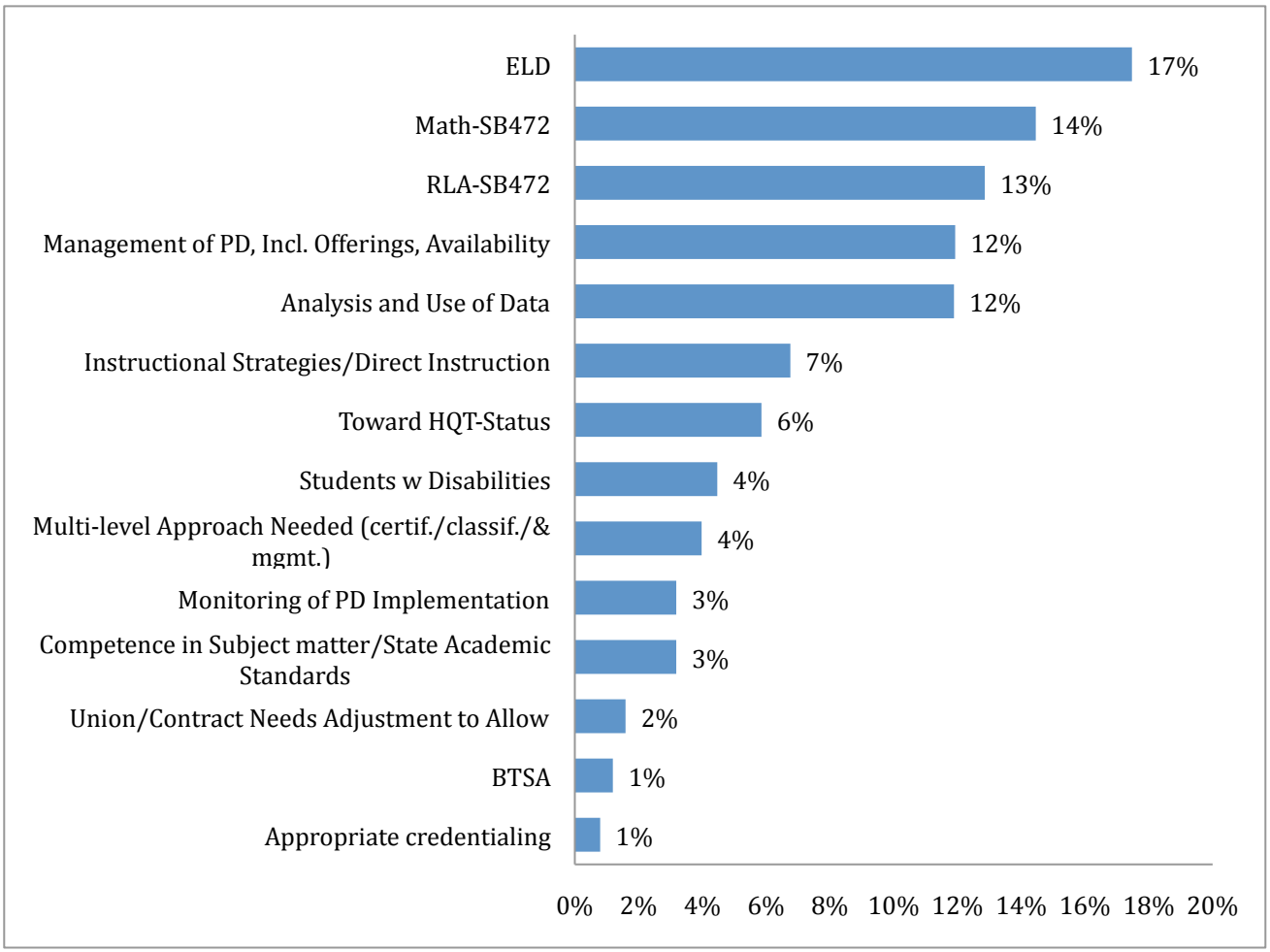


Source: Capacity Studies

Teacher Professional Development

After making recommendations regarding the governance and the instructional program, DAIT providers were most likely to aim their recommendations at how to improve delivery of the instructional program (12% of all recommendations). The subareas of recommendations for Teacher Professional Development (PD) are displayed in Figure 13.

Figure 13. DAIT Recommendations in Teacher Professional Development



Source: Capacity Studies

Proportionately, DAIT providers most often recommended that teachers be trained in strategies to support higher achievement for ELL students (ELD), comprising 17% of all PD recommendations, and that they be proficient in the adopted math (14%) and language arts (13%) curricula. In fact, many of the provider recommendations combined these three elements, such as the following comment:

> *We recommend the district develop a] coherent professional development plan that provides and monitors SB 472 training and ELPD, and provides ongoing training in strategies that reflect research-based strategies for improved student achievement, create a plan to systematically implement the 2007 mathematics adoption and the 2008 reading/language arts adoption so that all students will be served appropriately, including English language learners,*

students with disabilities and those identified as needing strategic or intensive-level intervention. (quote from capacity study prepared by a DAIT provider)

Training teachers to make the core more accessible for ELL students is a theme that providers repeatedly addressed.

Summary of Capacity Study Analysis

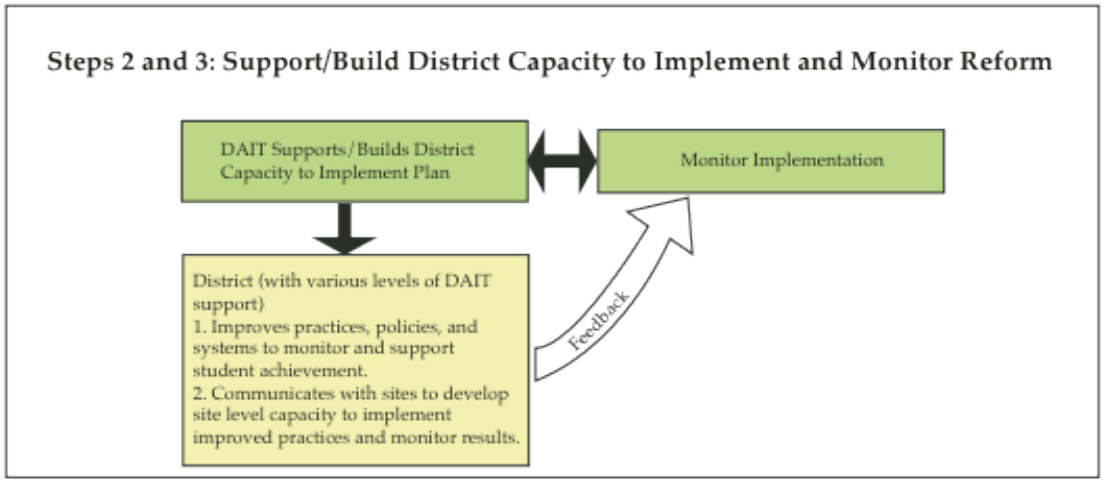
The weaknesses most frequently observed in DAIT districts were in the areas of Governance (notably the stability of district leadership and policy development), Instructional Program (especially students with disabilities, math and language arts interventions), and Human Resources (labor relations, HR policies, and the stability of teachers and site administrators).

The recommendations most frequently prescribed by DAIT providers focused on Governance (policy development, management collaboration, and district vision), Instructional Program (ELD, interventions, and students with disabilities), and teacher professional development (ELD, SB 472). While instability in personnel was an oft-cited weakness, this issue was not extensively addressed by DAIT providers in their recommendations; rather, they focused on aspects of district operation that could be formalized and standardized and perhaps, support district improvement regardless of turnover.

DAIT Implementation: Priorities, Activities, and Changes over the Course of the DAIT Engagement

We now turn to an examination of what occurred during the two-year engagement of the DAITs in the Cohort 1 districts. As Figure 14 illustrates, the expectation was that DAITs would work with the districts to build their capacity to support student achievement in an on-going process that involved advising and assisting in establishing action plans and communicating them to stakeholders, assisting in implementing those plans, monitoring results, and then making adjustments and additions repeatedly over the course of the engagement.

Figure 14. Implementation and Monitoring Phase



District and DAIT Activities

1. Educate/communicate about best practices
2. Build consensus/communicate plans
3. DAIT provides direct assistance to district staff
   - PD/education
   - Establishing new policies or practices (e.g. hiring/evaluating staff, site accountability structures/practices)
   - Building new/improving existing systems
     - data systems
     - communication
     - assessment/pacing guides
     - monitoring curriculum implementation
4. DAIT provides or arranges for services to school sites
   - teacher/principal PD
   - other site practices (e.g. record-keeping, PLCs)
5. Monitoring of plan implementation, feedback to district and stakeholders
6. Modifying plans and processes based on feedback

Implementation Barriers and Facilitators

1. Teacher union rules
2. District staff and Board readiness to change and culture (willingness, resources, structure)
3. DAIT capacity to address district needs
4. Site level readiness to change
   a. principal and teacher turnover, experience, tenure
   b. school culture, demographics and history (e.g. student achievement, mobility, teachers' expectations)
5. Leadership
   a. DAIT vs. Supt./Shared Leadership
   b. Availability/Visibility of DAIT
   c. Frequency/level of feedback and accountability district: DAIT and district: school sites
6. External pressure
   a. State and federal accountability, funding, and policies
   b. Community
   c. Local and state Boards of Education
7. Resources (fiscal, human, structural)

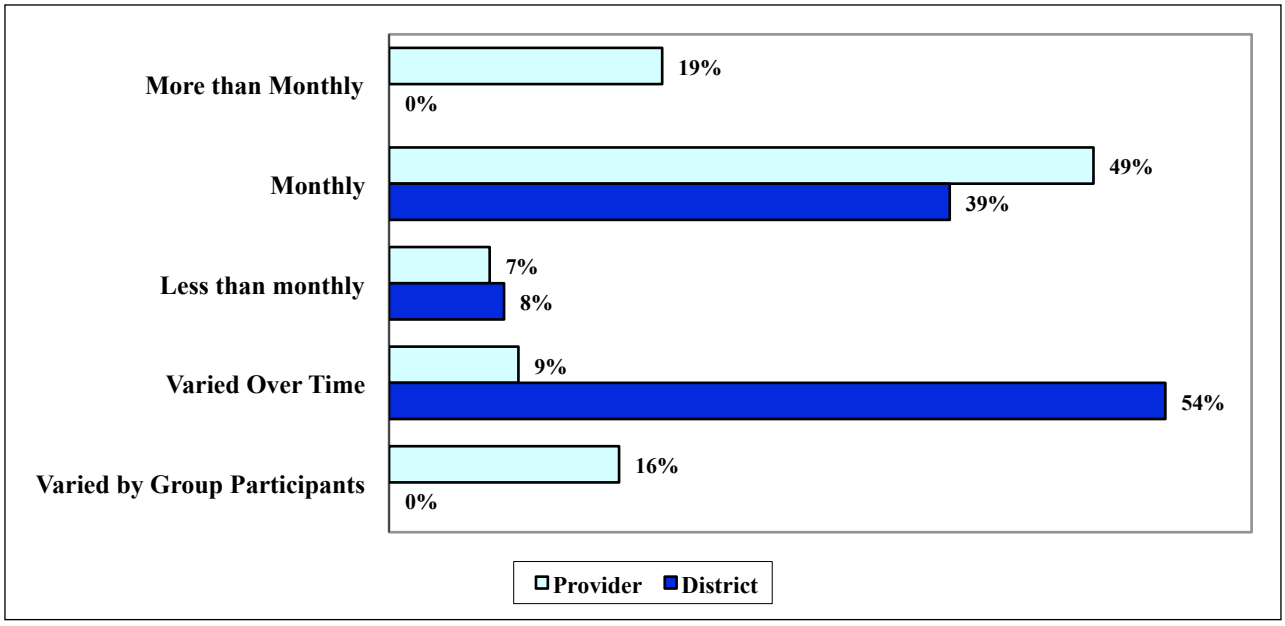
While there was some initial ambiguity about the requirements of DAIT, it was clearly expected by the training and communication that providers received from CDE that DAITs would, in fact, remain engaged with their districts and assist in the implementation of their recommendations. Interview results confirm that, in fact, the majority of DAITs did exactly that. There were a few districts where the process did not work as planned, where, for a variety of reasons, DAITs could not or did not successfully engage with their districts during the entire two years following their capacity study reports. In some cases, district capacity was so compromised by local conflicts or lack of staff, or inability to build productive relationships, that DAITs could get little traction in their improvement efforts. In other districts, major turnover in district staffing, including a change in superintendent (with sometimes a significant period in which the superintendent post was vacant), either entirely curtailed the DAIT's work with district staff or significantly slowed the process while the new district leadership team became established, requiring a "rerun" of the initial entry negotiations and relationship building stage.

There were as many variations as there were districts in the ways that the districts and their providers worked together, the activities and reforms they undertook, the barriers and facilitators they encountered, and their success in making significant changes in processes/resources to address student achievement. Some DAITs tended to remain close to the pilot DAIT model of focusing primarily on assisting and developing district level capacity, focusing on developing and improving systems (e.g., communications, HR, data systems, district-wide benchmark assessments, etc.), while others took a more "hands-on" approach and also provided direct services to school sites (e.g., principal coaching, teacher professional development, etc.). In some districts where the DAIT was unable to establish a productive relationship with the district staff, they focused almost exclusively on school site assistance.

DAIT Activities

First, we examine how and how frequently the DAITs and DLTs interacted. Interview respondents were asked how frequently the DAIT and DLT met, and what they did during those meetings. Survey respondents found it difficult to answer the question regarding frequency of DAIT:DLT meetings with a single response. While most of each group (39% - 49%) indicated they met monthly, there were many qualifications regarding differences over time and by group composition (Figure 15). District respondents were more likely to indicate the meeting schedule varied over time (54% vs. 9% for the providers), depending on the tasks to be addressed. DAIT providers were more likely to indicate that they met with different subgroups of the DLT on different schedules (16% vs. none of the district respondents).

Figure 15. Frequency of DAIT:DLT Meetings



Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

Interviewers asked about the functions of the DAIT:DLT meetings and the most frequently mentioned functions (Table 19) focused on either monitoring district progress (64% of the providers and 94% of the district respondents) or developing action plans (75% of providers and 55% of district respondents). About a third of each group mentioned reviewing or revising the LEA plan, a primary focus early in their work together. DAIT providers also tended to mention the meetings as an opportunity to identify problem areas (61%) or rethink priorities (39%), and/or expand the knowledge of the DLT members (33%). District respondents also tended to mention identifying problem areas (39%), although less frequently than did providers and approximately one third of the district respondents mentioned that the meetings were an opportunity to establish "buy-in" or consensus around the action items.

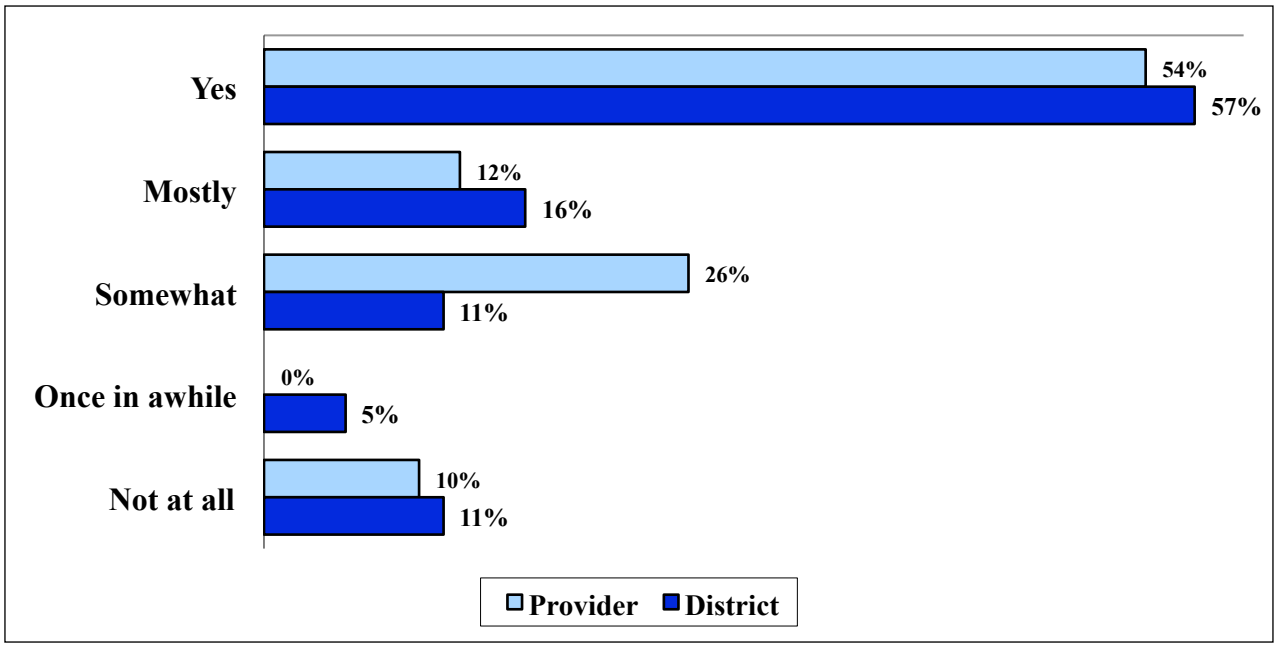
Table 19. Primary Functions of DAIT:DLT Meetings

	District (N = 33)	Provider (N = 36)
Revise/Review LEA Plan	33.3%	36.1%
Monitor progress	93.9%	63.9%
Rethink priorities	18.2%	38.9%
Professional development for DLT members (expand their knowledge)	24.2%	33.3%
Develop action plans to implement recommendations	54.5%	75.0%
Establish "buy-in" for recommendation actions	33.3%	25.0%
Identify problem areas	39.4%	61.1%
Develop specific policies	3.0%	25.0%

Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

Over half of each respondent group indicated they found these meetings to be effective in building district capacity to address student achievement problems (Figure 16). Just over half of the providers and their districts both answered an unqualified "yes" to this question. Four providers (9.5%) and six district respondents (16%) indicated the meetings were either seldom or never effective (although these responses were not matched within a district – e.g., the providers who found the meetings ineffective did not match their district's response and vice versa). Generally, providers were slightly less positive than were the district respondents (26% of providers said the meetings were "somewhat" effective compared to 11% of the district respondents).

Figure 16. Were DAIT:DLT Meetings Effective?



Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

Respondents were asked what other ways, in addition to the DAIT:DLT meetings that DAITs provided support to their districts. The answers were varied and sometimes difficult to categorize. The categories in Table 20 represent a preliminary analysis of the data with responses frequently coded into multiple categories. Further, there is some variation in categorization due to individual interviewer interpretation of the respondents' discussion. Generally, we found that most DAITs provided a variety of assistance to their district – ranging from district staff development and assistance in developing district policies and systems to working with school site administrators and teachers. There were as many variations in style and substance as there were districts. About two-thirds of the responses we heard from both sets of respondents could be categorized as "other professional development," a category that includes principal coaching, providing information/resources for DLT/board members, training school site on accurately collecting attendance data, training on the use of data to inform instruction, and a variety of other types of support for both district and school staff.

Table 20. Other Ways DAIT Provided Support[a]

	District (N = 39)	Provider (N = 42)
"Hands on" assistance in developing policy/program	15.4%	38.1%
Monitored implementation of recommendations	25.6%	31.0%
Presented to/assisted in prep for presentation to school board	23.1%	23.8%
Curriculum/instruction Math (includes PD)	17.9%	33.3%
Curriculum/instruction ELA (includes PD)	12.8%	33.3%
Curriculum/instruction ELL/ELD (includes PD)	17.9%	35.7%
Curriculum/instruction SWD (includes PD)	2.6%	9.5%
Other Professional development	61.5%	69.0%
HR (Policies, practice)	2.6%	4.8%
Fiscal	10.3%	14.3%
Governance (school board, DLT, policies)	12.8%	14.3%
Collected data	23.1%	35.7%
Assessment/use of data	28.2%	57.1%
Teacher collaboration/PLCs	12.8%	21.4%
ID additional resources to assist district w/ new programs/policies	23.1%	16.7%
Additional assistance refining LEA plan AFTER plan was approved by CDE	7.7%	19.0%
Parent/community involvement	2.6%	2.4%

[a]Categories are not mutually exclusive. Percentages do not sum to 100%
Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

Formal PD in math, ELA, and ELL/ELD were mentioned by about a third of providers and 13-18% of districts. These PD services might have been provided directly by the DAIT or the provider may have arranged for those services. Judging from the differences between provider and district respondents, providers may have had a more liberal interpretation of their role in PD provision than did district respondents. Data collection and data use were mentioned by a quarter to half of the respondents – again, this ranged from the data collected for identifying issues and monitoring the results of program implementation to working with districts to develop their own data systems and/or formalize the use of data for internal accountability.

Because this interview question was not intended to solicit an exhaustive list of all the possible ways a DAIT might assist its district, responses tended to be whatever was uppermost in the mind

of the respondent, and the categories in Table 20 also reflect information that was provided in other sections of the interview. Conversations with both groups of respondents were wide-ranging and, not surprisingly, DAIT providers and districts often had somewhat different perceptions of what action items should or should not be attributed to the DAIT. Further, in districts where the work with the DAIT was highly collaborative, it was difficult for both providers and district respondents to attribute any particular initiative as being directly a result of the work of the DAIT, rather than work that simply grew out of the capacity building relationship. Similarly, in districts where DAITs and their district were less successful in establishing and maintaining a collaborative relationship, district respondents tended to be less likely to attribute the majority of their improvement efforts to the efforts of the DAIT, rather than to their own ideas and initiative.

Priority Areas to Address

During the interviews, respondents were asked about district priorities in three ways: we asked what the district was planning on doing prior to being sanctioned, how those plans and priorities changed upon engagement with the DAIT, and, finally, what each group felt was the highest priority at the time of the interview, as the DAIT engagement, in most districts, was reaching its end.

It is important to note, that although Table 21 categorizes the responses of both groups to the question about what the district was preparing to do prior to receiving the sanction to engage with a DAIT, it is our sense that these responses are likely not entirely accurate. We found that a substantial proportion of respondents were likely to have not been intimately familiar with the district and its priority actions two years previously – the DAIT may have worked with the district previously, but often not in a comprehensive, district-wide manner and the district respondents sometimes either had not been in the district at that time or had not been in their current positions at that time. Further, it is difficult for anyone to recall accurately what was being planned 2-3 years ago, particularly when they are enmeshed in a current major change effort. With those caveats in mind, the data displayed in Table 21 clearly suggest that, as the DAIT providers indicated in their capacity studies, these districts were well aware of the need to better support their ELL students and improve student achievement in math. Over 40% of both providers and districts said that there were efforts in place to improve ELD and over a third of each group mentioned they were in the process of considering or adopting a new math curriculum. A third of the providers and over 40% of the district respondents mentioned efforts to develop or implement benchmark or formative assessments.

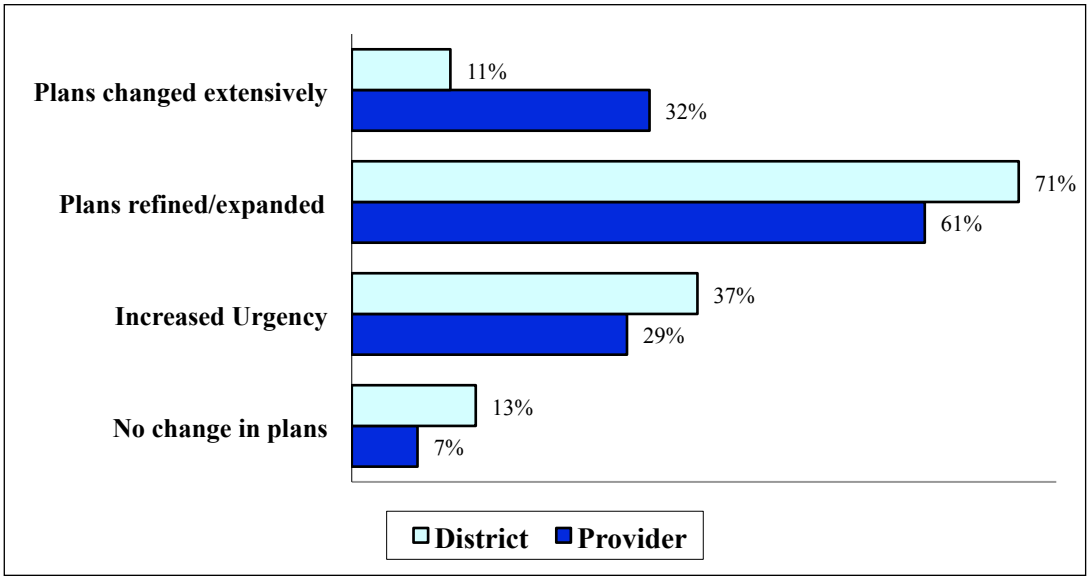
Table 21. Actions the District was Preparing to do in Response to Student Achievement Problems Prior to DAIT Sanction

	District (N = 17)	Provider (N = 18)
ELD PD	41.2%	44.4%
ELD adoption	11.8%	11.1%
Math adoption	35.3%	38.9%
Math PD	5.9%	27.8%
ELA adoption	11.8%	33.3%
ELA PD	11.8%	22.2%
SWD adoption	5.9%	0.0%
SWD PD	11.8%	27.8%
Benchmark/formative assessments	41.2%	33.3%

Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

When asked if their plans changed after the DAIT work began, most (61-71%) indicated that the plans were refined and expanded, 10-32% said plans changed extensively, and 29-37% said that the DAIT sanction increased the sense of urgency around implementing reforms (Figure 17). Although the analysis on this area is not complete, many district respondents indicated that the DAIT did not necessarily identify new areas of work, but rather "focused" their efforts. so that when revising action plans, instead of having 10 new areas of work, they addressed a few issues in each existing area.

Figure 17. How Plans Changed Due to DAIT



Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

Again, when asked about initial priorities, once the DAIT had begun to work with the district, the needs of ELL students was the most frequently cited – mentioned by 51% of DAIT providers and 46% of district respondents (Table 22). Next most frequently, providers tended to mention developing or improving data systems (38%), addressing students needing interventions (32%), and "math" (35%). District respondents' next most frequently mentioned priorities areas were teacher professional development (27%) and math (21%). Interviewers did not specifically prompt respondents to identify exactly what they meant by "math" or "ELA" being a high priority, but it was presumed that the respondent meant improving student achievement in these subject areas. Some respondents, however, did specify that they felt either improving the curricula or the intervention materials for these subject areas was a high priority. The categories are not mutually exclusive.

Table 22. District and Providers' Report of Their Initial Priorities

	District (N = 33)	Provider (N = 37)
ELLs/ELD	45.5%	51.4%
Developing/improving data systems and related policies	15.2%	37.8%
Students needing intervention	18.2%	32.4%
Math	21.2%	35.1%
Updating Math curricula, including interventions	12.1%	21.6%
ELA	9.1%	24.3%
Updating ELA curricula, including interventions	9.1%	16.2%
Teacher PD	27.3%	27.0%
Principal PD	15.2%	18.9%
Budget/fiscal policies	3.0%	13.5%
Aligning LEA plan with accountability requirements	9.1%	16.2%
SWDs	15.2%	10.8%
Educating School Board	6.1%	8.1%
Improving relations with teachers' union/educating Union	3.0%	2.7%
Aligning LEA plan with site plans	6.1%	2.7%
HR Policies/practices	0.0%	2.7%

[a]*Categories are not mutually exclusive therefore percentages do not sum to 100%.*
Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

Finally, respondents were asked about the current highest priority for their district (Table 23). The needs of ELL students continues to be the most frequently mentioned priority for district respondents (mentioned by 52%) and a high priority for providers (37.5%) as well. Both groups mentioned the continuing need for teacher support and professional development (34% of providers, 39% of districts), and supports and practices for students needing interventions (31% of providers, 39% of districts). Clearly, neither group of respondents believes that the districts' problems have been entirely resolved. However, some shifts in emphasis are implied by the pattern of responses. It appears that providers, and possibly districts, believe that the districts now need to turn their attention to ELA and professional development for principals has risen in relative priority for both groups, as has the needs of SWDs.

Table 23. District and Providers' Report of the Current Highest Priority

	District (N = 31)	**Provider (N = 32)**
Developing better supports/policies/practices for ELLs	51.6%	37.5%
Developing better supports/policies/practices for Teacher PD	38.7%	34.4%
Developing better supports/policies/practices for students needing intervention	38.7%	31.3%
Developing better supports/policies/practices for ELA	16.1%	40.6%
Developing better supports/policies/practices for Principal PD	25.8%	28.1%
Developing better supports/policies/practices for SWDs	22.6%	28.1%
Developing better supports/policies/practices for Math	12.9%	21.9%
Aligning LEA plan with site plans	3.2%	12.5%
Budget	9.7%	9.4%
Fiscal policies	3.2%	9.4%
Aligning LEA plan with accountability requirements	3.2%	6.3%
HR Policies/practices	3.2%	6.3%
Educating the School Board	3.2%	0.0%
Improving relationships with the School Board	0.0%	3.1%

Source: District and DAIT Follow-up Interviews

Levels of DAIT Implementation

District and DAIT Providers Implementation Ratings

Because both district personnel and DAIT providers responded to the implementation survey, which contained primarily close-ended items, we compared the ratings to determine whether there were significant differences in the district and providers' perspectives (see Appendix E). We then examined the data for patterns in these discrepancies (e.g., district personnel tending to rate implementation higher/lower than DAIT providers). Across all survey items, the two ratings (district and provider) were only an average of 0.77 points apart (on a scale of 1-4 where 4=fully implemented) and on 85.6% items, the district and the provider either agree (41.7%), or had ratings that were within one point of one another (43.9%). Furthermore, as seen in Table 24, the results were similar when the level of agreement was analyzed separately for each sub-area of implementation discussed in the survey. This indicates that the districts and the DAIT providers generally agreed on the level of implementation, both overall and for each of the implementation sub-areas.

Table 24. District and Provider Agreement on Level of Implementation Overall and by Implementation Area

	District and Provider Agree Exactly (%)	Ratings Agree Within 1 Point (%)	Higher District Rating (%)	Higher Provider Rating (%)
Overall	41.7	85.6	33.6	24.7
Sub-Areas				
Governance	41.2	87.0	37.7	21.2
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	37.5	85.5	40.3	22.2
Professional Development	38.2	85.2	30.3	31.5
Fiscal Operations	49.0	84.9	27.4	23.6
Students with Disabilities	41.5	86.7	34.1	24.4
English Language Development	46.4	88.4	32.4	21.2
Parent and Community Involvement	32.1	84.3	34.8	33.3
Human Resources	40.7	80.1	34.4	24.9
Data Systems & Monitoring	36.1	81.3	37.7	26.2
District Capacity	42.6	91.9	35.4	22.0

Source: District and DAIT Implementation Surveys

Table 25 shows the district and DAIT providers' ratings of the districts' level of implementation, both overall and by implementation sub-area. As shown in the table, the districts tended to have higher implementation ratings overall (p = .03) and in several of the sub-areas including governance

(p = .01), curriculum, instruction, and assessment (p = .001), and ELD (p = .04). Despite the statistical significant of the differences in the district and DAIT providers' ratings, the magnitude of the differences in the ratings were small (between 0.16 and 0.28). Furthermore, for each of these sub-areas where there were statistically significant differences in the district and DAIT providers' ratings, the ratings were at least somewhat correlated with one another (r between .32 and .56). Because the level of agreement between the district personnel and the DAIT providers was relatively high and differences in the ratings were minimal, for each item, the lowest of the two ratings was used in subsequent analyses of the implementation data to avoid over-estimating the districts' levels of implementation.[3]

Table 25. Average District and DAIT Provider Implementation Ratings Across Both Years (2008-09 & 2009-10)

	Average District Rating	Average DAIT Provider Rating
Overall	3.03	2.87*
Sub-Areas		
Governance	3.05	2.80**
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	3.00	2.72**
Professional Development	3.01	2.99
Fiscal Operations	3.14	3.05
Students with Disabilities	3.05	2.90
English Language Development	3.15	2.98*
Parent and Community Involvement	2.60	2.60
Human Resources	3.02	2.84
Data Systems & Monitoring	3.10	2.88

Difference is statistically significant *p <.05; **p <.01
Source: District and DAIT Implementation Surveys

Relationship between Implementation and District Capacity

As discussed earlier in the report, the capacity studies provided by the DAITs were coded and analyzed by research staff. These ratings were then transformed into a "need" score for each district, both for their overall capacity and their capacity relating to governance, curriculum and instruction, professional development, fiscal operations, students with disabilities, ELD, parent and community involvement, and human resources. When the capacity studies were coded by the evaluators, each comment was coded as positive, negative, or neutral. In addition, each comment was coded as falling into sub-areas including governance, curriculum and instruction, professional development, fiscal operations, students with disabilities, ELD, parent and community involvement, and human resources. To calculate the need score for each district, the percentage of the total comments that were positive was subtracted from the percentage of total comments that were

[3] Although, on average, the DAIT provider ratings were lower (Table 25) approximately 25% of the providers' ratings of individual survey items were higher.

negative. Thus creating an index that represents the district's "need," with higher scores indicating that the district needed to make improvements and initially had low capacity, whereas lower scores indicating that the district had a less need for improvements and had relatively high initial capacity. The overall need ratings ranged from .02 to .96, with a mean score of .55.

In addition, to calculate need scores for each sub-area, the number of positive comments for an area was divided by the number of total comments. This number was then subtracted from the number of negative comments for an area divided by the total number of comments. Like the overall need scores, high sub-area need scores indicate that the district has a high level of need (i.e., low capacity) in that particular area, whereas low need scores indicate the district has a low level of need (i.e., high capacity) in that particular area.

To determine whether districts' initial capacity was related to their subsequent implementation activities, the correlations between the need and implementation ratings were analyzed. There was a negative correlation between districts' overall need scores and their ratings of overall implementation in both 2008-09 (r = -.37) and 2009-10 (r = -.39), indicating that, on average, districts with more need (i.e., lower capacity) had lower levels of implementation. In other words, districts with higher initial needs begin the process at a lower starting point, and then had greater difficulty implementing reforms.

A similar relationship was found for several of the sub-areas including professional development (2008-09 r = -.42; 2009-10 r = -.32), ELD (2008-09 r = -.36; correlation is not significant in 2009-10), and human resources (2008-09 r = -.35, 2009-10 r = -.46). The relationships between districts' need scores and their ratings of implementation are shown in Table 26 below.

Table 26. Relationship between Implementation and Need Ratings

Implementation Area	Correlation	
	2008-09	2009-10
Overall	-.37*	-.39**
Sub-Areas[a]		
Governance	-.11	-.29
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	-.28	-.16
Professional Development	-.42**	-.32*
Fiscal Operations	-.17	-.22
Students with Disabilities	-.25	-.19
English Language Development	-.36*	-.11
Parent and Community Involvement	-.06	-.19
Human Resources	-.35*	-.46**

*p <.05; **p <.01

[a] Correlations for the sub-areas are the correlations between the implementation rating for the specific sub-area and the capacity score for that same sub-area.

Source: District and DAIT Implementation Surveys

In addition, the relationship between the districts' need scores and the change in their implementation rating from 2008-09 to 2009-10 was examined to see if the districts' initial capacity was related to their implementation growth. There was no statistically significant correlation between the districts' overall need ratings and the change in their overall implementation ratings from 2008-09 to 2009-10, indicating that districts' initial capacity was not related to their overall change (i.e., improvement or reduction) in implementation between the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years. [4]

Furthermore, there was no statistically significant correlation between the need ratings and the change in implementation ratings for any of the sub-areas except for ELD (r = .43). The positive correlation between the ELD need ratings and the change in implementation ratings indicates that districts with higher ELD need ratings (i.e., lower initial ELD capacity) tended to make larger improvements in their ELD implementation between the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years. ELD was problematic for many of the districts and cited as a reason that many of them were in PI. Consequently, as discussed in the interviews, ELD became a focus of the DAIT interventions for many districts. It is possible that the districts that had the lowest initial ELD capacity placed the largest emphasis on ELD as a part of the DAIT intervention and, consequently saw the largest gains in implementation scores.

Table 27. Relationship Between the Change in Implementation from 2008-09 to 2009-10 and Districts' Need Ratings

Implementation Area	Correlation
Overall	0.00
Sub-Areas[a]	
Governance	-.23
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	.19
Professional Development	.21
Fiscal Operations	.01
Students with Disabilities	.14
English Language Development	.43**
Parent and Community Involvement	-.14
Human Resources	-.17

*p <.05; **p <.01; ***p <.001

[a] Correlations for the sub-areas are the correlations between the implementation rating for the specific sub-area and the capacity score for that same sub-area.

Source: District and DAIT Implementation Surveys

[4] This relationship was also analyzed by dividing the districts into quartiles based on their capacity study scores. ANOVA was then used to compare the mean change in implementation across the quartiles; however the differences were not statistically significant.

The relationship between the districts' objective criteria index scores (as assigned by CDE, SBE Agenda 11/18/09 Item 9 and Nov 5-6, 2008 Item 6, available at http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/agenda1108.asp and http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr09/agenda200911.asp) were also compared, via correlational analysis, to their capacity study "need" score). The correlation between the objective criteria scores and the implementation ratings (overall and by sub-area) were not statistically significant.[5]

Change in Implementation

To examine whether the districts' levels of implementation increased over the first two years of the DAIT intervention, the change in implementation ratings was examined. Overall, the average rating across all sub-areas increased from 2.32 in 2008-09 to 2.77 in 2009-10, a statistically significant increase of 0.45 ($p < .001$). This indicates that, on average, the districts' levels of implementation, as reported by both district personnel and DAIT providers, improved over the course of the two years. To put this change in context of the survey scale, these findings indicate that, on average, districts implementation increase from just above "partial" (2 = partial) to just below "substantial" (3 = substantial).

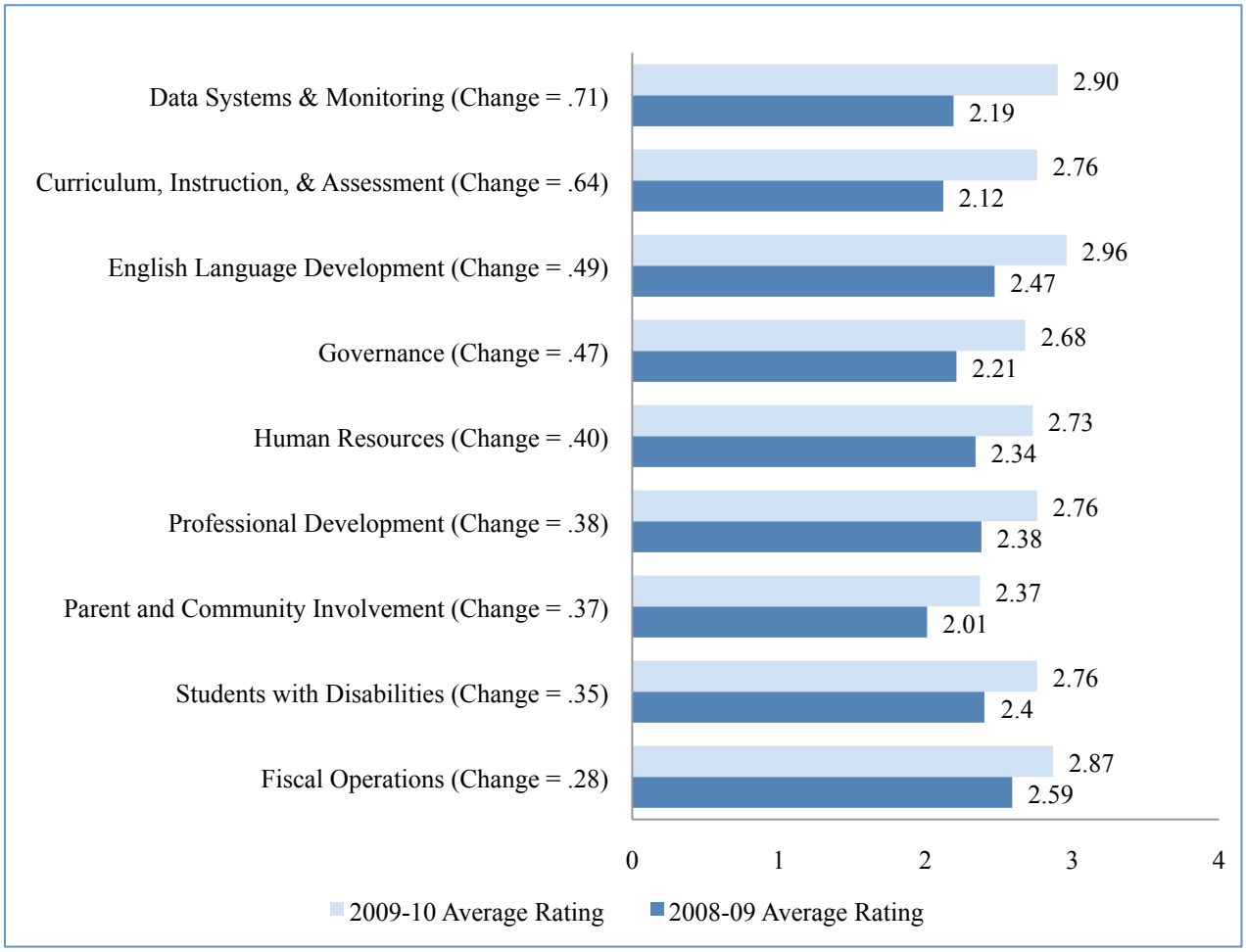
In addition to examining the overall change in implementation, we examined the changes for each of the sub-areas. Paired-samples t-tests indicate that for each sub-area, there was a statistically significant increase in the implementation ratings.[6] The highest increase was reported in the implementation ratings of the districts' data systems and monitoring, with a change of 0.71 ($p < .001$). The smallest increase was reporting in implementation ratings of the districts' fiscal operations, with a change of 0.28 ($p < .001$). The 2008-09 and 2009-10 implementation ratings for each sub-area are displayed in Figure 18 below.

Although these findings suggest that the districts' levels of implementation improved over the course of the two years, caution is warranted when interpreting these findings. Because the implementation survey was administered to each district and DAIT provider once asking them to report on both years of implementation at the same time, the respondents may have been inclined to rate the 2009-10 implementation higher than the 2008-09 because they thought that higher 2009-10 ratings were expected or desirable and would reflect more positively on their work in the district. Therefore, the reported increases in implementation may be due, in part, to bias introduced by the timing of the survey rather than to real changes in implementation.

[5] The correlation between the ranks assigned to districts based on their priority assistance index and the implementation ratings were also examined, and, like the priority assistance index, the rank was not correlated with reported implementation levels.

[6] Increases were statistically significant overall and for all sub-areas regardless of which ratings were used (DAIT providers' ratings, district personnel's ratings, average of the district and DAIT providers' ratings, or lowest of district and DAIT providers' ratings. The results that are presented are the lowest of the two ratings.

Figure 18. Changes in Implementation from 2008-09 to 2009-10



Source: District and DAIT Implementation Surveys

Further insight into the implementation of DAIT came from the interviews with the district personnel and DAIT providers. Toward the end of the interviews, participants were asked what they thought were, overall, the most significant changes in their district since they began working with DAITs and implementing their action plans. They most often mentioned changes to governance, instructional resources and practices, fidelity of implementation, and supports for struggling students (Table 28). These responses align well with the areas most frequently recommended for improvement in the capacity studies and with the intent of the reform effort, suggesting that the participants view the intervention as being associated with improved implementation these high need areas. Although "culture" was not on the original EPCs, and not broken out as a separate section in surveys and interviews, CDE and the CACC developed culture assessment tools, addressed the topic in DAIT trainings, and intended it to be part of the change process. The topic generally came up as participants described changes in the definition of roles and responsibilities, and the establishment of trust within the district and DLT, hence in this analysis it is under governance. Improved supports for struggling students was also cited frequently as an area of most significant change, and was a focus of the intervention, as it was often the lagging performance by

these groups that lead to districts being in PI. Many participants cited the DAIT and their own improved use and understanding of data as making clear the needs of these groups. Additionally, those districts that did implement new curriculum had more resources for struggling students, as the new versions of the curriculum have improved differentiation and more explicit intervention materials. Improved fidelity of implementation is also key to the intervention's success and was emphasized heavily in the DAIT training and materials, so this area of work also appears to be seen as successful and valuable by participants.

Table 28. Report of the Most Significant Changes Since the Start of the DAIT Program

	District (N = 39)	Provider (N = 43)
Changes to district governance, culture, systems, alignment (includes data systems, common curriculum across district, higher expectations, etc.)	59.0%	72.1%
Better instructional resources/practices - e.g., teachers, teacher PD, PLCs, coaches, curricula, using data to inform instruction, benchmark assessments, protocols, collaboration time	51.3%	39.5%
Improved fidelity of implementation (e.g., pacing guides, monitoring, walkthroughs, etc.)/shared understanding of instructional quality/9 EPCs/ accountability, PD, academic coaching	20.5%	41.9%
Better support for students/student subgroups (e.g., ELD, interventions, RTI, SWD)	35.9%	30.2%
Stronger district and site admin staff/leadership/Board/principals	12.8%	18.6%
Improved Fiscal Practices	5.1%	2.3%
Improved student achievement	5.1%	7.0%
No specific changes mentioned/Don't know/Few changes	7.7%	0.0%

Source: District and DAIT Implementation Surveys

Quantitative Analysis of Achievement Outcomes in Districts with DAITS

Examination of Raw Data

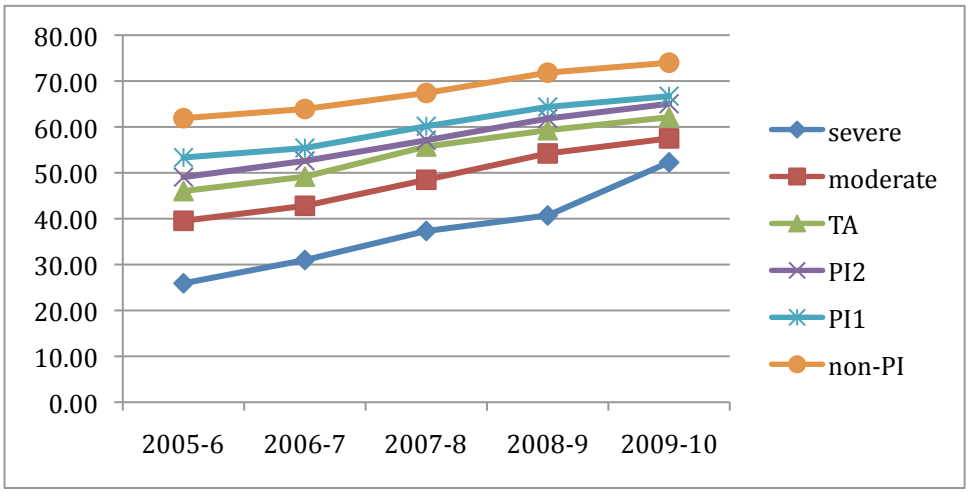
As with the rest of this interim report, it is important to note that all results from the quantitative analysis of achievement outcomes are entirely preliminary. We examine only the progress of students in Cohort 1 disticts with DAITs (those identified in 2007-8 that received DAITs for the first time in 2008-9), and we only have one year of student-level data (2008-09) and two years of school- and district-level achievement data (2008-09 and 2009-10) with which to assess students'

progress once their districts received DAITs. As such, these results necessarily reflect short-term impacts of the intervention. In our final report we will discuss similar short-term impacts of the intervention for Cohort 2 districts as well as provide slightly longer-term impacts of DAITs on student outcomes in Cohort 1 districts, with two years of data.

To first paint a descriptive picture of student progress in California districts with and without DAITs, we examine raw aggregate data (i.e., unadjusted for other covariates) on the progress of school districts in California. To show a snapshot at two different grade levels, we show aggregate unadjusted student achievement scores in math and ELA in fourth and seventh grades. These aggregate scores are weighted by the number of tested students in each district, but are unadjusted for any factors that may impact student achievement, such as poverty level.

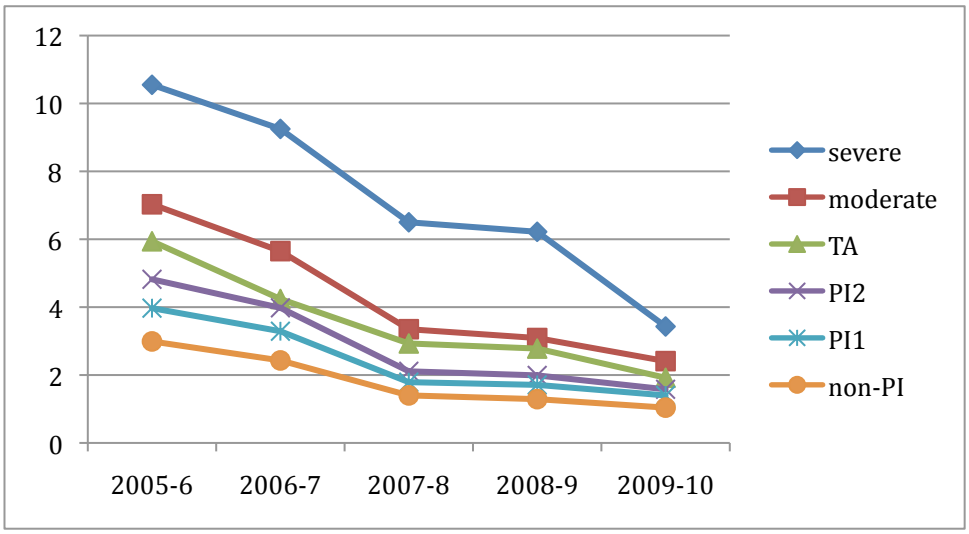
We see that the percentage of students scoring Proficient or above in 4th grade CST math tests has been increasing steadily over the past five years (Figure 19). Although increases have slowed for some groups (non-PI and PI1) in the last two years, we see that the severe PI3 group (those districts assigned DAITs) has seen the largest increase (11.6%) between 2008-9 and 2009-10. "Moderate" PI3 districts (those required to contract with DAITs) saw fairly consistent gains over the last year – larger than the average growth in districts without DAITs, but slightly lower gains than they had seen in the last two years. It should be noted that the absolute differences between student achievement in the moderate and severe PI3 groups are not statistically significant.

Figure 19. 4th Grade Math % Proficient or Advanced Time Trend, Cohort 1 Designations



In addition, although we see that all categories of districts have seen average decreases in the proportion of students scoring "Far Below Basic" in 4th grade math, PI3 districts that were assigned DAITs (the "severe" category) have seen the largest decreases in the proportion of Far Below Basic students over the last year, with a nearly 3 percent decrease between 2008-9 and 2009-10 (Figure 20). Again, the difference in the proportion of students scoring Far Below Basic between severe and moderate PI3 districts is not statistically significant in the 2009-10 school year.

Figure 20. 4th Grade Math % Far Below Basic Time Trend, Cohort 1 Designations



We see somewhat similar raw trends when we examine 4th grade ELA scores, where we see that the percentage of students scoring Proficient or above in 4th grade ELA has been increasing steadily over the past five years (Figure 21). Again, the severe PI3 group has seen the largest average increase of any group (6.9%) between 2008-9 and 2009-10, and this gain is greater than for any of the previous years. "Moderate" PI3 districts, however, saw gains of only 1.9% over the last year – far lower than the average gains in proficiency or above from the previous year (6.2% between 2007-8 and 2008-9). Nonetheless, in both 2008-9 and 2009-10, severe PI3 districts performed significantly worse that moderate districts.

Figure 21. 4th Grade ELA % Proficient or Advanced Time Trend, Cohort 1 Designations

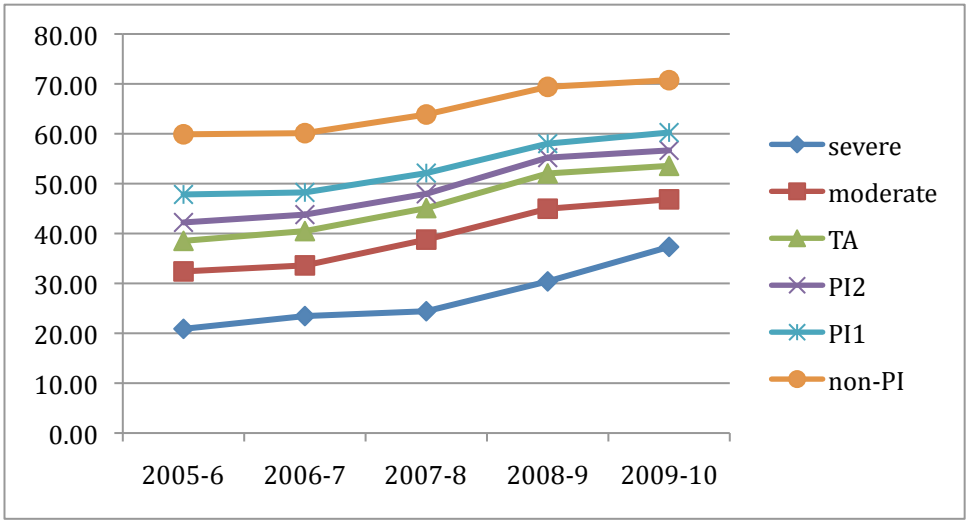
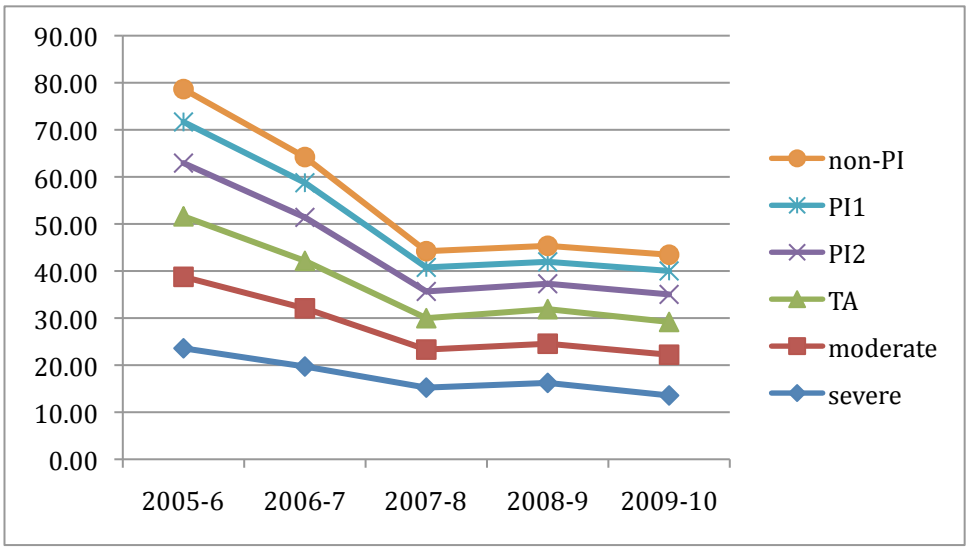


Figure 22 shows that all groups of districts have trended similarly in the percentage of students scoring Far Below Basic over time, with severe PI3 districts posting the greatest decreases in percent Far Below Basic (2.7%) in the last year. Moderate PI3 districts actually saw a slight increase (of 0.3%) in the percentage of students scoring Far Below Basic between 2008-9 and 2009-10. Nonetheless, severe PI3 districts still had significantly higher proportions of students scoring at Far Below Basic than did moderate PI3 districts in both 2008-9 and 2009-10.

Figure 22. 4th grade ELA % Far Below Basic time trend, Cohort 1 Designations



The percentage of students scoring Proficient or above in 7th grade math has not been increasing as steadily over the past five years as they have in 4th grade. However, Figure 23 shows that the proportions of students scoring Proficient and Advanced have increased for all categories of districts between 2008-9 and 2009-10, with the steepest gains (9.5%) seen in the severe group. A statistically significant difference between the levels of students scoring Proficient and Advanced in the severe and moderate PI3 groups remains. Similarly, Figure 24 shows that the Severe category saw the greatest decreases in the proportion of students scoring Far Below Basic between 2008-9, with a decrease of approximately 4%.

Figure 23. 7th Grade Math % Proficient or Advanced Time Trend, Cohort 1 Designations

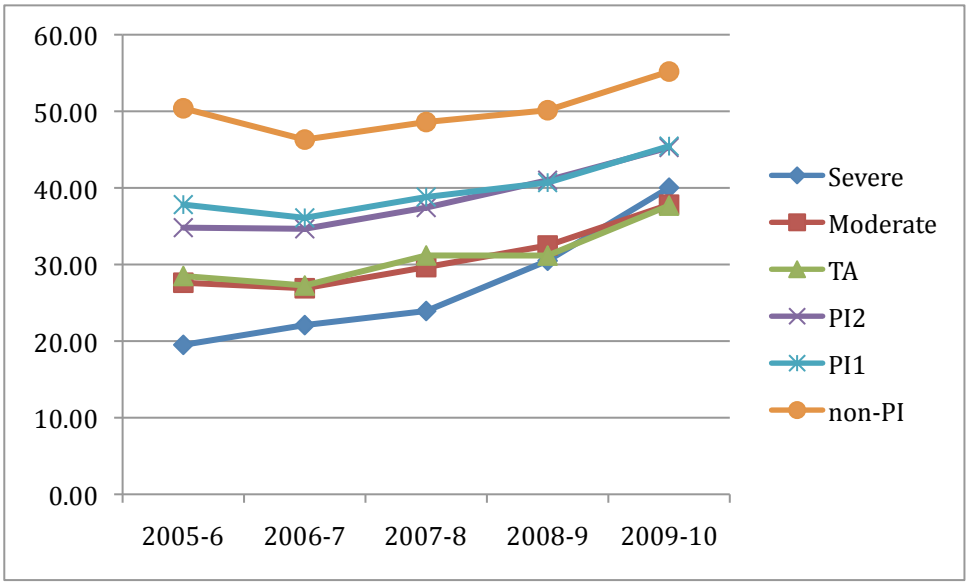
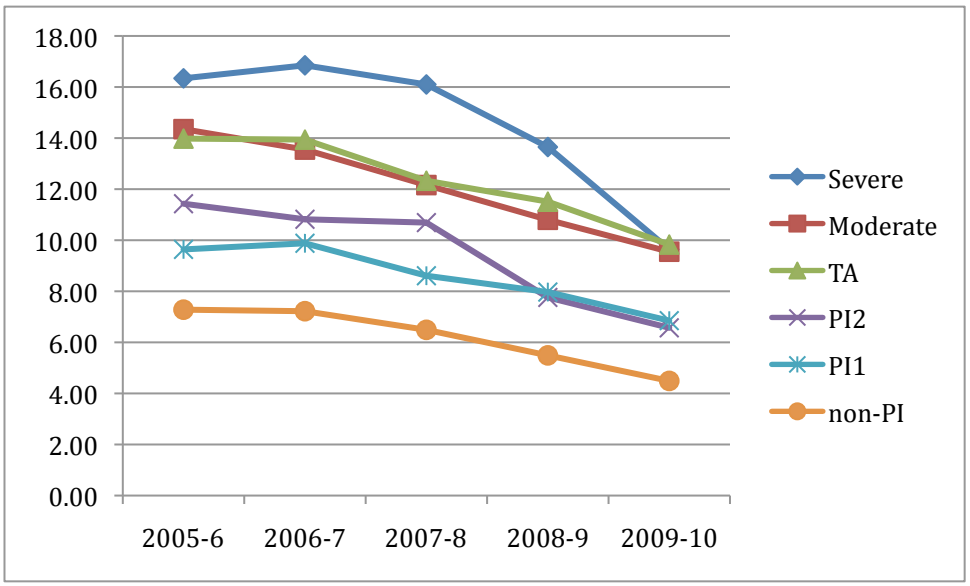
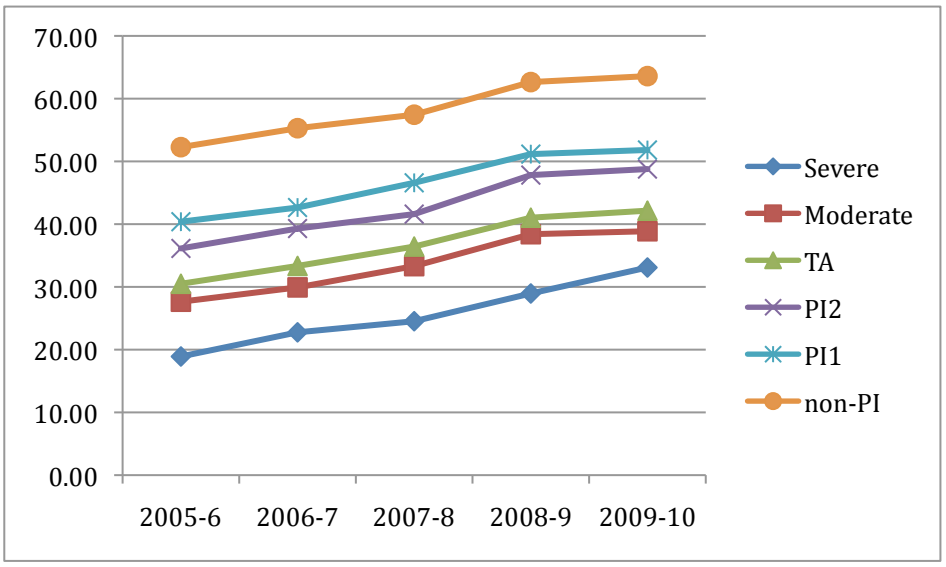


Figure 24. 7th Grade Math % Far Below Basic Time Trend, Cohort 1 Designations



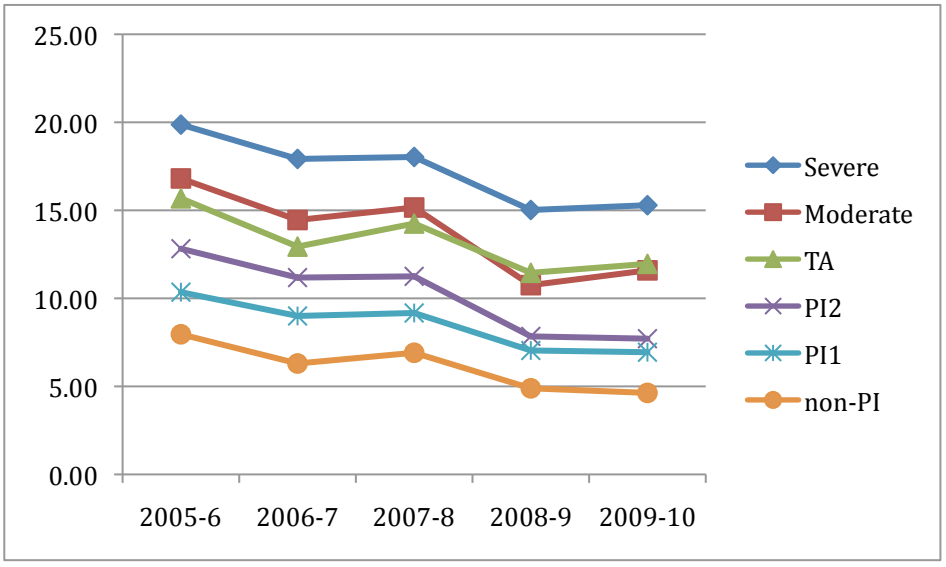
The raw CST scores for 7th grade ELA Proficient or above show similar results: the Severe PI3 category posted the largest increases between 2008-9 and 2009-10, with an average four percent increase in the proportion of students scoring Proficient or Advanced (Figure 25). Moderate PI3 districts, however, saw the smallest increases, of approximately 0.5 percent.

Figure 25. 7th Grade ELA % Proficient or Advanced Time Trend, Cohort 1 Designations



However, Figure 26 shows that, on average, all categories of districts posted either very small decreases or increases in the proportion of students scoring Far Below Basic in 7th grade ELA. Whereas both Severe and Moderate districts had seen the largest decreases in the proportion of students scoring Far Below Basic between 2007-8 and 2008-9, both groups saw small increases in the percentage of students scoring Far Below Basic between 2008-9 and 2009-10.

Figure 26. 7th Grade ELA % Far Below Basic Time Trend, Cohort 1 Designations



Although the raw CST data shows interesting trends, it tells us very little about the true progress of districts that received DAITs relative to those that did not. In order to better understand the true impact of DAITs on student achievement, it is important to control for factors that may themselves impact student outcomes regardless of the presence of DAITs in the district. Without controlling for these factors, we cannot know whether to attribute the differences between district types shown in the graphs above to DAITs or to some other factors that are correlated with the use of DAITs and student outcomes. The remaining sections show how we work to isolate the impact of DAITs on student achievement using short-term student-level achievement data from the 2008-9 school year. Because 2009-10 student-level data have not yet been released by the California Department of Education, we are unable to examine trends in student achievement for more than one year of the DAIT intervention, and we are only able to examine short-run impacts of DAITs on students in Cohort 1 DAIT districts.

Examination of Student Achievement Data Controlling for Confounding Variables

Table 29 and Table 30 show our main estimation results of the difference-in-difference analyses on both Math and ELA CST outcomes, standardized to the complete longitudinal data sample of students. (Please see Appendix F for details.) Table 29 shows the results of the DAIT treatment on student performance levels in 2008-09.

Table 30 shows the results of the DAIT treatment on student achievement growth between the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years. In both Tables 29 and 30, Models 4 and 8 serve as our final models for ELA and Math outcomes, respectively. We choose these models because they control for the most factors that may impact student achievement other than the DAITs. Failure to include these variables may result in biased estimates of the impact of DAITs. In addition, models 4 and 8 explain the largest proportion of the variance.

The Impact of the DAIT Treatment on Student Achievement in 2008-9

As is shown in columns 1-4 of Table 29, we find no evidence of a positive or negative impact of DAITs on student achievement on the ELA CSTs when comparing students in districts with DAITs and non-DAIT TA districts between the 2007-8 and 2008-9 school years. However, columns 5-8 show that we do find that students in districts with DAITs saw a significant, albeit small, improvement in Math CST scores, on the order of 2 % of a standard deviation, or approximately two points on the math scale score distribution, relative to students in districts with non-DAIT TA. Appendix Table F-4 shows that the improvement in Math CST scores for districts with DAITs is significant across all methods of standardizing the Math CST dependent variable. It also shows that there is no evidence of improvement in ELA CST scores.

Table 29. Treatment Effect Estimate of Change in ELA and Math CST Scores for Longitudinal Standardization

	ELA				Math			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
DAIT	-0.118***	-0.088**	-0.048	-0.084**	-0.114***	-0.085**	-0.066+	-0.115***
	(0.034)	(0.027)	(0.046)	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.036)	(0.022)
Time	-0.002	0.000	0.003	-0.004	-0.001	0.003	0.009	0.008
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.006)
DD Treatment Effect	0.002	0.002	0.002	-0.005	0.025*	0.026*	0.027*	0.021+
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.010)
English Language Learner		-0.167***	-0.110***	-0.119***		-0.012	0.041**	0.032***
		(0.010)	(0.015)	(0.011)		(0.011)	(0.014)	(0.008)
Minority Student		-0.547***	-0.392***	-0.391***		-0.497***	-0.385***	-0.385***
		(0.076)	(0.039)	(0.039)		(0.088)	(0.043)	(0.044)
Disabled Student		-0.782***	-0.776***	-0.778***		-0.643***	-0.651***	-0.654***
		(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.024)		(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.041)
% Minority in the District				0.971***				0.954***
				(0.128)				(0.136)
# of AYP Criteria				-0.003				-0.004
				(0.003)				(0.003)
Urban District				-0.018				0.015
				(0.030)				(0.025)
Rural District				-0.132*				-0.0460
				(0.065)				(0.054)
Small District				0.011				-0.009
				(0.040)				(0.037)
Large District				0.007				0.015
				(0.057)				(0.040)
HS District				0.069				0.08
				(0.062)				(0.071)
Unified District				0.038				0.045
				(0.030)				(0.031)
Per Pupil Expends				0.000				0.000
				(0.000)				(0.000)
School Controls			X	X			X	X
Constant	-0.234***	0.372***	0.719***	0.311	-0.216***	0.240**	0.648***	0.321*
	(0.027)	(0.079)	(0.148)	(0.189)	(0.017)	(0.091)	(0.180)	(0.151)
Adj. R-squared	0.003	0.134	0.149	0.160	0.002	0.090	0.123	0.135
N	1999288	1998817	1997027	1973153	1946391	1946033	1944555	1923432

*+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001*

Note: the p-statistic for the DD treatment effect in model 8 is p=0.51

The Impact of the DAIT Treatment on Student Achievement Growth between the 2007-8 to 2008-9 school years

As shown in Table 30, we find similar results when we explore the effect of DAITs on student achievement growth before and during the implementation of the DAIT treatment. As is shown in columns 1-4 of Table 30, we again find no consistent significant impact of DAITs on student achievement growth on the ELA CSTs when comparing students in districts with DAITs and districts with non-DAIT TA between the 2006-7 to 2007-8 and 2007-8 to 2008-9 school years. Columns 5-8 again show that students in districts with DAITs saw a significant, and again small, improvement in Math CST score growth, on the order of 4% of a standard deviation, or approximately 2.3 points on the fifth grade math longitudinal scale score distribution, relative to students in districts with non-DAIT TA. Appendix Table F-6 shows that the improvement in student growth in Math CST scores for districts with DAITs is significant across all methods of standardizing the Math CST dependent variable and that there is again no evidence of improvement in ELA CST growth.

Table 30. Treatment Effect Estimate of Growth in ELA and Math CST Scores for Longitudinal Standardization

	ELA				Math			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(10)
DAIT	0.009	0.010+	0.01	0.001	0.012	0.01	-0.009	-0.021
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.018)	(0.015)	(0.011)	(0.014)
Time	-0.005	-0.005	-0.005	-0.004	-0.011	-0.011	-0.008	-0.001
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.013)
DD Treatment Effect	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	0.000	0.040*	0.039*	0.040*	0.040*
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.016)
English Language Learner		0.029***	0.029***	0.029***		0.025***	0.025***	0.026***
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)		(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Minority Student		-0.012*	-0.011***	-0.011***		0.044***	0.014**	0.014**
		(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)		(0.013)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Disabled Student		0.026**	0.026**	0.026**		0.103***	0.089***	0.089***
		(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)		(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)
% of Minorities in the District				0.030+				0.045
				(0.016)				(0.043)
# of AYP Criteria				0.000				0.001
				(0.001)				(0.001)
Urban District				-0.003				0.007
				(0.005)				(0.013)
Rural District				0.0260				0.076**
				(0.016)				(0.026)
Small District				0.01				-0.002
				(0.008)				(0.019)
Large District				0.003				0.024
				(0.006)				(0.016)
High School District				-0.028*				-0.027
				(0.013)				(0.034)
Unified District				-0.01				-0.022
				(0.007)				(0.019)
Per Pupil Expenditures				-0.000***				-0.000***
				0.000				0.000
School Controls			X	X			X	X
Constant	-0.016***	-0.027***	-0.039***	-0.018	-0.047***	-0.105***	-0.040+	0.036
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.025)	(0.012)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.059)
Adj. R-squared	0	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.001	0.004	0.035	0.035
N	1983081	1982629	1981004	1957646	1916761	1916423	1915163	1895550

*+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001*

In addition, our analyses show other significant results. It is important to note, however, that none of the other coefficients in the model can be interpreted as causal impacts of a variable on student achievement. Rather all other coefficients indicate adjusted correlations between the measure and student achievement, controlling for other factors. At the student level, we see that minority students have lower ELA and math achievement than non-minority students, all else equal. Both ELL students and students with disabilities have lower levels of ELA achievement in 2008-09, although ELL students appear to perform slightly better in math, when controlling for student and school-level factors. Minority, ELL and disabled students all see higher achievement growth between 2007-8 and 2008-9 in math, ceteris paribus, but minority students do not have negative growth in ELA achievement.

The difference-in-difference analytic technique used is susceptible to a few validity threats. As described in detail in the Technical Appendix F, we test for a number of threats to the validity of our estimates of DAIT impacts and find that our results stand up to these checks. The positive and significant improvements in math CST outcomes appear to be attributable to DAITs.

The Impact of the DAIT Treatment in Severe vs. Moderate PI3 Districts on Student Achievement Levels and Growth between the 2007-08 to 2008-09 School Years

In addition, we ask if districts that were classified as "Severe" PI3 districts saw differences in student outcomes relative to PI3 districts classified as "Moderate." As noted earlier, "Severe" districts are those that received the lowest rankings on the Priority Assistance Index generated by the CDE, and were assigned a DAIT, whereas "Moderate" districts were required to contract with a DAIT, but were not assigned specific DAITs. The "Severe" districts faced increased accountability pressures, as they are singled out as the worst-performing PI3 districts.

Table 31 shows our results from analyses using a variation on the difference-in-differences (DD) approach described above, this time allowing for different treatment effects for districts that were assigned DAITs versus those that were required to contract with DAITs. Before discussing these results, we should note an extra limitation of this analysis. First, there are only seven "Severe" districts, with approximately 22,000 students in them. By contrast, there are 37 Moderate districts, with 323,000 students enrolled in them. As such, any results from this analysis are susceptible to bias, and should be understood as suggestive rather than causal evidence.

We find that students in Severe districts assigned DAITs made significantly larger gains in math achievement levels than did students in districts that received non-DAIT TA, but that students in Moderate PI3 districts that were required to contract with a DAIT did not perform significantly better than students in districts with non-DAIT TA. In addition, we find that students in severe districts performed significantly higher in math achievement than students in moderate districts (F-test testing the coefficients on the severe and moderate groups was significant at 0.02). However, when we examine the impact of the different levels of DAIT intervention on student math achievement growth, we find that both Severe and Moderate PI3 districts outperformed districts

with non-DAIT TA, and that students in Severe PI3 districts did not see significantly higher math achievement growth outcomes than students in Moderate PI3 districts. We find no differences between severe and moderate districts in ELA achievement levels or growth; neither group performed significantly better than districts with non-DAIT TA.

Table 31. Treatment Effect Estimate of Severe and Moderate PI3 DAITs in ELA and Math CST Level and Growth Scores for Longitudinal Standardization

	ELA		MATH	
	Level	Growth	Level	Growth
Severe	-0.271***	0.012	-0.257***	0.000
	(0.048)	(0.021)	(0.060)	(0.030)
Time	-0.004	-0.004	0.008	-0.001
	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.013)
Severe DD Treatment Effect	0.007	-0.013	0.060***	0.049**
	(0.012)	(0.021)	(0.016)	(0.019)
Moderate	-0.079**	0.001	-0.111***	-0.021
	(0.027)	(0.008)	(0.021)	(0.014)
Moderate DD Treatment Effect	-0.006	0.001	0.018	0.039*
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.016)
English Language Learner	-0.118***	0.029***	0.033***	0.025***
	(0.011)	(0.001)	(0.008)	(0.003)
Minority Student	-0.391***	-0.011***	-0.385***	0.014**
	(0.039)	(0.003)	(0.044)	(0.005)
Disabled Student	-0.778***	0.026**	-0.654***	0.089***
	(0.024)	(0.009)	(0.041)	(0.005)
% of Minorities in the District	0.988***	0.029+	0.966***	0.043
	(0.129)	(0.017)	(0.137)	(0.044)
# of AYP Criteria	-0.0040	0.0000	-0.0040	0.0010
	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Urban District	-0.022	-0.003	0.012	0.007
	(0.030)	(0.005)	(0.025)	(0.013)
Rural District	-0.023	0.023	0.027	0.061*
	(0.061)	(0.015)	(0.077)	(0.023)
Small District	0.013	0.01	-0.007	-0.002
	(0.039)	(0.008)	(0.037)	(0.019)
Large District	0.008	0.003	0.016	0.024
	(0.056)	(0.006)	(0.039)	(0.016)
High School District	0.069	-0.028*	0.081	-0.027
	(0.061)	(0.013)	(0.071)	(0.034)
Unified District	0.039	-0.010	0.046	-0.022
	(0.030)	(0.007)	(0.032)	(0.019)
Per Pupil Expenditures	0.000	-0.000***	0.000	-0.000***
	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Constant	0.310+	-0.019	0.320*	0.036
	(0.184)	(0.025)	(0.146)	(0.059)
Wald Test P-value	0.296	0.506	0.024	0.516
Adj R2	0.161	0.002	0.135	0.035
N	1973153	1957646	1923432	1895550

*+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001*

Conclusion and Future Analyses

The primary caveat that should be attached to this work is that it is all preliminary. It is inadequate to assess the impact of a large-scale intervention based on one year of implementation data. The results in fact may be due to an impact of the DAITs on student achievement; however, they may also be due to an initial shock of the intervention that decreases over time or to some other factor. Although the results of this analysis give cause for optimism regarding the DAIT intervention for student outcomes in math, it is too soon to determine the true impact of the DAITs on student outcomes.

In addition, it should be reiterated that the effect sizes found in the Math CST outcome analyses are very small, and that no significant gains are found in ELA. It would be worthwhile to conduct a cost analysis to determine the cost of the DAIT intervention program, both to the state and to the individual districts and schools, relative to the impact on student test scores. The math finding will be examined further in future anlyses together with the qualitative data, as the preliminary qualitative data indicates that districts were emphasizing math curriculum and professional development more than ELA in the year just prior to working with DAITs, as well as in the first year of the intervention. The capacity studies show slightly more DAIT recommendations in ELA, and slightly fewer weaknesses in the area of math, again indicating that more districts had identified and begun working on math prior to the intervention.

Lastly, this is solely an interim report. There is still much work to be done to determine the impact of DAITs on other important district and school level outcomes. This work will be completed by the final report, due to the SBE in November of 2011.

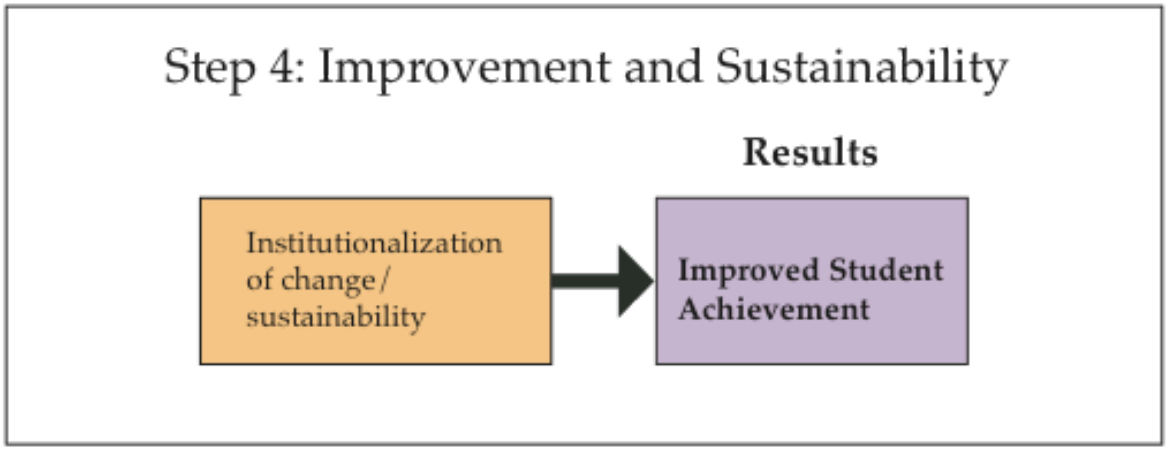
Institutionalizing Change Efforts

Findings from this evaluation provide preliminary evidence that the DAIT intervention appears to have resulted in improved implementation of the EPCs and positive, albeit small, improvements in students' math achievement, especially for students in districts rated as "Severe." This section discusses the perceived sustainability of these changes, as well as district personnel and DAIT providers' satisfaction with the program and recommendations for improvement.

Sustainability

This initiative is intended to change norms and practices by engaging multiple levels of district stakeholders around a common focus – board members, superintendents, teachers, finance managers, etc. should all be in dialogue around supporting shared student achievement goals. "Focus" was often cited by district leaders as a strong outcome of working with DAITs. Ideally this focus and engagement will result in the type of collective capacity building that realizes institutionalization and internalized accountability (Elmore 2004, Fullan 2010). This in turn, should result in more coherent supports for shared student learning goals, and, in the long run, improve student achievement (Figure 27).

Figure 27. Step 4 Institutionalization of Change



Indicators of Institutionalization

1. New policies and systems are in place to support implementation and communication
2. Adoption of new practices is consistent across sites
3. Feedback systems are in place to monitor results
4. District has capacity and willingness to act on results to improve student achievement

Institutionalization: Barriers and Facilitators

1. District and site staff stability/turnover
2. Fiscal resources
3. Access to TA as needed
4. Remaining or new resistance from stakeholders
5. Changing emphasis and funding from state and federal government that divert resources or undercut efforts

In the final section of the implementation survey, respondents were asked to rate the district's capacity to implement and sustain reforms. Capacity was rated on a scale of 1-4 (no capacity to high capacity) based on the districts' current capacity to implement/sustain improvement efforts in each area (See Appendix E for specific items). In general, the majority of districts were rated as having high or adequate capacity to both implement and sustain improvements in the nine sub-areas examined by the implementation interviews (Figure 28). Although many areas received higher

"capacity to implement" responses than their "capacity to sustain" responses, analyses did not reveal any statistically significant differences between these ratings. In other words, although it appears as though the proportion of districts with the capacity to sustain improvements seems somewhat lower than the proportion with the capacity to implement improvements, there were no statistically significant differences between the two for any of the implementation areas.

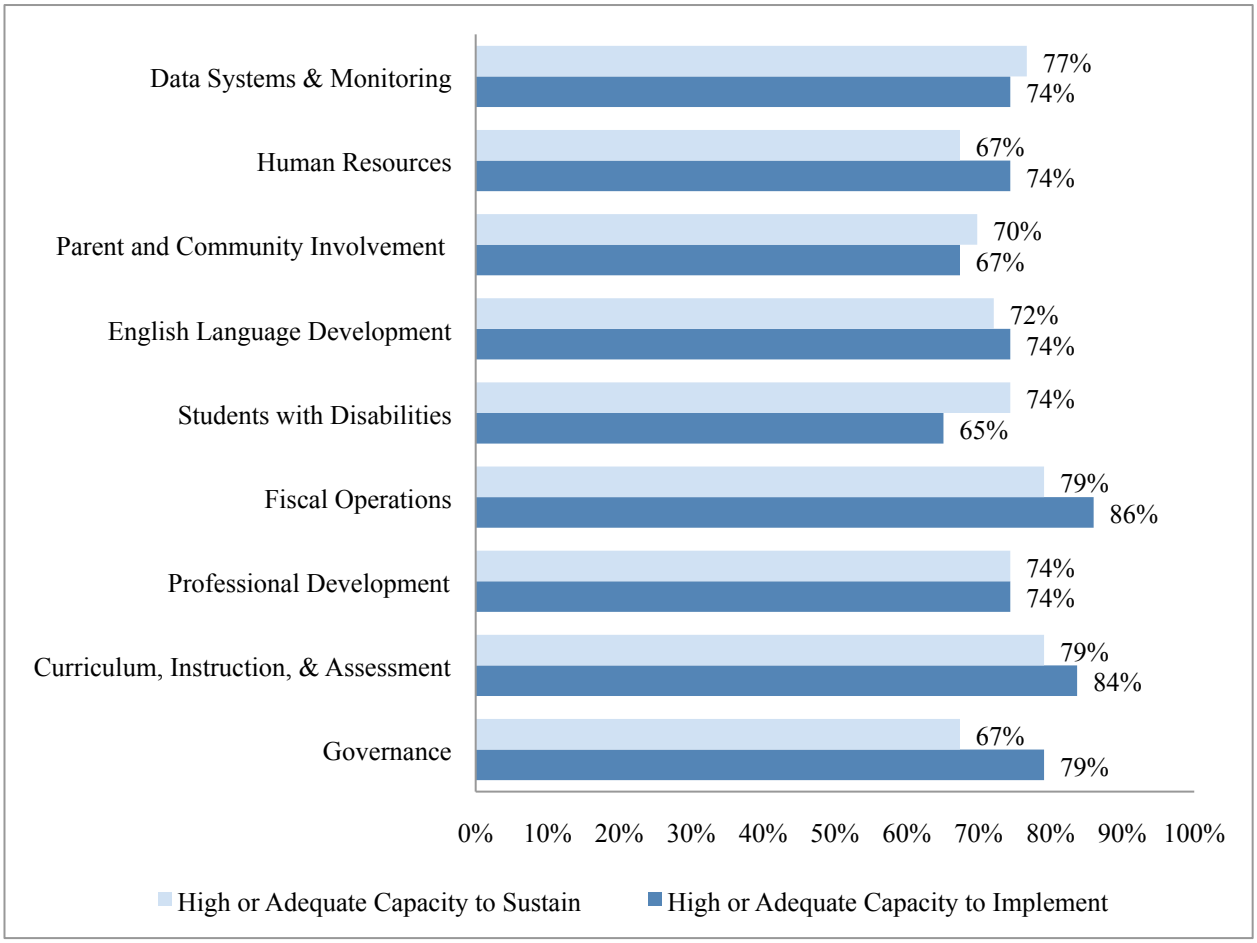
As was discussed above, during interviews respondents indicated that many districts were struggling with budget shortfalls that made them somewhat pessimistic about their ability to sustain the reforms they had implemented. The lower sustainability ratings could also signal that capacity was not really built — that the participants viewed the DAIT provider and PI grant funds as short term "additions" rather than the impetus for long-term change to district systems, practice, and structures. Or perhaps capacity building intent was there, but simply was not able to be realized or fully institutionalized. This issue will be explored more fully in the final report. When asked if the district's ability to implement its action plan had changed due to current budget problems, over half of both district and provider respondents answered "yes" (Table 32). While some districts (21%) were fairly confident that budget shortfalls would not impair their implementation plans, most indicated at least some potential problems.

Table 32. District and Providers' Report of the Whether or Not the District's Ability to Implement its Action Plan Has Changed, Given the Current State of the Budget

	District (N = 38)	Provider (N = 43
Yes	55.3%	65.1%
Somewhat	23.7%	27.9%
No	21.1%	7.0%

Source: District and DAIT Implementation Follow-up Interviews

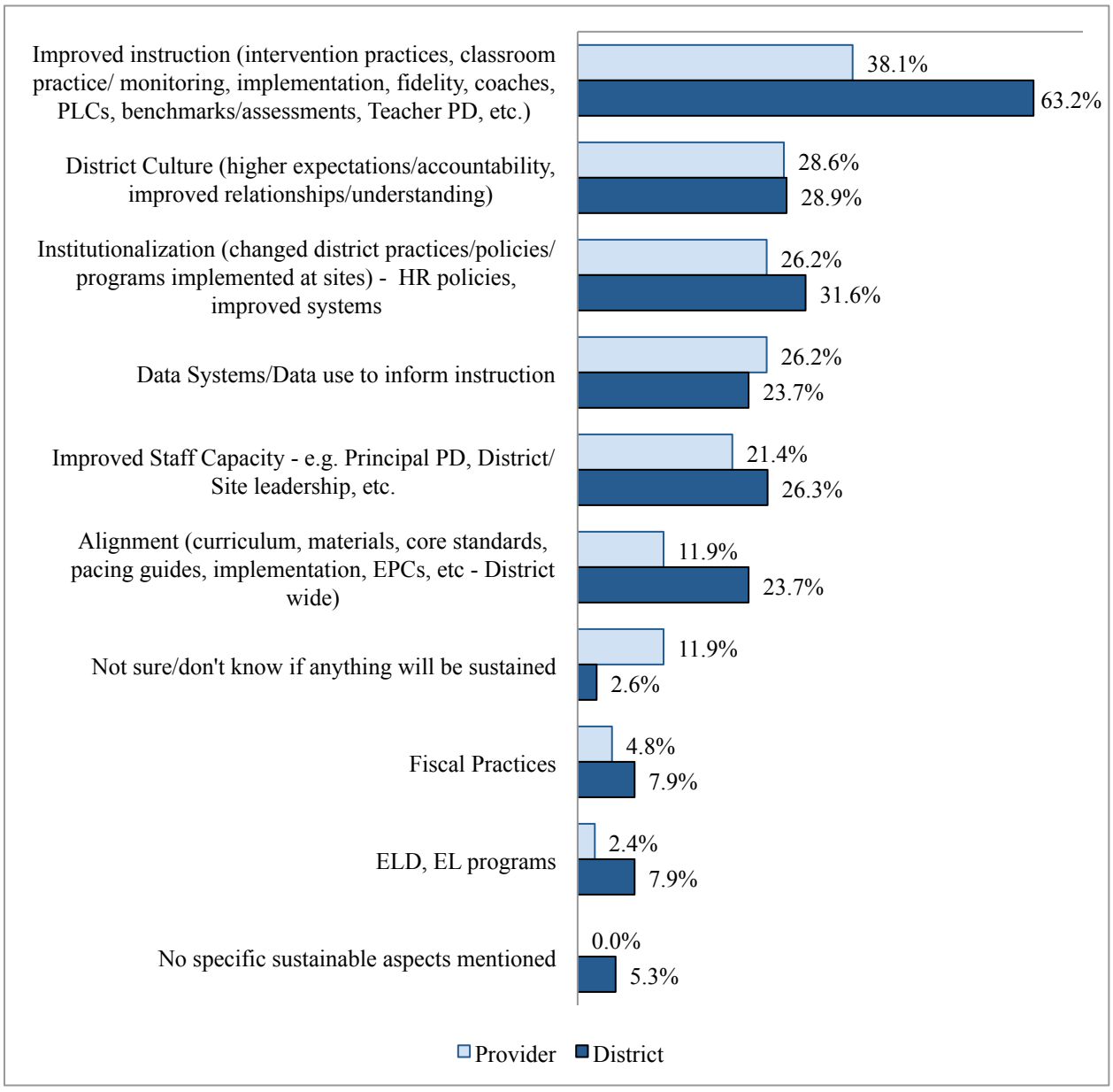
Figure 28. Percentage of Districts with Reported High or Adequate Capacity to Implement and Sustain Improvement Efforts



Source: District and DAIT Implementation Surveys

Data from the district and DAIT interviews provides further information on the sustainability of the reform efforts (Figure 29). Both the districts and the DAITs reported that the change they expected to be most sustainable was the improvement in instruction; however far more districts reported that they expected these reforms to be sustained than providers (63% vs. 38%). Very few districts and DAIT providers reported that they expected changes made to ELL programs would be sustained (7.9% and 2.4%, respectively), despite this area being cited as a high priority area for many districts. Future analyses will examine this issue in more detail; it is possible that -- through the diagnostic and data work, especially use of the ELSSA -- participants realized the extent of their ELL issues, and the complexity of addressing them, for the first time, and the low score in sustainability reflects the deeper knowledge that there is much more work needed to improve ELL services and student outcomes.

Figure 29. District and Providers' Report of What They Expect to be the Most Sustainable Changes



Source: District and DAIT Implementation Surveys

Next Steps, Satisfaction, and Recommendations

Near the conclusion of interviews with district personnel and DAIT providers, we ask them to provide us with what they believed to be their next steps in order to implement their revised LEA plan. The majority of district personnel we spoke with anticipated their next steps to focus on district level improvements, which included the development of actions plans, increasing alignment, restructuring and adopting new reform models (Table 33). Approximately 30% of district personnel

also mentioned improved instruction, involving professional development for teachers and coaches, and the adoption of new curriculum as a focus of their reform efforts. These efforts were also mentioned in regard to improving supports for student subgroups through interventions, ELD and RTI. DAIT providers' responses often mirrored those of the districts in terms of the next steps needed by the district to implement their new LEA plan. Nearly half of DAIT providers mentioned district level improvements as necessary to implement the LEA plan. Providers also emphasized the need to improve supports for specific student subgroups and to fully implement their LEA plan.

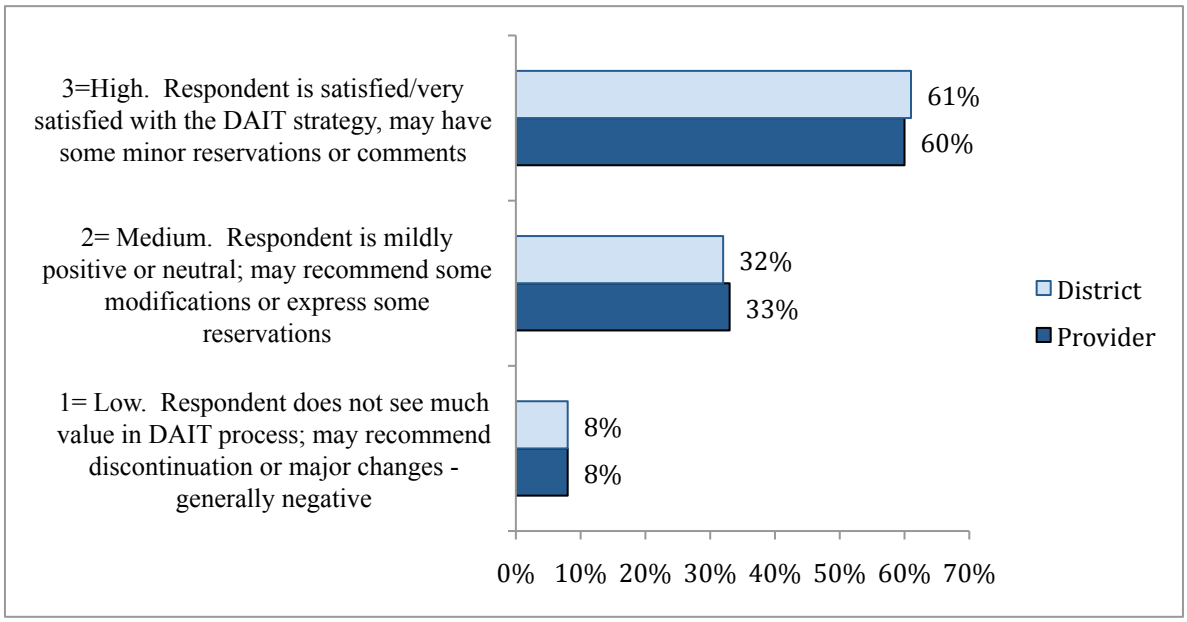
Table 33. Next Steps the District will take to Implement its LEA Plan

	District (N = 39)	Provider (N = 43)
District level improvements (e.g., action plans, alignments, systems, schedules, restructuring, adopting a new reform model)	43.6%	44.2%
Improve supports for specific student subgroups (e.g., ELD, interventions, RTI)	30.8%	37.2%
Improve instruction (teacher PD, PLCs, coaches, curriculum)	33.3%	16.3%
Improve site level support/accountability/monitoring	17.9%	14.0%
Improve data systems/assessments	17.9%	9.3%
Continue/stay the course/fully implement plan	15.4%	20.9%
Improve subject matter materials/programs (e.g., curriculum, PD)	15.4%	14.0%
Fiscal issues - budget, find additional funding, etc.	7.7%	9.3%
None/don't know	2.6%	4.7%

Source: District and DAIT Implementation Follow-up Interviews

To gauge the overall perception of the DAIT process, participants were asked to describe their satisfaction with the DAIT program as a strategy to build district capacity. As illustrated by Figure 30, the vast majority of providers and district respondents (92%) indicated they were generally or highly satisfied with the DAIT program. Only 8% of district personnel and DAIT providers held negative views of the DAIT process. This is an interesting result, as many respondents emphasized, throughout the interview, the extensive challenges and time consuming nature of the work.

Figure 30. District and DAITs' Satisfaction with the DAIT Process



Source: District and DAIT Implementation Follow-up Interviews

Although the majority of district personnel and DAIT providers were highly satisfied with the DAIT process, a number of recommendations were offered to improve the DAIT program. The most frequently mentioned recommendations centered on state policies and requirements, specifically the need for better communication between the state and districts and fewer conflicting mandates. Also highly recommended was the need for more time (45% of providers and 39% of districts), and/or increased funding or different funding strategies (37% of providers and 47% of districts) in order to fully implement reform efforts (Table 34).

Table 34. District and DAITs' Recommendations

	District (N = 36)	Provider (N = 38)
CDE/State policies & requirements: Better communication state:districts; more notice of deadlines, fewer conflicting mandates	64%	58%
Need more time	39%	45%
Funding: More, different allocation strategy, on-going to maintain changes	47%	37%
Need more accountability to State (more reporting, more consequences for DAIT &/or district)	44%	38%
More training/consistency/information about or for DAITs/oversight of DAITS/insure DAIT is good match for district needs & context	39%	24%
More (other than funding) resources or assistance from state (e.g., statewide adoption of ELD curriculum, data system, district staff training, direct TA services, quicker CST data, etc.)	25%	16%
Training for local school boards	17%	16%
Issues around federal accountability/State response to feds/Better recognition of gains made/alternative ways to demonstrate improvements & growth	28%	16%
Changes in law regarding teacher unions/training for Unions	17%	9%
Quicker intervention by state when DAIT is not enough help/DAITs need to have more authority	8%	5%

Source: District and DAIT Implementation Follow-up Interviews

The need for greater accountability for both districts and DAITs was also recommended (by 38% of providers and 44% of districts), including increased reporting to the state, with mandated consequences for either party when things did not go well. In a similar vein, many respondents also thought there should be more oversight of DAITs by the state (24% of providers and 39% of districts). Respondents in both groups were also concerned about consistency across DAITs and matching districts with providers who had appropriate expertise. Over half provider and districts respondents (56% of providers and 51% of districts) indicated there were problem areas that required them to seek additional expertise to supplement the DAIT team.

Summary and Recommendations

During the past year the evaluation team focused on developing and implementing the qualitative data collection tools and analytical approaches for both the qualitative and quantitative components. We analyzed Cohort 1 Capacity Studies, interviewed and surveyed Cohort 1 intensive and moderate DAITs and district leaders. We found that, for the most part, the DAIT intervention proceeded as anticipated with work beginning in the spring of 2008 and proceeding from identifying district needs and developing plans, to implementing and monitoring those plans. While both providers and district respondents indicated that there were many contextual factors that either facilitated or impeded the work, for the most part they were satisfied with the results of the engagement and reported successful activities and initiatives to build district capacity to support student achievement.

We found that districts' "readiness" for change was an important factor that influenced both the progress and content of the work for DAITs and their district partners. The concept of readiness, however, is not one-dimensional – many contextual factors come together that influence a district's ability to undertake reform and capacity building. One important factor is superintendent tenure and leadership. According to providers, 25.6% of Cohort 1 districts with DAITs had a change in superintendent during the DAIT process. In those districts with superintendent and cabinet turnover during the course of the engagement, DAITs often found their work either stalled or significantly re-routed. On the other hand, when the DAIT and district leadership could quickly come to agreement on district needs and necessary actions and establish a collaborative and productive relationship, the work proceeded more smoothly and more improvements that directly support student achievement could be made. Similarly, reform work was easier in districts with cooperative and informed relationships among district leadership, local school boards, teacher unions, and other community stakeholders. The work was more difficult when philosophical, historic, or political differences emerged, and was sometimes, nearly impossible. The influence of teachers, as a stakeholder group, and teachers' unions (specifically their contracts) came up in discussions fairly often. Because teachers are the front-line of implementing reforms that directly impact students, their buy-in, opinions, and cooperation is critical (Fullan 2010, Weatherly & Lipsky1977). Similarly, when union contracts prohibit activities to insure fidelity of instructional implementation or limit teachers' availability to participate in professional development, professional learning communities, and other activities critical to reforms, the process can be slowed or diverted.

Another major "readiness" factor was the robustness of the district's existing structures and policies. For example, in districts with no or inefficient data systems it was considerably more time-consuming and difficult to implement reforms to encourage widespread use of student data to inform instructional practice. Similarly, aligning curriculum and instruction among schools within a district was more efficient in districts with well developed communication and accountability structures. Finally, although the majority of DAITs appeared to successfully develop productive relationships with their district partners, in some cases there are indications that the particular staffing or expertise of the DAIT was not a good match for district needs.

Although district priorities, needs and activities differed, areas they commonly reported making important, sustainable change in included:

- improving supports for under-performing students (e.g., interventions, diagnostic and formative assessments) and for certain student subgroups (notably ELL students);
- improving instruction, with some combination of improving instructional materials (e.g., adopting new curricula) and providing targeted professional development for teachers and principals, as well as establishing strategies and structures to both support teachers (e.g., instructional coaches) and to monitor the fidelity of implementation of instructional practice (e.g., classroom "walk-throughs")
- establishing and supporting teacher professional learning communities, serving both as a teacher support and an approach to insure fidelity of implementation (the specific purposes and expectations varied among districts)

While the focus on instructional improvement and supporting under-performing students remained constant, near the end of the two year period, it seemed that the subject matter focus was shifting somewhat in many districts from math to ELA, and from primarily focusing on ELL/ELD needs to include students with disabilities. Further, early activities tended to focus on building systems in many districts (e.g., data systems, accountability and alignment among school sites) while later efforts in seemed to be shifting in some districts to focus on building school site leadership capacity.

The majority of both providers and district respondents reported significant positive changes were made as a result of the DAIT intervention to build district capacity. Respondents were less consistent in their beliefs about the district's ability to sustain those reforms. Given the current fiscal crisis in California's education system, many feared that increasing class sizes and reductions of both human and fiscal resources at both the district and school level seriously threaten their ability to sustain the momentum they had managed to establish in the past two years. Others feared that shifting priorities in state and federal policy might move the focus of improvement from the district back to the individual school site, again weakening their efforts to improve district culture, accountability, and alignment.

An initial examination of student achievement data shows promising results. Careful statistical analysis of the initial year's test results (2008-09), controlling for external factors, finds a small but statistically significant positive improvement within the districts with DAITs in math (but not ELA) achievement. This is consistent with the qualitative analysis findings regarding stronger emphasis on improving math instruction and curricula during the initial implementation year. In addition, we find that districts that were *assigned* DAITs (those designated as Severe by the CDE) see slightly higher math achievement growth between 2007-8 and 2008-9 than do districts that were required to contract with their choice of DAITs (those designated as Moderate). Next year's report will examine student achievement results in more detail and will include two years of data, allowing examination of the impact of the entire engagement of the DAIT within the Cohort 1 districts.

Both providers and district respondents provided recommendations to the state around district reform. Improving communication between the state and the districts and fewer competing mandates and duplicative reports were prominent among the recommendations. Nearly half of each respondent group also noted that reform takes more time and/or more money that was provided to

be both effective and sustainable. A fairly large proportion of each group also requested increased accountability for both districts and DAITs – many responses indicated that being held publicly accountable by the state provided necessary leverage and urgency to move reforms, others mentioned the importance of having a good "match" between DAITs and their district and consistent training, oversight, and direction for DAITs from the state. There was also concern, shared by the evaluators, that when the DAIT is unable to adequately engage or assist a district within a few months (for whatever reason) that the state should have mechanisms in place to recognize that failure and address it.

Finally, from our many hours of conversation with both providers and district leaders, we would also recommend that the state and organizations within the state (e.g., CCESA and CSBA) continue to improve communication and education of the various stakeholders regarding education policy, district roles, and research-based instructional approaches. Doing so will likely reduce the barriers to effective reform and facilitate more informed local decision-making.

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