

Summary

Overall, the auditors found that cognition levels of the artifacts in all content areas and grade levels, except high school ELA, were overwhelmingly at the lowest levels of cognition. The least engaging contexts made up the majority of artifacts in all but high school ELA. Almost half the elementary science and social studies artifacts either partially met or did not meet the expectations of the identified standard. Many artifacts at the Elementary and middle school levels were below the reported grade level. Disparities exist between schools located in the north vs. the south in social studies and science.

Overall, the content was below grade level in 14.5% of artifacts and a content mismatch in 5% of artifacts in grades K-8 math, K-8 ELA, K-5 science, and K-5 social studies artifacts. Many of the artifacts that were on level only partially fulfilled the requirements described in the standards. Middle school science and social studies artifacts partially matched or did not match the intent of the standard (49%). These findings suggest a problem with both standard specificity and horizontal coordination. Cognition levels were low in the majority of ELA, math, science and social studies artifacts in all grade spans, except high school ELA. The context of artifacts was generally of the least engaging types, Classroom and Test-like. Low cognitive demands and lack of variety in contexts will not adequately prepare students for classroom or high stakes assessments. Differences in cognitive demands and context type were present in science and social studies for schools located in the north vs. the south.

Finding 3.4: Current practices in Coeur d'Alene Public Schools are leading to inequities among schools in the areas of graduation requirements, student transfers, and full-day kindergarten.

The purpose of educational equity efforts is to provide all students with the tools necessary for academic success, even though their needs for programs or support might differ. This is accomplished when school districts ensure resources flow to the areas of greatest need. In order for a school system to deliver the appropriate programs and services to each student, school boards must adopt and actively monitor policies that promote equity. The concept of equity is distinguished from equality in an important way. Equality refers to treating people the exact same way, or impartially, while equity refers to a state of fairness that may require inequalities. In other words, equity treatment means treating un-equals unequally until they are equal. For example, under a state of equality, children with greater needs receive the same as children with fewer needs; they are treated equally. But under a state of equity, students with greater needs receive greater attention and resources to make up for the differences with children who begin with more. Equity is the more relevant and important aspect of educational success in effective school systems. These school systems recognize that if students are all treated the same, regardless of their individual challenges and needs, some of those students will be limited in their opportunities to succeed. Providing children with equal opportunities in a spirit of equity may, in fact, mean that resources and attention must be divided unequally.

Concepts of equity and equality can easily become blurred in a school system. Quite often inequalities may be hidden in data and unrecognizable at first glance. To better understand the expectations for equity in the Coeur d'Alene Public Schools, auditors examined board policy, regulations, planning documents, and other provided documents.

The auditors concluded that the Coeur d'Alene Public Schools has students with limited access to resources through inequitable policies and practices such as varying graduation requirements, student transfers, and full-day kindergarten. Varying graduation requirements limit access to potential future career courses in the area of elective choices for students who attend Coeur d'Alene and Venture High Schools. The systems' transfer policy is forcing some economically disadvantaged students to transfer to schools outside their neighborhood school. While the district is providing equity by offering full-day kindergarten to students enrolled in southern elementary schools with high economically disadvantaged student populations, the system is unintentionally neglecting other economically disadvantaged students in its northern elementary schools.

Policies provide little guidance regarding equity in the Coeur d'Alene Public Schools. Auditors noted several statements referring to "*Equal Access*" to educational opportunities; however, no policies were found related to equity within the school system.

Graduation Requirements

Graduation requirements allow students to develop a quality four-year plan based on required courses and optional courses needed to meet graduation requirements. An effective high school educational system provides opportunities for students to explore their interests through optional elective courses. Students may be able to take courses in agriculture, business, computers, physical education, construction, and much more. According to Coeur d'Alene Public Schools *Board Policy 2700*, the board shall award a regular high school diploma to every student enrolled in the district who meets the requirements of graduation established by the district. The official transcript will indicate the specific courses taken and level of achievement. The board shall establish graduation requirements which, at a minimum, satisfy those established by the Idaho State Board of Public Education.

Students who excel in their coursework should be allowed opportunities to do so by having access to relatively the same expectations and course offerings. The 2002 audit completed by CMSi addressed this concern, so auditors expected to find similar course offerings and graduation expectations at the two traditional high schools within the district. Disparities were found among graduation requirements and course offerings, limiting access to student populations.

Auditors examined the graduation requirements for Coeur d'Alene Public Schools and found that different graduation requirements exist, depending on the high school in which students are enrolled. Exhibit 3.4.1 shows the different graduation requirements by subject area at each high school within the district, compared to state requirements.

Exhibit 3.4.1

High School Graduation Credits Compared to State Requirements Coeur d'Alene Public Schools February 2019

School Subjects	CHS-VHS Required Semester Credits (Traditional Schedule)	LCHS Required Semester Credits (Block Schedule)	Idaho Required Semester Credits
English	8	8	8
*World History (Elective)	1	1	0
Speech/Debate	1	1	1
Science	6	6	6
Mathematics	6	6	6
Economics	1	1	1
*Humanities (2 Electives)	4	4	2
*Physical Education (Elective)	1	1	0
Health	1	1	1
U.S. History	2	2	2
U.S. Government	2	2	2
*Technology (Elective)	1	1	0
Electives	12	24	17
Total Credits	46	58	46
*Indicates required electives by the district			

Exhibit 3.4.1 shows the Coeur d'Alene Public Schools meet the required graduation requirements set by the Idaho State Board of Education. However, high schools within the district have different graduation requirements, mainly in the area of the number of electives required for graduation. Lake City High School (LCHS) requires an additional 12 elective credits for graduation.

Auditors also examined the differences in course offerings of the three high schools. Exhibit 3.4.2 displays the number and categories of courses offered in the three Coeur d’Alene high schools.

Exhibit 3.4.2

**High School Course Offerings
Coeur d’Alene Public Schools
February 2019**

Courses	Coeur d’Alene High School	Lake City High School	Venture High School
English Language Arts	19	32	7
Mathematics	16	18	3
Science	15	22	4
Social Studies	12	18	4
World Languages	16	15	0
Physical Education and Health	9	12	5
Career and Technical Education	22	32	12
Fine Arts	6	14	1
Instrumental Music	14	14	0
Total	129	177	36
<i>Source: Course Offerings</i>			

Exhibit 3.4.2 shows significant variances in course offerings between Coeur d’Alene High School and Lake City High School. Lake City High School offers 48 more courses to its students than Coeur d’Alene High School. Venture High School is an academic alternative school; thus, course offerings are offered on an as needed basis according to individual student’s needs for graduation.

Auditors took a closer look at specific course offering variances between the two traditional high schools. Exhibit 3.4.3 shows the advanced courses offered at Lake City High School but not offered at Coeur d’Alene High School.

Exhibit 3.4.3

**High School Advanced Course Offerings Present at LCHS
Coeur d’Alene Public Schools
February 2019**

Science
Honors Anatomy and Physiology
AP Environmental Science
Social Studies
AP World History
World Languages
Honors Latin 3
Fine Arts
AP Art History
AP Art Studio

A total of six advanced courses were found to be present at Lake City High School and not present at Coeur d’Alene High School as noted in Exhibit 3.4.3.