

**Proposal to Provide A Curriculum Management Audit of:
System Governance, Organizational Quality Control,
and Design and Delivery of Programs and Services**

To:
Dr. Diana Ezell, Assistant Superintendent
Tupelo Public School District
Tupelo, MS



Submitted By:
The International Curriculum Management Audit Center
Phi Delta Kappa International

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February 17, 2009

Proposal Submitted to the:
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Proposing Organization	Curriculum Management Audit Center Phi Delta Kappa International
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Participating Educational Organization	Tupelo Public School District
Organization Representative	Dr. Diana Ezell, Assistant Superintendent
Title of Project	A Curriculum Management Audit of the Tupelo Public School District
Proposed Starting Date	To Be Determined
Proposed Duration and Schedule	To Be Determined
Budget	\$34,800 Plus an estimated \$6,000 for expenses for travel, food and lodging for 4 auditors to be onsite 3 days.
Optional Services	One-day Pre-Audit Visit \$1,600 + travel expenses for lead auditor One-day Post-Audit Visit \$1,600 + travel expenses for lead auditor
Number of Schools Student Sampling	14 7,200
Total Contracted Budget	\$34,800 + Expenses (Estimated \$6,000) - \$ (\$1,500 if a PDK Institutional Member) +\$ <u>Optional Service(s) (+ travel expenses)</u> \$
ACCEPTED:  Jeanne Storm 17 February 2009 Associate Executive Director Phi Delta Kappa International	ACCEPTED: Dr. Diana Ezell Date Assistant Superintendent Tupelo Public School District

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document constitutes a proposal for delivery of services to the Tupelo Public School District for the purpose of conducting an audit of the *quality* of the system's curriculum management processes. Included in the audit is a review and analysis of the (1) scope and extent of coverage of the school district's curriculum, programs, and services, (2) documentation of curriculum expectations to guide teachers in content selection, (3) nature and appropriateness of curriculum expectations for learners, (4) how the system assesses performance results and success in its educational programs, (5) scope and quality of board policies and planning for effective governance of the system, (6) connections and relationships among organizational components for consistency and equity of programs of services, and (7) use of resources for maximal productivity. The proposed audit will be in conformance with standards and principles of the Curriculum Management Audit Centers, Inc., Phi Delta Kappa International and with *Curriculum Management Auditing: Improving School Quality*.¹

A curriculum audit is designed to reveal the extent to which officials and professional staff of a school district have developed and implemented a sound, valid, and operational system of curriculum management. Such a system, set within the framework of adopted board policies, enables the school district to make maximum use of its human and financial resources in the education of its students. When such a system is fully operational, it assures the governing board and Tupelo Public School District taxpayers that their fiscal support is optimized under the conditions in which the school district functions.

Background

The Tupelo Public School District constitutes an advancing educational institution in terms of its willingness to embark on a challenging road to improvement. Even in good school systems, the complexities of the system and the interrelationships of local schools and operational departments affect the quality of educational program delivery and the overall direction of the system. The salient characteristics of a sound curriculum have been recognized by citizens, taxpayers, teachers, and others in aiding the system in accomplishing its goals. The Tupelo Public School District has invited this proposal to determine whether or not its programs and services are properly suited for the system, if delivery of programs and services is in keeping with sound and appropriate practice, and whether or not the system has sufficient data for improvement of its educational programs and services over time.

This proposal contains a definition of the types of services proposed, a tentative calendar, and the cost for such services. The Phi Delta Kappa International Curriculum Management Audit Center is well suited to provide the proposed slate of services. It has several fully certified and highly experienced lead and regular curriculum management auditors available to serve on staff for this project, and all associates have achieved certified auditor status. In addition, the staff proposed for this audit includes nationally recognized auditors and educational leaders from across the United States, Canada, and other countries.

¹ (Frase L., English, F., and Poston, W.; 1995: Technomic Press, Lancaster, PA)

Nature of the Curriculum Audit Process

The Curriculum Management Audit is a process which was first implemented in 1979 in the Columbus Public Schools in Columbus, Ohio. The audit is based upon generally-accepted concepts pertaining to effective instruction and curricular design and delivery, some of which have been popularly referred to as the “effective schools research” and quality improvement processes related to school excellence.

A curriculum management audit is an independent examination of three data sources: documents, interviews, and site visits. These are gathered and triangulated, or corroborated, to reveal the extent to which a school district is meeting its goals and objectives, whether they are internally or externally developed or imposed. A public report is issued as the final phase of the auditing process.

The audit’s scope is centered on curriculum and instruction, and any aspect of operations of a school system that enhances or hinders its design and/or delivery. The audit is an intensive, focused, “postholed” look at how well a school system such as the Tupelo Public School District has been able to set valid directions for pupil accomplishment and well being, concentrate its resources to accomplish those directions, and improve its performance, however contextually defined or measured, over time.

The Curriculum Management Audit centers its focus on the main business of schools: teaching, curriculum, and learning. Its contingency focus is based upon data gathered during the audit which impinges negatively or positively on its primary focus. These data are reported along with the main findings of the audit.

In some cases, ancillary findings in a curriculum management audit are so interconnected with the capability of a school system to attain its central objectives, that they become major, interactive forces which, if not addressed, will severely compromise the ability of the school system to be successful with its students.

The methodology and assumptions of the Curriculum Management Audit have been reported in the national professional literature in the past decade, and at a broad spectrum of national education association conventions and seminars, including the American Association of School Administrators (AASA); Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD); National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP); Association for the Advancement of International Education (AAIE); American Educational Research Association (AERA); National School Boards Association (NSBA); the National Governors Association (NGA); Phi Delta Kappa (PDK); the School Administrators of Ohio (SAO); the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB); and the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA).

Auditors serving on the Tupelo Public School District Curriculum Management Audit will all be certified auditors from comparable educational systems. Each auditor has been trained through an intensive national program designed and developed by the National Curriculum Audit Center expressly for the purpose of conducting Curriculum Management Audit nationally and internationally.

The names and qualifications of all curriculum auditors will be identified and subject to school district approval prior to commencement of the audit.

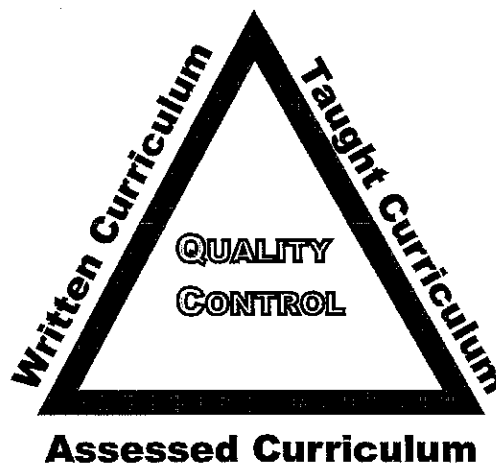
The Curriculum Management Audit has established itself as a process of integrity and candor in assessing educational organizations. The audit report should serve as an important data source to the governing board, superintendent, members of the faculty and staff, and the educational community for improvement of the design and delivery of teaching and learning.

II. METHODOLOGY

The Model for Curriculum Management Audit

The model for the Curriculum Management Audit is shown in the schematic below. The model has been published widely in the national professional literature, most recently in the book, *The Curriculum Management Audit: Improving School Quality* by Larry E. Frase, Fenwick W. English, and William K. Poston Jr. (Lancaster, PA: Technomic Press, 1995).

A Schematic View of Curricular Quality Control



General quality control assumes that at least three elements must be present in any organizational and work-related situation for it to be functional and capable of being improved over time. These are: (1) a work standard, goal/objective, or operational mission; (2) work directed toward attaining the mission, standard, goal/objective; and (3) feedback (work measurement), which is related to or aligned with the standard, goal/objective, or mission.

When activities are repeated, there is a “learning curve,” i.e., more of the work objectives are achieved within the existing cost parameters. As a result, the organization or sub-unit of an organization, becomes more “productive” at its essential short- or long-range work tasks.

Within the context of an educational system and its governance and operational structure, curricular quality control requires: (1) a written curriculum in some clear and translatable form for application by teachers in classroom or related instructional settings, (2) a taught curriculum which is shaped by and interactive with the written one, and (3) a tested curriculum which includes the tasks, concepts, and skills, of pupil learning which are linked to both the taught and written curricula. This model is applicable in any kind of educational work structure typically found in mass public educational systems, and is suitable for any kind of assessment strategy, from norm-referenced standardized tests to more authentic approaches.

The Curriculum Management Audit assumes that an educational system, as one kind of human work organization, must be responsive to the context in which it functions and in which it receives support for its continuing existence. In the case of public educational systems, the support comes in the form of the moneys from three levels: local, state, and federal.

In return for such support, mass public educational systems are supposed to exhibit characteristics of rationality, i.e., being responsive to the public will as it is expressed in legally constituted bodies such as federal government, state legislatures, and locally elected/appointed boards of education.

In the case of emerging national public school reforms, more and more this responsiveness is assuring a distinctive school-based management focus which includes parents, teachers, and, in some cases, students. The ability of schools to be responsive to public expectations, as legally expressed in law and policy, is crucial to their survival as publicly-supported educational organizations in the years ahead. The Curriculum Management Audit is one method for ascertaining the extent to which a school system or sub-unit thereof, has been responsive to these expressed expectations and requirements in its context.

Standards for the Auditors

The members of the audit team will be highly trained and experienced in conducting audits of systems of the magnitude of the Tupelo Public School District. The audit team is guided by a set of generally accepted auditing principles. While a Curriculum Management Audit is not a financial audit, it is governed by some of the same principles. These are:

Technical Expertise

Selected auditors must have actual experience in conducting the affairs of a school system at all levels audited. They must understand the tacit and contextual clues of sound curriculum management.

The Tupelo Public School District Audit Team will include auditors who have been school superintendents, Curriculum and Instructions, directors, coordinators, principals and assistant principals, as well as elementary and secondary classroom teachers in public educational systems of comparable size and characteristics as the Tupelo Public School District.

The Principle of Independence

None of the audit team members have any vested interest in the findings or recommendations of Tupelo Public School District Curriculum Management Audit. None of the auditors presently works in your state, nor do any know the individuals that occupy top or middle management positions in Tupelo Public School District nor any of the past or current members of the system's governing board. The district representative will coordinate the audit process, but will not directly be involved in the audit findings or recommendations found in the final report.

The Principle of Objectivity

Events and situations which comprise the data base for the audit are derived from documents, interviews, and sites visits. This public data base and subsequent judgments made upon it, must be verifiable and grounded in it. Findings must be factually triangulated.

The Principle of Consistency

This audit will use the same standards and basic methods found in the copyrighted curriculum audit process. Audits are not normative in the sense that one school system is compared to another. School systems, as the units of analysis, are compared to a set of standards and positive/negative discrepancies cited.

The Principle of Materiality

Auditors have broad implied and discretionary power to focus on and select those findings which they consider most important to describing how the curriculum management system is functioning in a school district, and how that system must improve, expand, delete, or re-configure various functions in order to attain an optimum level of performance.

The Principle of Full Disclosure

Auditors must reveal all relevant information to the users of the audit, except in cases where such disclosure would compromise the identity of employees or patrons of the system. Confidentiality is respected in audit interviews.

Data Sources of the Curriculum Management Audit

A curriculum audit uses a variety of data sources to determine if each of the three elements of curricular quality control is in place and connected one to the other. The audit process also inquires as to whether pupil learning has improved as the result of effective application of curricular quality control.

The major sources of data for the Tupelo Public School District Curriculum Management Audit will be:

Documents

These sources consist of written board policies, administrative regulations, curriculum guides, memoranda, budgets, state reports, accreditation documents, and any other source of information which would reveal elements of the written, taught, and tested curricula and the linkages among these elements.

Interviews

Interviews will be conducted by the auditors to shed light on the same elements often included in written documents or reports and to reveal interrelationships and contextual understanding. Interviews will be held with all board members, the superintendent, top-level administrative staff,

building principals, some classroom teachers and some parents. The auditors will also interview those who request an audience.

Site Visits

The audit team would prefer to schedule a visit to as many school sites in the Tupelo Public School District as time permits. Site visits reveal the actual context in which programs and services are designed and delivered in an educational system. Contextual references are important as they indicate discrepancies in documents or unusual working conditions.

Standards Proposed for the Curriculum Management Audit

The proposed audit will use five major standards against which to compare, verify, and comment upon the Tupelo Public School District existing curricular management practices. These standards have been extrapolated from an extensive review of management principles and practices and have been applied in all previous Curriculum Management Audits.

As a result, the standards reflect an ideal management system, but not an unattainable one. They describe the major working characteristics that any complex work organization should possess in being responsive and responsible to its clients.

A school district that is using its financial and human resources for the greatest benefit of its students is a district that is able to establish clear objectives, examine alternatives, select and implement alternatives, measure results as they develop against established objectives, and adjust its efforts so that it achieves a greater share of the objectives.

The five standards to be employed in the proposed Curriculum Management Audit include:

1. **Governance and Control:** The school district demonstrates its control of resources, programs, and personnel.
2. **Direction and Clientele Expectations:** The school district has established clear and valid objectives for students and clientele.
3. **Connectivity and Consistency:** The school district has demonstrated internal consistency and rational equity in its program development and implementation.
4. **Assessment and Feedback:** The school district has used the results from district-designed or adopted assessments to adjust, improve, or terminate ineffective practices or programs.
5. **Productivity and Efficiency:** The school district has improved its productivity and efficiency, particularly in the use of resources.

A finding within a Curriculum Management Audit is simply a description of the existing state, negative or positive, between an observed and triangulated condition or situation at the time of the audit, and its comparison with one or more of the five audit standards.

Findings in the negative represent discrepancies below the standard. Findings in the positive reflect meeting or exceeding the standard. As such, audit findings are recorded on nominal or ordinal indices and not ratio or interval scales. As a general rule, audits do not issue commendations, because it is expected that a school district should be meeting every standard as a way of normally doing its business. Commendations are not given for good practice. On occasion, exemplary practices may be cited.

Unlike accreditation methodologies, audits do not have to reach a forced, summative judgment regarding the status of a school district or sub-unit being analyzed. Audits simply report the discrepancies and formulate recommendations to ameliorate them.

Other dimensions of school district operations and activities deemed germane and discovered during the conduct of the audit will be considered in the formulation of findings and recommendations.

What the Audit Will Look For in the Education Organization:

Standard 1: Governance and Control

A school system meeting Curriculum Management Audit Standard One is able to demonstrate its control of resources, programs, and personnel. Common indicators are:

- a curriculum policy framework that:
 - is centrally defined and adopted by the board of education
 - establishes an operational framework for management that permits accountability
 - reflects state requirements and local program goals
 - reflects the necessity to use achievement data to improve school system operations
 - defines and directs change and innovation within the school system to permit focus of its resources on priority goals, objectives, and mission
- a functional administrative structure that facilitates the design and delivery of the system's curriculum (programs and services) and achievement of goals
- a direct, uninterrupted line of authority from governing board to the superintendent/chief executive officer and other central office officials to principals and classroom teachers
- documentation of school board and central office planning for the attainment of goals, objectives, and mission over time.
- organizational development efforts which are focused to improve system effectiveness

Standard 2: Direction and Learner Expectations

An educational system meeting Standard Two demonstrates clearly established learner expectations and definitions of instructional content for effective teaching and learning. Common indicators are:

- a clearly established, system-wide set of goals and objectives that addresses all programs and courses and is adopted by the board of education
- demonstration that the system is contextually responsive to national, state, and other expectations as evidenced in local initiatives
- operations set within a framework that carries out the system's goals and objectives
- evidence of comprehensive, detailed, short- and long-range curriculum management planning
- knowledge, local validation, and use of current best curricular practices
- written curriculum that addresses both current and future needs of students
- major programmatic initiatives designed to be cohesive
- provision of explicit direction for the superintendent and professional staff
- a framework that exists for systemic curricular change

Standard 3: Connectivity and Consistency

A successful school system meeting Standard Three will demonstrate a highly-developed, articulated, and coordinated curriculum (programs and services) in the organization that is effectively monitored by the administrative and supervisory staffs at the central and site levels.

Common indicators are:

- documents/sources that reveal internal connections at different levels in the system
- predictable consistency through a coherent rationale for content delineation within the curriculum
- equality of curriculum/course access and opportunity
- allocation of resource flow to areas of greatest need
- a curriculum that is clearly explained to members of the teaching staff and building-level administrators and other supervisory personnel
- specific professional development programs to enhance curricular design and delivery
- a curriculum that is monitored by central office and site supervisory personnel
- teacher and administrator responsiveness to school board policies, currently and over time

Standard 4: Assessment and Feedback

A school system meeting Standard Four has designed a comprehensive system of assessment/testing and uses valid measurement tools that indicate how well its students are achieving designated priority learning goals and objectives. Common indicators are:

- a formative and summative assessment system linked to a clear rationale in board policy
- knowledge, local validation, and use of current curricular and program assessment best practices
- use of a student and program assessment plan which provides for diverse assessment strategies for varied purposes at all levels -- district, school, and classroom
- a way to provide feedback to the teaching and administrative staffs regarding how classroom instruction may be evaluated and subsequently improved
- a timely and relevant data base upon which to analyze important trends in student achievement
- a vehicle to examine how well specific programs are actually producing desired learner outcomes of results
- a data base to compare the strengths and weaknesses of various programs and program alternatives, as well as to engage in equity analysis
- a data base to modify or terminate ineffective educational programs
- a method/means to relate to a programmatic budget and enable the school system to engage in cost-benefit analysis
- organizational data gathered and used to continually improve system functions

Standard 5: Productivity and Efficiency

While the attainment of improved productivity in a school is a complex process, caused in part by the lack of a tight organizational structure (referred to as “loosely coupled”), common indicators of an educational system meeting Standard Five are:

- planned and actual congruence among curricular objectives, results, and financial allocations
- a financial data base and network that are able to track costs to results, provide sufficient fiduciary control, and is used as a viable data base in making policy and operational decisions
- specific means that have been selected or modified and implemented to attain better results in the schools over a specified time period
- a planned series of interventions that have raised pupil performance levels over time and maintained those levels within the same cost parameters as in the past
- school facilities that are well-kept, sufficient, safe, orderly, and conducive to effective delivery of the instructional program
- support systems that function in systemic ways
- district and school climate conducive to continual improvement

III. SCOPE OF WORK

Lead Auditor Responsibilities

1. The Lead Auditor will be responsible for overall coordination of the work, employment of the auditors, preparation of the report, and delivery of the report to the client, the Tupelo Public School District. All work will be performed and reported in accordance with the guidelines and standards described in this proposal
2. The final report to the Tupelo Public School District will include a description of the standards employed, the process followed, the findings of the audit team with documentation, and a set of recommendations for action by the governing board and administrative staff of the system. The timeline for performance of the work is described below:

Typical Timeline for the Proposed Work

The proposed schedule for activities pursuant to this audit is delineated below:

Week One	Tupelo Public School District authorization to proceed with the audit and notification to district representative
Week Two-Four	Selection and identification of audit team members
Week Twelve	District personnel responsibilities completed (see list below)
Week Sixteen	Site visits, document review, and development of findings on site in the Tupelo Public School District
Week Sixteen - Twenty-four	Preparation of audit report with findings and recommendations
Week Twenty-six	Expected date for delivery of final audit report to the Tupelo Public School District

Tupelo Public School District Responsibilities

General Tasks:

1. Assign a local liaison representative (usually not the superintendent, but may be a senior administrator with curriculum and instruction responsibilities). Support the audit team and project in accordance with the following schedule.

First Week	Commence process to obtain board approval
Second Week	Board approval and authorization to proceed with notice to district representative
Eighth Week	Delivery of documents requested for audit to audit team members as directed by Lead Auditor
Sixteenth Week	Coordination of audit team site visit including scheduling and support
Twenty-sixth Week	Receive final report and prepare implementation strategies for Board and Superintendent approval
Twenty-seventh Week (and annually thereafter)	Progress report to the Superintendent and Board on audit recommendations

2. Pay proportionate amount of the project cost (quoted on page 2) on the following schedule:

Upon approval and authorization of the work	1/3 of the total project amount
Upon completion of the site visit	1/3 of the total project amount
Upon delivery of the draft audit report, prior to delivery of final audit report.	1/3 of the total project amount plus reimbursement for out of pocket expenses (travel, lodging, printing, etc.)

3. Obtain, prepare, and deliver the following documents for the audit team review in accordance with the schedule indicated above:

- All Board policies, rules, or regulations relating to curriculum, budgeting, or assessment
- Any planning documents for the past five years
- All system produced curriculum guides (one copy each)
- All course descriptions and courses of study
- Testing reports and test scores for the past five years
- Copies of the system budgets for the past three years
- Copies of any reviews or accreditation reports conducted by external agencies in the past five years
- Copies of any studies of graduates conducted during the past five years
- Copies of any financial audits conducted in the past three years
- Any document which presents a history of the school system, from inception to the present
- A map and list of schools for the school system
- A complete list of all administrative and supervisory personnel
- A complete listing of all documents provided to the audit team (very important so we can return everything to you)

4. Identify, list, and notify all schools to be visited in the Tupelo Public School District.
5. Arrange, recruit, and convene three focus groups for the purpose of obtaining background information for the audit team. Focus groups should consist of approximately 20-30 persons each if possible, and should convene for not less than a two hour session (at a convenient time) under the supervision of the school administration. Data from focus groups should be compiled, summarized, and presented to auditors at the time of the site visit. Focus groups should also be interviewed in person by the audit team during the site visit. Three focus groups are recommended, including the following:
 - a. District parents, reflecting all educational levels (preschool, primary, middle, high school -- whether or not their children are enrolled in the Tupelo Public School District).
 - b. District teachers, reflecting all educational levels (see above)
 - c. District and community leaders, representing other educational institutions, employers, business and industry representatives, and patrons of the system. This group should reflect the community at large with perspectives about the needs and direction of the community over the next twenty years.

Tasks for Focus Groups

The purpose of the focus groups is to identify their perceptions of the status of the system, how that status manifests itself compared to expectations, and what information is available to such groups affecting their perceptions and opinions. Focus groups should address the following issues and questions during their sessions:

1. What are your expectations for the programs and services of the Tupelo Public School District? In other words, what skills, attitudes, abilities, knowledge, and characteristics do you want the educational program of the Tupelo Public School District to produce in its graduates and/or students?
2. How well is the system addressing the expectations you enumerated in number 1? In your opinion, what needs are being fully met and what needs are not being fully met by the educational program of the Tupelo Public School District? (Note: needs are differences between expectations and performance).
3. What information do you have or get which enables you to identify your responses to the above questions? What information would you like to receive about educational programs and services which would enable you to better assess the progress and performance of the Tupelo Public School District?

Responses from the focus groups should be documented, summarized in a report, and published by the system, or its assigned representatives.

Documented information obtained from the focus groups will be provided to the audit team prior to the site visit. Responses from focus groups should be kept confidential (within the bounds of law) as much as possible until after the audit team site visit so as to prevent influence in the conditions monitored during the audit site visit.

IV. SUMMARY

This proposal sets forth the services of a curriculum management audit requested by the Tupelo Public School District. If approved, The Phi Delta Kappa International Curriculum Management Audit Center will conduct a curriculum management audit of the Tupelo Public School District in accordance with generally accepted standards and principles for school district management audits.

Moreover, the audit team provided pursuant to this audit will include only certified curriculum auditors, unless the school district gives permission to use interns. This increases the cost of conducting such an audit, but it also assures a high quality product suitable for use by the Tupelo Public School District in its efforts to improve the quality of its curriculum design and delivery.

The Curriculum Management Audit Report will be provided to the Superintendent for transmittal to the Governing Board and for dissemination to stakeholders of the system. The audit report provides a detailed, rigorous, and forthright diagnosis and analysis of the quality control activities of the system in terms of its capabilities to provide quality teaching and learning for its clientele. Given the audit report information, the Board and Superintendent will be able to identify strengths and weaknesses of the system, formulate improvement action plans, and proceed to improve and enhance the quality of the Tupelo Public School District.