

**Mathematics Implementation Study
District Curriculum Coordinator/Math Specialist
Interview Questions**

[Record district name, interviewee's name, interviewee's title, and date and time of interview.]

Thank you very much for speaking with me today. The study that I am working on is about the kinds of instructional practices that contribute to high mathematics achievement, and the influence of state and local policies on mathematics instruction.

[if taping the interview] With your permission, I would like to tape record the interview so that I can concentrate on what you are saying rather than on note-taking. The tape recording will remain confidential. Is that okay?

Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay.

1. **Description of Instruction.** Tell us about your district's mathematics program.

- *[Probe for underlying philosophy, scope and sequence (e.g., is it district-wide, K-12 articulated, etc.), when it was adopted/revised, any recent changes and reasons for changes, materials adopted, etc.]*
- How much discretion and authority do schools and teachers have in determining curriculum? instructional methods? textbook and other instructional materials (e.g., calculators, manipulatives, etc.)? curriculum coverage and pacing?

2. **Influences.** Tell us about the factors influencing what mathematics gets taught—and how it gets taught—in this district.

- What major policies does the district use to guide curriculum and instruction in mathematics?
- In what ways, if any, have state actions or policies influenced the nature of mathematics instruction in your district? *[Probe for the 1998 SBE standards, the Mathematics Frameworks, program advisories, SAT-9, Prop. 227, CSR, Social Promotion, etc.]*
- What other influences have helped shape district mathematics instruction? *[Probe for national influences (e.g., NCTM), local influences, research findings, assessments, professional development, teacher preparation, student demographic characteristics, etc.]*
- What people/groups have been, and are currently, involved in shaping district mathematics instruction?
- Which of the influences shaping district mathematics instruction would you describe as the most important?
- Are there any incentives or disincentives for schools and teachers to follow district and/or state decisions regarding mathematics instruction? (e.g., schools

get less money if they depart from the textbooks or materials adopted by the district, or laws require schools to make the decisions)

3. **Content Standards.** Tell us about the use of mathematics content standards in your district.
 - Has the district developed local content standards for math? When? Who was involved? Are there any plans to create/revise them? In what grades? Do they differ from the state content standards, and if so, how and why? How are standards used in the district?
 - What, if anything, does the district do to assist schools and teachers in understanding and implementing the math content standards?
 - What assessments does the district use for math? How were they selected?
 - Do you think district standards, curriculum-planning documents, instructional materials, and assessments are well aligned with each other? Why or why not?
4. **Professional Development.** Tell us about mathematics professional development in your district.
 - What professional development does the district provide for teachers and/or school administrators in mathematics instruction? Do you have any particular priorities and goals for professional development in math? *[Probe for whether teachers/administrators are required to participate, how often, whether they have any choices, compensation, who sponsors, and who provides PD.]*
 - What do you think are the most effective kinds of staff development for teachers/administrators in mathematics? *[Probe: what makes you think so?]*
 - What financial resources do you have available for professional development? *[Probe for Eisenhower, other grants, etc.]*
5. **Student Achievement.** Tell us about student mathematics achievement in your district.
 - Generally speaking, how would you rate student mathematics achievement in the district as a whole?
 - What factors do you think exert the greatest influence over student achievement in mathematics in the district? *[Probe for professional development, instructional strategies, school characteristics, student characteristics, parent involvement, etc.]*
 - What measures do you use to assess student achievement across the district and to evaluate your overall mathematics program? *[Probe for local, state, and national assessments, percentage of students meeting grade level standards, etc.]*
6. **Strengths and Weaknesses.** Tell us about what you see as being the strengths and weaknesses of your district mathematics instruction.

- What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of mathematics instruction in your district? Do you feel that all students across the district have access to quality math instruction? [*Probe for evidence.*]
 - What do you see as the biggest challenges to improving student mathematics achievement in your district? [*Probe for shortage of math certified teachers, teacher preparation, instructional materials, student characteristics, etc.*]
 - Thinking about your district as a whole, what changes do you think are needed to encourage improvement in math instruction and achievement? [*Probe for changes in how schools/ teachers work together, funding and other material resources (e.g., technology), and district or state policies.*]
 - Specifically, what assistance or additional resources, and from whom, would help? [*Probes: if funding, how would it be spent? If time, how would the time be allocated?*]
7. **Accountability.** Tell us about accountability in your district.
- What influence has the state accountability system (including standards and testing) had over mathematics instruction in your district?
 - How do you interpret and use data?
 - Are these good indicators for determining student achievement?
 - What are the major issues and challenges with this performance data?

Thank you so much for your time; you've given us some really valuable information. Can I get copies of the following materials you mentioned? Is there anyone else I should talk to in your district to get a perspective on the kinds of things that we have talked about?