Over time, said Hyatt, “I watched the shift in teachers’ thinking about who was sitting in front of them. They began to understand that they could deliver instruction at a very high level (to ELLs), as long as they provided the necessary scaffolds and supports.”

Results
After a year of comprehensive professional development, SSD Superintendent Millie Hamner said the district has made student learning the number-one priority, and a culture of high expectations has taken hold. State assessment data from 2007–2009 indicated the gap between white and minority students, as well as students living in poverty, is narrowing at all levels in both reading (by 6%) and mathematics (by 3%). At the high school level, reading scores have increased by an impressive 16 percent.

Next Steps
The district continues quarterly CITW trainings in each school and monitors implementation through regular classroom observations conducted by principals and central office administrators. With McREL’s assistance, Hamner said, the district is on its way to becoming the kind of school system it has “always aspired to be.”