CSRQ Center Report on Middle and High School Comprehensive School Reform Models

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THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM QUALITY CENTER

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About the CSRQ Center

The Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, through a Comprehensive School Reform Quality Initiative Grant, S332B030012, and is operated by the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

Since 1946, AIR—one of the nation's largest not-for-profit behavioral and social science research organizations—has engaged in thousands of research, evaluation, technical assistance, consulting, and communication projects that help to make research relevant to policymakers and practitioners. AIR's overriding goal is to use the best science available to bring the most effective ideas and approaches to enhancing everyday life. The organization's work spans a wide range of substantive areas: education, student assessment, international education, individual and organizational performance, health research and communication, human development, usability design and testing, employment equity, and statistical and research methods. AIR conducts its work within a culture and philosophy of strict independence, objectivity, and nonpartisanship. Given the variety of work that AIR conducts, rigorous institutional safeguards have been established to guarantee that any potential conflict of interest is avoided. For additional information about AIR, visit http://www.air.org.

The mission of the CSRQ Center is to provide timely and reliable tools and technical assistance to support urban and rural educators and education decision makers in choosing the highest quality comprehensive school reform (CSR) program to meet locally defined needs. The CSRQ Center promises to help raise student achievement and improve other important student outcomes for millions of America's children by helping education decision makers identify and apply "what works" in the area of comprehensive school reform.

To meet its mission, the CSRQ Center produces CSRQ Center Reports and makes them widely available; develops partnerships with communities and education and policy organizations; and provides technical assistance to selected states, districts, and schools. The following CSRQ Center Reports and services are available on its Web site (http://www.csrq.org):

- ***CSRQ Center Report on Elementary School CSR Models.*** This report offers a scientifically based, consumer-friendly review of the effectiveness and quality of 22 widely adopted elementary school CSR models.
- ***CSRQ Center Report on Education Service Providers.*** This report offers a scientifically based, consumer-friendly review of the effectiveness and quality of seven widely adopted education service providers.
- ***Works in Progress: A Report on Middle and High School Improvement Programs.*** This report summarizes more than a dozen key issues facing middle and high schools, such as literacy and reading, English language learners, violence and bullying, and transition.
- ***Moving Forward: A Guide for Implementing CSR and Improvement Strategies.*** This guide and accompanying workshop leads readers through an effective step-by-step process for implementing school reform and improvement strategies.
- ***Enhancing the Participation of Students With Disabilities in CSR Models.*** This guide builds off CSRQ Center Reports by providing information about specific model features that address the needs of students with disabilities. It also offers educators suggestions regarding strategies to

enhance the engagement and progress of students with disabilities in school reform models.

- ***Choosing an Education Contractor: A Guide to Assessing Financial and Organizational Capacity.*** This how-to guide provides state or local education agency staff—including state departments of education, school districts, charter school authorizers, or individual schools—with information about the importance of a provider's financial viability and organizational capacity and with guidance on how to assess these dimensions of contractor quality. The guide, which was developed in partnership with The Finance Project (http://www.financeproject.org), offers tips and tools to help readers gather information and use it to evaluate the financial and organizational health of potential education contractors.
- ***Seeing Improvement: A Guide to Visiting Schools That Use Effective Whole School Improvement Models and Promising Practices.*** This guide was developed in cooperation with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and is adapted from AFT's *Seeing Progress: A Guide to Visiting Schools Using Promising Programs.* The guide will help schools answer questions about choosing an evidence-based approach and adopting promising practices for school improvement. In addition, it provides guidance on planning and conducting a visit to a school that already uses whole-school improvement approaches and/or promising practices.
- ***CSR Model Registry.*** This online database allows model providers that are not reviewed in CSRQ Center Reports to submit nonevaluative information about their model to the registry. Readers can search the registry to find a model that may meet their local needs.

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Introduction

This consumer guide provides comparative ratings on the effectiveness and quality of 18 widely adopted middle and high school whole-school improvement models. This report continues the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's efforts to issue reports that help education decision makers sort through options for whole-school and district improvement. (Previous reports are available at http://www.csrq.org.)[1]

Why Is This Report Needed?

As a nation, we have worked hard to fulfill the vision that all students will graduate from high school and be prepared to succeed in life, to contribute to our economy, and to help build a more democratic society. Indicators of progress show that scores by fourth- and eighth-grade students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) have risen since 2000, that high school students are taking more demanding coursework, that more students are going on to postsecondary education, and that schools are safer than they were during the past decade (Jennings & Hamilton, 2004).

However, we also know that despite our best intentions and efforts, too many middle and high school students continue to be left behind. For example, a recent review of the state of education in middle schools points to poor academic success by students in grades 6–8 (Bradley & Manzo, 2000). The review concludes that, "So far, middle schools don't have much to boast about when it comes to student achievement." The review also points out that poor and minority youths—those who need to be supported the most—are doing the worst.

> "Today, we are barraged by a cacophony of ideas about how to improve public education in the United States. Opinions are great, but they are not something we want the lives of children to hinge on. Consequently, much work needs to be done to distill the nuggets of enduring value from this cacophony and to implement scientifically based research across educational programs" (Carter, 2002).
>
> *—Gene Carter, Executive Director, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*

The situation in grades 9–12 is similar. Education journalist Thomas Toch observes that, "Today's comprehensive high schools educate perhaps a third of their students well. But about half of the students graduate ill-prepared for the rigors of college work, and another fifth do not graduate at all. That is just not good enough any more" (Toch, 2003). This statement is reinforced by the June 2003 NAEP report card on reading that indicates, "Serious problems loom at the high school level" (Schemo, 2003). The NAEP scores point to a disturbing decline in reading performance among 12th-grade students and add to earlier findings that indicate drops in math and science performance.

Most recently, MDRC issued its first in a series of reports for policymakers, practitioners, and other decision makers. *Meeting Five Critical Challenges of High School Reform* summarized and synthesized what has been learned from evaluation findings and concluded that low-performing high schools face five challenges: "creating a personalized and orderly learning environment, assisting students who enter high school with poor academic skills, improving

[1] Unless noted otherwise, all Web addresses displayed in this report were active as of the publishing date, October 2006.

instructional content and practice, preparing students for the world beyond high school, and stimulating change in overstressed high schools" (Quint, 2006, p. iii).

The need is clear: Education must improve for all students in the United States—particularly for poor and minority students who attend middle and high schools. The accountability requirements established by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 translate this need into an urgent imperative. So far, however, most of the attention has focused on initiatives aimed at improving elementary schools.

Only recently have policymakers, researchers, foundations, and a variety of other organizations begun to attend to the challenging work of middle and high school improvement. For example, at its June 2003 convention, the U.S. Conference of Mayors adopted a resolution that recognized the "urgent need for changes in America's middle and high schools" and observed that "the time has come for the [f]ederal, state, and local governments to form a national partnership that transforms middle schools and high schools into centers of learning and engagement that prepare students for rewarding and meaningful lives" (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2003). Furthermore, in September 2004, the National Governors Association launched an initiative aimed at redesigning the American high school—see http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/04chairman.pdf.

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) has sponsored numerous meetings and provides ongoing support on high school improvement through its Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) (http://www.ed.gov/highschool). Additionally, in 2005, ED established the National High School Center (http://www.betterhighschools.org) to serve as a central source of information and expertise on high school improvement through transforming high-quality resources into user-friendly products and tools.

Those responsible for improving secondary schools seek to implement improvement approaches that are supported by scientifically based research. But education decision makers face an increasing number of whole-school improvement options that claim to offer research-based, research-proven services. This growth in choice means that educators face a bewildering set of options, with little guidance to help make their decisions. Consumers still have too few independent and credible sources to turn to when making important decisions about adopting a school improvement model (Shaul, 2002).

This report serves as a consumer guide that will help decision makers sort through claims about which school reform approaches could truly meet the needs of students. The report is the first comprehensive review of middle and high school whole-school reform models ever issued. To prepare this report, the CSRQ Center screened nearly 1,500 documents and reviewed 197 studies on 18 widely implemented middle and high school models. We used rigorous standards that are aligned with the requirements for scientifically based research established by NCLB. Each model is rated on a number of dimensions, including evidence of raising student achievement. The reviews of the individual models provide education decision makers with profiles of each model and the evidence needed to make decisions to meet locally defined needs.

> "Several major studies of educational change have indicated that externally developed designs can be successfully implemented and have positive results. . . . Studies of comprehensive school reform show that not only can externally developed designs be successfully implemented, but that they are often easier to implement than locally developed designs" (Desimone, 2000; also see CSRQ Center, 2005, p. 75).
>
> *—Laura Desimone, Education Researcher, Vanderbilt University*

What Is Whole-School Improvement and Why Does It Matter?

For more than two decades, the school-level adoption and effective implementation of externally developed and research-based whole-school improvement models have been used increasingly to raise student achievement. These models have been tried in hundreds of schools nationwide, most of which are high poverty and low performing. This trend is driven by the recognition that school improvement efforts are complex and require a coordinated, systematic approach that addresses every aspect of a school, including curriculum, instruction, governance, scheduling, professional development, assessment, and family and community involvement. Rather than use individual, piecemeal programs or approaches, effective whole-school improvement models integrate research-based practices within one unified effort to raise student achievement and achieve other important outcomes, such as reduced dropout rates or improved behavior.

Many schools that adopt the whole-school improvement approach choose an external model to provide a research-based, replicable set of practices. These external models, which are offered by a variety of service providers, are meant to be blueprints to help a school make improvements in a number of areas. Although their foci, philosophies, and methods vary, the designs of these models are research based and intended to help raise student achievement. To support implementation, whole-school improvement models typically provide schools with materials, professional development, and technical assistance. Other schools that adopt a whole-school improvement approach may choose to develop their own improvement models, putting together research-based elements.

The whole-school improvement approach has evolved from more than two decades of systematic improvement efforts based on the adoption of external schoolwide improvement models. This trend accelerated in the early 1990s, when, after decades of concentrating on programs targeted at individual students at risk of academic failure, a new idea was conceived based on a comprehensive approach to school improvement. The RAND Corporation published *Federal Policy Options for Improving the Education of Low-Income Students, Volume I, Findings and Recommendations* in 1993. This report suggested to the federal government that to reap the biggest impact, funds from Title I (previously called Chapter I) would be best spent on schoolwide improvement (Rotberg & Harvey, 1993). These ideas were soon incorporated within the Title I program. At about the same time, New American Schools began to operate as an advocate for whole-school improvement and a supporter of the development of high-quality whole-school improvement models (Stringfield, Ross, & Smith, 1996).

> "By evidence based, I mean an endeavor in which decision makers routinely seek out the best available research and data before adopting programs or practices that will affect significant numbers of students" (Whitehurst, 2004, p. 1).
>
> —*Grover J. (Russ) Whitehurst, Director, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education*

The whole-school improvement approach gained further momentum with the 1997 passage of the federal Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program. Through this program, Congress provided dedicated funding to support the adoption of whole-school improvement strategies throughout the country. The 2001 Elementary and Secondary Education

Act, also known as NCLB, gave further momentum to the whole-school improvement approach by changing it from a demonstration project to a full-fledged federal program called the Comprehensive School Reform Program. According to NCLB, whole-school improvement models must be scientifically based. This means that a model or approach must demonstrate strong research evidence that it can improve the academic achievement of students. Today, regardless of the funding source, the use of schoolwide improvement models is likely to remain an important strategy for improving schools, particularly those that fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress.

How Can Educators Meet the Challenge of Evidence-Based Decision Making?

Critics often claim that decisions in the education field are driven by whims and fads, thoughtlessly adopted and easily abandoned. Although this is an exaggeration, it is nevertheless true that despite billions of dollars and countless hours of well-intentioned efforts, educators and policymakers still cannot say, with confidence, how best to bring about the many desired improvements. Better research and evidence, when combined with sound professional judgment, can help guide the way toward solid and sustained improvement. However, educators, policymakers, and the public cannot be expected to *do what works* until they actually *know what works.*

> "There may be less than 1% of existing research that is really meaningful to teachers. . . . I don't want theories. Teachers need strategies, practices. Give them things that can help teaching and learning, things that can help kids" (Huang et al., 2003).
>
> —*Veteran school superintendent, in an interview on the research needs of policy makers*

The education community increasingly turns to research to help sort through its school improvement options. This reliance on research helps to satisfy NCLB's requirement that school improvement efforts be driven by scientifically based research. More importantly, however, it helps to meet the urgently felt need on the part of educators and policymakers to ensure that their efforts improve the lives of children.

Researcher Tom Corcoran (2003) points out some of the challenges in transforming education into an evidence-based field. In a study conducted in three districts, he found that

> School district leaders want to make evidence-based decisions and they are making efforts to build evidence-based cultures in their central offices and schools. But, significant progress is being hampered by the inadequacy and confusion of the existing research, its availability to school and district-level staff, and reliance by staff on decision-making patterns that focus on philosophy rather than effects. (p. 1)

In addition to the challenges confronted by districts, education stakeholders—including teachers, administrators, policymakers, and state- and district-based evaluators—are hard pressed to keep up with the volume of approaches and initiatives that must be studied. One recent nationwide review of education program evaluation efforts at the state level found that

> Most states infrequently evaluate their programs, if at all. . . . [A]bout a third of states do practically none, another third does a little, and a third does a noticeable number of evaluation studies. . . . [L]ess than 10% of all the studies purporting to be impact evaluations used random assignment or quasi-experimental designs. (Raymond, Bortnik, & Gould, 2004, pp. viii–ix)

In short, few evaluation studies are conducted, and even fewer studies are rigorous enough to provide reliable findings. In addition, the researchers found that even the results of these infrequent and flawed evaluations were disseminated only sporadically, thus providing little guidance to decision makers.

A further impediment to building evidence-based practice and policy in education is the lack of research studies and findings that provide practical guidance. Many studies in education do not focus on questions that are critical to decision makers, such as what works, under what circumstances, and for which students. Also, some of the research that could potentially act as a guide is very hard to access or understand. Thus, solid research evidence is often undervalued or ignored (Huang, Reiser, Parker, Muniec, & Salvucci, 2003; Sutton & Thompson, 2001). As a result, when educators seek and demand evidence to help answer their questions, they are either left disappointed by the lack of relevant research or are challenged to make meaning out of the findings.

Even when educators and decision makers have committed to the adoption of models that have track records of effectiveness, they are often challenged to find, interpret, and apply relevant research. The selection process is also challenging, because interpreting findings across evaluation studies of the same or similar models is difficult to make due to variations in implementation, characteristics of participating students, rigor of research design, and other factors.

Fortunately, a number of efforts are underway to improve the value of research for education decision makers. Many of these efforts are sponsored by ED and seek to improve the quantity and quality of education research, make it more relevant to educators, and ensure that it is available in a timely manner and in easily accessible formats and language. For example, ED and others have issued guidance on judging the quality and relevance of research findings (see "Resources for Judging Research in Education").[2]

> "[R]esearch findings must be made more accessible. Most research evidence is published in places and forms that only researchers visit and can comprehend" (Stipek, 2005).
>
> *—Deborah Stipek, Dean, School of Education, Stanford University*

Furthermore, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)—sponsored and managed by ED's Institute of Education Sciences—provides educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public with a central, trusted source of scientific evidence of what works in education. WWC systematically searches for, evaluates, and reports on the evidence of effectiveness of programs, products, practices, and policies that claim to improve student outcomes. Throughout the coming years, WWC will review many topics of interest to education decision makers, including programs to raise math and reading achievement, reduce dropout rates, and improve character education. WWC's reports are available at http://www.whatworks.ed.gov.

Finally, in fall 2006, ED will launch a large-scale Promising Practices Initiative that identifies potentially promising educational practices and provides educators with tools and other support to assist with implementation. Promising practices will be identified in such priority areas as teacher quality, high school reform, school restructuring, reading, mathematics, science, English language learning, foreign language acquisition, and early childhood (http://www.ed.gov).

Sorting through and making sense of research is hard work, even for research scientists with years of training and experience. Despite substantial advances in

[2]The CSRQ Center provides further guidance on this topic on pages 6–8 of *Works in Progress: A Report on Middle and High School Improvement Programs* (CSRQ, 2005).

Table 3. Resources for Judging Research in Education

Fashola, O. S. (2004). Being an informed consumer of quantitative educational research. *Phi Delta Kappa, 85,* 532–538.
This article includes a user-friendly description of the nature of scientific research. Specific guidelines are offered on how to evaluate the quality of an evaluation study and how to relate findings to the educator's own school or district context.

Fleischman, S. (2005). Research matters: Moving to evidence-based practice. *Educational Leadership, 63,* 87–90. This column outlines concerns that educators have expressed regarding access to research and their ability to apply this research. It also provides resources that can help educators bridge the gap between research and practice.

Lauer, P. A. (2004). *A policymaker's primer on education research: How to understand, evaluate and use it.* Aurora, CO: Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. Retrieved December 1, 2004, from http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/Research/primer/foreword.asp
This primer addresses how to determine the trustworthiness of research and whether research warrants policy changes. It also includes a statistics tutorial and a glossary.

Slavin, R. E. (2003). A reader's guide to scientifically based research. *Educational Leadership, 60,* 12–16.
This article presents a review of criteria to use when selecting scientific research to review and how to evaluate the quality of the research.

Stringfield, S. (1998, Fall). Choosing success. *American Educator.* Retrieved December 1, 2004, from http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/fall98/ChoosingSuccess.pdf
This is a practical guide on how to select a model, using criteria such as model goals, research base, and associated costs.

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. (2003). *Identifying and implementing educational practices supported by rigorous evidence: A user friendly guide.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved December 1, 2004, from http://www.excelgov.org/usermedia/images/uploads/PDFs/User-Friendly_Guide_12.2.03.pdf
This publication points out the importance of using rigorous evidence and provides guidance when applying it to make program and model adoption decisions.

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. (2003). *Random Assignment in Program Evaluation and Intervention Research: Questions and Answers.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved October 10, 2005, from http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/resources/randomqa.html
This brochure, issued by the National Center for Education Evaluation of the Institute of Education Sciences, explains the nuts and bolts of why and how random assignment evaluations are conducted and answers some frequently asked questions.

developing standards and processes for judging and adding up the evidence in education, researchers often disagree. Although procedures exist for reviewing and comparing a large number of studies, the process is often complex and painstaking. Therefore, education decision makers often turn to others to sort through the evidence and report it as actionable information.

How Can Education Decision Makers Use This Report?

This report provides education stakeholders with a decision-making tool to help them sort out options from middle and high school whole-school reform models that are available to meet local needs. The

ratings that are applied to the 18 models in this report are intended to clarify options, not to point to or endorse best buys. Together, these models represent a significant portion of the total number of middle and high school models being used by schools. Each model included in this report serves more than 40 schools in at least three states and is available for adoption in almost all states. (For a detailed discussion about this report, see "About This Report" and "Methodology.")

Although this report reviews evidence on widely adopted models, it does not represent an evaluation of all middle and high school whole-school improvement models. To satisfy the interest expressed by many stakeholders in knowing about as many whole-school improvement models as possible, the CSRQ Center's Web site provides a Model Registry that allows the provider of any whole-school improvement model to enter information about its model (see "The CSRQ Center's Model Registry"). In addition, we believe that the review framework described in "About This Report" can be used by education consumers to ask probing questions of each model being considered, even if the model is not included in one of our reports. For example, consumers can ask model providers to provide them with evidence of rigorous research on effectiveness and to demonstrate how this evidence aligns with the standards set by the CSRQ Center.

Finally, readers should be aware that a variety of organizations provides publications, tools, and guidance to help educators and others who are considering

Table 4. CSR Model Registry

Reports from the CSRQ Center can review only a limited number of CSR models. Some education decision makers may be interested in additional CSR models, including new or smaller models that have not yet been reviewed by CSRQ Reports. Thus, the CSRQ Center launched a Model Registry in fall 2005 so that service providers have the opportunity to share nonevaluative information about models not included in reports from the CSRQ Center.

The Model Registry is nonevaluative, and any provider who wishes to register information on a CSR model may do so. Users should be aware that each model provider has supplied the information in this Registry. The CSRQ Center will conduct a minimal amount of fact checking for each model. The Model Registry provides basic background information for each CSR model:

- Focus and mission of the model
- Grade levels that the model serves
- Subject areas that the model covers
- Descriptions and citations of research demonstrating the model's effectiveness on student achievement and other outcomes
- Descriptions of the link between research and the model's design
- Description of the model's services and supports to schools
- Cost of the model

Providers that would like to submit information about their models can register on the CSRQ Web site: http://www.csrq.org/CSRProgramRegistry.asp.

the adoption and effective implementation of whole-school improvement models. The CSRQ Center's Web site (http://www.csrq.org) provides a list of helpful organizations and resources.

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About This Report

This chapter provides readers with general information on how the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center reviewed models on five categories of quality and effectiveness, including a description of the process to establish the rating system, an overview of the rating process, and an explanation of the ratings. In keeping with the consumer orientation of this report, we have tried to limit our use of overly technical jargon and to provide clear, straightforward discussions of methodological issues involved in conducting the reviews. The "Methodology" chapter, which follows, provides researchers and others interested with a review of the scientific procedures that were followed to produce this report.

How Are Models Rated by This Report?

This CSRQ Center report provides a series of reviews on the effectiveness and quality of 18 middle and high school whole-school improvement models. As a group, these models operate in thousands of schools throughout the United States.

Although summaries of overall evidence of effectiveness and quality are crucial to solid decision making, they can also be misleading. For example, researchers have frequently noted that most models vary in their effectiveness from school to school. That is, in some schools they work well and in others hardly at all (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2002, p. 35). Often these variations in model effectiveness are about as large as the variation in effectiveness from one model to another. Thus, decision makers should keep in mind that even those models that received lower ratings in this report may be good options in certain circumstances. For instance, because implementation is such an important variable in ensuring good results, schools or districts may be better off by adopting a model, regardless of the rating, that may meet the needs of local leadership and the school community. Alternatively, if schools or districts commit to the work needed to properly implement a model, they may wish to adopt a higher-rated model, even if the model may encounter some resistance.

As with all consumer choices, decision makers must weigh the pros and cons of their model selection. This report is not intended to dictate decisions or pick "winners" and "losers." Instead, this report aims to clarify choices by providing the most rigorous evidence and user-friendly information to date on the options available to meet local school improvement needs.

Each review first offers basic information on the middle and high school improvement model, including the model's mission and focus, year introduced in schools, grade levels served, number of schools served, and costs. In particular, we tried to gather as much detailed information as possible regarding the costs of adopting and implementing each model, because this is a key consideration for schools and districts. Unfortunately, models do not uniformly report this information, and costs vary widely. Ideally, for each model, we would have provided an estimated total cost of implementation that would have included the services and materials provided by the model and any additional labor or materials and expenses (e.g., new textbooks or software or release time for teacher professional development or common planning). Each review provides as much information as we were able to gather from the provider and from publicly available sources. As consumers, schools and districts are in a strong position to (a) require each model to specify all of its expected costs in comparable formats and (b) estimate the budgetary impact of local changes that might have to be made to successfully implement the model. We

urge consumers to engage the models in this discussion early in the adoption process.

The *Tool kit for engaging a design-based assistance provider: Guidelines for Ensuring the Quality of National Design-Based Assistance Providers,* issued in 2000 by a blue ribbon panel of education stakeholders, established a set of standards to which all model developers should be held (New American Schools, 2000). The CSRQ Center, including our advisory committee, used these standards and its experience working in the whole-school reform field for the past decade to develop a set of measures to rate the quality and effectiveness of middle and high school improvement models. Without a doubt, academic outcomes are a critical measure of a model's performance. Educators, administrators, policymakers, and the public all want to know: Will the model we are considering for our school improve our students' academic performance? In addition, decision makers want evidence in other critical areas that assures them that a model will not only provide help to improve student achievement but also deliver services that are considered important, such as providing support for model implementation or for effective parental and community involvement. Therefore, this report evaluates evidence on five categories for each model.

Category 1: Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

A school or district considering implementing a model should conduct a self-assessment to identify its own strengths and weaknesses and to seek a model that will help it address these areas. As part of this process, consumers need to know whether a model provider can help their schools raise achievement levels of specific student groups and whether a model can demonstrate positive effects on student achievement in specific subject areas. Category 1 examines the extent to which a model can demonstrate, using research of reasonable quality, a positive effect on student achievement. This category is comprised of three subcategories.

Category 1a focuses on a model's evidence of positive overall effects on student achievement. The rubrics in this category establish standards by which research on a model's overall impact on student outcomes is evaluated. This may be the only category that matters for many consumers. However, decision makers should consider that our review of 197 studies revealed only an emerging evidence base regarding the effectiveness of individual models. Thus, some models in our review may have received a relatively low rating based on the current small research base of studies demonstrating effectiveness. This means that while many models may be able to consistently improve student outcomes, such capacity may not yet be based on rigorous research evidence. In time, many models may and should be able to provide greater evidence of positive effects on student achievement. We recommend that consumers decide which models they will consider based on (a) the CSRQ Center ratings on all categories and (b) a careful review of the detailed profile provided for each model.

Category 1b examines whether a model can demonstrate evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations. Readers should note that many schools implementing the 18 models reviewed in this report are high-poverty schools. Although we were not able to gather the information on the percentage of Title I students served by these models, federally funded whole-school reform models on average serve school populations with a poverty rate of about 70% (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, n.d.). Therefore, even when a model does not break out its results by specific subpopulations, one can assume that overall these studies measure effects in highly challenging circumstances. The models that reported outcomes for specific student populations should be commended for their efforts to provide consumers with this additional disaggregated information, which is rarely available.

Therefore, even in instances in which a model provided evidence that was rated on the low end of our rating scale, readers should consider that other models have not reported this evidence and therefore provide less information on which to make a decision.

Category 1c examines whether a model can demonstrate evidence of positive effects for specific subject areas. Similar to Category 1b, few models provided evidence of their impact in specific subject areas. When we were able to find this evidence for specific subjects, the most common content areas were reading and math. Therefore, even in instances in which a model provided evidence that was rated on the low end of our rating scale, consumers should consider that other models have not reported this evidence and therefore provide less information on which to make a decision.

Category 2: Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Category 2 was developed to provide consumers with information about model effects beyond student achievement. Although student achievement is usually the outcome of primary concern to those seeking tools to improve their schools, consumers also want to know whether a model can help a school improve additional nonachievement outcomes, such as student discipline, student attendance, school climate, retention/promotion rates, and teacher satisfaction. However, our attempts to rate models in these areas faced two key challenges:

- The amount of available evidence in this area is insufficient to adequately judge the quality of most models.
- Currently available measurement tools for these areas are much less reliable and sound than the CSRQ Center would prefer.

For example, although steps are now being taken to remedy this situation, student attendance is measured differently across schools and districts. The additional outcomes covered in Category 2 are the outcomes that were most commonly examined in the research literature across models.

Consumers must make a distinction between models that specifically claim to help schools improve in the areas outside of student achievement and those that do not. For example, some models include components that are designed specifically to help improve student discipline, whereas other models do not. Improvement in student discipline may be a side effect of implementing a given model—even if that model does not claim to, or was not developed to, improve that particular outcome. However, if a model promises that it can help a school improve student discipline, that model ought to be able to demonstrate that it can deliver on its promise. Consumers should proceed with caution if a model was developed to help schools improve in a specific area but cannot provide solid evidence of effectiveness.

Category 3: Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

The CSRQ Center's audiences have indicated that consumers also want to know whether a model can help a school improve its level of family and community involvement. Research also suggests that high performing schools may benefit from having strong family and community involvement. Moreover, citizens in every community have a right and a responsibility to be engaged in improving schools for their children and for society at large. Family and community involvement in reform efforts can spur and may help sustain long-term improvements. Based on this information, the CSRQ Center developed rubrics to determine whether a model can demonstrate that it helps schools improve family and community involvement. Consumers should keep in mind that some models,

while acknowledging a desire to involve parents in schooling, do not count on parental involvement to deliver improved student achievement. Decision makers should note this as they review models that may have higher ratings on student outcomes and lower ones on family and community involvement. Some model providers have decided to focus on strengthening elements other than community involvement to achieve their stated outcomes.

To rate models for Categories 1 (student achievement), 2 (other educational outcomes), and 3 (family and community outcomes), we synthesized quantitative evidence gathered through the review of existing research articles. Whenever possible, we have provided information on model results for specific student groups or specific types of school settings.

Category 4: Evidence of a Link Between Research and the Model's Design

As schools and districts increasingly heed the national call to implement scientifically based reform, consumers will need to know whether a model can clearly demonstrate links between research and the components of the model's design.

A provider's clear explanations of model design can help school staff understand the model and accept changes that they will be required to make. In addition, consumers considering a newer model with lower evidence of effectiveness must consider whether the model's design is based on solid research. A model may be too new to have enough research about its effectiveness, but that model ought to be able to clearly demonstrate that it can work—that it was built based on solid evidence of what works. Of course, over time a model must demonstrate that it does work. The rating for Category 4 measures how clearly and explicitly the materials reviewed by the CSRQ Center demonstrate links between research and the model's design. Through phone conversations with the model's director, conversations with a group of randomly selected districts or principals for each model, and a review of model materials, we rated whether the model has linked its components—such as organization and governance, professional development, and technology—to a research base. Consumers should be aware that it was beyond the scope of this report to review whether the research cited by the models is itself highly rigorous. Other researchers and organizations, such as the What Works Clearinghouse, help address this issue.

Category 5: Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Even the most well-designed, well-researched models can fail to produce positive results if implemented poorly. Implementing any model requires schools and districts to expend significant amounts of money, time, and effort over a long period of time. If consumers are going to make this kind of investment, they need to feel confident that the model provider can offer adequate, high-quality services and supports to help school staff fully and faithfully implement the model. The CSRQ Center created Category 5 to rate a model's readiness to be implemented successfully and to rate the quality of professional development and technical assistance that the model provides to schools.

Category 5a reviews the model's evidence of readiness for successful implementation. Under this subcategory, for this report, we assessed the following components:

- Provider tracks and supports full implementation in schools.
- Provider helps schools allocate resources needed to fully implement the model.

Category 5b reviews the model's evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful

implementation. Under this subcategory, we assessed the following components:

- Provider offers comprehensive training opportunities and supporting materials.
- Provider ensures that professional development effectively supports full model implementation.
- Provider develops school's internal capacity to provide professional development.

For Categories 4 (link between research and the model's design) and 5 (professional development and technical assistance), we synthesized and reported qualitative data that were gathered through phone conversations with model directors and up to three districts or principals and reviewed publicly available documentation on the model. Categories 4 and 5 rate the effectiveness of the middle and high school model's delivery of services to schools.

Decision makers and consumers need to know that the model they adopt is effective and that its services will be delivered effectively. As readers will note, many of the models reviewed in this report take from 3 to 5 years to fully implement and demonstrate results. Consumers must have confidence that the model providers that they engage are financially sound organizations that will be able to deliver high-quality services over the life of the contract. To date, no one has reviewed this type of critical consumer information. However, the CSRQ Center has worked with financial and organizational experts to develop a set of standards that will permit consumers to make more informed and confident long-term commitments. For example, the CSRQ Center, in partnership with The Finance Project, released *Choosing an Education Contractor: A Guide to Assessing Financial and Organizational Capacity* (http://www.csrq.org/resources.asp) in August 2006. This "how-to" guide provides state or local education agency staff—including state departments of education, school districts, charter school authorizers, or individual schools—with (a) information about the importance of a model provider's financial viability and organizational capacity and (b) guidance on how to assess these dimensions of contractor quality. The guide offers tips and tools to help readers gather information and use it to evaluate the financial and organization health of potential education contractors. The end goal is to help leaders of school systems to make solid investment decisions.

How Was the Rating System Developed and Applied?

The production of this report was guided by the CSRQ Center's Quality Review Tool (QRT). The QRT provides the criteria for independent, fair, and credible model reviews. (Greater detail regarding the methods used in this study is available in the "Methodology" chapter.) To ensure that the QRT is valid, reliable, credible, and useful, the QRT development process involved several steps. First, the CSRQ Center's staff developed review frameworks in consultation with some of the nation's most respected education researchers, model evaluators, and school improvement experts. Then, the QRT was reviewed and revised with the help of the CSRQ Center's Advisory Committee, a nationally respected panel of experts that includes leading education practitioners, methodologists, and researchers from a variety of fields, including education, sociology, psychology, and economics (see Table 1). Finally, the QRT drew on (a) previous and current efforts to conduct rigorous research reviews—including Herman et al. (1999) and Borman et al. (2002)—and (b) standards set by the What Works Clearinghouse.

The forms, rubrics, and evaluation criteria that are part of the QRT have been carefully designed to guide the CSRQ Center's reviews of reform models. The tools are intended to make the review process clear, transparent, and rigorous. The QRT review process is divided into three parts. Each part guides a distinct

Table 1. The CSRQ Center's Advisors

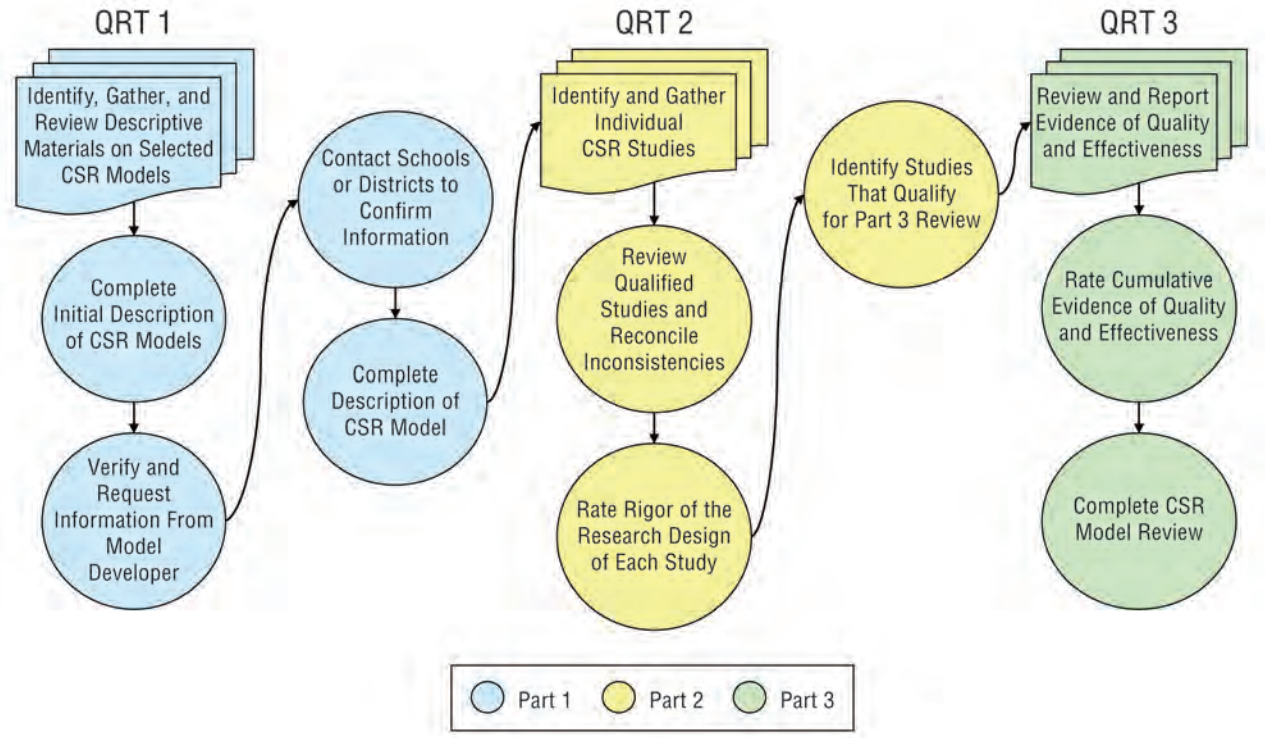
Anthony Amato	Superintendent	Kansas City (MO) Public Schools
Dan Goldhaber, Ph.D.	Research Associate Professor	University of Washington, Evans School of Public Affairs
David Francis, Ph.D.	Professor	University of Houston, Department of Psychology
Frances Harris-Burke, Ed.D.	President	Bell School Reform Network
Jeff Valentine, Ph.D.	Professor	Duke University, Department of Psychology
Jon Supovitz, Ed.D.	Research Assistant Professor	University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education and Senior Researcher, Consortium for Policy Research in Education
Katrina Kelley	Director, Council of Urban Boards of Education	National School Boards Association
Kenneth Wong, Ph.D.	Professor of Education Policy and Director, Urban Education Policy Master's Program	Brown University, Education Department
Laura Desimone, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Education	Vanderbilt University, Peabody College of Education
Margaret Raymond, Ph.D.	Research Fellow, Hoover Institution and Director, Center for Research on Education Outcomes	Stanford University, Center for Research on Education Outcomes
Matt Hornbeck, J.D.	Principal	Hempstead Elementary School, Baltimore, Maryland
Sam Stringfield, Ph.D.	Distinguished University Scholar	University of Louisville, College of Education and Human Development
Scott Joftus, Ph.D.	President	Cross and Joftus, LLC
Will Jordan, Ph.D.	Associate Professor	Temple University, College of Education

phase of the review process. Figure 1 depicts the QRT research review and reporting process.

QRT Part 1 is an information cataloguing system that allows the research team to acquire as much information as possible about all models being reviewed. It consists of a multifaceted process for collecting and verifying information from a model's Web site, contacts with model staff, and conversations with districts or principals that are implementing the model. This part involves several steps:

1. Gathering public materials about the models from the Internet and the model's developers
2. Reviewing the materials to develop an initial description of the model
3. Contacting the model provider to confirm the description and to request the following information: studies of the model's implementation and effectiveness, model benchmarks, and the research base for the model design

Figure 1. QRT Process



4. Holding conversations with three districts or principals for each model (chosen at random) to verify the descriptive information and better understand the implementation process

QRT Part 2 helps to analyze the model's evidence of effectiveness and research base. It examines the rigor of the research design of each individual study on a middle and high school model's effectiveness. QRT Part 2 does not examine the strength of a model's impact. Instead, it judges the quality of the research design supporting its evidence of impact. This part involves several steps:

1. Determining which studies meet the CSRQ Center's standards for causal validity of the outcome measures
2. Collecting contextual and statistical information about each study
3. Rating the rigor of the research design and identifying the studies of sufficient quality to be included in Part 3 of the review

QRT Part 3 applies rubrics that establish standards against which evidence of a model's impact can be examined and rated. If the CSRQ Center's reviewers deem the rigor of a study's research design to be strong or *conclusive* using QRT Part 2, then the study proceeds to QRT Part 3. In QRT Part 3, reviewers look across studies of a model and rate the cumulative evidence as "very strong," "moderately strong," "moderate," "limited," "zero," or "no rating." Using research and evidence that meet the CSRQ Center's standards set forth in QRT Parts 1 and 2, these rubrics help

evaluate the extent to which a model can demonstrate positive impact in the five aforementioned categories:

- Evidence of positive effects on student achievement
- Evidence of positive effects on additional outcomes
- Evidence of positive effects on parent, family, and community involvement
- Evidence of a link between research and model's design
- Evidence of services and support to schools to enable successful implementation

How Does the Rating System Work?

Our rating process is complex and is based on the assumption that to make timely decisions, education consumers need a relatively small number of straightforward ratings that are developed through reliable methods. Our system to measure and report quality and effectiveness for each category combines two elements to provide a single rating for each of the aforementioned categories and subcategories:

- **The strength of the evidence based upon the causal validity of the research design (e.g., how reliable and credible is it).** Strength of evidence depends on several elements: the rigor of the research design and thus the reliability of the evidence produced, the quantity of the research evidence provided by a model, and the consistency of the evidence in pointing to positive outcomes.
- **The strength of the reported impact or effect (e.g., does the model raise student achievement a little or a lot).** To measure the impact of the model, we calculate effect sizes—a measure of standardized differences between groups that allows researchers to compare impact on different outcomes (e.g., reading achievement on different tests). We then establish a range of effect sizes that can be used to categorize the strength of impact and contribute to the overall rating. (See "About Effect Sizes" for more information.)

More details about our rating process are presented in the "Methodology" chapter.

The CSRQ Center applied separate rubrics for each category to arrive at its ratings. Ratings are expressed

About Effect Sizes

Effect sizes (ESs) are a way to standardize measures to show gains and losses on achievement or other outcomes, where differences between experimental and control groups are expressed as standard deviations (SDs). For example, an ES of 1.00 indicates that students using a CSR model scored one full SD higher than comparison students not using that model. This is equivalent to an estimated increase of 100 points on the SAT, 21 NCEs (normal curve equivalent ranks), 15 points of IQ, or enough to move a student from the 20th percentile to above the 50th percentile (Slavin & Fashola, 1998).

ESs appear throughout this report to serve two purposes. First, we report ESs when describing results within individual studies. The range of outcomes in these studies varies greatly. Second, and most importantly, we report average ESs that indicate the effects of a CSR model across studies on various outcomes. ESs are used by the CSRQ Center as one component to rate models on their evidence of effectiveness. Based on a review of existing literature on ESs for CSR models and in consultation with experts, we set ranges for moderate (+0.15 to +0.19), moderately strong (+0.20 to +0.24), and very strong (+0.25 and above) as components of our model rating rubrics. Because of differences among study designs and assessments, our determination of ESs for each model can only be considered a rough estimate of impact, allowing for comparison among the various models.

by a common set of symbols. In general, the rubrics resulted in the following ratings:

- **Very strong (●).** This is the highest rating provided by the CSRQ Center. It means that the model demonstrates very strong (highly credible) evidence of a very strong (large) impact in a reviewed category.
- **Moderately strong (◕).** This is the next highest rating. It indicates that the combination of strength of evidence and strength of impact is moderately strong, because for either or both, the evidence base is not sufficiently rigorous or the overall impact is not as large as for very strong models.
- **Moderate (◑).** This rating results when either or both the strength of evidence or the strength of the impact do not meet the higher standards described above. Models receiving this rating may still have notable evidence because of its rigor or impact.
- **Limited (◔).** This rating indicates that while the CSRQ Center found some evidence of effectiveness, more rigorous research needs to be conducted on the model to fully support its effectiveness on the category reviewed.
- **Zero (⊘).** This rating means that none of the studies were of sufficient quality to be counted as reliable evidence.
- **Negative (⊖).** This rating indicates that we found strong evidence of detrimental effects in a given category or subcategory. In practice, we did not find any evidence of this kind for any model.
- **No rating (NR).** This rating indicates that the model has no studies (i.e., no evidence) available for review in a category or subcategory.

Table 2 illustrates how a set of fictitious middle and high school models (A–F) might be rated based on their evidence of effectiveness (impact) and the strength of their evidence. As noted previously and detailed in the "Methodology" chapter, models vary in cumulative effect sizes. The higher the positive effect size, the greater the estimated positive impact on the category under analysis. (Whenever possible, effect sizes were calculated for Categories 1, 2, and 3.) Strength of evidence, as noted previously, is a compound of several elements. Because cumulative effect sizes and strength of evidence can vary among models, several models may receive the same rating for different reasons.

Several conclusions can be drawn from Table 2:

- Model A and Model B are rated "limited." In Model A's case, we would have found that we had fairly high confidence based on research evidence that the model has limited impacts. Although Model B seemed to have moderate impact, we had little confidence that this was indeed the case given the research that suggested this effect (e.g., research designs with relatively lower rigor were used).
- Models C and D would have received a moderate rating but for different reasons. Model C has moderately strong evidence but a limited impact; Model D has a stronger effect but weaker evidence (e.g., only a few studies).
- Models E and F have strong effect size results (impact), but Model F has stronger evidence (e.g., a larger number of highly rigorous studies were conducted, leading to greater confidence) supporting a rating of very strong versus moderately strong (for Model E).

In practice, the 18 models reviewed in this report might have been arrayed in a similar fashion because they demonstrate a large range of effect sizes and in the level of confidence that we could place on their research findings.

Table 2. The CSRQ Center's Rating System for Categories 1–3

Strength of Evidence: Confidence in Evidence	Impact: ⬅ Weak	Strength of Effect			Very Strong ➡
⬆ High	Limited	Moderate	Moderately Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong
	Limited ***Model A***	Moderate	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Very Strong ***Model F***
	Limited	Moderate ***Model C***	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong ***Model E***
	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate ***Model D***	Moderate
⬇ Low	Limited	Limited	Limited ***Model B***	Limited	Limited

Similarly, the rating system for Categories 4 and 5 was complex and depended on several elements: evidence of explicit links between research and the model's design, evidence that the model's provider offers services and supports to schools to enable successful implementation, and evidence that the model's provider offers professional development and technical assistance to enable successful implementation.

To determine evidence of services and supports, the following areas were examined: (a) provider tracks and supports full implementation in all schools and (b) provider helps schools allocate resources needed to fully implement the model. For evidence of professional development and technical assistance, the following areas were examined: (a) extensive training opportunities and supporting materials to support the model's core components, and (b) provider's support to schools in the development of its internal capacity to provide professional development.

The same rating scale and symbols were used to rate Categories 4 and 5 as were used to rate Categories 1–3. But the meanings of the ratings are different so that they match the category:

- **Very strong (●).** This is the highest rating provided by the CSRQ Center. It means that the model provided evidence of explicit links between research and model design, comprehensive services and supports to schools to enable successful

implementation, and/or comprehensive professional development and technical assistance to enable successful implementation for 100% of the model's core components.

- **Moderately strong (◕).** This is the next highest rating. It indicates evidence of explicit links between research and model design, comprehensive services and supports to schools to enable successful implementation, and/or comprehensive professional development and technical assistance to enable successful implementation for 75% of the model's core components.
- **Moderate (◑).** This rating indicates evidence of explicit links between research and model design, comprehensive services and supports to schools to enable successful implementation, and/or comprehensive professional development and technical assistance to enable successful implementation for 50% and at least two of the model's core components.
- **Limited (◔).** This rating indicates evidence of explicit links between research and model design, comprehensive services and supports to schools to enable successful implementation, or comprehensive professional development and technical assistance to enable successful implementation for fewer than half (below 50%) and at least one of the model's core components.
- **Zero (⊘).** This rating means that we found a non-specific research base, no evidence of services and supports, and/or evidence that does not meet CSRQ Center's standards of rigor and quality.
- **No rating (NR).** This rating indicates that the CSRQ Center was unable to conduct a conversation with the model provider or to obtain complete information to verify evidence. Thus, no rating would be given to the model.

What Are the CSRQ Center's Findings?

The CSRQ Center identified few rigorous studies that were relevant for rating each model's overall evidence of positive effects on student achievement for middle and high school students. In Category 1, after screening approximately 1,500 studies and documents for quality, only 41 studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. (Appendix T, Table T–1 summarizes the quantitative study findings that were used to rate evidence of overall positive effects on student achievement.) These 41 studies represent 14 of the 18 models.

For Category 1 (Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement), the CSRQ Center rated the models as follows:

- **Four models as *moderate:*** America's Choice, School Development Program, Success for All–Middle Grades, and Talent Development High School
- **Six models as *limited:*** Expeditionary Learning, First Things First, Knowledge Is Power Program, Middle Start, More Effective Schools, and Project GRAD USA
- **Eight models as *zero:*** Accelerated Schools PLUS, ATLAS Learning Communities, Coalition of Essential Schools, High Schools That Work, Making Middle Grades Work, Modern Red SchoolHouse, Onward to Excellence II, and Turning Points

The research base on which to rate models in Categories 2 (Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes) and 3 (Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement) is sparse.

Category 4 rated evidence of a link between research and the model's design. The rating system for Category 5 (Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation) depended on two subcategories: (a) evidence of readiness for successful

implementation and (b) evidence that the model provider offers professional development and technical assistance to enable successful implementation.

Although, the CSRQ Center contacted each model provider to verify information to complete ratings in Categories 4 and 5, two models (Expeditionary Learning and KIPP) did not participate in such conversations. Thus, these models received no rating in Categories 4 and 5.

For Category 4, the CSRQ Center rated the models as follows:

- **Fourteen models as *very strong:*** Accelerated Schools PLUS, America's Choice, First Things First, High Schools That Work, Making Middle Grades Work, Middle Start, Modern Red SchoolHouse, More Effective Schools, Onward to Excellence II, Project GRAD USA, School Development Program, Success for All–Middle Grades, Talent Development High School, and Turning Points
- **One model as *moderately strong:*** Coalition for Essential Schools
- **One model as *limited:*** ATLAS Learning Communities

For Category 5a, the CSRQ Center rated the models as follows:

- **Seven models as *very strong:*** America's Choice, ATLAS Communities, First Things First, More Effective Schools, School Development Program, Success for All–Middle Grades, and Turning Points
- **Seven models as *moderately strong:*** Accelerated Schools PLUS, Coalition of Essential Schools, High Schools That Work, Middle Start, Modern Red SchoolHouse, Project GRAD, and Talent Development High School
- **Two models as *moderate:*** Making Middle Grades Work and Onward to Excellence II

For Category 5b, the CSRQ Center rated the models as follows:

- **Thirteen models as *very strong:*** Accelerated Schools PLUS, ATLAS Learning Communities, Coalition of Essential Schools, First Things First, High Schools That Work, Modern Red SchoolHouse, More Effective Schools, Onward to Excellence II, Project GRAD, School Development Program, Success for All–Middle Grades, Talent Development High School, and Turning Points
- **Three models as *moderately strong:*** America's Choice, Making Middle Grades Work, and Middle Start

Given the importance of implementation to the success of any whole-school reform, consumers who select models that have low rankings in evidence of positive effects on student outcomes may still experience success if the models are implemented faithfully. Appendix T, Table T–2 summarizes basic model information and model ratings for Categories 1–5.

What Are the Limitations of This Report?

Although this report builds on the strong prior work of others (e.g., Borman et al., 2002; Herman, et al., 1999) and the best thinking of the education research community regarding how to conduct consumer-friendly evidence reviews, it falls short of the ideal in a number of areas. We hope that over time—with the feedback of education consumers, researchers, and model providers—we will be able to issue future reports that are increasingly accurate and useful.

Given limited resources, verifying the claims made by all model providers was impossible. We attempted to gather independent information through conversations with a small group of randomly selected districts or principals served by the models. However, these were informal conversations that were conducted with only

a very small number of individuals. Given our limitations, other participants and stakeholders involved in whole-school reform—such as teachers, students, parents, and school board members—could not be reached. We encourage consumers to probe more deeply during the model adoption process for more information to support their final choice of a model. For example, schools and districts can and should request detailed cost, operational, and evaluation information from a model as part of a contracting process.

Likewise, our quantitative information was limited to a review of available prior research that had been conducted on the 18 models. Although we searched extensively to uncover all sources of existing evidence, we were not able to conduct original research or to apply common evaluation measures across all models to ease comparability. Also, because models are evolving and refining their designs, we cannot be certain whether the high or low ratings given to a model are truly representative of the current version of that model. Many models may be "new and improved" but may not yet have rigorous evidence to demonstrate such a claim.

As Professor Larry Hedges notes,

> Evidence-based social policy formation requires a base of evidence that key actors . . . view as sufficiently valid to warrant its active application in policy formation. The evidence must at least meet minimum standards of internal validity (freedom from bias) and external validity (generalizability to other settings than the one studied). It is not always easy to specify exactly what evidence meets these standards. (2000, p. 193)

The CSRQ Center undertook this review with the full knowledge of an ongoing scientific debate on such questions as how to appropriately weigh evidence from different types of research designs, how to add up research findings, and how to report results. We confronted a number of these questions in this review, and each time we consulted our expert technical advisors to arrive at a workable answer that allowed us to reach our goal: a consumer-friendly report that is based on the best available evidence and scientific thinking. However, to do so, we had to resolve such issues as how to present a composite measure that included rigor of research design with strength of impact and how to set cut points to determine how large of an effect size was needed to gain a rating of moderate, moderately strong, or very strong on our rating of overall effects. We have made our assumptions and our work as transparent as possible so that others can help improve our thinking and methods for future reports.

Finally, we knew that to be usable, this report had to strike a balance between brevity and depth. Too little information or evaluation risked falling short of our goal to provide consumers with an effective decision-making tool. Too much information risked confusing decision makers with an overwhelming set of details. In practice, we erred on the side of providing fewer numbers and less technical information in our analyses, leaving that for the "Methodology" chapter and appendixes. However, we also erred on the side of providing as detailed a description of the models as possible, hoping that consumers will get a clear understanding of the distinctive elements of each and thus, be able to make the wisest decision possible. We hope that we made the right sacrifices to meet the evidence needs of end users of this report, while upholding the highest standards of scientific research.

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Methodology

This report is the first systematic attempt to characterize the evidence on the effectiveness and quality of 18 widely used middle and high school whole-school reform models. Although this report is intended for a general readership, cutting edge scientific concepts and processes have been used to produce the reviews in this report. This section details the research methods that were used to support the reviews, highlights some of the challenges posed in conducting systematic reviews of evidence, and provides technical readers with the background needed to judge the quality of the scientific efforts.

Past systematic reviews of the effectiveness of comprehensive school reform (CSR) models have relied heavily on published and unpublished reports about specific CSR models. Most notably, work by Borman, Hewes, Overman, and Brown (2002) and Herman et al. (1999) compared the effectiveness of specific CSR models in raising student achievement. Building on such work, this report from the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center quantitatively evaluates CSR models and provides a qualitative narrative description of 18 CSR models.

The CSRQ Center's researchers recognize that student achievement is critical to education consumers. However, education consumers also rely on thorough descriptions of whole-school improvement models, such as those in this report, and they want to know how their schools may change if they implement a specific model. Educators also seek information about the experiences of other schools that implement whole-school improvement models. To meet this need, the CSRQ Center combined qualitative and quantitative research techniques to report on (a) the impact that middle and high school models have on student achievement and (b) the experiences of schools that implement these models. This approach aligns with Creswell's five purposes for the use of multimethods (1994, p. 175):

- Triangulation, in seeking convergence of results
- Complementary, in that overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon may emerge
- Developmentally, wherein the first method is used sequentially to help inform the second method
- Initiation, wherein contradictions and fresh perspectives emerge
- Expansion, wherein the mixed methods add scope and breadth to a study

Through the use of multimethods, the CSRQ Center reviewed available evidence on middle and high school models to determine their effects on student achievement and to expand and fully describe the components of each model and the services that they offer to schools.

As described in the introduction, the CSRQ Center developed the Quality Review Tool (QRT), a three-part, multimethod tool to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the middle and high school models for the education consumer.

1. **QRT Part 1** is the *qualitative data collection* phase. The purpose of QRT Part 1 is to gather (a) supporting information on each middle and high school model from publicly available sources, model directors, and three districts or principals and (b) descriptive information about the middle and high school models, such as professional development, technical assistance, and research-based design.

2. **QRT Part 2** is the *quantitative data collection* phase. The purpose of QRT Part 2 is to conduct a systematic review of the literature on the effectiveness of a middle and high school model on student achievement, other outcomes—such as attendance and graduation rates—and parent, family, and community involvement.

3. **QRT Part 3** is the *data analysis* phase, in which the qualitative and quantitative data are synthesized to generate effectiveness ratings of the middle and high school model. These ratings (very strong, moderately strong, moderate, limited, zero, and no rating) are developed for several categories, including evidence of positive effects on student achievement, additional outcomes, and parent, family, and community outcomes; evidence of a link between research and the model's design; and evidence of the model's ability to provide services and support (e.g., readiness and professional development/technical assistance) to schools to enable successful implementation.

Sample of Middle and High School Models

The CSRQ Center gathered an initial list of 37 middle and high school models by consulting previous reviews (Borman et al., 2002; Herman et al., 1999; Slavin & Fashola, 1998), the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's (NWREL) *Catalog of School Reform Models;* Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL); the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform; and the Center for Education Reform. From this list, a final sample was selected by:

1. Exploring the replicability of the middle and high school model, as determined by the total number of states implementing the model
2. Determining market share, as defined by the total number of schools implementing the middle and high school model
3. Investigating the comprehensiveness of the middle and high school model's design

During each step of the information gathering process, researchers consulted previous reports, databases, and Web sites of the middle and high school models.

For step 1 (replicability), the CSRQ Center's researchers consulted information from the Web sites of each middle and high school model to determine whether the 37 middle and high school models from the initial list operated in three or more states. This step narrowed down the initial list from 37 to 33 middle school and high school models.

For step 2 (market share), the CSRQ Center's researchers searched the Web sites of each middle and high school model for information on the total number of schools that used the model. The CSRQ Center defined the selection criterion for market share as middle and high school models that operate in 40[1] or more schools. This step narrowed down the list from 33 to 26 middle and high school models.

For step 3 (comprehensiveness), the CSRQ Center's researchers examined whether the features of the middle and high school model's design met the following components identified by the U.S. Department of Education: governance, administrative services, technical assistance, classroom practices, professional development, leadership development, benchmarks/assessments, and curriculum (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). For coding purposes, components were defined as follows:

- **Governance** was defined as operations and management conducted in schools. Key words associated

[1]One model, First Things First (FTF), operated in more than 40 schools when the CSRQ Center was selecting its sample. Since then, however, three FTF schools were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

with governance were operations, structure, management, scheduling, committees, blocks, and administration.

- **Technical assistance (TA)** was defined as classroom operational or management assistance through mentoring, coaching, or other services provided to teachers. Key words associated with TA were troubleshooting, coaching, and mentoring.
- **Classroom practices (CP)** was defined as pedagogical, structural, and behavioral management practices that a teacher enacts in a classroom. Key words associated with CP were pedagogy, classroom management, classroom structure, teaching strategies, and philosophy of instruction.
- **Professional development (PD)** was defined as teacher training on a specific topic. This training typically occurs in a workshop or conference environment. Key words associated with PD were training (on specific topics), conferences, and workshops.
- **Leadership development (LD)** was defined as administrative training or development for school personnel in leadership positions (principals, grade-level chairs, and lead teachers). Key words associated with LD were leadership training and/or development.
- **Benchmarks/assessments** was defined as tests and evaluations used to measure students' skills and understanding and academic progress. Key words associated with benchmarks/assessment were measurable goals, formative evaluation, and benchmarks of progress.
- **Curriculum** was defined as the scope and sequence of learning objectives and indicators, as well as materials provided for lessons to instruct such objectives. Key words associated with curriculum were materials, scope and sequence, standards, and learning objectives.

Each middle and high school model was given a point for each component or criterion that the model met based on information found on the model's Web site and additional resources, including, but not limited to, *An Educator's Guide to Schoolwide Reform* (Herman et al., 1999); *Show Me the Evidence! Proven and Promising Programs for America's Schools* (Slavin & Fashola, 1998); and Web sites of the U.S. Department of Education (http://www.ed.gov), NWREL (http://www.nwrel.org), and SEDL (http://sedl.org). Each middle and high school model that had five or more components in its design was included in the final sample. This step narrowed the list from 26 to 23 middle and high school models.

Upon further examination, the CSRQ Center withdrew five models from its final sample for the following reasons:

- Two of the models were interventions that targeted specific populations of students within a school.
- One of the models had recently been discontinued.
- One model had been purchased by another business.
- The CSRQ Center could not verify the number of middle and high schools implementing one model.

By eliminating these models, the sample for review was narrowed from 23 to 18 middle and high school models.

QRT Part 1: Qualitative Data Collection Phase

QRT Part 1 was the qualitative data collection phase. It included guidelines for (a) conversations with model directors and (b) the collection of artifacts from the models and additional information about the model from publicly available resources (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 1994, 1998).

QRT Part 1, including the guidelines for phone conversations, conversation questions, and artifact lists, was pilot tested with a model provider that was reviewed in the *CSRQ Center Report on Elementary School Comprehensive School Reform Models* (http://www.csrq.org/reports.asp), which was released by the CSRQ Center in November 2005. Based on feedback from the pilot conversations, researchers at the CSRQ Center modified the qualitative data collection process. To develop a complete description of each middle and high school model in the sample, an experienced and trained qualitative researcher at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) provided training on information gathering techniques, coding artifacts, and synthesizing qualitative data. The qualitative researchers met weekly to ensure consistency across the qualitative data collection efforts.

For QRT Part 1, qualitative researchers performed four main steps:

1. **Complete an initial description of the middle and high school model by using a standardized form.** The CSRQ Center developed the Model Description Form, a comprehensive survey instrument for compiling existing information about a middle and high school model, including mission, history, market share, costs to the school, and design of each of the middle and high school model's components. For example, researchers gathered information about the middle and high school model's organization and governance, such as how the middle and high school model provides site-based autonomy, whether additional personnel are needed, and whether the middle and high school model requires changes to the structure of the school. For questions about professional development, researchers gathered information about which school personnel are required to attend professional development, what types of professional development are offered before and during implementation, and what strategies are available to help a school build capacity to provide its own professional development. In all, researchers gathered information about the middle and high school model's organization and governance; administrative services; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; technology; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. The researchers also requested benchmarks and explicit citations that link the model's design to a research base. The researchers completed this form using the Web sites of each middle and high school model and other publicly available information.

2. **Conduct a phone conversation with the provider of the middle and high school model to verify previously gathered information.** Conversations were structured around the Model Description Form (completed in step 1). On average, phone conversations lasted 90 minutes.

3. **Conduct phone conversations with three schools that use the middle and high school model.** The conversations verified information gathered in steps 1 and 2. The schools were randomly selected from a list provided by the middle and high school model. The conversations were guided by the Model Description Form.

4. **Complete a final description of the middle and high school model by using a standardized form.** The Model Description Form-Complete synthesized all sources of qualitative data, such as the conversations with the model provider and the three schools and the artifacts collected from the middle and high school model. The Model Description Form-Complete was checked for quality control twice to ensure that each item had 100% agreement between the two qualitative researchers. This form was then used to organize the data based on core components. According to the CSRQ Center's standards, core components are

considered essential to successful implementation of the model. Additionally, these data were coded to answer several questions:

- Is there a strong link between research and the middle and high school model's design?
- Does the middle and high school model track and support full implementation in all schools?
- Does the middle and high school model help schools allocate resources to implement the model?
- Does the middle and high school model provide comprehensive training opportunities and supporting materials?
- Does the middle and high school model develop the schools' internal capacity to provide professional development?

QRT Part 2: Quantitative Data Collection Phase

QRT Part 2 was the quantitative data collection phase. Using systematic review methods (Borman et al., 2002; Lipsey & Wilson, 2001), QRT Part 2 included protocols to conduct systematic literature reviews and to code research studies for statistical and causal validity information.

QRT Part 2, including the protocols for literature reviews and coding instruments, was pilot tested using the same whole-school improvement model provider as was used for the qualitative data collection efforts (QRT Part 1). Based on feedback from the pilot test and from the *CSRQ Center Report on Elementary Comprehensive School Reform Models,* the process for conducting the literature review was improved and the coding instruments were refined. An experienced and trained quantitative researcher at AIR conducted training on how to use the coding instruments to ensure consistency in the data collection. The training included a presentation of the definitions of different research designs, causal validity issues, and background information on calculating effect size.

For QRT Part 2, quantitative researchers completed five main steps:

1. **Conduct a thorough literature search.** For each middle and high school model, quantitative researchers searched educational databases (e.g., JSTOR, ERIC, EBSCO, PsycInfo, SocioFile, NWREL, DAI) and Web-based repositories (e.g., Google, Yahoo, Google Scholar). From these sources, quantitative researchers screened for *initial relevance* nearly 1,500 article abstracts or summaries across the 18 models in the final sample. To pass the initial screen, the studies had to meet several criteria: be published or distributed between 1980 and September 2006, examine at least one of the middle and high school models being investigated, use quantitative methods, and be reported as a full-text research paper (i.e., not a PowerPoint presentation or executive summary). From these articles, researchers identified 198 articles to code. Of those, 197 were available and retrievable for coding. Appendix T provides a summary table of the number of articles that passed through each phase of the QRT Part 2 process.
2. **Complete a Study Description Outcome Form (SDOF), the first standardized coding sheet.** The CSRQ Center's quantitative researchers used the SDOF to code and document each study's research design, outcome variables, and demographic information. The CSRQ Center assigned a lead and secondary coder for each article. The SDOF was completed by the lead coder. Then, the secondary coder verified all the information for 100% agreement. At this stage of coding, the primary focus was to screen each study for a reliable research design. Studies that *were not eligible for full review* often were evaluations of implementation theories

supporting the middle and high school model with no quantitative data on outcomes or used research designs that were not sufficiently rigorous (e.g., one group pretest-posttest research designs). Research designs that passed this stage included experimental and quasi-experimental research designs with both pre- and posttests that evaluated the middle and high school model with a control group (Cook & Campbell, 1979; Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002) and longitudinal and cohort designs with multiple testing periods. Studies with research designs that passed this screen and included student achievement outcomes became eligible for full review. A total of 41 articles passed this step and were eligible for full coding in step 3.

3. **Complete the Quality Indicators Form (QLIF), the second standardized coding sheet.** Researchers used the QLIF to code studies that appeared to use rigorous research designs. The QLIF served two purposes: examine the quality of the research and gather statistical information. Researchers examined the quality of the research, such as the internal and external validity, face and psychometric validity of the outcome measures, and other quality indicators (Herman et al., 1999). Coders also collected statistical information, such as effect sizes reported by the authors or raw statistical information. For each study that was relevant for full review, two quantitative researchers independently coded one QLIF for each achievement outcome in that study.

4. **Reconcile the two QLIF coding sheets to attain 100% agreement on each coded item.** If the two quantitative researchers could not reach a consensus, a review coordinator reviewed the coding sheets to facilitate reconciliation. After the reconciliation process, a final QLIF reflected the 100% agreement.

5. **Rate each article on an overall causal validity score.** The final step was to systematically map the information from the final QLIF (the reconciled version) based on a set of rubrics designed to score each study for its causal validity (Shadish et al., 2002) as *conclusive, suggestive,* or *inconclusive.* Studies determined to be suggestive or conclusive met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design.

Conclusive studies had high levels of rigor; that is, experimental and quasi-experimental designs that had zero critical threats to validity and fewer than two noncritical threats to validity. Effect sizes were reported or calculated only from studies that had a conclusive causal validity rating (Cooper, 1998; Light & Pillemer, 1984; Shadish et al., 2002). If the researcher could not calculate an effect size because of missing data, then the researcher conducted one of the following steps: (a) contacted the author for the statistical information needed; (b) imputed missing data, particularly standard deviations and sample size, using protocols established in previous meta-analysis (Borman et al., 2002); or (c) chose not to include the study in the synthesis if options a and b were not feasible.

Suggestive studies were those that had zero critical threats but more than two noncritical threats. Studies without control groups, including longitudinal and cohort research designs, were capped at suggestive, unless the analytic techniques generated high levels of rigor.[2]

Inconclusive studies had critical threats to validity, such as using testing instruments with poor face validity and reliability, insufficient program fidelity, nonequivalence of treatment/control groups, lack of proper baseline, and/or timing of outcome measures that was less than 1 school year after middle and high school model implementation or less than 1 academic

[2] For example, backward-looking interrupted time series designs were considered more rigorous than longitudinal or longitudinal cohort studies that examined trends over time.

year between pretest and posttest. Noncritical threats to validity included historical events, disruption/novelty effects, instrumentation changes, maturation, selection bias, and statistical regression (Shadish et al., 2002).

QRT Part 3: Data Analysis Phase

QRT Part 3 synthesized the qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate each middle and high school model in five main categories.

1. Evidence of positive effects on student achievement:
    a. Evidence of positive overall effects
    b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations
    c. Evidence of positive effects for specific subject areas
2. Evidence of positive effects on additional outcomes (e.g., student discipline, student attendance, school climate, retention/promotion rates, and teacher satisfaction)
3. Evidence of positive effects on parent, family, and community involvement
4. Evidence of link between research and the model's design
5. Evidence of services and supports to schools to enable successful implementation:
    a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation
    b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation

Category 1 used the quantitative information gathered in QRT Part 2. For each middle and high school model in the sample, the quantitative information—including the number of studies coded, the number of studies that were rated as suggestive or conclusive, the percentage of findings in the suggestive or conclusive studies that demonstrated a positive impact, and the average effect size of those significant findings—was mapped onto rubrics to determine what rating the model should receive—either very strong, moderately strong, moderate, limited, zero, or no rating—for effects on student achievement. Quantitative researchers systematically aggregated results according to the QRT 3 rubric for the overall effect by grade, subject (reading, writing, math, science, and social studies), and diverse student populations (e.g., high poverty, minority, learning disabled and other special needs, and urban and rural students).

Category 2 evaluated the positive effects of each middle and high school model on additional outcomes, and Category 3 evaluated the evidence of positive effects of each middle and high school model on parent, family, and community involvement. Similar to Category 1, quantitative researchers mapped onto rubrics the information about the number of studies that evaluated these outcome variables, the number of studies that were suggestive or conclusive, the percentage of findings that demonstrated a positive impact, and the average effect size of those positive findings.

In general, the rubrics for the quantitative information for Categories 1–3 were as follows:

- **Very Strong.** If a model had at least 10 studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design, with at least 5 rated conclusive (and/or conclusive studies constituted at least 50% of the total studies coded), and 75% of the outcomes showed statistically significant positive model effects ($p \leq .05$), with an overall mean model achievement effect size for positive effects that is greater than or equal to +0.25, then the model received a very strong rating. A very strong rating is symbolized by a fully shaded circle (●).

- **Moderately Strong.** If a model had 5 to 9 studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design, with at least 3 rated conclusive (and/or conclusive studies constituted at least 50% of the total studies coded), and 51% to 74% of the outcomes showed statistically significant positive model effects ($p \leq .05$), with an overall mean model achievement effect size for positive effects that is between or equal to +0.20 and +0.24, then the model received a moderately strong rating. A moderately strong rating is symbolized by a three-fourths shaded circle (◕).

- **Moderate.** If a model had 2 to 4 studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design, with at least 1 rated conclusive (and/or conclusive studies constituted at least 50% of the total studies coded), and 26% to 50% of the outcomes showed statistically significant positive model effects ($p \leq .05$), with an overall mean model achievement effect size for positive effects that is between or equal to +0.15 and +0.19, then the model received a moderate rating. A moderate rating is symbolized by a half shaded circle (◑).

- **Limited.** If a model had 1 study that met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design and 1% to 25% of the outcomes showed statistically significant positive model effects ($p \leq .05$), then the model received a limited rating. A limited rating is symbolized by a one-fourth shaded circle (◔).

- **Zero.** If a model had zero studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design or 0% of the outcomes in the studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design showed statistically significant positive effects, as required for a limited rating, then the model received a zero rating. A zero rating is symbolized by a circle with a diagonal slash (⊘).

- **Negative.** If a model had at least 10 studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design, with at least 5 rated conclusive (and/or conclusive studies constituted at least 50% of the total studies coded), and 75% of the outcomes showed statistically significant negative model effects ($p \leq .05$), with an overall mean model achievement effect size of less than or equal to zero, then the model received a negative rating. A negative rating is symbolized by a circle with a minus sign (⊖). Studies that receive a negative rating suggest that the model has detrimental effects. In practice, this review did not find any evidence of this kind for any model.

- **No Rating**. If a model had no studies (i.e., no evidence was available), then the model received a no rating. A no rating is symbolized by a circle with "NR" (NR).

Category 4 evaluates the link between research and the middle and high school model's design. This category used the qualitative information from QRT Part 1. Qualitative researchers applied the information synthesized in the Model Description Form (from QRT Part 1) onto the following rubric.

- **Very Strong.** If a model provided documentation that explicitly described and convincingly supported links between the research base and *all* (100%) core components of its design, then the model received a very strong rating. A very strong rating is symbolized by a fully shaded circle (●).

- **Moderately Strong.** If a model provided documentation that explicitly described and supported links between the research base and *most* (75%) of the core components of its design, then the model received a moderately strong rating. A moderately strong rating is symbolized by a three-fourths shaded circle (◕).

- **Moderate.** If a model provided documentation that explicitly described and supported links between the research base and *half* (50%) of the core components of its design, then the model received a moderate rating. A moderate rating is symbolized by a half shaded circle (◑).
- **Limited.** If a model provided documentation that explicitly described and supported links between the research base and *less than half* (below 50%) of the core components of its design, then it received a limited rating. A limited rating is symbolized by a one-fourth shaded circle (◔).
- **Zero.** If a model provided documentation that referred to a *nonspecific* research base to support the inclusion of the core components in its design, then the model received a zero rating. A zero rating is symbolized by a circle with a diagonal slash (⊘).
- **No Rating.** If the CSRQ Center was unable to conduct a conversation with the model provider or obtain complete information to verify evidence, then the model received a no rating. A no rating is symbolized by a circle with "NR" (Ⓝⓡ).

Two main questions guided the ratings for Category 5 (evidence that the model provider offers services and support to schools to ensure successful implementation). The first question—does the middle and high school model provide evidence of readiness for successful implementation—included the following subcategories:

- Provider tracks and supports full implementation in schools.
- Provider helps schools allocate resources that are needed to fully implement the middle and high school model.
- Provider ensures initial commitment from schools.

Qualitative researchers used the information synthesized in the Model Description Form (from QRT Part 1) to rate the three subcategories using a specific rubric. These three ratings were then averaged to determine the rating for evidence of readiness for successful implementation. In general, a model's rating was based on evidence of the following: formal or informal benchmarks for all or some of its core components; a formal or informal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time; and a formal or informal process to ensure initial understanding of the model and commitment from staff.

The second question—does the middle and high school model provide schools with professional development and technical assistance needed to help teachers implement the model—included the following subcategories:

- Provider offers comprehensive training opportunities and supporting materials.
- Provider ensures that professional development effectively supports full model implementation.
- Provider develops a school's internal capacity to provide professional development.

Again, each subcategory received a rating. The three ratings were averaged to determine the rating for evidence of professional development and technical assistance for successful implementation. In general, a model's rating was based on evidence of the following: a variety of training opportunities, supporting materials for professional development in all or some of its core components, and a formal or informal plan to help build a school's capacity to provide professional development.

In addition to the ratings across these five categories, the qualitative data gathered in QRT Part 1, such as the phone conversations and artifacts, were synthesized into a narrative description of each middle and high school model. Each narrative includes indepth

information about the middle and high school model's costs and descriptions of the following components: organization and governance; curriculum and instruction; scheduling and grouping; technology; monitoring of student progress; parent, family, and community involvement; professional development and technical assistance; and implementation expectations and benchmarks.

In all, qualitative and quantitative data were mapped to rate each middle and high school model on five main outcomes:

- Evidence of positive effects on student achievement
- Evidence of positive effects on additional outcomes
- Evidence of positive effects on parent, family, and community outcomes
- Evidence of link between research and the model's design
- Evidence of services and support to schools to enable successful implementation

The quantitative analysis provided a systematic literature review of the reported effects of student achievement and other outcome variables. The middle and high school models that could show relatively more literature consisting of evaluation studies were more likely to achieve higher ratings in Categories 1–3 (as long as results demonstrated positive impact). Through the qualitative analysis, newer middle and high school models and those that did not have a substantial number of evaluation reports could be evaluated on such dimensions as quality of professional development offered by the middle and high school model. Although previous research on student achievement offers important considerations, education consumers may also consider whether the middle and high school model's design is based on solid research and provides a strong commitment to support schools through professional development and technical assistance.

Providers of newer models may not have had sufficient time to conduct research on the effectiveness of their models, but they should be able to clearly demonstrate that their models *can work,* that is, that the model's design is based on solid evidence of *what works.* Hence, by using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the CSRQ Center strives to provide the education consumer with a thorough and systematic description of the effectiveness of each middle and high school model reviewed in this report.

By using qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the effectiveness of widely implemented middle and high school models, this study also strives to provide usable information to education consumers. In 2005, U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings stated that the No Child Left Behind Act "rests on the common sense principles of accountability for results, data-based decision making, high expectations for all, and empowering change" (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

Meeting these goals will require a significant expansion of information for education consumers about what works. This report is intended to act as a decision-support tool for educators who wish to find effective whole-school improvement approaches for meeting locally defined needs. This report helps to provide descriptive and evidence-based information on selected middle and high school models that may help educators make decisions—marking a significant change in the culture of the education system to meet the needs of educators, policymakers, community leaders, families, and most importantly, America's children.

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Accelerated Schools PLUS—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Quality Review Results
Model Name:	Accelerated Schools: Powerful Learning Unlimited Success (AS PLUS)
Model Mission/Focus:	The mission of AS PLUS is to enrich the lives of all students, especially those who live in poverty and have a history of low academic performance and remediation, through a school environment characterized by accelerated instruction with high expectations and teaching methods traditionally reserved for only high achieving students.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1986
Grade Levels Served:	K–12

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
143	113	3	27
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	N/A	N/A	N/A

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	$61,500	$40,500	$3,000	Varies	Varies
Year 2	$61,500	$40,500	$3,000	Varies	Varies
Year 3	$51,000	$40,500	$3,000	Varies	Varies
Years 4+	$15,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. **Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:**
   - a. Evidence of positive overall effects — ⊘
   - b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations — NR
   - c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas — ⊘
2. **Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes** — NR
3. **Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement** — NR
4. **Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design** — ●
5. **Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:**
   - a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation — ◕
   - b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation — ●

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative NR = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

Model Description

The Accelerated Schools (AS) project began at Stanford University as a comprehensive approach to school change that focuses on students from at-risk communities. Dr. Henry Levin began to challenge the idea that struggling students should be remediated and proposed a new schooling system in which all students have access to instructional strategies that are usually reserved for gifted and talented students. In 1986, the first Accelerated School was introduced in the San Francisco Bay area. In 2003, AS piloted its first high school. AS operates seven high schools in seven states.

The National Center for Accelerated Schools established several regional centers in 1989 to support and monitor the growth of the AS comprehensive school reform model. In 2000, the National Center for Accelerated Schools moved its headquarters to the University of Connecticut and now maintains a partnership with the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT). In 2003, the AS project was renamed Accelerated Schools PLUS (Powerful Learning Unlimited Success).

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards, the following were identified as core components of AS PLUS: organization and governance; professional development; instruction; inclusion; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

According to AS PLUS, the model's mission is to enrich the lives of all students, especially those who live in poverty and have a history of low academic performance and remediation, through a school environment characterized by accelerated instruction with high expectations and teaching methods traditionally reserved for only the high achieving students. The AS PLUS model is a learning philosophy accompanied by a process for change. The transformation process greatly emphasizes placing school governance and decision making in the hands of school staff, parents, and students so they can take responsibility for the transformation of their own school culture and practices.

Goals/Rationale

According to the model, the goal of AS PLUS is to create Powerful Learning opportunities for all students. Powerful Learning is an instructional philosophy that integrates three elements of accelerated instruction: materials, learning opportunities, and classroom settings. The model believes that by building on the strengths of students, the school can use instructional strategies traditionally reserved for gifted students to accelerate the learning of all students. Each Accelerated School is expected to create its own Powerful Learning experiences based on its unique needs, strengths, and vision. Through Powerful Learning, the model believes students are actively engaged and allowed to take ownership of their learning, thus accelerating achievement.

Costs

The total operating cost for one school is $61,500 for each of the first 3 years. In the 4th year, operating costs are lowered to $15,000. The cost breakdown includes $36,000 for onsite professional development, $4,500 for offsite professional development, and $3,000 for materials. The remaining costs cover additional personnel, travel costs, and overhead costs.

The model costs include 18 days of onsite professional development; coaching assistance and support; a minimum of 4 days of offsite professional development sessions for a team of staff members; training materials, including five copies of the *Accelerated Schools Resource*

Guide (Hopfenberg, Levin, & Chase, 1993); an introductory video; instructional materials for all staff members; several books, including *In Search of Understanding: The Case for the Constructivist Classroom* (Brooks & Brooks, 1999), *Accelerating the Learning of all Students* (Finnan & Swanson, 2000), and *Using Data to Improve Student Learning in Elementary Schools* (Bernhardt, 2003); ongoing assessments of AS PLUS implementation and student achievement; annual diagnostic assessments of school progress; access to national faculty and NRC/GT resources; five regional or national conference registrations; technical assistance via phone, fax, and e-mail; membership in the AS PLUS national network, and a subscription to the newsletter and the project's electronic network. Additional costs include release time for the entire teaching staff for 2 days of initial training and 4 days of additional training during the 1st year. More specific information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel can be obtained directly from the model provider.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: ⊘

The CSRQ Center reviewed 13 quantitative studies for effects of AS PLUS on student achievement at the middle and high school levels. One of the 13 studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. The CSRQ Center considers the findings of this study to be *suggestive,* meaning that the CSRQ Center has limited confidence in the results. Because this study does not report results on statistical significance, the overall rating of the effects of this model on student achievement is zero.[1] This study is described below. (Appendix A reports on 12 studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and is considered to be suggestive used a quasi-experimental, cohort design.[2] The study reported outcomes for eighth-grade students in one school in Wisconsin that served a predominantly low socioeconomic status population. The study reported the percentage of students scoring proficient or higher on the reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies subtests of the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination over a 3-year period. The study found consistent positive trends in the proportion of eighth-grade students who scored proficient or higher in all subjects except language arts. However, the study did not report on level of statistical significance.

Evidence of Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: NR

No studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the impact of AS PLUS on the achievement of diverse student populations. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

The CSRQ Center urges readers to not necessarily judge a no rating or a low rating in this category as evidence that AS PLUS cannot be effective in Title I schools or other schools with similar student populations. The one study on this model that met the CSRQ Center's standards included schools serving primarily low-income minority students. Thus, readers may interpret the CSRQ Center's overall rating for the category of positive overall effects on student achievement as an indicator of the model's effectiveness in working in challenging settings.

[1] Level of statistical significance is determined by a statistical test and demonstrates whether the observed changes are likely to have occurred by chance alone.

[2] Several schools were examined in this study. However, only one school had a sufficient level of model implementation and was therefore included in the CSRQ Center's review. AS Plus is a K–12 model that follows the same processes at all grade levels. Therefore, outcomes for students in grade 8 were included in this study although the particular school defines itself as an elementary school.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas

Rating: ⊘

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined students' outcomes in five subject areas: reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies. The study reported positive trends for all of the subject areas except language arts, but the study did not report a level of statistical significance. Therefore, the rating for this category is zero.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: (NR)

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards did not examine the impact of the model on additional outcomes. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: (NR)

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards did not examine the impact of the model on parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: ●

Based on documentation provided by AS PLUS, explicit citations support the following core components of the model: organization and governance; professional development; instruction; inclusion; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: ◕

Based on documentation provided by AS PLUS, the model offers a formal process to help school staff establish an initial understanding of AS PLUS and strategies to develop faculty buy-in. However, the model only offers an informal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. AS PLUS provides formal benchmarks for implementation, *Tools for Reflection, Assessment, and Continuous Evaluation of Schools* (TRACES). (TRACES is discussed in more detail in the section titled "Monitoring Student Progress and Performance.") Therefore, the rating for this category is moderately strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

AS PLUS provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, AS PLUS provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of the model's core components. AS PLUS also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

Each school using the AS PLUS model is either a K–8 Accelerated School or 9–12 Accelerated High School. Both models follow the same philosophy of Powerful Learning and use the same strategies for change. However, the Accelerated High Schools also use an "inquiry academy" to increase student achievement. An Accelerated High School consists of several small "inquiry academies" that are supported by local corporations and community agencies. Each student, faculty member, and parent elects to join an academy. AS PLUS believes that this process of choice creates a culture of achievement in which all stakeholders take responsibility for their own learning. Within each academy, students complete "inquiry projects" that link classroom learning to specific careers and vocations. Both types of schools (K–8 and 9–12) are expected to commit to a 5-year partnership with the district and AS PLUS.

AS PLUS recommends that middle and high schools interested in participating expose all school staff to the AS PLUS philosophy before applying to the national center. The model also encourages interested schools to speak with coaches and principals currently implementing the model and to host meetings with school community members to introduce them to the AS PLUS process. After the initial exploration phase, members of the school community are encouraged to visit existing AS PLUS schools to observe the model and to ask any additional questions regarding implementation. At this stage, schools begin to consider potential individuals to fill the coaching position and submit an application to the national center. AS PLUS requires a 90% teacher buy-in before a school can be accepted to participate.

After the application is accepted, schools follow a four-step start-up phase prior to full implementation. The first step involves taking stock of the school's starting point by organizing the entire school community to consider important questions about the school, research potential answers, and explore all the facts. The information collected should include a history of the school, the curriculum, and instructional practices currently used; a detailed description of student and community characteristics; and a depiction of the school by its staff.

The second step requests that each school create a shared vision that is unanimously agreed upon by the school community. During the third step, schools establish priorities for action. Creating a school governance structure is the fourth and final step before full implementation can commence.

The new governance structure should include a three-tier system: (1) the school as a whole (SAW) committee, (2) a steering committee, and (3) cadres of committees to focus on specific priorities. The groups build on the work of each in a cooperative manner with final decisions made by the SAW. The members of these groups use specific problem-solving and decision-making strategies provided by the model such as consensus building, collaboration, and using data and assessment strategies to improve student achievement.

School principals are required to take an active role in the implementation process through attending conferences, sharing in decision making, granting release time, assisting coaches, and attending staff training. The national center provides each school with an assessment toolkit used to monitor progress. The toolkit provides timelines, checklists, and tools for observations. Self-assessments are ongoing, and coaches are trained to provide guidance during the assessment process.

The model requires each school to have a coach and recommends that schools also have an internal

facilitator. The coach position may be filled by someone from a nearby university, the state department of education, or the district. The coach acts as a resource to guide a school community through the transformation into an Accelerated School. Coaches support the schools in making changes over time by monitoring and assisting with the implementation but are not held responsible for evaluating staff members. Coaches are required to spend at least 50% of their time supporting implementation in K–8 schools and 25% of their time supporting implementation in 9–12 schools.

The internal facilitator acts as a teacher leader who is granted release time to assist the coach in providing training and follow-up guidance throughout the model implementation process.

Curriculum and Instruction

AS PLUS does not require that a specific curriculum be implemented in any subject area. However, AS PLUS recommends that schools implementing the model adopt curricula that provide enriched instruction; emphasize language development in all subject areas, including math and science; and focus on problem-solving and higher order analytical skills. Teachers are encouraged to use the inquiry process to select materials and to work as a team in constructing units, lessons, and learning experiences.

AS PLUS schools establish common curricular objectives for all students. During implementation, AS PLUS encourages teachers to use teacher-developed materials some of the time. After implementation, teachers begin using these materials more frequently. These items may include daily practice materials, specialized units of instruction, selected books, and curriculum maps.

AS PLUS requires that all schools use the Powerful Learning instructional philosophy across all subject areas. The Powerful Learning approach integrates the following three elements of acceleration: what students need to know, how students are engaged in the learning experience, and the context or learning environment to support their learning. Powerful Learning includes five basic components:

- Authentic—engaging students in authentic activities
- Interactive—involving all teachers in sharing ideas and concerns
- Learner centered—addressing specific interests of students
- Inclusive—creating opportunities for active learning
- Continuous—helping students make interdisciplinary connections in what they learn

Through Powerful Learning, teachers encourage students to use their diverse cultural and daily experiences to become the subjects of their own education. For example, the benchmarks for authentic learning provide teachers with a list of ways students can be more engaged in learning activities, such as incorporating real-life situations within lesson plans.

Additional recommended instructional practices include small-group instruction, hands-on activities, discussion, cooperative learning, content reading strategies, and cross-age tutoring. More strategies for improvement of instruction are provided in the TRACES toolkit.

Scheduling and Grouping

AS PLUS does not require any specific scheduling changes, although some schools may opt to make scheduling changes due to the interdisciplinary nature of the model. Schools are expected to assess the need for any necessary changes through the inquiry process at the beginning of implementation.

AS PLUS recommends that students be instructed in both small groups and individually. Grouping strategies are flexible, and determining factors may include interest, readiness, and preferred ways to demonstrate competence. AS PLUS emphasizes differentiated instruction for both small groups and individual instruction.

According to the AS PLUS philosophy, all students are treated as gifted and talented and every student needs to receive the same accelerated instruction. AS PLUS places a strong emphasis on involving students in the mainstream, including those from different ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds, special needs students, and English language learners.

Technology

AS PLUS does not expect schools to incorporate technology within the model's implementation. However, if a school chooses to use computers as part of its instructional model, AS PLUS does offer computer modules that incorporate the Powerful Learning framework within instructional practices. Additionally, AS PLUS provides e-mail discussion groups and an online information clearinghouse to assist coaching activities and other implementation activities in participating schools.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

AS PLUS is a data-driven process and provides each participating school with an assessment toolkit, TRACES, to assist with data collection. The toolkit was redesigned in 2003 to reflect the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the guidance provided by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

The assessment toolkit includes checklists, questionnaires, and protocols for observing both school and student progress. These tools may be used to assess progress against benchmarks; guide classroom, steering committee, and cadre observations; provide interview protocols; and support schoolwide assessment and coaching activities. The school staff uses these data collection tools to assist with the data-based decision-making process encouraged by the model.

For example, classroom observations are part of a multiple assessment approach used to construct a thorough understanding of the AS PLUS Powerful Learning framework, which is a key component in achieving successful implementation of the model according to the provider. Linked with data accumulated through the Powerful Learning Questionnaire, interviews, and schoolwide observation notes, information gathered through multiple observations of every classroom allows participating schools to create a "complete picture" of schoolwide activities as the school progresses through the implementation process. These assessments provide feedback to teachers that they can use to adjust their classroom teaching practices for the benefit of all students.

The data collection toolkit is designed to help each school reflect upon and evaluate its own work to develop action plans as needed and to make continuous progress in student achievement. The local provider and the national center use the toolkit to ensure that each school's needs are met and to monitor the effectiveness of AS PLUS nationwide.

The TRACES toolkit is designed to monitor a school's progress over the course of 1 year. Schools should use the assessment tools annually and the data portfolio should be updated continually as new information becomes available to the school. AS PLUS provides coaches with training on how to guide a school through the TRACES process.

Family and Community Involvement

AS PLUS requires community and family membership on the school governance committee. Prior to

implementation, parents are expected to agree to the goals of the AS PLUS model, which include a list of the specific obligations of parents, students, and school staff. Parents help make school decisions by joining various task forces and serving on the steering committee. According to AS PLUS, parental involvement in school activities is increased when schools follow the model requirements.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

AS PLUS works with each school to reinforce the school's capacity for improvement through continual professional development. The model's formal professional development plan includes mentorship from the national center or a regional center, phone calls, site visits, retreats, and a continual exchange of ideas and materials with the national center and other Accelerated Schools. Schools have access to the model's newsletter, e-mail discussion group, and information clearinghouse.

AS PLUS distributes the formal professional development plan to all schools and covers topics that provide a research-based model for improving student achievement; involve students, parents, and community members in the school in a collaborative effort; and provide a "process" that changes the way the school meets individual needs of all students.

AS PLUS expects participating schools to commit to a minimum 5-year partnership to ensure successful implementation. To assist schools in achieving this goal, AS PLUS provides a detailed year-by-year breakdown of the elements necessary to succeed.

In the 1st year of implementation, schools assess their needs, develop goals, and create a plan that will help them achieve their stated goals. AS PLUS provides 18 days of onsite professional development for school personnel and 4 days of networkwide training sessions for five representatives (a team) from the school.

During the 18 days of onsite training, model staff covers such topics as setting priorities, establishing school governance, and developing a community-owned vision. The offsite sessions discuss school leadership, collegial coaching, and strategies to meet the needs of all students. These sessions also provide opportunities to network with other schools. The model provides the materials and technical assistance that the schools need to be successful.

During years 2 and 3 of AS PLUS implementation, schools again receive 18 days of onsite training, mentoring, and coaching that move beyond the initial tasks identified in year 1 and focus on specific needs of that school. The 4 days of offsite sessions are again provided for school teams. These training sessions can help schools prepare and support new team members and become more familiar with AS PLUS national faculty and resources. The focus on what tasks lie ahead in the implementation process is narrowed to meet more specific challenges to implementation.

In the 4th year and beyond, AS PLUS determines the number of onsite training days that are necessary through a diagnostic assessment and a review of the school action plan. The model provides two 4-day offsite sessions for school teams during the 4th year. Topics included in these years mirror those of the first 3 years, although each year allows more focus as the school gets closer to successfully completing its implementation of the model. The model also provides an assessment tool through which schools are able to gauge their implementation progress.

Beginning in year 1, both the external coach and internal facilitator are trained at an AS PLUS regional center and attend monthly follow-up training sessions. The external coach and internal facilitator are trained in a 5-day session at AS PLUS regional centers and attend additional 2-day training sessions each month. The model provides an assessment tool through which schools are able to gauge their implementation progress.

AS PLUS provides technical assistance through its regional centers, e-mail discussion groups, and online information clearinghouse to assist teachers as they work through AS PLUS model implementation activities in participating schools. The regional centers are located in the western, central, southeastern, and northeastern regions of the country. The model also publishes a newsletter, *Imagine,* several times each school year that provides profiles of AS PLUS schools and includes articles of interest for those schools implementing the model.

Additionally, AS PLUS sponsors an annual national or regional conference and provides a leadership conference for participants to gain additional knowledge about the model from others working to implement it. Leadership and regional conferences are provided for specific audiences. For example, a leadership conference might be held for principals, coaches, and others working on their 1st year of model implementation.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

The AS PLUS national center provides each school with the TRACES assessment tool and a formal set of benchmarks used to monitor progress toward implementation. Specific benchmarks are provided through TRACES for nine categories identified by AS PLUS as "demonstrated" implementation of the model: philosophy, principles, values, vision, inquiry process, governance structure, Powerful Learning, academic achievement, and schoolwide strategies for acceleration.

In addition, each category may include one or more of the components that lead schools in the direction of successful implementation of the model. For example, in the Powerful Learning category, TRACES lists key benchmarks for authentic, interactive, learner-centered, inclusive, and continuous learning. According to the model, the key to authentic learning lies in the belief that "[e]very student demonstrates his/her learning through the creation of authentic products, and performances." Likewise, the model states that "Every student is engaged in differentiated content, process and products based upon his/her needs, interests, and strengths to accelerate learning" which it lists as a key benchmark.

According to AS PLUS, components in the TRACES toolkit, especially the interviewing exercises, allow teachers opportunities to express opinions and concerns about the AS PLUS model implementation and the challenges they encounter while active in the process. Classroom observation checklists, provided in the TRACES toolkit and conducted by AS PLUS national faculty members, provide feedback to teachers about their teaching practices, how their practices are working or not working, and what changes might be useful to improve them. Additionally, the schoolwide assessment portfolio helps teachers complete their implementation tasks by providing clearly defined timelines.

Data are collected through checklists, observations, and self-assessments provided by TRACES and are used to establish goals for subsequent years and to adjust model implementation as needed. The role of the AS PLUS coach is to use these tools to provide feedback and guidance to schools and their staff, keeping them on track to achieve successful implementation of the AS PLUS model.

Special Considerations

AS PLUS requires schools to enter into a partnership agreement that ensures a 5-year commitment to the model. The transformation process for an AS PLUS school generally takes 3–5 years. According to AS PLUS, regional AS centers and schools are mutually committed to the model's implementation: The regional centers commit to providing professional services to support the implementation process, and the schools commit to the change process for successful implementation. AS PLUS views itself as a process rather than a product.

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Model Study Reviewed

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Benson, J. T. (2000). *The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program in Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction second year evaluation.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

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America's Choice School Design—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Review Results
Model Name:	America's Choice School Design (America's Choice)
Model Mission/Focus:	America's Choice is a standards-based, comprehensive school reform model that seeks to ensure that all students are successful on local and state assessments, are prepared to do college-level work without remediation, and are ready to participate in today's economy.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1998
Grade Levels Served:	K–12

Number of Schools[1]

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
364	239	51	74
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	234	104	26

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	$80,000–$100,000 for basic middle school design $85,000–$105,000 for basic high school design	55% of total operating costs	8% of total operating costs	30% of total operating costs	7% of total operating costs
Year 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Years 4+	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:	
a. Evidence of positive overall effects	◑
b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	◔
c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:	
Reading and math	◑
Writing	◔
2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes	(NR)
3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	(NR)
4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	●
5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:	
a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	●
b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	◕

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative (NR) = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

[1]America's Choice also offers, at a higher cost, an intensive version of the design. Refer to the section titled "Costs" for additional details and costs regarding the intensive design.

Model Description

America's Choice School Design (America's Choice), originally known as the National Alliance for Restructuring Education, began in 1989 as a project partially funded by the New American Schools Development Corporation. The design is the result of a study conducted by the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) on the best educational practices in the United States and abroad. NCEE's 1990 report presented the framework for America's Choice. America's Choice was introduced to schools in 1998.

Currently, America's Choice provides four regional offices to support implementation of the model throughout the United States: North (New York City), South (Atlanta), Central (Chicago) and West (Los Angeles). Satellite offices also have been created in four locations to support large-scale projects. The model hosts a national conference each year for educators to share ideas, to deepen their knowledge of the design, and to listen to national experts on school improvement.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards, the following components of America's Choice were identified as core: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to the successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

The mission of the America's Choice model is to ensure that all students are successful on local and state assessments and are prepared to do college-level work without remediation. America's Choice has model designs for elementary, K–8, middle, and high schools. The model works directly with schools, districts, and states on strategies for raising student achievement. For example, Arkansas has contracted directly with America's Choice to use the design throughout the state in support of schools facing restructuring. At the time of this report, similar statewide initiatives were in place in Hawaii, Massachusetts, Mississippi, and Ohio.

America's Choice focuses on five design tasks:

- Standards and assessments
- Aligned instructional systems
- High-performance leadership, management, and organization
- Professional learning communities
- Parent and community involvement

The design elements are interdependent and require that each school set high expectations for all students and clearly communicate those expectations.

Goals/Rationale

America's Choice is designed to provide teachers and schools with a coherent, standards-based educational system. Working with state standards and assessments, America's Choice helps teachers and schools align instruction to expectations. The goal is to move all students from where they are to proficiency levels of performance and beyond. Analyzing student work to determine whether it is "good enough" to meet standards and how to get students there focuses classroom teaching and learning. Using data from regular ongoing assessments, teachers and school staff chart progress and provide safety nets in a timely and targeted fashion.

America's Choice aims to prevent student failure by early intervention and acceleration, not by remediation. The model focuses on the social development of adolescents and high academic standards that are implemented through a rigorous curriculum.

Costs

Schools or districts may adopt the basic America's Choice design or they may choose to adopt a more intensive design at a higher cost. Implementation costs also vary based on the size of the school and the number of teachers. The basic design can be used at either middle or high schools. The basic middle school design costs $80,000–$100,000 for the 1st year of implementation. During the 1st year, training comprises approximately 55% of the total operating costs while materials comprise 8%, personnel 30%, and other costs 7%. Costs for classroom libraries and student materials to support supplemental courses, such as the Ramp-Up/acceleration courses for low-performing students, are not covered by the contract.

The basic high school design costs $85,000–$105,000 for the 1st year of implementation. The fees for training, materials, personnel, and other costs are the same percentages of the total operating costs as the basic middle school design.

The intensive design includes more onsite technical assistance, more direct training of teachers provided by the model, and acceleration of some elements of the design. The intensive middle school design costs $125,000–$200,000 for the 1st year of implementation; the intensive high school design costs $175,000–$250,000. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel associated with the model and the intensive design, sites should directly contact the model provider.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: ◑

The CSRQ Center reviewed 10 quantitative studies for effects of America's Choice on student achievement at the middle and high school levels. Six of these studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. The CSRQ Center considers the findings in five of these studies to be *conclusive*, meaning that the CSRQ Center has confidence in the results of the study. Because a less rigorous research design was used, the CSRQ Center considers the findings of one study to be *suggestive,* meaning that the CSRQ Center has limited confidence in the study's findings.

Overall, the six studies reported a mix of results, suggesting both positive effects and no effects of America's Choice on student achievement. Across these studies, 14 findings on student achievement tests included a reported level of statistical significance. About 44% of these findings demonstrated a positive effect on student achievement. The average effect size of these positive effects was +0.15.[2] These results are consistent with an overall rating of moderate for the effects of America's Choice on student achievement. The six studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards are described below. (Appendix B reports on four studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

Each of the five studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards and were considered to be conclusive used a quasi-experimental, matched comparison group

[2]For more information on the strength of effect sizes, please refer to "About Effect Sizes," an inset in the "About This Report" chapter of this report.

design to examine the effects of America's Choice on student achievement in several states in different regions of the United States. Schools in each study served predominantly low socioeconomic status (SES), minority populations.

One study examined the effects of America's Choice on middle school students in Rochester, New York, relative to students in other middle schools within the same school district. Results were statistically significant, with an overall effect size of +0.07, and favored students in America's Choice schools on state standardized tests in both reading and math. This study also provided evidence that America's Choice benefited low-achieving students in math and African American and Hispanic students in math and reading.

The second study examined two separate samples of middle school students. For both samples, the study compared America's Choice students to students in demographically similar schools in the same districts. One sample was located in the northeast United States. The schools served primarily low SES, minority populations. On the standardized state test in reading, students in grades 6–8 in America's Choice schools significantly outperformed comparison students, with an average effect size of +0.39. On the standardized state test in math, the study reported a positive effect of America's Choice on students in grades 6–8, with an average effect size of +0.53. The study found no differences in achievement among seventh-grade students.

In this same study, the second sample reported results for students in grades 6–8 in the south Atlantic region of the United States. Students in America's Choice schools significantly outperformed comparison students in reading, with an average effect size of +0.18. On the standardized state test in math, the study found a significant positive effect of America's Choice on students in grades 7 and 8, with an average effect size of +0.08, but not on students in grade 6. This study also examined the results of the state writing exam on eighth-grade students. The study found no significant differences between the writing performance of America's Choice students and other students in the district.

The third study was a follow-up study to the aforementioned study that was conducted in the south Atlantic region of the United States. This follow-up study examined an additional cohort of students in grades 6–8 from seven middle schools. Findings indicated no statistically significant differences among student achievements on state standardized tests in reading, writing, and math.

The fourth study compared cohorts of eighth-grade students in 50 America's Choice and comparison schools on state tests in writing. The sample consisted of more than 9,500 students. Results showed that gains at America's Choice schools were significantly greater than those at comparison schools, with an effect size of +0.11.

The fifth study examined results of state tests in reading, math, and language in one middle school in California that had implemented America's Choice for 3 years.[3] Findings indicated no statistically significant differences in tests of reading, math, or language between America's Choice students and comparison students.

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and was considered to be suggestive used a large sample of 27 America's Choices schools in the south-central region of the United States. Cohorts of eighth-grade students were tracked for 6 years, and cohorts of 11th-grade students were tracked for 4 years. Overall, the study reported mixed trends over time in both math and reading. However, the study did not report a level of statistical significance.

[3]This study also reports on results from two other America's Choice middle schools in the same school district. The CSRQ Center did not include findings from these schools because America's Choice had only been implemented for approximately 1 year, and no reports of fidelity of implementation were available.

Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating:

One study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and was considered to be conclusive examined the effects of America's Choice on African American, Hispanic, and low-achieving students in Rochester, New York. Results demonstrated a positive effect on reading and math achievement on statewide tests for African American (average effect size of +0.04), Hispanic (average effect size of +0.07), and low-achieving students (average effect size of +0.13). Although these results are promising, no other studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards specifically examined the effects of America's Choice on the achievement of diverse student populations. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Of note, a rating of limited or higher in this subcategory indicates that the research on a model provides evidence of positive effects for specific diverse student populations. Few of the models reviewed by the CSRQ Center had evidence that met the CSRQ Center's standards for this subcategory. America's Choice is commended for offering detailed additional evidence that met the CSRQ Center's standards for this subcategory.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

Rating:

The impact of America's Choice on reading achievement was mixed. Four studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined reading achievement at the middle or high school levels. In two of those studies that were considered to be conclusive, America's Choice demonstrated a positive effect on reading achievement. The average effect size of the positive results was +0.17. The difference between reading achievement by students in America's Choice schools and those in comparison schools was statistically significant in favor of America's Choice for 60% of the reading outcomes that were examined. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is moderate.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Math

Rating:

Four studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards and were considered to be conclusive examined the effects of America's Choice on student achievement in math. Results were mixed among positive and null effects. Two of the studies demonstrated some positive effects of America's Choice on math achievement. The average effect size of the positive results was +0.18. The difference between math achievement by students in America's Choice schools and those in comparison schools was statistically significant in favor of America's Choice for 47% of the math outcomes that were examined. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is moderate.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Writing

Rating:

One study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and was considered to be conclusive examined the impact of America's Choice on student achievement in writing. This study demonstrated a statistically significant positive effect on writing achievement, with an effect size of +0.11. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: NR

No studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined effects of America's Choice on additional outcomes. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: NR

No studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined effects of America's Choice on parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: ●

Based on documentation provided by America's Choice, explicit citations support all of the model's core components: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

Based on documentation provided by America's Choice, it offers a formal process to help school staff establish an initial understanding of the model and strategies to develop faculty buy-in. Additionally, America's Choice offers a formal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. America's Choice also provides formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is very strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ◕

America's Choice provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, and capacity building. However, the model does not offer professional development specifically designed for new staff. America's Choice also provides supporting materials for professional development that address most of the model's core components. Additionally, America's Choice offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is moderately strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

Full implementation of the model takes place over 5 years. During implementation, the model requires several changes in the organization and governance of the school. America's Choice requires schools to appoint coaches, use the required materials and assessments, participate in the America's Choice National Conference by sending a team of at least three staff members, provide safety nets for students that need additional support, secure district support, reserve adequate funding for continued implementation, and participate in outside evaluations conducted by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education on behalf of America's Choice.

The principal acts as the instructional leader to guide the implementation process. In this role, the principal participates in professional development through

regional academies and networks. The principal also oversees the school's leadership team and business partners in implementing the design. At the district level, there must be support for implementation including the purchase of materials and the allowance for site-based autonomy for certain activities such as professional development. According to America's Choice, the principal should be committed to developing a data-driven school in which every teacher embraces standards-based instruction and every student graduates ready to complete college level academic work.

America's Choice requires each middle and high school to designate the following four positions within its staff:

- **Design coach.** Coordinates the implementation of the design
- **Math coach.** Provides instructional leadership for the implementation of America's Choice math curriculum
- **Literacy coach.** Provides instructional leadership for the implementation of America's Choice English language arts curriculum
- **Parent community outreach coordinator.** Works with parents to help them understand the model and ways in which they can support their children's education

The coaches deliver professional development, coach classroom teachers, support the staff in analyzing student assessment data, and identify needed steps to move students toward meeting the standards. Both of the content coaching positions require full release from teaching responsibilities.

At each school, the principal forms a leadership team that, at a minimum, is comprised of the principal, the design coach, the math coach, the literacy coach, heads of subject-area departments, and the parent/community outreach coordinator. The leadership team sets schoolwide targets for achievement and oversees the use of data to guide instruction.

In addition to the staffing requirements, America's Choice advocates for smaller learning communities. In middle school, the model divides larger schools into either several small autonomous schools or into smaller but not autonomous administrative units known as "houses." Small schools and houses contain approximately 300 students (100 students each in grades 6, 7, and 8). Each small school or house is staffed by a team of teachers, known as class teachers, in the core subjects of English, math, science, and social studies. These teachers stay with the same group of students throughout middle school.

Furthermore, each middle school student is assigned a faculty member who becomes the student's advisor for the 3 years in middle school. Each faculty member is assigned to support approximately 25 students.

America's Choice high schools are also organized into small schools and houses. The "Lower Division" comprises students in grades 9 and 10. Each small school or house contains approximately 400 students. Students are placed in groups of 100 on grade-level academic teams in the core subject areas of English, math, science, and social studies. As with middle schools, class teachers stay with the students for 2 years.

The high school's "Upper Division" comprises grades 11 and 12 and is organized similarly to that of the lower division. America's Choice students in the upper division are exposed to work, training, and college while they are still in high school. America's Choice supports several small learning community approaches and encourages their implementation by offering schools consulting and technical assistance. Options may include the following:

- Career academies that are built around a broad career theme

- Houses that focus on a curricular theme and go indepth in certain subject areas
- Early college programs that focus on providing students with college coursework for credit before high school graduation

Each option is a self-contained entity with its own lead teacher and between 200 and 400 students. Students take core courses as a cohort, mixing with other students when they take elective courses; Advanced Placement or honors courses; physical education; and interscholastic sports. Additionally, each student in the upper division must complete a "Capstone Project," a lengthy research project that culminates in a written and oral presentation. Each Upper Division option leads to college enrollment and should be seen as college preparatory by parents, students, and community members.

Curriculum and Instruction

America's Choice offers specific curricula for reading, writing, and math (high school only). Dedicated instructional blocks for specific subjects are divided into three segments, or workshops. During these workshops, teachers provide whole-class, one-on-one, and small-group instruction. America's Choice provides teachers with sample lessons and practice test materials to guide implementation. The following strategies are also essential: hands-on activities, discussion, and cooperative learning.

Middle school. The core curriculum requires students to complete 3 years of instruction in English language arts, math, science, and social studies. English language arts classes are organized as reading and writing workshops. Students study genres and authors in 25-day units of instruction. America's Choice provides an acceleration course (Ramp-Up to Middle Grades Literacy) for students who enter middle schools 2 or more years behind in reading. This 90-minute block course includes a year-long curriculum and intensive professional development.

America's Choice does not provide a specific math curriculum for middle schools. Instead, the model supports teachers as they learn to choose the essential concepts for instruction. According to America's Choice, math instruction in middle school seeks to ensure a basic understanding of arithmetic, fractions, and decimals to lay the foundation for algebra in eighth grade. For students who enter middle schools 2 or more years behind in mathematics, America's Choice provides a 90-minute block acceleration course (Ramp-Up to Pre-Algebra) that includes a year-long curriculum and intensive professional development.

High school: Lower division (grades 9 and 10). The core curriculum requirements for high school's lower division are two college preparatory English and social studies/history classes; one laboratory science class; the completion of a portfolio project; and such electives as physical education, art, music, theatre, technology, and a second language. Algebra I and geometry are the minimum math requirements in the lower division. However, if students already completed algebra I in eighth grade, then they should take algebra II and geometry in the lower division. For students who enter high schools 2 or more years behind in mathematics, America's Choice provides a 90-minute acceleration course (Ramp-Up to Algebra) that includes a year-long curriculum and intensive professional development. Those students may complete algebra I in summer school or take algebra I and geometry in 10th grade.

Similar to the middle school's English language arts curriculum, English instruction in high school's lower division is organized as reading and writing workshops with author and genre study units. Teachers encourage students to read widely and to write on their own, conference individually with the teacher and in small groups, and participate in whole-class mini-lessons. Ramp-Up to Advanced Literacy is a 90-minute block

class offered to students who enter high school 2 or more years behind in reading.

High school: Upper division (grades 11 and 12). After successfully completing the requirements of the lower division, students choose one of four academies:

- The Early College Humanities Program emphasizes coursework in English, foreign languages, or other humanities areas and requires one Advanced Placement or equivalent course. This program is administered onsite and requires students to meet the entrance requirements for their respective state-university system and to pass all requisite exams.
- The Early College Mathematics and Science Program emphasizes coursework in math and sciences and requires one advanced placement or equivalent course. This program is administered onsite and requires students to meet the entrance requirements for their respective state-university system and to pass all requisite exams.
- The Career Academy includes a college preparatory curriculum and applied learning opportunities off campus in a broad career area. The program is administered onsite and requires students to meet the entrance requirements for their respective state-university system and to pass all requisite exams.
- The Technical Training program includes formal enrollment in a specialized technical training program at a nearby community or technical college that offers a 2-year degree. This is an offsite technical training program in which students must meet the requirements of the program in which they are enrolled.

Upon successful completion of the requirements of the Lower Division, students choose their course of study. America's Choice offers a model for the Upper Division that is a combination of academies, Advanced Placement offerings, and/or off-campus programs. Additionally, each student in the Upper Division completes a "Capstone Project." This is a lengthy research project that culminates in a written and oral presentation.

Ramp-up courses. America's Choice uses accelerated courses to help students who are significantly below grade level, particularly students in low-performing schools. The model's primary curricular offerings are designed to reengage students and get them back on track.

The middle school and lower division of the high school offer "Safety Net" courses in English language arts and math. Ramp-up Literacy offers instruction in advanced phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The courses are for students who need additional work in those areas and extensive opportunities to read self-selected texts. The Ramp-Up Mathematics courses support students who enter middle or high school 2 or more years behind in math. The goal is to prepare these students for success in higher level mathematics courses.

Both the literacy and math courses feature a year-long curriculum for 90-minute classes that are tailored to the needs of students who have not experienced academic success. According to the model provider, courses in both subjects use a powerful set of classroom routines to help students become motivated and successful. During such workshops, teachers practice whole-class, one-on-one, and small-group instruction. Teachers receive a complete system of instruction, professional development, and assessment tools that are specifically designed to provide data that can be used to guide instruction.

Both the literacy and math acceleration courses include assessment systems that are developed for America's Choice by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), an internationally recognized leader in student assessment that contributed to the development of Third International Mathematics and

Science Study and developed the Programme for International Student Assessment.

Scheduling and Grouping

The model advocates small learning communities as discussed in the section titled "Organization and Governance." Middle school learning communities should be no larger than 300 students, and the lower division of high school should have no more than 400 students. Furthermore, class teachers stay with the same group of students throughout middle school and the lower division of high school, respectively. The ramp-up courses require a double period for scheduling to accelerate student growth rather than focus on remediation of deficits. Thus, scheduling and staffing modification are necessary to implement America' Choice.

Technology

America's Choice recommends, but does not require, the use of computers for both instructional and non-instructional purposes. According to the model developer, technology can be integrated into the design as a tool to support student learning, but not as a machine to deliver instruction. Students may use technology to revise written work, practice targeted skills, or to access data and information. Technology is also integrated into professional development sessions to enhance the learning experience for teachers, principals, and coaches and becomes an ongoing tool and networking device via a Blackboard site designed by America's Choice.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

Data-based decision making is core to the model. Teachers meet in study groups or other meeting formats to discuss and analyze the results from ongoing progress monitoring to guide daily instruction. English teachers at the middle grades use the Developmental Reading Assessment to monitor ongoing progress of student performance in reading.

A comprehensive set of assessments are built into both the literacy and math ramp-up programs. ACER developed Ramp-Up Literacy's formative assessment system exclusively for America's Choice. Through end-of-unit tests, teachers evaluate students' skills in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing, providing a snapshot of student progress throughout the year and helping schools make appropriate placement decisions for subsequent years. Teachers also learn to determine students' independent reading levels, fluency, and accuracy rates and track the number of pages read during independent reading. These results are used to place students in appropriate groups for instruction. America's Choice uses the Gates MacGinitie for the pre- and posttest for the courses.

Ramp-Up Mathematics courses have a similar system that includes quizzes, end-of-unit assessments, class profiles, and periodic reports about growth and areas in need of work. The courses also include pre- and posttests that have been developed by ACER. The assessments are designed to measure basic skills, problemsolving, and understanding of key math concepts. Teachers use the results of the assessments to tailor instruction to students' needs.

Family and Community Involvement

America's Choice requires schools to appoint a parent community outreach coordinator. The coordinator serves on the leadership team and encourages parental involvement through a variety of activities, such as parent workshops, Book-of-the-Month, and the 25 Books Campaign.

In the high school's upper division, an adult from the community serves as a mentor who supports and counsels students, especially regarding postsecondary education and/or work.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

America's Choice provides professional development and technical assistance to schools throughout implementation. The model's professional development trainers are required to attend a yearlong "boot camp" through its National College and to be certified in school design and as a specialist in literacy, math, or leadership.

America's Choice requires teachers, administrators, and specialized personnel to participate in professional development workshops and training sessions. District leaders are also invited to attend these sessions. Although America's Choice customizes the professional development plan based on each school's needs, intensive training focuses on implementation of the acceleration courses in literacy and math and on strengthening on-grade English and math courses. Professional development also centers on strategies for differentiating instruction, establishing classroom routines and rituals, and focusing on the most important content and concepts.

During the initial implementation, school faculty members receive an extensive orientation to the design. They begin to analyze school data and are introduced to standards-based reform. Developers of America's Choice believe that professional development must help teachers connect work to student performance standards, must be intensive and sustained, must relate to teacher experience with students, and must be content-focused and connected to other school improvement and change. Throughout the school year, teachers participate in onsite study groups and teacher meetings.

The math and literacy teachers and coaches attend offsite institutes. The institutes provide teachers and coaches with a solid grounding in the latest research on effective instruction and offer full simulations of daily lessons. The coaches create model classrooms through lesson demonstrations and close collaborative work with the classroom teacher. Thus, the classrooms modeled during the institutes become a professional development tool for all teachers.

Professional development helps science teachers align their curriculum, instruction, and assessments with their science standards. Professional development in science focuses on an analysis of student work and strategies to improve overall student performance.

Professional development provides principals and design coaches with a deeper understanding of America's Choice so that they can facilitate their roles in leading the implementation schoolwide. Principals and design coaches also attend regional academies and networks. The model also conducts semiannual implementation checks and provides feedback to principals and design coaches regarding school progress.

In addition to formal workshops, institutes, and academies, America's Choice also provides onsite technical assistance, primarily through cluster leaders who are part of the America's Choice staff. The cluster leaders provide onsite assistance through periodic visits to the schools—monthly for the standard model and weekly or bi-weekly for the intensive version of the model. Cluster leaders work with school leadership teams and coaches to plan and implement America's Choice and to troubleshoot along the way.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

America's Choice provides all schools with implementation rubrics to guide the implementation process. Stage 1 rubrics guide the initial reform efforts and assist schools in gauging progress. The rubrics are organized around the five design tasks: standards and assessments; aligned instructional systems; high performance leadership, management, and organization; professional learning communities; and parent and community involvement. Within each design task, the rubrics outline the implementation expectations for

each quarter of a school year and provide several examples of evidence as indicators of high performance. For example, under high performance management for middle schools, one expectation is that sites will implement the Book-of-the-Month program schoolwide. One example of evidence that could indicate high performance is that student work related to the monthly book selection is on display in classrooms and hallways.

The model also provides similar rubrics for stage 2 of implementation. Stage 2 rubrics deepen the expectations for each design task. In stage 2, schools are expected to continue to implement all items on the rubrics from stage 1. An example of an expectation for high performance under standards and assessment for stage 2 is that teachers use the planning for results system to set and meet clear grade and class targets for student performance. Evidence that this takes place could be grade-level team meetings in which teachers determine individual student weaknesses according to standards, strategies, and student work.

America's Choice cluster leaders list the implementation outcomes based on these rubrics on the Diagnostic and Assessment Tool, which is then incorporated in the school's yearly quality review. The quality review provides feedback to schools regarding strengths, weaknesses, and strategies for improved implementation. Schools are required to use this feedback to guide implementation. Therefore, all school staff members are expected to be familiar with the rubrics.

Special Considerations

America's Choice School Design is a model that requires significant changes and adjustments in multiple areas, such as additional personnel, curriculum, and scheduling. Because of the nature of these changes, teacher buy-in is important. According to the model provider, high standards drive instruction and are the cornerstone of America's Choice. With proper buy-in and implementation fidelity, America's Choice believes it can help schools to align standards, assessment, and instruction to improve student achievement.

In addition to the full design, America's Choice offers stand-alone literacy and mathematics curriculum and professional development designed to assist students who are behind or who have specific gaps and misconceptions. Examples of these programs include Math Navigator, Writers Advantage, and customized packages for introducing the Ramp-up programs in both literacy and math. Sites can also purchase technical assistance and coaching services from the model.

Model Studies Reviewed

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Berends, M., Kirby, S. N., Naftel, S., & McKelvey, C. (2000). *Implementation and performance in New American Schools three years into scale-up.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Education.

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Center for Policy Research in Education. (2001). *Moving mountains: Successes and challenges of the America's Choice comprehensive school reform design.* Philadelphia: Author.

Mason, B. (2005). *Achievement effects of five comprehensive school reform designs implemented in Los Angeles Unified School District.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pardee RAND Graduate School.

May, H., Supovitz, J., & Perda, D. (2004). *A longitudinal study of the impact on America's Choice on student performance in Rochester, New York, 1998-2003.* Philadelphia: Center for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

May, H., Supovitz, J., & Lesnick, J. (2004). *The impact of America's Choice on writing performance in Georgia: First-year results.* Philadelphia: Center for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

Supovitz, J., Taylor, B., & May, H. (2002). *The impact of America's Choice on student performance in Duval County, Florida.* Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

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ATLAS Learning Communities—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Review Results
Model Name:	ATLAS (Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment for All Students) Learning Communities
Model Mission/Focus:	ATLAS' mission is to enable every young person to fully realize his/her learning potential by building academically rigorous and caring schools that leave no child behind. In addition, ATLAS' schools use five key elements that serve as fundamental assumptions about how schools create substantive and long-lasting learning experiences for all students.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1993
Grade Levels Served:	K–12

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
100	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	57	26	17

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	$60,000–$80,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 2	$60,000–$80,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 3	$60,000–$80,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Years 4+	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. **Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:**
   - a. Evidence of positive overall effects
   - b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations
   - c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas
2. **Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes**
3. **Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement**
4. **Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design**
5. **Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:**
   - a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation
   - b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

Model Description

Since 1993, ATLAS (Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment for All Students) Learning Communities, Inc. has delivered comprehensive school improvement services to more than 150 schools nationwide. ATLAS was founded by four nationally recognized educational leaders: Dr. Howard Gardner of Project Zero at Harvard University, Dr. Theodore Sizer of the Coalition of Essential Schools, Ms. Janet Whitla of the Education Development Center, and Dr. James Comer of the School Development Program at Yale University. ATLAS' mission is to enable every young person to fully realize his/her learning potential by building academically rigorous and caring schools that ensure that no child is left behind.

Built on the research base and experience of the four founding partners, ATLAS offers a model for systemic change that leads to continuous improvement by changing the ways in which teachers and administrators think and work. The comprehensive approach is developed through the adoption of five key elements: teaching and learning, assessment, professional development, management and decision making, and family and community. This comprehensive approach is grounded further through a School Pathway—ATLAS' concept that views a child's passage from pre-K–12 as a unified program from grade to grade and subject to subject. Designed to interact with the unique site context by building on local assets, ATLAS provides network schools with a structured process and tools and strategies to create an environment for students' success.

ATLAS recognizes that school improvement is not a "one size fits all" endeavor and has developed alternatives for districts to consider. In 2005, ATLAS began to offer *Pathway Services* for classroom teachers, principals, and/or district administrators. The services can be delivered individually or together as part of a comprehensive approach.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards, the following were identified as core components of ATLAS Learning Communities: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; instruction; time and scheduling; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

ATLAS' mission is to enable every young person to fully realize his/her learning potential by building academically rigorous and caring schools that leave no child behind. In addition, ATLAS' schools use five key elements (teaching and learning, assessment, professional development, management and decision making, and family and community) that serve as fundamental assumptions about how schools create substantive and long-lasting learning experiences for all students.

Goals/Rationale

ATLAS Learning Communities seeks to ensure that students are integrated members of a global learning community and are lifelong learners and productive workers. To achieve this goal, ATLAS supports school communities on several fronts:

- Linking elementary, middle, and high schools as partners to ensure that academic and social connections are made from pre-K to grade 12 to support the success of every child. A Pathways Leadership Team (PLT) facilitates collaborative learning, curriculum alignment, instruction, and assessment to ensure a coherent academic program for each student.

- Preparing teachers to be the driving force in school improvement through a variety of professional development programs that create highly qualified teachers who meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act.
- Developing highly qualified school leaders who can guide systemic school change that is linked to an explicit and rigorous set of academic standards.
- Building school–community partnerships that embrace the assets of families and community organizations in the service of student learning and success.

Costs

The costs of the comprehensive model for the first 3 years of implementation range from $60,000 to 80,000 per year. The model costs for the 4th year of implementation depend on which ATLAS services are selected by the site. ATLAS negotiates the 4th-year costs directly with the site. Costs for services related to individual pathways are negotiated directly with the site. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact the model provider.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: ⊘

The CSRQ Center reviewed four quantitative studies for effects of ATLAS Learning Communities on student achievement at the middle and high school levels. None of those studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. Therefore, the overall rating of the effects of ATLAS Learning Communities on student achievement is zero. (Appendix C reports on the four studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: NR

No studies of ATLAS Learning Communities at the middle and high school levels met the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas

Rating: NR

No studies of ATLAS Learning Communities at the middle and high school levels met the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: NR

No studies of ATLAS Learning Communities at the middle and high school levels met the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: NR

No studies of ATLAS Learning Communities at the middle and high school levels met the CSRQ Center's

standards. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: 

Based on documentation provided by ATLAS Learning Communities, the model's design is grounded in the TFU framework and Dr. Comer's research and work on the School Development Program. ATLAS Learning Communities provided an explicit citation to support the following core components of the model: professional development and technical assistance. However, explicit citations for the following core components were not provided: organization and governance; instruction; time and scheduling; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is limited.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: 

Based on documentation provided by ATLAS Learning Communities, the model offers a formal process to help school staff establish an initial understanding of ATLAS Learning Communities and strategies to develop faculty buy-in. Additionally, the model offers a formal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. ATLAS Learning Communities also provides formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating:

ATLAS Learning Communities provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, ATLAS Learning Communities provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of its core components. ATLAS Learning Communities also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

ATLAS Learning Communities serves school feeder patterns, also known as pathways, which normally consist of one high school, two middle schools, and several elementary schools within a school district. ATLAS will work with individual school sites with the intention of expanding into a pathway. Before the school site or pathway makes a commitment to ATLAS, the school district and ATLAS staff evaluate whether the model fits local and state requirements and meets the needs of the school site or pathway. To this end, ATLAS staff members conduct an internal audit of the site. The audit provides the site with indepth information regarding the site's capacity to implement the model based on current state and local requirements. The assessment also provides the site with next steps for implementation. Finally, the audit provides an overview of the academic achievement of the site.

To deepen the site's understanding of the model, ATLAS Learning Communities conducts weekly meetings with school administrators in person or via phone or e-mail. ATLAS staff members also conduct

a formal presentation for the site's faculty, family members, and community in order to help these stakeholders gain an indepth understanding of ATLAS Learning Communities. In addition, ATLAS provides materials on the model to build faculty buy-in during the pre-implementation stage. While no minimum percentage of faculty buy-in is required, the model does require agreement among faculty prior to the model's adoption. Each individual site determines the level of consensus necessary for adoption.

After committing to the model, ATLAS assigns each site one ATLAS staff member, called an ATLAS site developer. The ATLAS site developer works with the site once a week to help facilitate implementation activities. The site developer provides guidance on professional development, teaching and learning practices, assessment, family and community involvement, and data-based decision making. For example, a site developer might work with ATLAS Learning Communities' study groups that consist of school site faculty to lead professional development activities, assist teachers with teaching and learning practices, or provide training on assessment tools. These site developers are trained by ATLAS and are generally members of the ATLAS staff.

Although the model does not require sites or pathways to hire additional staff, each pathway identifies an ATLAS Learning Communities liaison from within its staff to work closely with ATLAS throughout implementation. The model also requires schools to appoint a pathway administrator and site administrator whose support for the model is believed to be vital to successful implementation. The model requires pathway administrators to participate in professional development opportunities and to allocate funding for these professional development opportunities. The model also requires a site administrator to grant professional development release time for site staff and to participate in leadership groups. Furthermore, pathway and site administrators make decisions about time and scheduling, participate in leadership teams that consist of stakeholders from the school and community who support the leadership structure of the school, analyze student achievement data, and ensure that curriculum and instruction are carefully aligned with state and district standards.

Each site is required to form a PLT that consists of multiple stakeholders from the school and/or community, depending on how the model is being implemented locally. ATLAS trains the PLT to analyze and use data to improve instruction. Additionally, the PLT leads the local effort to provide for a coherent learning experience for students across classrooms, grades, and schools (depending on the local structure of the reform model). With the assistance of the ATLAS site developer, the PLT is also responsible for establishing the school's baseline data and subsequently for working with ATLAS to develop the implementation plan and school improvement plan. The PLT is intended to function as a vehicle for shared decision making and leadership and is trained in the analysis and use of data to support the instructional vision of the school or group of schools across grade levels and content areas. According to ATLAS, this contributes to the alignment and the coherence of learning opportunities across schools and grades.

In addition, ATLAS Learning Communities requires site-based or pathway-based autonomy in the areas of curriculum, instruction, staffing, and scheduling. Decision making about these topics is a collaborative process conducted by the PLT.

Curriculum and Instruction

ATLAS Learning Communities does not have its own curriculum and does not require sites to adopt certain curricula. Nonetheless, the PLT, administrators, teachers, and family members are all actively involved in making decisions about curriculum.

Teaching and assessment are designed to promote student mastery and understanding of important facts, concepts, and skills. Therefore, ATLAS supports teachers in developing the basic strategies and tools for improving teaching and assessment through TFU. The four-part TFU framework focuses on instructional strategies and practices across all grade and content area standards, accommodates the skills and abilities of students over a developmental continuum, and connects these with ongoing assessment.

The model requires sites to adopt the TFU framework, which guides teaching and instruction. The framework is a guideline for organizing and linking curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Pathways use the framework to adapt or modify their existing curricula and to align these curricula with state and district standards. The framework seeks to embed assessment in student learning so that knowledge is applied and synthesized.

Through TFU, ATLAS provides teachers with sample lesson plans in all core content areas and guidance on instructional practices. The model recommends that teachers use the following instructional strategies: group instruction, project-based activities, hands-on activities, and cooperative learning. ATLAS provides teachers and staff with training on the framework and instructional strategies through annual TFU Institutes.

Scheduling and Grouping

Although the model does not have specific grouping requirements, it recognizes the importance of flexible grouping.

The model does require schools to make scheduling modifications to allow for study groups and PLT meetings during the school day. The purpose of these meetings is to provide time for school staff collaboration and planning.

Technology

The model does not require sites to use technology for instruction. However, ATLAS Learning Communities does use technology to facilitate networking among the ATLAS Learning Communities sites. For example, the ATLAS Connection, an online database, provides site-based information on all of the ATLAS Learning Communities sites. The database features individual Web sites with specific site-based information such as demographics and implementation plans. The database also serves as an online forum for ATLAS Learning Communities sites to share information about resources or materials.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

The model requires ongoing assessment of student progress and performance. Specifically, ATLAS Learning Communities requires sites to use teacher-developed assessments, commercial diagnostics, and state and district assessments to gauge student progress. ATLAS Learning Communities also requires teachers to assess student progress using performance-based assessments, portfolios, and teacher observations. The model provider encourages teachers to use multiple assessment measures, including diagnostic assessments and ongoing progress monitoring assessments. The progress monitoring assessments help teachers identify students in need of special services and interventions, refine instructional strategies, and align teaching objectives with state standards.

Again, TFU connects teaching and assessment strategies and tools. (For a description of TFU, see the section titled "Curriculum and Instruction.") The TFU framework helps teachers conduct embedded, ongoing assessments of students' learning by engaging them in "performances of understanding," which requires students to apply, extend, and synthesize what they know. This portion of the assessment is linked back

to the developmental continuum to inform teachers of their students' progress and the areas of need.

Additionally, the model employs data-based decision making across ATLAS Learning Communities sites. The primary tool used for data-based decision making is the ATLAS Rubric. The rubric provides a detailed description of the five ATLAS Learning Communities elements with corresponding criteria and indicators for each of the elements. The rubric also describes the roles of school faculty, parents, district administration, and the PLT. These roles require all key stakeholders to make decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment based on analyses of student achievement data.

The PLT is responsible for designing an accountability strategy with measurable goals for student academic achievement that links school progress to the district and/or state benchmarks and to the school's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). At the beginning of the ATLAS implementation, the ATLAS site developer assists the PLT in the analysis of student data to establish the baseline of the school's current performance. The following information is reviewed as part of the baseline assessment process:

- School improvement plan
- State and local assessments
- AYP status
- Student attendance
- Student discipline statistics
- Student dropout rate
- Postgraduate plans (for high schools)
- Student work

Family and Community Involvement

Family and community involvement is one of the five elements of the model. The ATLAS Rubric is a set of implementation indicators for schools and districts, and because family and community involvement is an essential component of the model, it identifies the specific roles and responsibilities of family and community members. Specifically, the rubric states that families and community members should become involved in volunteer activities in the classroom, serve on the PLT, and provide tutorial support to students.

ATLAS Learning Communities expects school administrators to establish support programs for parents and to conduct surveys to measure parent concern and satisfaction. Likewise, the PLT ensures that school facilities are available for community use and forms partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and social service entities. The ATLAS site developer trains the PLT to map the assets of the community in order to guide these partnerships as well as other forms of community outreach.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

ATLAS Learning Communities requires professional development prior to and during full implementation. The professional development plan includes the following:

- Principals' Institutes
- Pathways to Understanding Institutes
- ATLAS Study Groups
- ATLAS Summer Leadership Institutes
- TFU Institutes

The Principals' Institute occurs yearly and involves an intensive 3-day workshop for the site leaders on model design and implementation. Like the Principals' Institute, the Pathways to Understanding Institutes, ATLAS Summer Leadership Institutes, and TFU Institutes provide information about the model's theoretical foundations and strategies for implementation.

Pathways to Understanding Institutes, the model's annual national teachers' conference, convenes teachers from across the country to modify existing curricula for collaboration around instructional challenges.

ATLAS study groups provide day-to-day professional development for site faculty. An ATLAS study group consists of three to six faculty members. All school faculty members meet in study groups, where they examine student work, address instructional needs, and develop their understanding of core academic content areas.

ATLAS Learning Communities also focuses on building school capacity to provide professional development through site-based coaching, critical friends' visits, and administrator input on professional development. Specifically, ATLAS Learning Communities helps schools build organizational capacity and a climate of collaboration through the formation of a PLT, which builds on existing leadership structures and is made up of multiple stakeholders from within the school and the community.

The professional development plan also includes cross-site visits and collaboration among pathway sites. Both existing and new staff receive ongoing professional development during implementation.

Furthermore, ATLAS provides technical assistance on a weekly basis to sites through the ATLAS site developer. The site developer works with the sites to support the elements of the ATLAS Learning Communities design (e.g., ATLAS study groups and the PLT), to help the sites with the full implementation of the model, and to assist with building capacity to provide professional development.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

ATLAS provides school administrators and teachers with the ATLAS Rubric, a formal set of implementation benchmarks and indicators. The ATLAS Rubric includes benchmarks for the five central elements of the model: teaching and learning, assessment, professional development, management and decision making, and family and community. The rubric also provides a detailed description of the five ATLAS Learning Communities elements and corresponding criteria for the elements' underlying principles. The rubric includes indicators for the beginning, developing, and advanced stages of implementation for each criterion.

The PLT and site developer use the ATLAS Rubric to map the existing practices within the school site into the five key elements of the ATLAS Learning Communities design. Criteria and indicators support each element, and for each criterion, the rubric describes the indicators one might observe. The results of the baseline assessment process are used to develop the ATLAS Learning Communities Implementation Plan, which is directly linked to the school improvement plan. (For more information on the baseline assessment process, see the section titled "Monitoring Student Progress and Performance.") The implementation plan lists the focus elements, action steps, a timeline, and key personnel responsible in each of these areas. The implementation plan is a site-specific plan that is used for evaluating and monitoring implementation progress. The implementation plan is also used to customize benchmarks, which are found in the ATLAS Rubric, for a specific school site.

Administrators and teachers at ATLAS Learning Communities sites use benchmarks and pre-assessments, mid-point assessments, and annual reports to guide and monitor implementation. ATLAS Learning Communities also includes both formative and summative evaluations that are conducted onsite by ATLAS staff, administrators, and cross-site visitors. ATLAS staff members, in particular the ATLAS site developer, provide feedback to the sites to improve implementation of the model.

Special Considerations

ATLAS Learning Communities targets school feeder patterns or pathways to develop a unified K–12 experience. However, according to ATLAS, the model provider will work with a single school that intends to "grow" a pathway. Pathways require collaboration across multiple school sites within a school district. Thus, district support for ATLAS Learning Communities implementation and the support of leaders from the schools within the K–12 pathway should be assessed when schools are considering the model. In addition, the model focuses on professional development, including ATLAS study groups.

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Coalition of Essential Schools—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Quality Review Results
Model Name:	Coalition of Essential Schools (CES)
Model Mission/Focus:	The mission of CES National is to transform public education by making all schools personalized, equitable, and intellectually vibrant.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1984
Grade Levels Served:	K–12

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
Approximately 600	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	N/A	N/A	N/A

Costs[1]

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 2	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 3	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Years 4+	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. **Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:**
   - a. Evidence of positive overall effects — ⊘
   - b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations — NR
   - c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas — NR
2. **Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes** — NR
3. **Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement** — NR
4. **Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design** — ◕
5. **Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:**
   - a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation — ◕
   - b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation — ●

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative NR = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

[1]Schools may join the CES national affiliate for $500 annually. Implementation costs vary by affiliate center and contracted services.

Model Description

Theodore R. Sizer built the 10 principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) on theories that arose from his works, *A Study of High Schools* (1984b) and *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School: The First Report From a Study of High Schools* (1984a). In 1984, a group of schools met and decided to redesign themselves based on Sizer's principles. This group formed the coalition. Sizer then formed a team based at Brown University to support these first schools.

Currently, CES serves grades K–12 and is a network of schools and centers that work together to create schools based on CES's 10 Common Principles. The model has a CES National Office in Oakland, California, and 22 CES affiliate centers across the country. Each affiliate center is independent and has the autonomy to create services appropriate for the schools it serves.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center standards, the following were identified as core components of the model: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; instruction; inclusion; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. The model identified an additional core component, continuous improvement and leadership, which is supported through the professional development. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

The mission of CES National is to transform public education by making all schools personalized, equitable, and intellectually vibrant.

Goals/Rationale

Four organizational goals form CES's "Theory of Action":

- **Exchange.** According to CES, exchanging knowledge and practices enhances schools' capacity to become more intellectually vibrant, personalized, and equitable and enhances the affiliate centers' capacity to support schools.
- **Growth.** CES seeks to increase (a) the number of schools that adopt the model's mission and enact the model's 10 Common Principles and (b) the capacity of regional centers to support schools.
- **Improvement.** CES seeks to improve the work of schools that have already adopted the CES principles and to improve the work of the affiliate centers that support schools.
- **Influence.** CES seeks to influence or shape public policy and public opinion to create an environment that is more conducive to equitable, personalized, and intellectually vibrant schools.

CES demonstrates its theory of action through 10 Common Principles:

- Teaching children to use their minds
- Focusing on a limited number of essential skills
- Applying the same goals to all students
- Personalizing teaching and learning
- Viewing students as workers and teachers as coaches
- Assessing students on real tasks with multiple forms of evidence
- Establishing a culture of trust and decency
- Assigning staff to multiple roles to establish a commitment to the whole school

- Concentrating maximum resources on teaching and learning
- Demonstrating policies and practices that are inclusive and honor diversity

CES holds that each school community can best determine the methods for embedding the 10 Common Principles within the school.

Costs

National affiliation with CES costs $500 annually and provides benefits to schools and/or districts such as a nationwide reform network, opportunities to participate in CES research projects, a waiver or discount on registration fees for professional development offerings, and subscriptions to newsletters and publications from CES. The CES National Office also supports schools directly.

If a school aligns with a CES affiliate center, together they customize a reform model for the site based on the 10 Common Principles. Implementation costs vary by affiliate center. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, schools should directly contact the model provider.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: ⊘

The CSRQ Center reviewed 23 quantitative studies for effects of CES on student achievement at the middle and high school levels. None of these studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. Therefore, the overall rating of the effects of CES on student achievement is zero. (Appendix D reports on the 23 studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: NR

No studies of CES met the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas

Rating: NR

No studies of CES met the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: NR

No studies of CES met the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: NR

No studies of CES met the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: ◕

Based on documentation provided by the model, CES's Common Principles are derived from Dr. Sizer's

works on high schools: *A Study of High Schools* (1984b) and *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School: The First Report From a Study of High Schools* (1984a). These studies support the following core components: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; instruction; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. However, explicit citations were not provided for the following core component: inclusion. Therefore, the rating for this category is moderately strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating:

Based on documentation provided by CES, the model offers an informal process to help school staff establish an initial understanding of CES and strategies to develop faculty buy-in. Furthermore, CES offers a formal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time but does not monitor such allocation. CES also provides formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, the rating for this category is moderately strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: 

CES provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, CES provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of the model's core components. CES also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

There are three ways that schools and/or districts may choose to affiliate with CES. First, schools may philosophically decide to follow the principles of CES and adopt various elements of the reform process. Second, schools may choose to affiliate with the CES National Office. The CES National Office provides direct technical assistance and benefits to schools, such as discounts on professional development opportunities and subscriptions to newsletters and publications. Finally, schools may affiliate with a CES affiliate center. The CES affiliate centers use the 10 Common Principles as a framework to bring knowledge and skills to schools regarding change in four areas: classroom practice, school organization, leadership, and parent/community connections.

When a school begins to work with a CES affiliate center, the process starts with informational planning meetings with school leadership teams. The center and the school work together to create an action plan that includes data-based and inquiry-driven schedules, expectations, benchmarks, targets, and outcome goals. The plan should build on the successful elements of the school's existing programs. At the same time, the school leadership team continuously communicates with all stakeholders (faculty, staff, students, parents, and other community members) to develop a clear understanding of the CES mission and goals. Depending on each school, these meetings can be multiday institutes, retreats, symposia, or workshops. The direct CES coaching work begins once the action plan has been determined.

Schools considering the CES model need teacher buy-in for implementation. CES recommends that teachers have time to coordinate instructional activities that support the CES principles. Furthermore, CES encourages teachers to continually discuss and refine their craft through shared decision making and common planning time.

CES requires that an onsite coach work with school staff and administrators. In addition, a team of professional development experts works with the district and school staff. These two requirements are common across all CES affiliate centers.

Curriculum and Instruction

The CES model does not require the use of specific curricula, but it does include essential skills that all students must master. These skills and areas reflect, to varying degrees, traditional academic disciplines (such as math and reading). However, CES recommends that mastery and achievement shape a school's curriculum design rather than content coverage. The model believes that the emphasis should be on the depth and understanding of the concepts rather than on the amount of material covered.

According to the CES principles, schools should view students and teachers as learning partners. CES believes that this collaborative approach provides opportunities for students to assume ownership of their work; participate in varied roles in the classroom such as investigator, team player, and leader; and critically examine their performance and achievement.

CES offers a process to ensure that a school's curriculum, instruction, and performance assessments are aligned with state standards, but the content of that curriculum varies based on each school's unique needs.

CES also provides guidance to schools on instructional strategies to promote higher-order thinking skills. Strategies such as inquiry into cause and effect and an examination of different perspectives are examples of classroom practices that promote higher-order thinking. The model also highly recommends heterogeneous grouping, small-group instruction, hands-on activities, student-to-student discussions, and the use of technology to enhance the learning process. Instructional strategies should allow students to apply various learning styles to the process.

According to CES's 10 Common Principles, the model fosters an environment in which the student is a worker and the teacher is a coach, rather than the more familiar arrangement with a teacher serving as the deliverer of instructional services. As coaches, CES teachers encourage students to learn how to learn and thus to teach themselves. Through this learner-centered approach, CES aims to help students acquire independent learning skills such as justifying their beliefs with evidence, critically examining issues and events, questioning bias and stereotyping, and conducting realistic and authentic problemsolving.

Scheduling and Grouping

Each school designs the appropriate structures, scheduling, and grouping practices that support its individual goals. Although CES does not require specific organizational structures or schedules such as houses, block scheduling, dedicated instructional blocks, or specific school hours, CES administrators find that as schools implement the model's practices and principles, they often initiate changes in these areas.

To enact the model's 10 Common Principles, CES highly recommends that teachers have responsibility for no more than 80 students at the middle and high school levels. CES's developers believe smaller classes and low overall student loads help teachers foster a personalized teaching and learning experience and provide teachers with time and opportunities for collaborative planning.

CES provides guidance, materials, and strategies for inclusion as guided by its principles. The model encourages differentiated instruction to meet the individual needs of students. Schools following the CES principles should demonstrate nondiscriminatory and inclusive policies and use democratic practices that involve all stakeholders such as families, teachers, school leaders, and community members.

Technology

CES recommends but does not require the use of technology for teachers and students.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

The model claims to help schools implement research-based best practices in three focus areas to monitor student progress and performance:

- Aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment with state standards and the CES principles
- Establishing collaborative, reflective learning communities to look at student work to inform teacher practice
- Engaging in data-driven decision making and action research using the CES Cycle of Inquiry to design lessons and interventions that meet each student's needs

CES uses different types of formative and summative assessments. Assessment results are used to guide instructional groups and to identify students with special needs or needing intervention. Schools disaggregate data to assess the effective implementation of instructional, curricular, and other strategies to achieve high outcomes for all students. Schools analyze a wide range of data to drive the instructional program of the school and to fine-tune their classroom practices.

The model encourages teachers to assess students' performance through a demonstration of mastery using performance assessments on real-life tasks. For example, students may complete projects and have opportunities to exhibit their expertise before family and community audiences. Likewise, teachers conduct observations to understand each student's strengths and needs and to plan for appropriate instruction. Teachers then provide intensive support and resources to students who have not reached appropriate levels of competence to assist them in meeting those standards. Consequently, student achievement in the classroom depends on mastery rather than time spent in class.

Data-driven assessment and instructional practices help CES schools work toward a culture of continuous school improvement. External and internal evaluators conduct formative evaluations at some CES schools. Additionally, external evaluators perform summative evaluations.

Family and Community Involvement

Each CES affiliate center works with schools to create specific strategies to encourage family and community participation. Centers may engage parents, businesses, and organizations in activities such as tutoring, volunteering in the classroom or library, or participating in schoolwide planning committees. The model believes that the community and school need to work together and hold each other accountable for the achievement of all students.

Additionally, CES wants schools to actively involve and engage family and community members in the life of the school through such activities as student exhibitions and tutoring. CES also encourages school staff to develop "critical friends' relationships" with parents and community members by inviting them to participate in a school review, engage in an exchange of ideas to support school improvement, and assess student work.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

CES affiliate centers aim to deliver knowledge and skills necessary for school change by creating and sustaining professional learning communities. CES does not offer a one-size-fits-all professional development model, but believes support systems are central to developing a reflective learning community and reaching and maintaining high student achievement.

The CES professional development program is required for teachers and administrators. Parents, students, and other community members are often invited to attend. Program offerings and requirements, such as summer sessions, workshops, and institutes vary by affiliate center. Examples of professional development activities include the following:

- The trek—a summer institute offered by centers across the country
- School coaching—regular onsite consultations
- Principal institutes—sessions to build leadership capacity
- Implementation assessment workshops—workshops that show schools ways to measure progress against their benchmarks
- Peer coaching or visits to CES schools

The affiliate centers provide ongoing training for leadership teams, school-based coaches, and other school leaders. These centers work to establish school-based professional learning communities that are data driven and student centered to build capacity for schools to sustain professional development beyond the grant. For example, school personnel may participate in Peer Coaching Training or visits to CES schools. Depending on the size of the school, a school may have one or more onsite coaches. All coaches are experienced educators with expertise in instructional practices, professional learning communities, leadership, data analysis, and best practices.

The CES National Office hosts a CES Summer Institute and Fall Forum each year as additional professional development opportunities for schools affiliated nationally or through a center with CES, schools adhering to the model's 10 Common Principles, and schools interested in learning more about CES. The CES Web site also maintains "CES Interactive," an online service that provides access to electronic news bulletins, the CES e-ssential News, information on the Summer Institute and Fall Forum, and CES ChangeLab. ChangeLab is a Web initiative that provides a range of resources on best practices.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

The CES National Office has a complete benchmark document used for an annual review of implementation status. However, the degree to which schools engage in this annual review depends on the particular practices and strategies supported by each affiliate center. In most cases, the CES affiliate centers distribute the benchmarks to all schools and teachers. The benchmarks are also available on the model's Web site.

The benchmarks have five interconnected categories: student achievement, classroom practice, organizational practice, community connections, and leadership. Each category has indicators aligned with the principles. For example, Principle 2, which focuses on a limited number of essential skills, states that an indicator for leadership is that school leaders engage in coaching and supporting teachers to establish specific competencies for all students. The CES Small Schools Project includes an additional benchmark category, continuous school improvement. Under this category, schools demonstrate a commitment toward continuous improvement through data-driven processes and structures. These structures are created and sustained to allow all learners to develop intellectually.

The CES benchmarks are organized by principle and are intended to assist schools in assessing their reform effort. Because schools implement the CES model to varying degrees, the benchmarks are examples and indicators of high implementation where the 10 Common Principles are being followed closely. Schools can use the benchmarks to identify strengths, weaknesses, and strategies for improvement and to establish goals for subsequent years.

Special Considerations

Various levels of affiliation are available to schools participating in the CES network. The most comprehensive implementation of the model entails curriculum and instructional change based on CES's 10 Common Principles and benchmarks. Schools that implement the comprehensive model are often affiliated with the CES affiliate centers and receive all of the CES professional development, technical support, coaching, and Web-based resources. CES schools may also affiliate with the CES National Office, which also provides direct support to schools.

References

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Sizer, T. R. (1984b). *A study of high schools.* Arlington, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

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Expeditionary Learning—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Quality Review Results
Model Name:	Expeditionary Learning
Model Mission/Focus:	The mission of the Expeditionary Learning model is to help create and sustain a national network of good and improving elementary, middle, and high schools in places where good and improving schools are not the norm. Expeditionary Learning also seeks to use active teaching and learning, a positive school culture, and equal emphasis on academic and personal growth to bring out the best in administrators, teachers, and students.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1993
Grade Levels Served:	K–12

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
150	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	N/A	N/A	N/A

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Years 4+	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:	
a. Evidence of positive overall effects	◔
b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	NR
c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:	
Reading and math	◔
Language arts, science, and social studies	⊘
2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes	NR
3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	NR
4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	NR
5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:	
a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	NR
b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	NR

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative NR = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

Model Description

Although the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center conducted a conversation with Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (the model provider) for *CSRQ Center Report on Elementary School Comprehensive School Reform Models,* the CSRQ Center was unable to conduct a conversation with the model provider for this report. The information presented in the Expeditionary Learning description was collected using the model's Web site and responses from the conversation with the model provider for the report on elementary school CSR models.

Researchers developed Expeditionary Learning in the early 1990s based on the Outward Bound model. Although Outward Bound uses outdoor adventure to promote core values and skills, the Expeditionary Learning model is not a wilderness adventure series. Rather, the model applies Outward Bound's educational principles and practices related to teaching, learning, and school culture. (The organization behind Expeditionary Learning draws upon the educational and developmental ideas of Outward Bound's founder, Kurt Hahn, and Outward Bound's significant history of teaching through adventure and service. Expeditionary Learning has its own nonprofit 501(c)(3) status, but operates in close concert with other Outward Bound entities in the United States and around the world.)

In 1992, the New American Schools Development Corporation selected the Expeditionary Learning proposal for 5-year support, and in 1993, Expeditionary Learning started with 10 demonstration schools (nine of which are still active partners). Today there are 150 Expeditionary Learning schools in more than 25 states.

According to the CSRQ Center's standards, the following components were identified as core components of Expeditionary Learning: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

According to Expeditionary Learning, schools should involve students in active learning projects, create a caring but demanding culture, and share a common vision for improved student learning and performance. The model developers believe that transformative learning takes place when skills and understanding are connected to the real world and that "authentic" practices in the classroom create academic rigor, character growth, and exemplary social standards.

Goals/Rationale

The goal of the Expeditionary Learning school reform model is to design schools where all students excel, engage in active learning, and connect their learning to the real world. The expected outcomes are (a) students motivated to be responsible for their own learning and the culture of the school and (b) teachers and administrators motivated to be able to improve student learning and achievement.

Costs

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the model provider, nor was it able to find publicly available information on the model's costs. For information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: 

The CSRQ Center reviewed 13 quantitative studies for effects of Expeditionary Learning on student achievement at the middle and high school levels. Two of these studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. The CSRQ Center considers the findings of the two studies to be *suggestive,* meaning that the CSRQ Center has limited confidence in the results of the studies. Both studies used a longitudinal cohort design, and one study reported 50% statistically significant positive findings. Because none of the studies are considered to be conclusive, findings are consistent with an overall rating of limited. The two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards are described below. (Appendix E reports on the 11 studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

One study that was considered to be suggestive examined the outcomes of cohorts of eighth-grade students in one middle school in the midwestern United States that served a predominantly middle-class population. The study reported percentages of students who scored at a proficient or advanced level in five subtests (reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies) of the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations. The percentage of proficient students in four of the five subject areas increased from the baseline year to the 1st year of implementation. However, the percentages of proficient students declined from the 1st to 2nd year of implementation. The study did not examine a level of statistical significance.[1]

The second study that was considered to be suggestive examined outcomes of students in three large school districts in three states in the northeastern United States.[2] All schools examined served predominantly low socioeconomic status (SES) populations. Two schools served primarily minority students, and one school served primarily White students. Student achievement outcomes in reading and math for seventh- and eighth-grade students were examined using nationally standardized tests. This study reported statistically significant positive effects of Expeditionary Learning after 2 years of implementation in half of the findings reported.

Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: 

No studies of Expeditionary Learning that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the impact of this model on student achievement for diverse student populations. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is no rating.

The CSRQ Center urges readers to not necessarily judge a no rating or a low rating for this subcategory as evidence that Expeditionary Learning cannot be effective in Title I schools or other schools with similar student populations. One study of this model that met the CSRQ Center's standards included schools that served primarily low SES students. Thus, readers may interpret the CSRQ Center's overall rating in the category of positive overall effects on student achievement as an indicator of the model's effectiveness in working in challenging settings.

[1] Level of statistical significance is determined by a statistical test and demonstrates whether the observed changes are likely to have occurred by chance alone.

[2] Multiple analyses were conducted in this study. However, only analyses based on three school sites met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

Rating: ◔

Two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined student outcomes in reading at the middle school level. One study reported statistically significant positive findings after 2 years of implementation in two thirds of reading outcomes. However, none of the studies are considered to be conclusive. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Math

Rating: ◔

Two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined student outcomes in math at the middle school level. One study reported statistically significant positive findings after 2 years of implementation in one third of math outcomes. However, none of the studies are considered to be conclusive. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Language Arts

Rating: ⊘

One study that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined outcomes in language arts among eighth-grade students. The study reported mixed results. However, the study did not conduct tests of statistical significance. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Science

Rating: ⊘

One study that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined outcomes in science among eighth-grade students. The study reported mixed results. However, the study did not conduct tests of statistical significance. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Social Studies

Rating: ⊘

One study that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined outcomes in social studies among eighth-grade students. The study reported mixed results. However, the study did not conduct tests of statistical significance. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: NR

No studies of Expeditionary Learning that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the impact of this model on additional student outcomes. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: NR

No studies of Expeditionary Learning that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the impact of this model on parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: NR

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the model provider, nor was it able to find publicly available information to rate this dimension of Expeditionary Learning's model for secondary schools. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: NR

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the model provider, nor was it able to find publicly available information to rate this dimension of Expeditionary Learning's model for secondary schools. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is no rating.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: NR

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the model provider, nor was it able to find publicly available information to rate this dimension of Expeditionary Learning's model for secondary schools. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is no rating.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

The full implementation of Expeditionary Learning requires an 80% commitment by teachers because the reform entails structural and cultural changes, mandatory staff development, and acceptance of the Expeditionary Learning design principles and core practices, plus participation in team planning and student advocacy meetings.

After schools decide to participate in the model, the Expeditionary Learning staff collaborates with the local school leadership to develop an implementation plan. The support includes an analysis of student achievement, assessment of current instructional and curriculum practices, review of budgetary constraints and financial resources, and a presentation of the Expeditionary Learning core practices and principles to administration and faculty.

Principals are expected to support implementation of the model by mentoring teachers, attending conferences, sharing decision making, allowing release time for professional development, establishing common planning periods, and attending staff training.

Expeditionary Learning schools participate in a national network that sustains the model. The network provides a forum for sharing project units, "learning expeditions," assessment practices, scheduling models, and instructional materials. Districts and regions already involved in the network mentor new schools by scheduling onsite visits, arranging classroom observations, and inviting staff to attend onsite training models.

Site-based autonomy over the instructional model, staffing, and budgets is recommended and pursued by Expeditionary Learning. Initially, assessment practices, organizational approaches, leadership strategies, and evaluation techniques are modeled by Expeditionary Learning staff with an incremental shift in governance to the local school.

Curriculum and Instruction

The Expeditionary Learning model does not include a prescribed curriculum, but each school is responsible for creating an instructional model that aligns with the model philosophy. The philosophy is based on 10 design principles.

- **Self-discovery.** Students participate in tasks that require perseverance, imagination, discipline, and achievement.

- **Wonderful ideas.** Students are involved in activities that require contemplation, reflection, and experimentation.
- **Responsibility for learning.** Both students and teachers are responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.
- **Empathy and caring.** Students participate in small learning communities with adults assuming advocacy roles. Older students also provide mentoring support to younger students.
- **Success and failure.** Students experience accomplishments and hardships and learn to take risks and meet difficult challenges.
- **Collaboration and competition.** Students are encouraged to do their personal best and strive for excellence.
- **Diversity and inclusion.** Students learn about diversity and discover the richness of a mosaic of cultures and communities.
- **Natural world.** Students investigate global issues and learn about the effect of scientific phenomena.
- **Solitude and reflection.** Students engage in activities that include self-reflection and interactive discussions with other students.
- **Service and compassion.** Students participate in service learning activities to learn the importance of social responsibility.

The model also has five core practices intended to guide teaching and learning.

- **Learning expeditions.** These expeditions take place over 6 to 8 weeks and include real-world indepth study of interdisciplinary topics that promote critical thinking, literacy, character development, and civic responsibility.
- **Active pedagogy.** When students are not on learning expeditions, classroom practices are active and engaging. Teachers talk less, students do more.
- **School culture and character.** Shared traditions and beliefs create a safe climate, sense of adventure, ethic of service, and desire for excellence.
- **Leadership and school improvement.** Schools establish a professional learning community that focuses on exemplary instruction, improving student achievement, and creating a positive school climate.
- **School structure.** Flexible schedules for students and teachers, such as block scheduling and common planning periods, provide a forum for collaborative planning and interdisciplinary units of study. Students stay with the same teacher for 2 to 3 years to build strong bonds and relationships between students and teachers.

Expeditionary Learning staff provides an average of 30 to 35 days per year of onsite professional development in the application of the model's design principles and core practices.

Engagement in 6- to 8-week learning expeditions, a primary instructional practice, immerses students in real learning situations. Teachers design long-range interdisciplinary units that shift the learning from the classroom to the community. For example, a biography unit involves interviews with seniors who live in the community. The students prepare interview questions, videotape interviews, and investigate local town archives to learn more about the local history.

All expeditions conclude with presentations to audiences that go beyond one classroom and that have expertise in the area being presented. These authentic demonstrations motivate students to conduct thorough investigations of a topic, because they are responsible for publicly sharing their results. They learn the importance of verifying information through

credible sources and identifying multiple resources related to an issue, topic, or problem.

Teachers are encouraged to develop or select units of instruction, fiction and nonfiction books, and multimedia resources that support the core practices. In addition, Expeditionary Learning developers and other Expeditionary Learning schools create supplementary instructional materials that are incorporated into the overall instructional model.

Scheduling and Grouping

The model emphasizes the importance of changing the school structure to optimize learning and teaching. Expeditionary Learning provides professional development strategies to support alternative grouping, scheduling, and organizational changes. A supportive culture is maintained through advisory meetings with teachers and students, inclusive classrooms, and the required practice of "looping" students so that they are assigned to the same teacher for 2–3 years.

Expeditionary Learning requires block scheduling to allow for more interaction, collaboration, and planning for students. With extended periods of time, students have the opportunity to reflect, expand, and refine projects and assignments. For example, because more time is allotted for completion of writing assignments, students are able to peer-edit, conference with teachers, and revise within a class period. Common planning time for teachers is essential.

The model design consists of small group instruction for all students within a class. The composition of the groups is based on teacher observations, skill mastery, and ongoing assessments in all disciplines. Block schedules provide extended time for teachers to discuss student progress, regroup students, and adjust instructional strategies across disciplines and grades. Additionally, larger planning blocks allow teachers to organize more indepth activities, as well as critically examine instructional practices.

An essential component of the Expeditionary Learning model is the "crew" or teacher advisory meetings. The crew (10–15 students and a teacher) helps create a positive relationship between students and teachers. The meetings provide an opportunity for students to get assistance on projects, assignments, and personal matters and serve as a forum for students to discuss schoolwide policies and present proposals for changes or modification to current school procedures.

Expeditionary Learning classrooms are inclusive and heterogeneous. The rationale is that all students are given an equal and equitable opportunity to learn in the least restrictive instructional setting possible.

Technology

The use of technology by teachers and students is recommended, but not required, for implementation. Where availability permits, Expeditionary Learning encourages the use of computers for instructional purposes, as well as noninstructional purposes such as record-keeping and communication.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

A range of diverse assessments is essential to determine student progress in the Expeditionary Learning model. Using these assessments allows schools to create instructional groups and identify students with special needs. In addition to the assessments, Expeditionary Learning schools conduct surveys, observations, and individual conferences to track student achievement.

The Expeditionary Learning model provides technical support and professional development to expand the faculty and administrative capacity for administering,

conducting, and interpreting assessments. In addition, students are involved in assessing their own work in ways that make assessment a better strategy for improving student learning. The performance-based approaches embedded in the model lend themselves to a different approach to assessment. Because the model involves student investigations, self-studies, research, demonstrations, and exhibitions, effective assessment can be designed around these active learning activities. These assessments focus on the participatory skills and processes involved in the self-directed activities of Expeditionary Learning. The tools include observation checklists, rubrics, self-evaluations, and portfolio assessments.

Both external and internal evaluators use formative and summative evaluations annually to assess student progress and performance and give feedback to the school regarding strengths, weaknesses, and strategies for improved implementation.

Family and Community Involvement

Family and community involvement is core to the Expeditionary Learning model and is encouraged in a number of ways. Family or community members can volunteer in a classroom or the library, serve on a governance committee, or offer their services as a tutor or an expert resource. Recognitions, meetings, and newsletters are other ways in which Expeditionary Learning encourages involvement.

Furthermore, the nature of the Expeditionary Learning model makes involvement integral. Schools must get parental permission for field trips and other expeditions, and the final projects and lessons are often presented to members of the community as public performances, not just to the class or teacher.

The local community plays an integral role in the design of the Expeditionary Learning model. The curriculum requires students to learn and gain knowledge from adults in the school and also from business leaders and residents in their surrounding neighborhoods. For example, a newspaper editor might be invited into the classroom to talk about objective reporting of the news. Or, an environmental specialist could talk to a class about the local water purification process.

Besides school visitations by local members of the community, field trips are scheduled for students to discover the rich resources that are available within their surrounding communities. For example, as students study the concept of a democracy, they could observe a small claims court proceeding to learn about individual legal rights, or they could visit a local broadcasting station to learn more about freedom of speech and its implication for disseminating information through the mass media.

According to Expeditionary Learning, the involvement of the family and community is paramount to the successful implementation of the model. The partnership with these groups fosters the concept of authentic learning, which is a major component of the model.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The Expeditionary Learning model includes a comprehensive program of professional development and technical assistance services to the faculty and leadership of each school over a period of at least 5 years to help schools develop a vision and set of practices rooted in and related to the model's design principles and core practices.

As members of the Expeditionary Learning network, schools receive a tailored package of onsite and offsite professional development and technical services. It includes reading and writing practices, curriculum planning, learning expeditions and active pedagogy, and the development of a strong and positive school culture.

The initial training involves a 1-week leadership institute that focuses on the structural and cultural components of the Expeditionary Leaning model. The institute provides an opportunity for schools to determine readiness to implement the model. The staff assists schools in planning schedules, developing team plans, and organizing student groups. Following the institute, the entire school staff participates in a 3-day training program to learn about Expeditionary Learning instructional and assessment practices and to develop learning expeditions.

During implementation, training is required for teachers and administrators in the form of summer institutes, residential summits, and year-round workshops. The delivery of services depends on the contractual agreement between the school and Expeditionary Learning, but can range from 75 to 125 hours offsite and 200 to 250 hours onsite.

The annual national conference showcases Expeditionary Learning teachers' work from across the model's network. Expeditionary Learning leadership from headquarters, regional areas, and school districts present the latest research and successful school practices and report on school improvement and reform nationwide. For example, the 2005 conference theme focused on the fusion of learning expeditions, active pedagogy, and character development.

During the summer, residential summits are conducted for educators from the Expeditionary Learning schools. The teachers engage in learning expeditions, similar to their students, to experience the impact of authentic learning. Throughout the summit they are given an opportunity to develop their own expeditions, question the process, and plan cooperatively with their colleagues. Another type of residential training offered during the summer is the institute, which is a forum for deepening and renewing understanding of the Expeditionary Learning common principles and core practices. Institutes are also held during the school year.

Schools may also participate in onsite seminars through visits to a model Expeditionary Learning school to observe demonstrations of Expeditionary Learning core practices. During the visits, participants observe classrooms, meet with teachers and administrators, and engage in conversations with colleagues from other Expeditionary Learning schools.

Throughout the school year, release time is provided for teachers to attend onsite workshops. The workshops include topics such as scheduling, data analysis, community service, or collaborative learning. The delivery of the training is determined collaboratively with the local school and Expeditionary Learning staff based on a needs assessment, current instructional practices, and schoolwide student achievement. Direct involvement in crafting the training plan assures teacher investment in the model.

College credit courses are also available through institutes offered during the school year and summer. The in-service courses are taught by Expeditionary Learning staff and teachers from Expeditionary Learning schools. The courses are offered at different sites and target educators new to the Expeditionary Learning model as well as those schools already implementing the model. For example, during the summer of 2005, a course titled "Leadership for Learning" was conducted for new teachers to become acquainted with the learning expedition approach. Additionally, a focused course titled "Endangered Species" was presented to more experienced schools to develop a learning expedition to investigate fragile ecosystems.

Outward Bound adventure courses provide additional training options and are available to the model schools. Although these courses are field based, the tenets of the courses, such as confidence building, teamwork, and active learning, follow the core practices of Expeditionary Learning.

Expeditionary Learning schools are entitled to multiyear professional development and technical support,

provided that funding is available through the local school districts. Also, schools are given opportunities to assume leadership roles in the national conference, summer institutes, and other courses. Schools with exemplary Expeditionary Learning projects are selected to act as demonstration schools and are expected to host staff members new to the network of schools.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

The model provides all Expeditionary Learning schools with core practice benchmarks to guide the model implementation process. Formal benchmarks are available to all teachers for all components of the model. Expeditionary Learning uses these benchmarks to provide feedback to schools regarding strengths, weaknesses, and strategies for improved implementation.

The benchmarks align with the five core practices and include the following indicators of student achievement:

- **Learning expeditions.** Implementation of learning expeditions that include compelling topics, field studies, service learning, and student exhibitions.
- **Active pedagogy.** Interactive and engaging instructional practices that include reading and writing across the curriculum, inquiry-based science, and social studies and that integrate arts and ongoing assessment.
- **School culture and character.** An inclusive school climate that ensures high expectations for all, guarantees a safe and respectful community, encourages fitness and adventure, and engages families in school activities and planning initiatives.
- **Leadership and school improvement.** Collaborative leadership in curriculum, instruction, and school culture that links Expeditionary Learning with school improvement and uses multiple data collection sources to evaluate student achievement.
- **School structure.** School organization for students and teachers that creates opportunities for interaction, long-term planning and investigations, conversations and reflections, and continuous assessment of student learning.

Special Considerations

The Expeditionary Learning model is unique in that it incorporates real-world lessons and expeditions within classroom learning. Teachers have the opportunity to go on learning expeditions before bringing the process into their classrooms.

The CSRQ Center was unable to conduct a conversation with Expeditionary Learning. The preceding information about Expeditionary Learning was collected from the model's Web site and responses from a conversation with the model provider for a previous report from the CSRQ Center on comprehensive school reform models at the elementary school level. For more information on Expeditionary Learning's model for secondary schools, schools should directly contact Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound.

Model Studies Reviewed

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Academy for Educational Development, Inc. (1995). *Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound Project: Final report.* New York: Author.

Benson, J. T. (2000). *The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program in Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction second year evaluation.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

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First Things First—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Review Results
Model Name:	First Things First (FTF)
Model Mission/Focus:	FTF is a model that seeks to develop a comprehensive system of reform at the district and school levels. The vision of the model is to strengthen the connection and relationships between students and adults within schools to improve the educational outcomes for all students so they are able to navigate their postsecondary options successfully.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1996
Grade Levels Served:	K–12

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
69	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	30	17[1]	22

Costs[2]

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1[3]	$315,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 2	$260,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 3	$175,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Years 4+	$70,000–$90,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1.	**Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:**	
a.	Evidence of positive overall effects	Limited
b.	Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	No Rating
c.	Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:	
	Reading	Limited
	Math and communication arts	Zero
2.	**Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes:**	
a.	Attendance, retention, graduation, and dropout rates and school climate–teacher support	Zero
b.	School climate—Teacher and student engagement and student support	Limited
3.	**Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement**	No Rating
4.	**Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design**	Very Strong
5.	**Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:**	
a.	Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	Very Strong
b.	Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	Very Strong

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative (NR) = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

[1]Currently, 39 middle and high schools implement FTF. At one point, more than 40 middle and high schools implemented the model, but three schools were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

[2]These costs reflect the cost to a district and a single school. At a minimum, FTF implementation occurs with the participation of the district and at least two schools. Therefore, costs for implementation decrease on average per school as greater numbers of schools are involved.

[3]First year costs are for the planning year; costs for years 2 and 3 are estimated costs for the 1st and 2nd years of implementation.

Model Description

First Things First (FTF) is a kindergarten through 12th-grade (K–12) model that was designed in 1996 by the Institute for Research and Reform in Education (IRRE). The mission of IRRE is to transform schools so that they are centered on student success, with particular focus on students who come from disadvantaged communities. FTF is a model of reform that aims to support IRRE's mission. However, the model has been designed for students from all backgrounds and communities.

The E. M. Kaufman Foundation funded the initial grant for FTF to partner with and implement the model in the Kansas City (Kansas) school district. The model's design was affected by lessons learned from the pilot. Over the past decade, FTF has become a comprehensive school and district reform model that is now being implemented in seven states. The model is supported by grants from the U.S. Department of Education and recently received a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. According to the model provider, this grant has substantially increased IRRE's capacity to support a growing number of districts and schools who are implementing FTF.

To implement FTF, IRRE may partner with an entire district or a minimum of two schools within a district.[4] IRRE seeks to develop feeder patterns of schools. For example, a feeder pattern may comprise several elementary schools whose students feed into one or two middle schools and then feed into one or two high schools. A feeder pattern can include schools from grades K–12 or from middle school to high school or from elementary school to middle school.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards, the following were identified as core components of FTF: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; technology; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

The model aims to improve the quality of life of all children and youth, with particular emphasis on those who come from a diverse set of racial, family, and economic backgrounds. According to IRRE, FTF's implementation framework and strategies are based on developmental and educational research on children and youth. These strategies include (a) engaging students through strong and consistent adult–student relationships within the school; (b) connecting these in-school relationships to a student's family; and (c) improving the academic instruction within the school to enhance student learning without remediation. Ultimately, FTF strives to implement a system of reform that prepares all students for postsecondary education and career options.

Goals/Rationale

FTF has several goals:

- Increase student engagement through effective teaching practices and strategies that encourage students to learn and deeply understand the curriculum
- Align curriculum and teaching strategies with what students are expected to know and understand
- Increase the rigor of the academic standards and content

[4]In small rural districts, FTF will work with several districts and schools from within the districts (a minimum of two districts and two schools).

- Allocate such resources as staff, time, and money to support student engagement, effective teaching practices, and increased rigor

According to the model, each district and school is expected to embrace three key principles:

- Commit to strengthening relationships between staff and students within the school, so that each student within the school feels that he/she is connected to the school and cared for as an individual by adults within the school.
- Focus on improving the academic rigor and relevance of the curriculum through high academic and conduct standards. FTF believes this is accomplished by motivating and engaging students through a diverse set of instructional strategies.
- Allocate such resources as time, space, and money so that these resources support and align with the first two goals of improving relationships and academics within the school and district.

To accomplish these goals, the model uses three key reform strategies:

- Reorganizing the school into small learning communities (SLCs) and creating a block schedule with 80- to 90-minute blocks
- Emphasizing teaching and learning, resulting in instructional improvement for each student
- Developing a Family Advocate System in which each student is regularly supported by an adult within the school who is responsible for connecting with a student's family

In addition to these elements, FTF works intensively with district staff to (a) ensure that leaders and teachers in the school have the appropriate tools to continually monitor and evaluate their practices and the progress of each student and (b) set long-term goals for student and school outcomes. Each school is expected to hire one school improvement facilitator, who is full time at the secondary level, to coordinate the implementation of FTF within the school and make connections between FTF and district staff.

Costs

The district and its schools share costs for FTF. Costs vary depending on the size of the district and the number of schools that implement FTF. Estimated costs for a single school are approximately $315,000 in the 1st year, $260,000 in the 2nd year, $175,000 in the 3rd year, $90,000 in the 4th year, and $70,000 in the 5th year. These costs reflect the costs for a district and a single school within the district. In most cases, at least two schools implement FTF. Costs are distributed across the number of schools implementing FTF—the more schools, the lower the costs per school.

Costs include a school roundtable (a kickoff meeting held at the beginning of the school year), onsite project management, leadership meetings and trainings, training for the SLC coordinator, study groups for faculty, onsite coaching and support for staffing and schedule changes, instructional improvement, technical assistance (one on one coaching) and trainings, curriculum mapping, common assessment training, family advocacy training, Measuring What Matters (MWM) training and software, summer training, FTF literacy (optional), and registration for 5–10 district and school representatives at the annual FTF conference (travel expenses are not included). For more details on the number of days of technical assistance that are provided as part of these costs, see section titled "Professional Development and Technical Assistance."

In addition to operating costs, districts must allocate resources for a district level point person, who spends 25–40% of his/her time on implementing the model. Also, each of the SLCs must have an SLC coordinator who is responsible for implementing the model within

the SLC. Generally, SLC coordinators receive a $500 stipend during the planning year and a $2,000 stipend in subsequent years. FTF also relies on flexible teacher release time, which may require additional funds.

The costs include a one-time fee for purchasing MWM software that is used to monitor the progress of students, teachers, classrooms, and the school. IRRE requires the purchase of personal digital assistants (PDAs) to use the MWM software. The PDAs are used to record information gained during regular classroom observations and interviews. Purchase of PDAs is not included in the total costs. Please contact IRRE for specific information on the costs of required technology.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: 

The CSRQ Center reviewed seven quantitative studies for effects of FTF on student achievement. One of these studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. Based on a review of the research design, the CSRQ Center considers this study's findings to be *conclusive,* meaning the CSRQ Center has confidence in the study's findings. Because a single study demonstrated mixed results at the middle and high school levels, the overall rating of the effects of this model on student achievement is limited, with an average effect size of +0.60.[5] The single study that met standards is described below. (Appendix F reports on the six studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

The study that met standards and is considered to be conclusive used a quasi-experimental design. The study focused on 10 schools (six middle and four high) that served predominantly low socioeconomic status (SES) minority populations in Texas and Missouri.[6] In Texas, researchers examined students' achievement in reading and math on national and state standardized tests. Findings showed that a higher proportion of FTF students passed the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills in reading at the 10th-grade level than high school students at comparison schools.[7] No statistically significant differences were found in eighth-grade reading and math outcomes and 10th-grade math outcomes in Texas. In Missouri, researchers examined math and reading outcomes among students in grades 8 and 10 and communication arts achievement among students in grades 7 and 11. Findings showed no statistically significant differences between students in FTF schools and non-FTF schools in reading, math, and communication arts.

Evidence of Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: 

No studies of FTF that examined effects on diverse student populations met the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is no rating.

The CSRQ Center urges readers not to judge a no rating or a low rating for this subcategory as evidence that the model cannot be effective in Title I schools or other schools with similar student populations. The one study on FTF that met the CSRQ Center's standards included schools that served predominantly low SES minority students. Thus, readers may interpret the CSRQ Center's overall rating in the category of positive overall effects on student achievement as an

[5] For more information on the strength of effect sizes, please refer to "About Effect Sizes," an inset in the "About This Report" chapter of this report.

[6] Additional middle and high schools reported in the same study were not reviewed by the CSRQ Center because they did not present longitudinal data or compare outcomes to students in non-FTF schools with sufficient rigor to meet the CSRQ Center's standards.

[7] One year later, the proportion of 10th-grade students who passed the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Test also approached statistical significance.

indicator of the model's effectiveness in working in challenging settings.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

Rating: ◔

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards found statistically significant positive effects in one fourth of the comparisons in reading, with an average effect size of +0.60. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Math

Rating: ⊘

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards found no statistically significant positive effects of FTF on math achievement. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Communication Arts

Rating: ⊘

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards found no statistically significant effects of FTF on communication arts achievement. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Of note, a rating of limited or higher for this category indicates that the research provides evidence of positive impact on additional outcomes. Few of the models reviewed had evidence that met the CSRQ Center's standards for this category. FTF is commended for offering detailed additional evidence that met the CSRQ Center's standards for this category.

Attendance Rate

Rating: ⊘

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards found no statistically significant positive impacts of FTF on attendance rates among middle school students in one FTF school in Texas after implementation year 3. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Retention Rate

Rating: ⊘

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards found no statistically significant effects of FTF on retention of high school students in Texas. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Graduation Rate

Rating: ⊘

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards found no statistically significant differences in high school graduation rates in Missouri relative to comparison schools. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Dropout Rate

Rating: ⊘

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards found no statistically significant differences in dropout rates of FTF high school students in Missouri. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

School Climate—Teacher Support

Rating: ⊘

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards used a longitudinal design to examine the effects of FTF on teacher support in FTF middle and high schools in

Texas.[8] After 2 years of implementing FTF, researchers found no statistically significant effects of FTF on teacher support. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

School Climate—Teacher Engagement

Rating:

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards used a longitudinal design to examine the effects of FTF on teacher engagement in FTF middle and high schools in Texas.[9] After 2 years of implementing FTF, researchers found statistically significant positive differences in high school teachers' engagement. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

School Climate—Student Support

Rating:

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards used a longitudinal design to examine the effects of FTF on students' perception of support from teachers in FTF middle and high schools in Texas.[10] After 2 years of implementing FTF, researchers found statistically significant positive differences in middle and high school students' perception of student support. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

School Climate—Student Engagement

Rating:

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards used a longitudinal design to examine the effects of FTF on student engagement in FTF middle and high schools in Texas.[11] After 2 years of implementing FTF, researchers found statistically significant positive differences in middle school students' engagement and statistically significant negative differences in high school students' engagement. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: 

No studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the effects of FTF on parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: 

Based on documentation provided by IRRE, explicit citations support all the core components of FTF: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; technology; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: 

Based on documentation provided by IRRE, FTF offers a formal process for establishing an initial understanding of the model and strategies to develop faculty buy-in. Additionally, FTF offers a formal process for

[8–11] Analysis for this outcome did not include a comparison group. Results only reflect FTF schools over a 2-year period.

allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. FTF also provides formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is very strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

FTF provides ongoing training opportunities, such as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, FTF provides supporting materials for professional development that address all core components. FTF also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is very strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

Two requirements must be met before commencing the planning year: district/regional buy-in and implementation in a minimum of two schools within a district. According to FTF, buy-in among district, school, and community leaders is an essential component when preparing for implementation. FTF emphasizes the need for buy-in from district staff (central office), board members, and school building leaders. Additionally, IRRE meets with union leaders; teacher leaders; union representatives; and external stakeholders from business, advocacy, and religious groups within the community to discuss each stakeholder's role in the implementation process. The buy-in period can last up to 1 year, depending on the school district. IRRE uses this time to gain an understanding of the local context and to develop an approach to implementing FTF so that it meets the specific needs of the district.

IRRE expects the district to supplement its existing leadership structure with an FTF point person at the district level, a school improvement coordinator in each school, and SLC coordinators in each school. Funding for changes in the leadership structure is not included in the operating costs. Thus, funding for such changes comes from reallocating district and school resources. These staffing changes occur at the district, school, and SLC levels. At the district level, the district point person coordinates implementation efforts and provides access to the district departments that can improve the flow of information provided to the school and classroom. At the school level, the school improvement coordinator communicates regularly with the district, FTF, and, most importantly, school leadership and staff to move along the planning and implementation of FTF. SLC coordinators work with staff within their respective SLCs to improve instruction and educational outcomes and to set long- and short-term goals in the areas of attendance, tardiness, suspensions, progress toward graduation, student test results, and high school graduation rate.

FTF works with schools and the district to begin the planning year. During the planning year, schools must organize into SLCs, with 150–325 students per SLC. The SLCs are organized around broad themes to meet the needs of an academically diverse set of students. Furthermore, the school and district need to allocate resources that will allow teachers across disciplines to move forward each year from grade to grade with the SLC's students. In this way, teachers and students, as well as parents, work together over several years and establish long-standing relationships.

Curriculum and Instruction

FTF does not require schools to implement a specific curriculum. Instead, schools are expected to align their curriculum with district and state standards. FTF Literacy and FTF Math are optional curricula and are included in the operating costs. Components from

these curricula are used to target students who are struggling in these areas during regular classroom time. Teachers are also expected to implement multiple instructional strategies and to develop curricula that incorporate FTF's approach to improving instruction. According to FTF, the basis for instructional improvement comprises the following research-based goals: engagement, alignment, and rigor (EAR).

- Students are engaged so that they feel a sense of connectedness and purpose to their work.
- Instructional content, local and state standards, and mandated assessments are aligned.
- Rigor of academic expectations is incorporated within the materials, student assignments, and classroom discussion.

To accomplish EAR, FTF focuses intently on literacy and math and implements common planning time and instructional leadership and support. Teachers within an SLC have a minimum of 3 hours of common planning time per week. During this time, teachers can address the components of EAR and develop comprehensive strategies to ensure these goals are being achieved.

Instructional leadership and support are provided through a combination of coaching and frequent discussion and data analysis among school staff. School leaders—such as the principal, school improvement coordinator, and SLC coordinators—and representatives from FTF provide coaching to classroom teachers. For example, in the 1st year of implementation, FTF provides 50–150 hours of coaching. Data analysis is fully integrated within the coaching and common planning time.

Scheduling and Grouping

As described in the subsection titled "Organization and Governance," schools are expected to organize themselves into SLCs. Each SLC consists of a core group of faculty who teach all or the majority of their time within a specific SLC. The goal of SLCs is to improve the relationship between teachers and students by keeping the SLC together throughout middle or high school.

According to FTF, each SLC is given an identity through a theme. Each SLC within a school is required to offer students equivalent opportunities for academic rigor and to ensure strong connections between teachers and students through common interests as defined by the themes. FTF also seeks to integrate academics with real-world applications through the themes.

As part of reorganizing into SLCs, FTF requires schools to implement block scheduling. The blocks are expected to be 80–90 minutes in length and are intended to provide intensive instruction for students and the entire class. According to FTF, intensive instruction is the foundation for all academic subject areas and allows all students, even those who are struggling, to catch up without remediation. FTF recommends specific class sizes for English language arts and math. According to one FTF principal who spoke to the CSRQ Center, lower student–teacher ratios in the core subjects are helpful in improving student outcomes. Core subject areas have lower student–teacher ratios than noncore subject areas.

Each SLC must allow for common planning time, flexible allocation and use of resources, and a common sense of responsibility. Teachers have at least 3 hours per week for common planning time to access training, analyze instructional practices, discuss individual student academic and behavioral progress, and plan for the future. The SLC coordinator facilitates common planning times and ensures that each of these issues is appropriately addressed.

According to FTF, IRRE works with schools to develop staffing and facility plans that support the SLCs and ensure equitable distribution of resources across each

SLC. Additionally, within each SLC, teachers are encouraged to customize instruction based on the academic needs of their students. FTF believes that the SLC setting accommodates teachers' ability to customize instruction. Because SLCs create an identity for staff and students, each SLC staff member is expected to feel a stronger sense of empowerment and ability to control and oversee the student progress and outcomes. SLC staff members are expected to set specific goals within their SLCs and monitor students' progress toward meeting those goals.

SLCs and block scheduling are critical elements to FTF implementation. Thus, IRRE works intensively with the school during the planning year to make recommendations in the area of school hours, number of days in the school year, and feasibility of SLC themes. However, FTF is flexible because these requirements do not always fit within the existing schedule of a particular school. IRRE supports the school and works with the district to ensure that the school is functioning within a workable schedule.

One of the underlying premises of FTF is to engage students in academically rigorous courses without remediation. Therefore, FTF has developed specific strategies for students who are not fully prepared to engage in rigorous coursework. FTF offers a temporary transitional community and/or an opportunity center. A transitional community is designed for students who are functioning below grade level and need concentrated attention to raise their skill levels; are struggling with literacy and need intensive support; or are in need of improving their English proficiency. According to FTF, to help students progress academically and gain self-confidence, transitional communities offer lower student–teacher ratios and longer blocks of instructional time compared with SLCs. Students stay in a transitional community for 1 year or less. As soon as they are ready, students are transferred to one of the SLCs.

The opportunity center is designed to meet the needs of students who are 2 years over age for grade level or who must complete a significant number of course credits to be considered at grade level. The center focuses on core courses that are required to graduate on time. Students in these centers do not have electives. Instead, they focus intensely on core subject areas. As with transitional communities, the student–teacher ratio is lower than that in SLCs; the focus on academic areas of need is intense; and students are expected to move into thematic SLCs within 1 year.

To accommodate varying levels of student readiness, FTF also offers mixed grade-level course offerings within each thematic SLC. This setting allows students who are more advanced to take courses with students from higher grades who may not be as ready to proceed to the next level. According to FTF, mixed grade-level courses also give students an opportunity to support their peers in achieving higher levels of academic attainment.

Technology

IRRE staff work with the district information technology (IT) department to develop user- friendly reports that support FTF initiatives. For example, to support the Family Advocate System, the district IT department works with IRRE and district student management system specialists to develop an academic and behavioral profile for each student. In doing so, the IT department compiles information into one, user-friendly format. In some schools, profiles are simply printed on paper, but in others, profiles are transmitted electronically to the school and accessible by teachers. The profiles provide teachers with student grades, disciplinary actions, and graduation requirements.

Through classroom observations and technology (e.g., PDAs and MWM software), instructional leaders—such as district personnel, principals, and the school improvement facilitator—monitor the

progress of students, teachers, classrooms, and the school. Schools and districts are required to purchase PDAs, and the one-time fee for the MWM software is included in the operating costs. Each classroom is visited at least two times per semester. The MWM software allows the observer to log observational data on the PDA. At a minimum, districts are required to provide FTF with student data at the school and SLC levels. FTF recommends that districts provide classroom- and student-level data at regular intervals.

For specific information on the MWM software, schools should directly contact IRRE.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

FTF monitors student progress and performance through a combination of external assessments and its own assessments. FTF builds on information from the district and state standardized assessments. FTF uses the information from external assessments to monitor school and SLC student outcomes.

MWM is used to monitor progress toward implementation of the SLCs, the Family Advocate System, and instructional improvement. MWM software links data from observations of classroom practices conducted by instructional leaders with student achievement and nonachievement (e.g., disciplinary actions, attendance) outcome data. Teachers, principals, the school improvement facilitator, and district leaders discuss these data at the SLC, subject area, classroom, and student levels. The SLC coordinator and teachers analyze these data during common planning time to guide instructional improvement.

Family and Community Involvement

The Family Advocate System is a major component of the FTF model. Within this system, each student has a teacher who provides consistent adult support over the course of the student's school career. The teachers serve as partners working with students and parents to set academic and behavioral targets, monitor student progress on these targets, and establish a system of interventions, if needed, to help students meet their targets. Additionally, parents and teachers meet at least twice annually. According to FTF, the Family Advocate System is intended to strengthen the net of support for each student and to ensure an enduring relationship between each student and an adult within the school.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Professionals from FTF provide a combination of onsite and offsite technical assistance and training. Operating costs (as detailed in the section titled "Costs") primarily cover onsite (in the district) and offsite technical assistance. The table that follows shows the number of days of onsite and offsite technical assistance that FTF provides during the first 4 years of implementation. Of note, in many cases, more than one FTF staff member provides technical assistance in a single day. Therefore, if three FTF staff members provide leadership training onsite on any 1 day, then this is counted as 3 days in the following table:

Year	Technical Assistance Days Onsite (in the District)	Technical Assistance Days Offsite
Year 1	162	95
Year 2	152	81
Year 3	110	59
Year 4	45	36
Year 5	27	27

FTF uses a variety formats to provide professional development and technical assistance to schools and

districts throughout the planning year, the 1st year of implementation, and subsequent years of implementation. In the planning year, IRRE provides intensive training to the school improvement facilitator and the SLC coordinators. Simultaneously, IRRE provides professional development and technical assistance to the whole faculty through a series of meetings. The meetings focus primarily on building SLCs and increasing the staff's familiarity with the principles of FTF.

IRRE and the district use the planning year to provide information to faculty to get their buy-in. IRRE works intensively during the planning year to provide direct technical assistance to the district superintendent, the district point person, the school improvement facilitator, school principals, and school improvement coordinators and to plan for additional technical assistance and professional development for the school and district. The school improvement coordinators are then responsible for supporting training and technical assistance through the remainder of the planning process. At the fall kickoff meeting, IRRE introduces staff to the basic concepts of FTF.

Implementing FTF begins at a school roundtable kickoff meeting at the beginning of the school year. The school roundtable is a day-long event for administrators, teachers, school staff, parents, community members, and student representatives. The event informs all constituents about FTF, answers their questions and concerns, develops a sense of urgency around the needs of the school, and engages stakeholders in the work of the reform model.

At the school roundtable, study groups conduct their first meeting in breakout sessions. These study groups consist of faculty, who meet regularly to focus on particular issues, gather information about the school, and develop reports for the school. The breakout sessions are designed to delve more intensely into the issues that the school faces and to connect such issues to FTF's framework. The school improvement coordinator and the FTF consultants provide support during the breakout sessions. Following these first meetings, student and faculty surveys are disseminated to obtain more information about the current school climate. SLC themes are selected based on information from student outcome measures (state and district standardized tests) and information from teacher and student surveys. FTF consultants provide support and conduct feasibility studies on potential SLCs to ensure that the themes are broad enough to include a diverse set of students, SLCs have a clear identity, and staff and funds are distributed equitably across each SLC.

When SLC themes have been selected, teachers embark on a series of instructional improvement and curriculum enrichment opportunities that are provided by IRRE at the school site (or at a common district location). According to FTF, such opportunities include an introduction to instructional improvement; curriculum enrichment; and training on EAR, FTF Literacy and Math, SLCs, and the Family Advocate System. FTF also provides training for new teachers.

Teachers receive technical assistance and professional development during common planning time in SLCs, early dismissal or late-start days, and district professional development days. The SLC coordinator uses the common planning time to share instructional practices and to study areas for improvement. FTF uses early dismissals or late-start days to allow teachers to meet across SLCs and to give teachers time to meet in groups based on the content area in which they teach. Teachers are expected to align curricula with standards, improve the reliability and validity of evaluations across SLCs, examine student data, and share promising practices during these meetings.

The district uses professional development days for whole-faculty professional development that focuses on engaging students, increasing academic rigor, and improving instructional strategies. According to FTF, a typical professional development day begins with a national expert who makes a presentation and conducts demonstrations. Then, faculty groups discuss ways to

apply the techniques and strategies learned. After the 1st year of implementation, FTF's coaches, in conjunction with the school, use assessment data to identify areas in which additional professional development is needed.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

FTF provides implementation benchmarks for middle and high schools. The benchmarks follow FTF's framework. Additionally, IRRE works with school staff to use implementation rubrics and tools to implement the SLCs. IRRE staff track progress by monitoring student records, test scores, graduation rates, attendance, grades, and referrals for behavioral problems. IRRE supports school staff in using such systems as MWM to monitor implementation, especially instruction and student outcomes. SLC teams are required to self-monitor and use information from monitoring to inform instructional improvement strategies. The school improvement coordinator and IRRE also use MWM to conduct informal monitoring of implementation and to provide technical assistance.

Special Considerations

According to one district administrator who was contacted by the CSRQ Center, FTF helped the district establish a prescriptive and clear plan and a detailed timeline for technical assistance and professional development. The administrator noted that the district and school are aligning their resources around key facets of FTF, such as SLCs and block scheduling.

Model Study Reviewed

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Quint, J., Bloom, H. S., Black, A. R., Stephens, L., & Akey, T. M. (2005). *The challenge of scaling up educational reform.* New York: MDRC.

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High Schools That Work—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Review Results
Model Name:	High Schools That Work (HSTW)
Model Mission/Focus:	HSTW aims to improve the academic rigor of college preparatory courses for all students, integrate academic and career courses in meaningful ways, and strengthen connections between academic and vocational/technical courses, so that students are engaged and motivated to achieve at the highest levels and are prepared to pursue postsecondary school or career options.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1987
Grade Levels Served:	9–12

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
1,094	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	0	0	1,094

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:[1]	Other:
Year 1	$38,400	$32,400	$2,000	$32,000	$4,000[2]
Year 2	$36,950	$26,650	$2,000	$32,000	$8,300[3]
Year 3	$36,950	$26,650	$2,000	$32,000	$8,300
Years 4+	$36,950	$26,650	$2,000	$32,000	$8,300

1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:	
a. Evidence of positive overall effects	⊘
b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	NR
c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas	NR
2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes	NR
3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	NR
4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	●
5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:	
a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	◕
b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	●

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative NR = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

[1]Personnel cost is not included in the total cost of the model. HSTW estimates that $32,000 will be needed for faculty stipends for each year of implementation.

[2]This is an estimated cost for the HSTW assessment ($40/student) for 100 students.

[3]For years 2–4, this is the estimated cost of the HSTW assessment, the demonstration classroom stipend, and the district leadership coordination.

Model Description

High Schools That Work (HSTW) was established by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) in 1987. According to HSTW, as of 2006, 32 states[4] were participating in the HSTW network, and 1,094 high schools were implementing the HSTW model. HSTW is based on the principle that all students can achieve at high levels in an environment and culture that have high expectations for each student. To this end, HSTW was specifically designed for high schools (comprehensive and vocational) that want to improve student achievement for all students. The model merges the requirements for completing a college-preparatory academic core with those of completing a planned sequence of career courses or further academics. HSTW seeks to eliminate the general education track that, according to the model, inadequately prepares students who plan to further their education or enter the workforce. HSTW is particularly oriented toward students from comprehensive or technical high schools who will either move into higher education or a career or both. The model seeks to prepare these students for postsecondary options by ensuring that they have access to the high standards of a college-preparatory academic core that is connected to real-world experience found in career/vocational/technical education or further indepth study in an academic area.

HSTW serves high school students in grades 8 or 9 through 12. HSTW high schools are encouraged to work with feeder middle schools and postsecondary institutions to improve transition into and out of high school and to align standards to ensure that students are academically prepared to enter and exit high school. Additionally, SREB operates a middle school reform model: Making Middle Grades Work.[5] Although Making Middle Grades Work operates with HSTW, the two models are considered separate and distinct. According to HSTW, the model focuses primarily on the high school. However, the participation of district administrators and members of the community is essential in the implementation and sustainability of the model.

HSTW offers several contracting options at the school, district, and state levels:

- School Level—Contracted Services
- School Level Option 2—HSTW-Enhanced
- State Level—HSTW-State Network
- District(S) Level—HSTW-Urban and Other

These different modes of participating in HSTW are designed to allow for efficient use of resources for states and/or districts that have a number of high schools implementing the HSTW model.

- **School Level—Contracted Services.** Schools are able to directly contract with HSTW as "Contracted Services" schools (that also includes HSTW comprehensive school reform sites). Contracted Services include all schools with special contracts, including, but not limited to, schools that pay for their contracts with comprehensive school reform funds. HSTW assigns one consultant to each school to improve coherency in implementing the model and to allow for the opportunity to build relationships. One consultant works with no more than 10 schools at a time. According to one school principal, having the same consultant who knows the school and is familiar with the staff proved to be an asset in the implementation of the model. The contract provides for: a whole-faculty site workshop, a technical assistance visit

[4]States in the HSTW state network include Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

[5]This CSRQ Center report on middle school and high school CSR models provides a full, separate description of the Making Middle Grades Work model.

(TAV) in year 1 and a follow-up technical review visit (TRV),[6] 10 days of onsite coaching annually, the cost of participating in the HSTW assessment (based on an estimate of 100 seniors), a minimum of 4 days of professional development based on school priorities that are aligned to the school improvement plan, registration cost for a team of six to attend the annual summer conference, registration cost for a team of five to attend one of the leadership initiative workshops, and the cost of materials.

Contracted Services schools are able to customize their professional development opportunities based on school-determined priorities and information from the results of a 3-day TAV. The TAV is used to gather baseline data on the school and to identify the school's strengths and challenges. An HSTW consultant works directly with the school to develop the school's improvement plan and its implementation plan; both plans are based on results from the TAV. The consultant also connects professional development resources and experts to the school based on needs, as determined by school leaders and staff.

- **School Level Option 2—HSTW-Enhanced.** As of 2006, HSTW developed "HSTW- Enhanced," a new contract for services for individual schools. This type of contract is like "School Level: Contracted Services" but provides more intensive services, professional development, and technical assistance to the contracting school. For example, HSTW-Enhanced schools work with an HSTW consultant who is required to spend 50% of his/her time with a school. Ten HSTW-Enhanced sites are currently in operation.

- **State Level—HSTW-State Network.** The "HSTW-State Network" is for states that would like to encourage many of its high schools to participate and would like to consolidate professional development and technical assistance, while increasing the level of HSTW expertise at the state level. Thus, state expertise is developed and can be shared with districts and schools that are interested in implementing HSTW's framework. The state model is a train-the-trainer model, in which a state designates a state coordinator to work directly with HSTW. The state coordinator is trained in the tenets of HSTW through professional development, modeling, and coaching. The coordinator is then expected to work directly with schools that are implementing HSTW within the state. Additionally, HSTW states are part of a consortium of member states that meet three times a year to discuss the challenges and successes they are having in reaching the HSTW-stated goal of getting at least 85% of career-bound high school students to complete a challenging program of study and to reach or exceed the HSTW performance goals in reading, math, and science.

  In an HSTW state, schools can either (a) participate in the state network, which means the schools have an indirect relationship with HSTW or (b) contract directly with HSTW to obtain specific services, hence a Contracted Services school, as discussed previously. HSTW expects states to incorporate comprehensive school reform and contracted sites within their state networks.

  Schools that implement HSTW as part of a state network are expected to participate in workshops offered by HSTW's state coordinator, send teams to the annual HSTW summer conference, and provide access to a sample of students to participate in the HSTW assessment every 2 years.

- **District(s) Level—HSTW-Urban and Other.** In situations in which a group of schools and/or districts form a cohort that is smaller than the state

[6]The TAV and TRV are described more fully in sections titled "Monitoring Student Progress and Performance" and "Professional Development and Technical Assistance."

network, HSTW offers a single district or group of districts the ability to contract with the HSTW using the "HSTW-Urban" contract. HSTW consultants, who work with HSTW-Urban sites, are responsible for no more than 11 schools. Therefore, an HSTW consultant is able to provide more concentrated time and effort with HSTW-Urban sites than with other sites in the HSTW state network.

Like state members, a district is expected to identify an HSTW coordinator who facilitates technical assistance, professional development, and assessment services among each of the participating schools. Districts are expected to form districtwide teams from each school. The teams focus on a number of areas during the initial 3 years of implementation. In year 1, teams focus on literacy across the curriculum, effective guidance programs, and small learning communities. In year 2, teams focus on numeracy, active engagement of students, and extra supports and transition programs. In year 3, teams focus on curriculum mapping and strategies to move students to proficiency.

Teams may also be developed to address additional priority areas identified by the school in any and all of the years of implementation.

In summary, when contracting with HSTW at the state and/or the district level, the state or district must designate a coordinator who becomes the interface between the school and HSTW. Expertise is developed at the state and/or district level through technical assistance, professional development, and coaching provided by HSTW. At the school level, the contracted services and HSTW-Enhanced schools work directly with HSTW consultants and develop a plan that is customized for the school. The difference between the contracted services school and the HSTW-Enhanced school is the intensity of services and focus during implementing. For example each contracted services school works with an HSTW consultant, who is expected to spend 10% of his/her time providing technical assistance and coaching to a school. HSTW-Enhanced schools work with an HSTW consultant who is required to spend 50% of his/her time with a school. These contracts also vary in cost and the number of days of professional development that are provided. As of 2006, no sites were contracted as HSTW-Enhanced.

The following description of HSTW's components is for contracted services at the school level unless otherwise noted. For more information on the other forms of contracted services, please directly contact HSTW.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards, the following were identified as core components for HSTW contract sites: organization and governance, professional development, technical assistance, instruction, student assessment, and data-based decision making. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

HSTW aims to improve the academic rigor of college preparatory courses for all students, integrate academic and career courses in meaningful ways, and strengthen the connections between academic and vocational/technical courses, so that students are engaged and motivated to achieve at the highest levels and prepared to pursue postsecondary school or career options.

Goals/Rationale

HSTW is designed so that schools fully embrace two educational goals:

- Providing all students who are looking toward a career with a coherent, up-to-date, and rigorous set of career/technical courses that are (a) combined with a set of rigorous academic courses in the areas of English language arts, math, and science and (b) equivalent to college preparatory coursework

- Increasing the number of students who are able to reach proficiency in the areas of reading, math, and science, so that the students are fully equipped to meet the demands of employers and postsecondary institutions

To accomplish these goals, HSTW schools are expected to (a) use strategies that provide a coherent, up-to-date, rigorous set of career/technical courses for students with postsecondary education and career aspirations and (b) provide students with access to academically rigorous courses that are equivalent to college preparatory courses in English language arts, math, and science and integrated with career/technical courses.

According to HSTW, its framework is built on 10 key practices:

1. Have high expectations for all students in all classrooms.
2. Require students to complete a coherent program of study that includes a rigorous academic core and additional academics or a career/technical concentration.
3. Align curriculum with state and national standards that prepare students for postsecondary education and have teachers use real-world applications in teaching academic concepts.
4. Provide quality opportunities for career/technical study that prepare students for a high-demand career area.
5. Offer courses that integrate high school academics with work-based learning opportunities.
6. Create a school environment in which teachers are given space and time to collaborate across subject areas and career and academic fields.
7. Engage students in learning high-level academics and technical content through research-based instructional strategies.
8. Develop a guidance system that personalizes the student's educational experience by (a) formally creating positive working relationships between students, parents, and educators to develop a plan of high school study and beyond for the student and (b) assigning a teacher adviser to each student to provide a consistent adult relationship with the student throughout high school.
9. Create structured systems of extra help and support for students who are struggling academically. Structured systems may include special programs to help students transition from middle grades to high school and from high school to postsecondary education or the workforce.
10. Use student assessment and program evaluation data to reflect and continually improve school culture, organization, management, curriculum, and instruction to advance student learning.

Costs

Costs to implement HSTW are based on the level at which implementation will take place. The costs to the school can be reduced if it is part of a larger network at the state or district level. Costs to the schools also vary depending on the size of the school and the professional development needs of the school.

- **School Level—Contracted Services.** The total cost for implementation for the 1st year is $38,400, which includes the cost of training, materials, and assessments. The training ($32,400) includes the recommended 4 days of professional development, 3 days of onsite coaching, an initial TAV, preconference and summer conference registration for eight staff members, registration for five staff members (school leadership team) for the Leadership Series for School Improvement, an orientation workshop, and a site-development workshop. The HSTW assessment, which is

$40/student and estimated for 100 students, is also included in the total cost.

Some costs are associated with HSTW that are not included in the total cost. First, the model estimates the cost for staff stipends for professional development to be approximately $32,000. Additionally, costs may also include travel and other related expenses.

In years 2–5 of implementation, HSTW estimates the annual cost to be approximately $36,950. This reflects the cost of training ($26,650), which includes a minimum of 6 days of professional development, a minimum of 6 days of onsite coaching, preconference and summer conference registration for eight staff members, registration for five staff members for the Leadership Series for School Improvement, and the cost of materials from SREB ($2,000). Items included as other costs ($8,300) include the HSTW assessment for 100 students, a demonstration classroom stipend, and district leadership coordination. Staff stipends and travel costs are not included in the estimated annual cost.

- **School Level Option 2—HSTW-Enhanced.** The cost of the HSTW-Enhanced contract is approximately $115,478 per school per year. This type of contract requires HSTW consultants to spend a minimum of 10 days at the school site with followup visits and coaching. The model provides 2- and 3-day summer institutes and professional development opportunities that are focused on small learning communities; integrated instruction; transitioning students from eighth to ninth grade; training on project-based learning; and developing an infrastructure for transitioning graduates from high school to postsecondary school or career options, depending on the year of implementation and the needs of the school. The contract includes the cost of assessing up to 100 students in an assessment year and sending teams to workshops; institutes; conferences; and trainings (including materials).

- **State Level—HSTW-State Network.** SREB/HSTW-State Network annual dues are $8,500 per state. Non-SREB/HSTW state annual dues are $17,500. States are also expected to allocate discretionary funds to help sites implement their school improvement plans, to support sites with professional development, to convene sites at least annually, and to send a state representative to three meetings of state HSTW leaders each year. Some states pay the HSTW assessment costs for a random sample of 60 students in each of the even years of HSTW implementation. States that participate in the network receive the following services: a 3-day TAV by SREB staff in two schools; a site-development workshop; access to professional development that includes an annual summer staff development conference for all HSTW sites and states, an annual leadership forum for teams and district leaders from all HSTW states and information and publications about HSTW best practices. State representatives must pay their travel and registration fees for professional development. The state HSTW coordinator is expected to lead any additional school visits.

- **District(s) Level—HSTW-Urban and Other.** The cost for participating as an HSTW-Urban site is $10,182 per school. HSTW-Urban clients receive the following services: a 3-day TAV every 3 years and a 1-day followup TRV, a site development workshop to be attended by teams from each school, participation in the HSTW assessment for a random sample of 60 students in each of the even years of implementation, and registration fees for teams from each school that is included in the district contract.

The aforementioned cost figures are estimates provided by HSTW. Exact costs for a particular school may vary. For more specific information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, schools should directly contact HSTW.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: ⊘

The CSRQ Center reviewed 48 quantitative studies for effects of HSTW on student achievement at the middle and high school levels. Of these studies, none met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. Therefore, the overall rating in this subcategory is zero. (Appendix G reports on the 48 studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

Evidence of Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: NR

Because no studies of HSTW met the CSRQ Center's standards, the impact of HSTW on student achievement for diverse student populations is unknown. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas

Rating: NR

Because no studies of HSTW met the CSRQ Center's standards, the impact of HSTW on student achievement in subject areas is unknown. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: NR

Because no studies of HSTW met the CSRQ Center's standards, the CSRQ Center was not able to evaluate the effects of HSTW on additional outcomes. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: NR

Because no studies of HSTW met the CSRQ Center's standards, the impact of HSTW on parent, family, and community involvement is unknown. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: ●

Based on documentation provided by HSTW, explicit citations support all of the core components of HSTW: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating in this category is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: ◕

Based on documentation provided by HSTW, it offers a formal process for establishing an initial understanding of the model and informal strategies to develop faculty buy-in. Additionally, HSTW offers a formal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. However, HSTW only offers an informal process for monitoring the allocation of

school resources. HSTW also provides formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is moderately strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

HSTW provides ongoing training opportunities, such as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, HSTW provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of its core components. HSTW also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is very strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

Before implementation, HSTW conducts buy-in sessions with leaders (superintendents, school board members, principals, and a core group of teachers) who are expected to review HSTW's components to determine whether the model matches the school. Additionally, HSTW encourages schools that are planning on implementing HSTW to obtain teacher buy-in. However, HSTW allows each school to determine the level of buy-in necessary and does not closely monitor this aspect.

Schools that implement HSTW are expected to reorganize their schools using existing staff, but some sites have chosen to hire additional staff to fulfill some of HSTW's requirements. HSTW is organized around a governance structure that uses teams to manage implementation. In general, intensive professional development is provided so team participants can develop school-level expertise and build local capacity. Team members are expected to share their expertise with staff throughout the school. Specifically, HSTW requires schools to develop a leadership team and "focus" teams.

The leadership team consists of the principal, key district and school administrators, and teacher leaders and is responsible for making key decisions about implementing HSTW. The leadership team must also participate in additional HSTW leadership-oriented professional development and the annual leadership initiative training, which is held for leadership teams from across the United States. Information from TAV reports determines focus teams; TAV informs the school staff about priority areas of need. According to HSTW, each year the school is expected to form up to three focus teams that will work specifically on the priority areas, strongly connect these priority areas to the school improvement plan, and communicate the efforts to the entire staff.

In addition to teams, HSTW recommends that schools designate a site coordinator. The site coordinator is a teacher who works directly with HSTW, the leadership team, focus teams, and faculty to support implementation of HSTW. HSTW expects site coordinators to be teachers who are already working in the school and who would be supplemented with a stipend for the additional work entailed by the positions. The site coordinator is responsible for monitoring the school's progress toward implementing the school's action plan; organizing focus teams as a result of the information from the TAV; coordinating HSTW data collection; and communicating regularly with the model consultant, district, principal, staff, and community members about the school's implementation progress.

HSTW also recommends that a teacher be designated as a literacy coach and another teacher be designated as the numeracy coach. According to HSTW, these teachers should have at least two periods per day (or one block) to provide professional development, coaching, and technical assistance to all teachers, as they begin to implement HSTW's literacy and numeracy

instructional strategies. These coaches are required to participate in professional development provided by HSTW to support their efforts with the faculty at the school.

Curriculum and Instruction

HSTW does not require schools to implement a specific curriculum or instructional model. However, HSTW schools are expected to align the curriculum with state and federal standards. Students in HSTW schools are required to take 4 years of college-preparatory English language arts and math, 3 years of college-preparatory science and social studies, 1 year of a technology course, and 4 years of coherent courses with an academic concentration (e.g., international baccalaureate) or career/vocational concentration (e.g., science and engineering). Schools are expected to continually refine the curriculum and offerings and are strongly urged to include HSTW standards in the curriculum:

- **English language arts.** Students focus on reading, writing, and presentation skills and are expected to read the equivalent of eight to 10 books annually, write short papers weekly, and write one or more research papers annually.
- **Math.** Students are expected to take algebra I, geometry, algebra II, and a 4th year of high-level math, including a math during his/her senior year.
- **Science.** Students are expected to take biology, chemistry, physics, or applied physics or anatomy/physiology that includes laboratory work, research projects, presentations, and written reports. HSTW recommends that, if a school uses block scheduling, the school requires students to take 4 years of science.
- **Social studies.** Students focus on reading and writing skills and are expected to read five to eight books annually.
- **Career/technical or additional academic studies.** Students should complete four credits in a career/technical area or additional credits in academic areas, such as math, science, or humanities.
- **Technology.** Students must take at least 1 year of a computer course or demonstrate proficiency in computer technology beyond simple keyboarding.

HSTW uses multiple approaches to improve the achievement levels of students in need of remediation. The model urges schools to implement catch-up courses in algebra and English in ninth grade so students who are not prepared for college-preparatory courses in high school are able to complete college-preparatory algebra I and English 9 by the end of grade 9 and continue in college-preparatory courses in successive years. To improve the readiness of entering ninth-grade students, HSTW also encourages the use of Gear-Up programs for students in grades 7 and 8 and a summer bridge program helps to prepare eighth-grade students for the academic, social, and emotional transition into an HSTW high school. HSTW also encourages students to use the summer institute as a time to begin exploring a career/technical area of interest. For students in their senior year who are planning postsecondary studies but have failed to meet college- and career-readiness standards, HSTW recommends special courses in English/reading and math.

HSTW recommends the use of multiple and engaging instructional strategies, particularly those that blend academic and real-world experience. The model also calls for a focus on teaching literacy across the curriculum and teaching relevant numeracy and science. The model recommends the following strategies: hands-on activities, discussions, cooperative learning, content reading activities, classroom management, project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, problem-solving, and integrated curriculum. Schools may choose from a range of professional development workshops that address the use of these strategies.

Scheduling and Grouping

Although implementation of HSTW is customized to a particular school or district, HSTW recommends several organizational strategies. First, HSTW recommends that, when possible, a school uses block scheduling in which each block lasts 60–90 minutes, which is approximately equivalent to two class periods. An HSTW consultant works with a school's principal and leadership team to develop a scheduling solution that works for each school. Also, HSTW recommends that large schools organize into small learning communities. The small learning communities should be organized around several broad pathways or interest areas that offer a coherent set of courses and blend academic and real-world experience. For example, science and engineering may be one pathway. Again, the HSTW consultant collaborates with a school's principal and leadership team to design a workable solution that fits the needs of each school and community. Even when a school is unable to accommodate such scheduling and organizational requirements, HSTW works with the school to assemble a coherent set of academically rigorous courses that blend academic and real-world experiences.

Technology

HSTW does not have specific technology requirements beyond Internet and e-mail access for staff. Depending on the capacity and needs of the school, HSTW will promote the use of technology in the classroom as a learning tool. For example, the model suggests that rural high schools use technology to enhance the rigor of academic offerings to students. Schools should make arrangements for students to take Advanced Placement and postsecondary courses online when such courses are not offered onsite.

Additionally, HSTW recommends the use of technology to manage data systems that are used for data-based decision making and to promote regular communication among the staff; however, the model is able to accommodate schools that have a range of capabilities with regard to technology.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

HSTW uses formative and summative assessments to monitor student progress and performance. Formative assessments include a transcript analysis by faculty, a ninth-grade survey, a senior survey, and other nonachievement indicators. HSTW provides a formative assessment during the TRV, a 1-day review by the HSTW team. The HSTW assessment is used as the summative assessment. According to HSTW, its assessment has been aligned with tests from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. HSTW assesses student progress in reading, math, and science. HSTW also uses student achievement on state tests to monitor student progress and performance.

Family and Community Involvement

HSTW encourages parent and community involvement in schools. In particular, HSTW suggests that a guidance system be designed to encourage parental involvement in students' decision making in such areas as course selection and postsecondary plans. Community involvement is encouraged in applying real-world problem-solving skills in the classroom. According to HSTW, community involvement is a key element for integrating academic and career courses by providing real-world context for students. Community members can get involved in HSTW through such activities as serving as classroom speakers; providing students with internships and structured work-based learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships; participating in curriculum development; and serving as evaluators of students' projects.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

HSTW provides professional development and technical assistance to schools based on their particular needs and/or priorities. Each school collaborates directly with an HSTW consultant to design professional development and technical assistance plans for the school. The HSTW consultant organizes the initial TAV. According to the model, the initial TAV is a 3-day review of school and classroom practices that is conducted by a technical assistance team. The team consists of an HSTW representative, three or four teachers, community members, principals, a postsecondary representative, and a state department of education curriculum or assessment expert. The team collects and reviews baseline data and then prepares an initial report of findings that are used to shape or revise the school improvement plan. During years in which a TAV is not being conducted, the school's progress is monitored during an annual TRV. Results from both the TAV and the TRV shape the technical assistance and professional development within the school.

The HSTW consultant provides on- and offsite technical assistance. In a contracted services school, the consultant is expected to provide onsite coaching and follow-up for a minimum of 10 days and offsite support on an as-needed basis. The HSTW consultant works collaboratively with the leadership team and site coordinator to implement and organize HSTW within a school.

HSTW offers some standard professional development sessions and options for other sessions. The HSTW staff, or contracted trainers, provide professional development offerings at either the school or an offsite location. Each school must participate in two standard professional development sessions conducted by HSTW:

- A 2-day, onsite orientation workshop during which time teachers, students, parents, and members of the local school board are presented with information designed to familiarize them with HSTW's model
- A 2-day, all-faculty site development workshop that is designed to help the school develop focus teams and determine initial implementation priorities

School teams and staff select professional development options from a menu based on the priorities determined at the site development workshop and the results of the TAV report. According to HSTW, the professional development offerings are continually refined and expanded based on the needs of each school. Additionally, HSTW uses the annual summer conference to customize professional development offerings. Teams from schools, districts, and states attend the conference to gain information on the implementation of the key practices of the HSTW model; share ideas across school and state teams; and participate in professional development workshops. HSTW also offers a national leadership initiative training for school leadership teams.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

HSTW customizes implementation to fit local context. However, certain key elements of HSTW's framework must be implemented in each school. Thus, HSTW has developed a set of expectations and benchmarks that outline ideal implementation of HSTW. The expectations and benchmarks are based on results from HSTW's self-evaluation and from research to identify key factors that contribute to successful implementation. According to HSTW, ideal implementation is spread across 3 years, and HSTW makes schools aware of specific structural, instructional, support, and leadership changes that a school can expect during that timeframe:

- Structural changes (e.g., increase in the number of students enrolled in college preparatory courses and an expansion in students' access to quality career/technical concentrations; engagement of faculty in continuous school improvement efforts, with focus teams addressing particular areas of need).

- Instructional changes (e.g., alignment of academic and career/technical curriculum and instruction to state graduation and to college- and career-readiness standards, with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum; integration of academic and career studies; and alignment of teacher assignments and classroom assessment to college- and career-readiness standards).
- Support changes (e.g., built-in supports for teaching and learning, development of a ninth-grade support program that may include a summer bridge program, catch-up courses, a freshman academy, a support class that educates ninth-grade students in the habits of success). The model also calls for a system of extra help for students in the later grades, especially grade 12 when schools would offer transition courses for underperforming students to gain postsecondary readiness skills in English and math.
- Leadership changes (e.g., a culture of high expectations, having faculty share decision making in the school-change process).

The primary tools for monitoring progress toward benchmarks are the school improvement plan, which is developed at the beginning of implementation, data collected from the HSTW assessment, student and teacher surveys, and a graduate followup survey. The school improvement plan is unique to each school and blends the model's components for implementation with the local context. As a document, the school improvement plan is used to monitor the school's progress toward implementation and is continually refined to reflect the deeper understanding of the needs of the school as the staff implements the model. The school improvement plan is considered to be a living document where progress toward full implementation of the model and progress toward meeting student outcomes is used for external and internal progress monitoring. For example, external monitoring is conducted during the TAV, which shapes the plan and ensures alignment with key elements of the model, and during the TRV visit, in which the HSTW team relies on data collected through HSTW to evaluate the initial school implementation plan, monitor progress toward the initial goals, and make suggestions for refinement and direction of future professional development and technical assistance. In addition, the leadership and focus teams conduct regular internal monitoring of the plan and use the monitoring results to guide and track progress and to identify areas that need refinement.

Special Considerations

The model runs annual workshops and site-based trainings that engage school teams in reviewing results from the biennial HSTW assessment, student and teacher surveys, a followup study of high school graduates, and other school-based data to help determine ways to improve the use of the model to improve both student achievement and graduation rates. Through the surveys, school and district teams receive anonymous feedback from students, teachers, and graduates on teaching practices and learning experiences and how the school can improve its efforts to prepare students for further learning and a career. School and district teams also use the HSTW assessment results to link student achievement in reading, math, and science to school and classroom practices and to identify the percentages of students who have intensive learning and support experiences associated with improved achievement. The intent is to develop a system that provides school and district leaders and teachers with the essential tools to determine their progress in implementing the model and improving achievement and to gain insights on further action they can take to make continuing progress.

A variety of ways can be used to contract with HSTW—either directly or indirectly between the school and HSTW—with either the district or the state serving as contact between the school and HSTW. A school considering contracting with HSTW or participating in a

district or state network should consider the benefits and drawbacks of each type of participation before implementation.

HSTW offers flexibility in how a contract is developed. HSTW also requires certain key elements to be incorporated within a school's implementation plan, but a school's desires and capacities are accommodated as needed. For example, one principal of a Contracted Services school was able to shape HSTW implementation based on the school's priority areas of literacy and math. In the 1st year of implementation, the school focused professional development and technical assistance on implementation of the full model, with an intense focus on literacy across the curriculum. In the 2nd year of implementation, the school planned to focus on math. This principal felt that being able to shape HSTW implementation to meet the school's needs was an asset.

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Knowledge Is Power Program—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Quality Review Results
Model Name:	Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP)
Model Mission/Focus:	The mission of KIPP is to provide underserved communities with free open enrollment schools that will prepare students to succeed in high-level academics, including college. According to KIPP, it prepares students by helping them to develop "the knowledge, skills, and character needed to succeed" in high-quality schools through a core set of operating principals known as the Five Pillars.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1994
Grade Levels Served:	K–11

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
52	50	0	2
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	2	48	2

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Years 4+	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1.	**Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:**	
	a. Evidence of positive overall effects	◔
	b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	NR
	c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:	
	Reading, math, and language arts	◔
2.	**Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes**	NR
3.	**Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement**	NR
4.	**Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design**	NR
5.	**Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:**	
	a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	NR
	b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	NR

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative NR = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

Model Description

The information presented in this description about Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) was collected from its Web site. Although contact was initiated with a representative of KIPP, the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center was unable to conduct a conversation with KIPP.

KIPP was designed by Dave Levin and Mike Feinberg, both former teachers under the Teach for America program. In 1994, Levin and Feinberg launched a program for fifth- grade students in a Houston, Texas, inner city public school. Based on their experiences, Levin and Feinberg began the first two KIPP charter schools in 1995: KIPP Academy Houston and KIPP Academy New York. In 2000, KIPP collaborated with Doris and Donald Fisher (cofounders of Gap, Inc.) to establish a $15 million grant to recruit, train, and support teachers and school leaders to open KIPP college preparatory public schools in educationally underserved areas across the United States.

The typical KIPP middle school begins from scratch with a fifth grade, and high schools start with ninth grade. Middle schools (i.e., grades 5–8) add one grade each year until capacity is reached at approximately 320 students. KIPP operates 52 schools in 16 states and Washington, D.C. Although KIPP focuses primarily on middle school grades, it also operates elementary and high schools. In 2004, the first KIPP elementary school opened as part of a pilot early elementary program. KIPP plans to open more elementary schools in cities in which KIPP middle schools already exist. KIPP also operates two high schools: One opened in Houston, Texas, in August 2004, and the other opened in Gaston, North Carolina, in August 2005. Both high schools primarily serve students from KIPP middle schools. As it has done with elementary schools, KIPP also plans to expand its high schools to other major cities in which KIPP middle schools already exist.

According to the CSRQ Center's standards, the following were identified as core components of KIPP: organization and governance; professional development; time and scheduling; and parent, family, and community involvement. However, the CSRQ Center was unable to determine additional core components of KIPP because the CSRQ Center was unable to conduct a conversation with a KIPP representative. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

The mission of KIPP is to provide underserved communities with free open enrollment schools that will prepare students to succeed in high-level academics, including college. KIPP's schools are free, open enrollment schools in which students develop the "knowledge, skills, and character" needed to succeed in the future. The principles underlying KIPP are illustrated through its Five Pillars:

- **High expectations.** Each KIPP school must clearly define a set of expectations and a system of measurement for student achievement and conduct. A system of rewards and consequences is implemented to reinforce student expectations.
- **Choice and commitment.** Students and families must choose to participate in the KIPP program and attend a KIPP school. Therefore, KIPP expects all students and families to make and keep a strong commitment to the program.
- **More time.** KIPP's schools implement extended day and year school calendars. KIPP believes that the extra time allows students more time for curricular and extracurricular activities.

- **Power to lead.** KIPP expects the principal in each school to serve as an organizational and instructional leader within the school.
- **Focus on results.** KIPP's schools use data obtained by standardized tests and other objective outcome measures to regularly assess student achievement. KIPP holds all students to the same set of performance standards.

Goals/Rationale

KIPP's primary goal is to help students gain the academic and life skills that will help them enter and succeed in college. To meet this goal, students, parents, and teachers are required to make a commitment and promise to adhering to the Five Pillars.

Costs

Information on costs was not available on the model's Web site. For more specific information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, schools should directly contact the model provider.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating:

The CSRQ Center reviewed eight quantitative studies of the effects of KIPP on student achievement. One of these studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. Based on a review of the research design, the CSRQ Center considers this study's findings to be *conclusive,* meaning that the CSRQ Center has confidence in its findings. Almost half (44%) of the findings reported in this study demonstrated positive effects. The average effect size of the positive effects for KIPP was +0.40. However, because only one study met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design, the overall rating for the effects of KIPP on student achievement is limited. The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards is described below. (Appendix H reports on the seven studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

The one study that is considered to be conclusive used a quasi-experimental, matched comparison group design. The study focused on one middle school in Memphis, Tennessee, that predominantly serves a minority population with low socioeconomic status. Fifth- and sixth-grade students' achievement in reading, math, and language arts were examined using the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). Sixth-grade students attending the KIPP middle school for 2 years had significantly higher reading, math, and language arts scores than their counterparts in matched comparison schools. Fifth-grade students attending the KIPP middle school for 1 year demonstrated significant positive results in language arts.

Evidence of Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: NR

No studies that examined KIPP's effects on diverse student populations met the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

The CSRQ Center urges readers to not necessarily judge a no rating or a low rating in this category as evidence that KIPP cannot be effective in Title I schools or other schools with similar student populations. The one study on KIPP that met the CSRQ Center's standards focused on minority students from low-income families. Thus, readers may interpret the CSRQ Center's

overall rating in the category of positive overall effects on student achievement as an indicator of the model's effectiveness in working in challenging settings.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

Rating:

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the effects of KIPP on reading achievement of three groups of students: fifth graders attending a KIPP school for 1 year, sixth graders attending a KIPP school for 1 year, and sixth graders attending a KIPP school for 2 years. One group (sixth graders attending a KIPP school for 2 years) demonstrated positive effects, with an effect size of +0.39. Because only one study met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design, the rating in this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Math

Rating: 

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the effects of KIPP on math achievement of three groups of students: fifth graders attending a KIPP school for 1 year, sixth graders attending a KIPP school for 1 year, and sixth graders attending a KIPP school for 2 years. One group (sixth graders attending a KIPP school for 2 years) demonstrated positive effects, with an effect size of +0.42. Because only one study met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design, the rating in this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Language Arts

Rating: 

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the effects of KIPP on language arts achievement of three groups of students: fifth graders attending a KIPP school for 1 year, sixth graders attending a KIPP school for 1 year, and sixth graders attending a KIPP school for 2 years. Two groups (fifth graders attending a KIPP school for 1 year and sixth graders attending a KIPP school for 2 years) demonstrated positive effects, with an effect size of +0.39. Because only one study met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design, the rating in this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: 

The CSRQ Center was unable to evaluate the effects of KIPP in this category because no studies of KIPP met the CSRQ Center's standards and examined additional student outcomes. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: 

No studies that met the CSRQ's Center standards examined the effects of KIPP on parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: 

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with a representative from KIPP, nor was it able to find publicly available information to rate this category. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: NR

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with a representative from KIPP, nor was it able to find publicly available information to rate this subcategory. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: NR

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with a representative from KIPP, nor was it able to find publicly available information to rate this subcategory. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

At start-up, a KIPP school begins by enrolling fifth-grade students. The school then adds one grade per year until it enrolls approximately 320 students in grades 5–8. KIPP's schools are open to all students, regardless of previous academic record, conduct, or socioeconomic background. Once a school is established, the principal, known as the school leader, has complete control over school budget and staffing issues. Each school is responsible for establishing its own hiring criteria, although most KIPP schools choose to hire certified teachers. Through KIPP, school leaders also support staff with mentoring and professional development opportunities.

All KIPP school leaders, teachers, parents, and students must sign a "Commitment to Excellence" pledge, confirming commitment to the school and promising to adhere to the Five Pillars. All stakeholders must also commit to extended school days and years. Teachers must agree to make themselves available by cell phone outside of school hours to assist students with homework.

Curriculum and Instruction

KIPP's curriculum is defined as "college preparatory instruction." To this end, when students enter a KIPP school in fifth grade, they must promise to achieve the ultimate goal of attending college. KIPP to College, an alumni program, has been created to support students in achieving this goal. The mission of the alumni program is to help students continue to use the study habits and character traits learned through the KIPP's curriculum to succeed after leaving the KIPP school. Other components of the program include counseling support for students and families, academic support services, college and financial aid counseling, and internship and job placement.

KIPP expects teachers to tailor lesson plans to meet the needs of each student. Lesson plans should also be designed to raise students to the next academic level. To engage students in the coursework, KIPP encourages teachers to use such instructional strategies as interactive lessons and hands-on activities. At the end of each school year, students take an academically oriented field trip to a national park, historical region, or university campus. For more information on curriculum and instruction, sites should directly contact KIPP.

Scheduling and Grouping

KIPP's schools implement extended school days and years that require students to be in school longer than most district requirements. The typical school day begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m. on weekdays.

Students also attend school for 4 hours every other Saturday and for 3 weeks in the summer. However, each school operates independently and can set the longer day, week, and school year slightly different. Students are expected to complete at least 2 hours of homework each night. For more information on scheduling and grouping, sites should directly contact KIPP.

Technology

Publicly available information on technology was not available. For information on technology, sites should directly contact KIPP.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

Publicly available information on monitoring student progress and performance was not available. For information, sites should directly contact KIPP.

Family and Community Involvement

All KIPP parents must sign a "Commitment to Excellence" pledge, confirming commitment to the school and promising to adhere to the Five Pillars. This commitment involves checking homework, volunteering, and attending meetings. For more information on family and community involvement, sites should directly contact KIPP.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

According to KIPP's Web site, its teachers receive ongoing professional development throughout the school year through such forums as national conferences, teacher retreats, and leadership summits. Before they open a new school, KIPP's leaders are also required to attend the Fisher Fellowship, an intensive 1-year professional development program.

The Fisher Fellowship begins with a 6-week School Leadership Institute at Stanford University, in partnership with the Stanford Educational Institute. This training involves intensive business and education courses in three areas: instructional leadership, organizational leadership, and operational management. Fisher Fellows also receive instruction in school start-up, real estate, and community development. Fellows then complete residencies at high-performing KIPP schools to observe and participate in best practices in leading a KIPP school.

Following residencies, Fisher Fellows engage in a 10-day conference that focuses on continued training. Here, Fellows present their completed school design plans and work with the KIPP Foundation's staff to refine the plans. Finally, Fisher Fellows embark on the initial steps of planning with the community and laying the foundation to open a KIPP school in the fall following the fellowship year. The year concludes with one additional conference to further enhance the skills of the new school leaders.

Staff members from the KIPP Foundation provide ongoing administrative support when opening a new school and are available to help school leaders identify and renovate facilities, hire and train staff, and develop curriculum. KIPP conducts regional trainings, site visits, and coaching that address the following instructional topics: standards and curriculum, instructional methods and materials, instructional supervision and coaching, student assessment and data-driven decision making, and school improvement planning. The KIPP Foundation also offers training in such organizational issues as leadership, development of a school culture, and community relations. Furthermore, it also provides formal training and individual consultation to address managerial tools, such as financial planning and management, human resources management, and facility management.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

Publicly available information on implementation expectations or benchmarks was not available. For information on implementation expectations or benchmarks, sites should directly contact KIPP.

Special Considerations

This description of KIPP was based on publicly available information. The CSRQ Center did not have a conversation with a representative from KIPP.

KIPP requires all involved stakeholders to make a strong commitment to its Five Pillars. Interested schools should note that KIPP requires all schools to implement extended school days and years. KIPP also requires teachers to be available by cell phone to help students with homework in the evenings and on weekends. All students and parents must pledge to support KIPP's Five Pillars.

Model Study Reviewed

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Gallagher, B. M., & Ross, S. M. (2005). *Analysis of year 2 (2003-2004) student achievement outcomes for the Memphis KIPP DIAMOND Academy.* Memphis, TN: Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis.

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Making Middle Grades Work—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Review Results
Model Name:	Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW)
Model Mission/Focus:	The primary goal of MMGW is to raise the percentage of students in middle grades who leave eighth grade prepared to succeed in high school college-preparatory courses in English/reading, math, and science.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1999
Grade Levels Served:	6–8

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
280+	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	0	280+	0

Costs[1]

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	$41,140	$16,140	$1,000	N/A	$24,000
Year 2	$29,640	$18,640	$1,000	N/A	$10,000
Year 3	$37,040	$18,650	$1,000	N/A	$17,500
Years 4+	$17,800	$6,800	$1,000	N/A	$10,000

1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:	
a. Evidence of positive overall effects	⊘
b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	NR
c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas	NR
2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes	NR
3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	NR
4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	●
5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:	
a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	◑
b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	◕

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative NR = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

[1]The amounts provided here represent the average cost of a contract school to implement MMGW for 1 year.

Model Description

The Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW) school reform model was developed in 1999 as an extension of the High Schools That Work (HSTW) model. Both models are provided by the Atlanta-based Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). According to SREB, the idea of expanding HSTW and developing a middle grades school reform model originated when the HSTW leadership noticed a repeated roadblock to student achievement: Students making the transition from eighth to ninth grade were consistently unprepared for college preparatory work in high school. Motivated by the observed lack of preparation, SREB attempted to create a series of middle schools with a rigorous academic curriculum that aligned with high school standards and expectations. Since its inception in 1999, MMGW has expanded and is now used in more than 280 schools in 21 states.[2] Approximately 80% of existing MMGW sites feed into high schools implementing the HSTW model.

The major components of MMGW grew out of a series of reports that SREB published on middle school trends in the late 1990s.[3] While conducting research for the series of reports, SREB's researchers noticed a series of trends in high-performing middle schools that were translated into MMGW's framework. SREB's reports covered a wide range of potential concerns and challenges, such as raising teacher qualifications, closing achievement gaps, increasing state involvement and oversight, ensuring smooth transitions to and from middle school, and determining student readiness for high school.

Schools can join the network of MMGW schools in two ways: through a state network or as a state, district, or site contract. The majority of schools have joined MMGW as part of a state network, but since the introduction of the contract option in 2006, more than 50 schools and districts have chosen the option of contracting for services. Although the same services are offered to both types of schools, the major distinction between the two approaches is the flexibility of implementation. State network schools have far greater flexibility than contract schools. Although MMGW has established a large number of required components for contract schools to implement, most components are recommended for only state network schools.

For example, although MMGW *recommends* that state network schools train an existing staff member to serve as a site coordinator, this is a *required* component for contract schools. One other major difference between the two methods of implementation is evident in the professional development plans. MMGW includes a certain number of professional development workshops and conferences in the fee paid by contract schools. However, no professional development workshops are included in the fee paid by schools in the state network. State network schools must pay a fee for each workshop they choose to attend. Furthermore, state network schools do not receive the same level of onsite support as contract schools.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards, the following were identified as core components for MMGW contract schools: organization and governance, professional development, technical assistance, curriculum, instruction, student assessment, and data-based decision making. MMGW also identified an additional core component: transition, which includes programs and activities designed to ease the transition of students into and out of middle school.

[2] MMGW currently has middle grades participating in 21 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

[3] The four foundational reports can be accessed on SREB's MMGW Web site (http://www.sreb.org/programs/MiddleGrades/MiddleGradesindex.asp): *Education's Weak Link: Student Performance in the Middle Grades; Leading the Way: State Actions to Improve Student Achievement in the Middle Grades; Raising the Bar in the Middle Grades: Readiness for Success;* and *Improving Teaching in the Middle Grades: Higher Standards for Students Aren't Enough.*

Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

According to SREB, the mission of MMGW is to raise the percentage of students in middle grades who leave eighth grade prepared to succeed in college-preparatory courses in high school. MMGW encourages each school to determine a concrete and measurable school-level mission statement that echoes MMGW's national mission.

To help schools meet their mission statement, MMGW has established three goals:

1. Increase the percentage of eighth-grade students who score at or above the MMGW reading, math, and science performance goals on SREB's Middle Grades Assessment (MGA), a National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)-referenced assessment test in reading, math, and science.
2. Provide educational experiences that increase students' knowledge and skills in math, English/reading, science, and social studies.
3. Provide students with opportunities to apply their skills in the fine arts and to explore careers and new technologies.

SREB believes that by achieving each of these three goals and by following a comprehensive improvement framework of key practices and essential conditions, each school can successfully carry out MMGW's mission.

Goals/Rationale

MMGW has developed a comprehensive improvement framework of 10 key elements that it believes are crucial to success in middle grades:

- Establishing a rigorous academic core
- Fostering a belief that all students matter
- Setting high expectations and providing students with extra help and time to meet them
- Using engaging classroom practices
- Encouraging teacher collaboration
- Using parent and community support
- Hiring highly qualified teachers
- Using data
- Exploring and using technology
- Strengthening leadership

The comprehensive framework afforded by these 10 elements serves as a foundation for state network and contract schools that are implementing MMGW.

Furthermore, MMGW has determined five essential conditions for success:

- Commitment
- A plan for continuous improvement
- Curriculum
- Support for professional development
- Teacher preparation

These five conditions were determined based on research conducted by SREB on middle schools.

MMGW believes that a middle school can achieve success if it meets the five essential conditions for success and implements, with fidelity, the 10 key elements of MMGW's framework.

Costs

The cost of implementing MMGW varies greatly from school to school and particularly from state network

school to contract school. MMGW estimates that the average cost per year for a state network school is $10,000 compared with $31,405 for a contract school. Costs also vary depending on the number of national workshops attended by school staff. The registration fees for each workshop are between $150 and $350 per person and do not include travel costs.

For both state network and contract schools, the base cost includes a 3-day technical assistance visit (TAV) and a 1-day technical review visit (TRV), a site development workshop, the MGA (discussed in detail in the section titled "Monitoring Student Progress and Performance"), and statewide professional development workshops. In addition, contract schools receive additional services that may vary depending on the specific terms of the contract, including:

- Ten days of onsite coaching
- Four days minimum of onsite professional development
- Registration fees for teams of six people to attend two national workshops
- Registration fees for a team of five people to attend a national leadership series workshop
- Registration fees for a team of eight people to attend the summer conference
- Registration fees for a team of three people to participate in a workshop on curriculum alignment to high school readiness standards in college-preparatory English/reading, algebra I, and science
- Registration fees for a team of three people to attend a 1-week summer institute to design and implement catch-up courses in English/reading and math
- One-thousand dollars of school improvement materials for an onsite professional development library.

For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, schools should directly contact SREB.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: ⊘

The CSRQ Center reviewed seven quantitative studies for effects of MMGW on student achievement. Of these studies, none met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. Therefore, the overall rating of the effects of this model on student achievement is zero. (Appendix I reports on the seven studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

Evidence of effects for diverse student populations

Rating: NR

Because no studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for review, the rating for this subcategory is no rating.

Evidence of positive effects in subject areas

Rating: NR

Because no studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for review, the rating for this subcategory is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: NR

Because no studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for review, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: NR

Because no studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for review, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: ●

MMGW provided documentation that offered explicit citations to support the following core components of the model: organization and governance, professional development, technical assistance, curriculum, instruction, student assessment, and data-based decision making. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of readiness for successful implementation

Rating: ◑

Based on documentation provided by MMGW, the model offers a formal process to help school staff establish an initial understanding of MMGW and informal strategies to develop faculty buy-in. MMGW does not provide a process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. MMGW provides formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is moderate.

Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation

Rating: ◕

MMGW provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, and sessions for new staff. MMGW also provides supporting materials for professional development that address most of its core components. However, MMGW offers only a partial plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is moderately strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

Schools interested in MMGW must join as either a state network school or a contract school and must obtain buy-in from at least half of the faculty members before implementation. MMGW also believes that a strong partnership between each school, the local district, and state-level agencies is necessary to successfully implement MMGW's framework. Accordingly, MMGW requires each state that joins its state network to designate a state middle grades coordinator, create a network of middle grades schools, provide technical assistance and professional development, and attend SREB's annual staff development conference and other such MMGW conferences as SREB's national leadership workshop series.

School principals are expected to take an active and supportive role in the implementation of the MMGW framework. MMGW recommends that school principals commit to mentoring teachers, attending national conferences and workshops, sharing decision-making responsibilities, and providing release time for staff members to attend professional development. MMGW also recommends that principals establish a system for monitoring implementation of the model. MMGW

offers a list of optional structural changes within a school, including feeder patterns, block scheduling, houses within the school, extended school days for at-risk students, teams, and dedicated instructional blocks.

MMGW's schools are not required to make any significant changes to their school governance structure. MMGW recommends that schools set up a series of focus teams to help plan and implement the MMGW framework. The focus team members should include staff members, students, and parents. MMGW's schools are not expected to hire additional staff, but the model does require that each contract school select a site coordinator from among existing staff. Site coordinators are usually classroom teachers, principals, or assistant principals who have time to take on the additional commitments of monitoring implementation and serving as a liaison to district, state, and national MMGW contacts. In addition, MMGW recommends that both state network schools and contract schools appoint teachers to serve as literacy and numeracy coaches.

Curriculum and Instruction

MMGW's schools are not required to use any specific curricula or materials. Instead, MMGW provides schools with a list of content and process standards. These standards indicate students' readiness for taking college-preparatory courses in high school. Each outgoing eighth-grade student should meet these standards in each of the four core content areas:

- **Math.** All students must successfully complete algebra I or pass a state exam to demonstrate proficiency in algebra I, as required under the No Child Left Behind Act
- **Science.** All students must use the scientific process combined with laboratory and technology experiences to learn about scientific concepts in physical life, earth, and space sciences.
- **English/reading.** All students must be able to find, organize, and report on information through the correct use of reading and writing skills. Students complete short writing assignments each week and longer research papers each semester, read the equivalent of 10 to 12 books each year, and demonstrate through the state's eighth-grade assessment that they can comprehend and analyze materials at grade-level standards.
- **Social studies.** All students must be able to describe their heritage and government, world, and economic principles by using key information from historical and current events.

Schools are expected to incorporate reading instruction into all content areas in the academic core curriculum through grade 8.

MMGW requires each contract school to align its curriculum with rigorous high school standards. Such alignment is not required in state network schools but is strongly encouraged by MMGW. Specific instructional strategies—including cooperative learning, small group instruction, teacher-developed materials, and project-based learning—are also required for contract schools and recommended for state network schools. Optional training on the recommended instructional strategies is provided through national workshops.

MMGW does not prescribe specific curricula or instructional strategies for special needs students or English language learners (ELLs). For contract schools with a high ELL population, MMGW's staff members work with school leadership to find consultants who have experience working with ELLs. MMGW also runs a national workshop, which is open to all schools, that addresses instruction for ELLs. MMGW recommends that all schools operate an extended day program to provide extra learning time and opportunities for at-risk and low-performing students. MMGW also suggests that schools host a 6-week summer program before the start of eighth or ninth grade for students who are at

risk for not meeting the expectations for exiting eighth grade. At-risk students can take catch-up courses during the summer program. The summer program should combine intensive instruction in core subject areas with instruction in study skills and long-term goal setting.

Scheduling and Grouping

MMGW's schools are not required to use any specific scheduling or grouping strategies.

Technology

MMGW's schools are not required to use any specific technology. However, for interested schools, MMGW holds an optional national workshop on integrating technology within instruction.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

MMGW developed the MGA, a biannual assessment process to monitor school progress toward successful implementation of the MMGW framework. The MGA is a multipronged assessment that relies on a number of tools to collect data about student achievement and schoolwide progress, including:

- **School Data Profile/Annual Report.** The principal or site coordinator is responsible for completing the school data profile and updating it annually with complete demographic and organizational information about the school, its student population, and its progress in implementing the model.
- **Middle Grades Teacher Survey.** All teachers are required to complete the MMGW-developed survey. Survey information is also used to plan professional development.
- **Middle Grades Principal Survey.** The school principal must complete this survey about school climate, processes, and policies.
- **SREB Middle Grades Student Assessment.** This assessment is administered to a randomly selected group of eighth-grade students as part of the MGA. The test is a compilation of NAEP questions and consists of a student survey and sections about reading, math, and science.
- **TAV.** A technical assistance team visits each school for 3 days during its 1st year to identify strengths and weaknesses and to set up an action plan.
- **TRV.** Eighteen months after the TAV, the technical assistance team leader and a state coordinator revisit the school for 1 day to identify further needs and to revise the school's action plan.

Family and Community Involvement

Although parental involvement is one of the key elements of MMGW's framework, schools are not required to integrate a parental component as part of MMGW implementation. MMGW recommends that schools ask parents to volunteer, serve on focus teams, and help students with homework. MMGW also recommends that schools hold annual parent–student–teacher conferences.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Before implementation, MMGW's staff provides an orientation for faculty. School faculty can also attend an optional half-day orientation conducted by SREB's staff. MMGW also offers interested sites a list of other schools in their area that are currently implementing MMGW.

During implementation, MMGW requires all schools, both contract and state network sites, to participate in a TAV and TRV. The TAV occurs within the first 12 months of implementation and lasts 3 days. A technical assistance team conducts the TAV or TRV. The team is comprised of representatives from feeder

elementary schools and receiving high schools, outstanding teachers from each of the four core content areas from other middle schools, parents, and a representative of the state department of education. Each visit is led by an MMGW staff member, a person trained by MMGW, or the MMGW state coordinator.

The goal of the TAV is to identify any necessary changes needed to improve implementation and student achievement. MMGW expects each visiting team to focus on four areas: identifying promising practices related to MMGW's framework, discussing improvement steps planned by the school, describing major challenges to implementation, and identifying specific actions the school should take to address the challenges. Before the TAV, all team members are expected to study information about the school, including demographics, suspension rates, failure rates, course enrollment data, and absenteeism. Team members should also look at recent state and MMGW assessment data and survey results for different groups of students. Each team member receives *Making Middles Grades Work: Technical Assistance Guide for Team Members and Leaders,* a detailed guide that describes the steps necessary to prepare for, conduct, and follow up on the TAV.

The school's site coordinator is generally responsible for preparing for the TAV and TRV. Each site coordinator receives a copy of the *Making Middles Grades Work: Technical Assistance Guide for Site Coordinators.* This guide provides information to help site coordinators select team members, schedule a visit, and create an agenda for the visit. The guide also provides a detailed list of expectations for each member of the team and a checklist for before, during, and after the visit. After the TAV, each school receives a comprehensive report that outlines the challenges. The technical assistance team provides specific feedback in the areas of curriculum, student achievement, teacher collaboration, parent involvement, data-based decision making, technology, staff development, and leadership development.

The TRV occurs 24 to 30 months after the TAV and follows a similar format. A team—including the state coordinator, a district representative, and an SREB staff member—visits a school to assess implementation progress. Before the visit, the team studies baseline data collected during the TAV, and during the visit, the team assesses the school's progress toward implementing the 10 key elements of the model. To prepare for the TRV, all members of the technical assistance team receive a copy of *Site Guidelines for a Making Middle Grades Work Technical Review Visit.* This guide includes a progress report form, a walkthrough observation form, interview protocols, and checklists and guidelines for preparing and conducting the TRV.

In addition to the TAV and TRV, MMGW offers professional development activities to all schools. Professional development is required for all contract schools and is recommended for state network schools. Most professional development takes place in the form of national and onsite workshops that are aligned to school improvement plans. Each year, MMGW—in partnership with SREB and HSTW—holds approximately 12 workshops, of 2–3 days in length, throughout the United States. These workshops cover diverse topics and change each year. Past workshops have focused on "Quality Teaching Strategies that Raise the Bar"; "Transitions: Getting Middle Grades Students Reading for High School"; "Using Technology to Enhance Classroom Instruction"; and "Improving Achievement by Engaging Students in Reading and Writing for Learning in All Subjects." Schools send teams of approximately six staff member to attend the workshops. Types of attendees vary depending on the topics but can include the principal, assistant principal, classroom teachers, guidance counselor, district administrator, and site coordinators.

MMGW works with contract schools to create a formal professional development plan that includes onsite and offsite activities, such as conferences, workshops, site-based coaching, demonstration classrooms,

professional learning communities, and consultant visits. Each contract school is required to attend the Summer Staff Development Conference and at least one leadership series workshop. The model works with the leadership team to determine a plan for additional training.

State network schools have an informal plan for professional development. MMGW recommends that each state network school attend at least one national workshop. However, such schools must pay a registration fee and cover all travel expenses. MMGW also recommends that state network schools attend national conferences and participate in follow-up activities, which is similar to contract schools. Unlike contract schools, state network schools do not have access to consultants and onsite visitations because the professional development plan is informal.

MMGW provides coaching services only to contract sites. A coach visits each contract school 4–6 times per year. The coaches are generally former middle school staff members (often from MMGW schools) with a demonstrated ability to make significant changes in a middle school environment. Each coach attends 10 days of training during the academic year and must attend a set number of national workshops. Contract sites are also required to establish "demonstration classrooms" with the help of the coach. The demonstration classroom serves as a professional development resource for teachers. Professional development is customized to the meet the needs of each school.

MMGW uses professional trainers to deliver national workshops. MMGW also hires specific trainers with expertise in math, science, and English/reading. The subject-specific trainers are assigned to schools in which students are weak in that specific subject area. The trainers work closely with the schools for 1 year at a time to address gaps and shortcomings.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

MMGW has established a list of implementation benchmarks that are based on the information collected from faculty and student surveys. The model identifies the factors that are linked with higher achievement and successful implementation and uses such factors as measures to determine the depth with which a school is implementing the model's design. A set of benchmarks is distributed to each school via the school site coordinator. *Establishing Benchmarks of Progress for Middle Grades Sites* lays out a detailed list of all the conditions expected of middle schools and a list of benchmarks and possible indicators across nine broad themes:

- Analyzing performance goals and gaps in middle grades
- Setting a clear mission and a vision of success
- Raising expectations and providing extra help
- Providing rigorous and challenging academic content
- Engaging students in learning challenging content by using specific strategies in literacy, math, and science
- Providing guidance and support for all students
- Improving transitions to increase the percentages of ninth-grade students who have the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college-preparatory courses in high school
- Supporting teachers with time and structure for collaboration in systematic professional development
- Demonstrating strong leadership and focusing on continuous improvement

MMGW also provides a list of indicators for each of the 10 key practices outlined in MMGW's framework. This information is provided to teams that conduct the TAV; the teams share such information with the schools.

Establishing Benchmarks also provides guidance to help schools use the benchmarks and indicators to set goals in each of the nine themes. For example, under the first theme, "Analyzing Performance Goals and Gaps in Middle Grades," one benchmark listed by MMGW is that "Students report teachers often indicate the amount and quality of work necessary to earn an A or B." MMGW states that schools should use the data collected in the student assessment of the MGA as an indicator. If 50% of students surveyed agreed with the statement, a possible goal would be to increase the number to 67% during the following year. MMGW encourages schools to determine clear and quantifiable goals and benchmarks of progress for each indicator.

Special Considerations

MMGW identified "transition" as a core component of its model. To this end, MMGW recommends that its schools implement programs designed to ensure a smooth transition for all students. The model recommends that middle schools hold summer camps for incoming sixth grade students and catch-up courses for low-performing students who may not be adequately prepared for middle school level work. For at-risk seventh- and eighth-grade students, MMGW recommends that schools design catch-up courses during the school year that are supplemented by additional planned learning experiences during the summer and the extended day or work programs. MMGW also recommends that middle schools work to establish good relationships with feeder elementary and high schools and to align their curricula with the high school readiness standards.

Most MMGW schools implement a mentoring program at the recommendation of SREB. Typically, each faculty member mentors 15–18 students. Mentors are responsible for providing academic, career, and personal support to students throughout the middle grades.

MMGW places an emphasis on providing leaders and teachers in middle grades with the tools for using data to guide school improvement. The biennial MGA in reading, math, and science and student and teacher survey results assist school and teacher leaders to understand the link between student achievement and the quality of their learning experiences. Through the surveys, school leaders and teachers are able to get anonymous feedback from students and teacher leaders on school and classroom practices. The MGA links student achievement in reading, math, and science to school and classroom practices. The MGA focuses on fixing the systems that research indicates may cause students to fail to achieve the desired performance goals.

In conversations with three school principals, each commented on the strength of research materials provided by SREB. One principal noted that the national conferences and workshops are good sources of information and networking. However, one principal noted that completing the MGA in his school was a time-consuming process; he felt that the MGA duplicated concepts that are already tested in the statewide assessment. In general, the principals felt that positive gains could be achieved in any school if it selects the right pieces of MMGW's framework.

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Middle Start—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Review Results
Model Name:	Middle Start—Secondary
Model Mission/Focus:	Middle Start seeks to create equitable learning environments for middle grade students and to improve the academic success and development of middle grade students—regardless of race, gender or ability level—by collaborating with other national and local organizations to provide professional development for teachers, support networks for schools, and challenging and supportive programs for students.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1994
Grade Levels Served:	6–8

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
39	18	2	19
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	0	39	0

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	$66,000[1]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 2	$66,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 3	$66,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Years 4+	$40,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:	
a. Evidence of positive overall effects	◔
b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	NR
c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:	
Reading	◔
Math	⊘
2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes	NR
3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	NR
4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	●
5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:	
a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	◕
b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	◕

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative NR = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

[1]Cost may vary considerably depending on schools' and districts' choices of Middle Start program components, intensity of engagement, and adaptations made to address particular needs and interests.

Model Description

Middle Start is a comprehensive school improvement model for schools that serve middle grades. Middle Start works with any school that contains a seventh grade and at least one other contiguous grade level, including grades 6–8 of K–8 schools, grades 7–9 of junior high schools, and grades 6–12 of secondary schools.

In 1994, the Academy for Education Development (AED) developed Middle Start with funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and began implementing the program in Michigan. Since then, Middle Start has expanded to other states, including Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Wisconsin. In 2002, the Middle Start National Center at AED was established in New York City. The national center seeks to expand its support to schools in different regions of the country through engaging local support, identifying needs, and fostering interest in school improvement strategies for middle grades.

Middle Start emphasizes regional partnerships to promote the development of a support system and structure that will ensure sustainability by continuing to assist schools beyond the initial period of implementation. Middle Start has two regional partnerships: the Michigan Middle Start Partnership and Mid-South Middle Start. The Michigan Middle Start Partnership was established in 1994 with grants from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The partnership includes professional development organizations, advocacy groups, technical assistance organizations, and universities. The Mid-South Middle Start Partnership was established in 1997 and serves three mid-south states: Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Through partnerships with the Foundation for the Mid-South and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Mid-South Middle Start Partnership offers grants to schools that they can use for comprehensive school improvement efforts.

To foster challenging academic curricula and healthy development of students, Middle Start focuses on four principles:

- Reflective review and self-assessment
- Effective small learning communities
- Rigorous curriculum instruction and student assessment
- Distributed leadership and sustainable partnerships

To ensure that these four principles become embedded in school culture, Middle Start provides extensive support to individual schools and clusters of schools within and across regions in the following areas:

- Developing a foundation for continuous improvement
- Establishing small learning communities
- Sharing leadership and building partnerships
- Providing guidance on curriculum, instruction, and assessment

Middle Start requires schools to commit to a 3-year school improvement process. Schools may also contract with Middle Start to engage in a planning year. The planning year can include participation in Middle Start Self-Study leadership seminars and additional support provided by an Middle Start coach. The 3-year school improvement process enables schools to build lasting capacity to meet school improvement goals and accountability measures. Recognizing that no two schools or regions are alike, Middle Start tries to offer a high degree of flexibility and responsiveness to the respective school improvement needs of each school.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards, the following were identified as core components for Middle Start:

organization and governance, professional development, technical assistance, instruction, student assessment, and data-based decision making. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

Middle Start recognizes that young adolescents have unique needs. Middle Start works to address those needs through proven methods and intensive coaching. Middle Start builds on what is already working well in a school, identifies challenges being faced by a school, and helps to develop the tools and skills that address such challenges and create an environment for schoolwide success. Middle Start claims that high achievement is the result of high expectations and high support. An overarching goal of Middle Start is to create schools that are socially equitable, in which all students have the appropriate supports, resources, and opportunities to achieve. Middle Start claims that its goals can be accomplished by implementing a data-driven model that focuses on student achievement.

Goals/Rationale

Middle Start seeks to improve all types of middle schools, particularly those that have a high-poverty student population. Middle Start's focus is to enhance teaching and learning and to create learning environments that are academically challenging, responsive to the needs of young adolescents, and socially equitable. Middle Start aims to help all students in middle grades meet academically challenging standards and prepare for the next stage of learning and growing.

Costs

Costs to implement Middle Start generally vary from $65,000 to $125,000, depending on the number of schools within a region and the level of support that they choose. Cost may also vary considerably depending on what Middle Start program components that schools and districts choose to implement, intensity of engagement, and adaptations that schools and districts make to address particular needs and interests.

Middle Start offers different contract and pricing options for basic coaching and intensive coaching. The average cost per school for years 1–3 is $66,000. The average cost for year 4 and beyond decreases to $40,000. Costs include Middle Start orientation, administration of the self-study survey and customized results, leadership seminars and network meetings, professional development, a collegial peer review, and an Middle Start coach.

Compared with years 1–3, years 4 and 5 are less intensive and more individualized. During these years, Middle Start continues to provide seminars and to concentrate on building leadership skills of school staff for sustainability. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, schools should directly contact the Middle Start National Center at AED.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: 

The CSRQ Center reviewed 15 quantitative studies of the effects of Middle Start on student achievement at the middle school level. Two studies met the Center's standards for rigor of research design. The Center considers the findings of one of the two studies to be *conclusive,* meaning the Center has confidence in the study's results. The findings favoring Middle Start students in the conclusive study demonstrated a difference that approached statistical

significance.[2] The findings of the second study are considered to be *suggestive,* meaning the Center has limited confidence in the study's results. The findings in the suggestive study demonstrated a positive trend, but the level of statistical significance was not reported. Together, these results are consistent with an overall rating of limited. (Appendix J reports on the 13 studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

The first study, which was considered to be conclusive, examined students in schools that served predominately low socioeconomic status populations throughout the state of Michigan. Student outcomes in reading were examined using the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP).

The second study, which was considered to be suggestive, examined outcomes of seventh-grade students in 11 middle schools in a large Michigan school district. The second study examined students' scores on the reading and math subtests of MEAP.

Evidence of Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: NR

No studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined Middle Start's effects on student achievement for diverse student populations. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

The CSRQ Center urges readers to not necessarily judge a no rating or a low rating in this category as evidence that Middle Start cannot be effective in Title I schools or other schools with similar student populations. The studies of Middle Start that met the CSRQ Center's standards included schools serving primarily low-income minority students. Thus, readers may interpret the CSRQ Center's overall rating in the category of positive overall effects on student achievement as an indicator of the model's effectiveness in working in challenging settings.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

Rating: ◔

The two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards focused on the effects of Middle Start on student achievement in reading. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Math

Rating: ⊘

One of the two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards (i.e., the study that was considered to be suggestive) focused on the effects of Middle Start on student achievement in math. Although the study reported an increase in the percentage of students who reached a proficient level in math (from 32% to 44%) over 5 years of implementation, the study did not report tests of statistical significance. So, positive or negative effects of Middle Start could not be discerned from this study. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is zero.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: NR

No studies of Middle Start that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined additional student outcomes. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

[2] This finding is based on 10 Middle Start schools that had a high level of program implementation compared with 10 matched comparison schools. The study reported a level of statistical significance of $p < .06$. The effect size, as calculated by the CSRQ Center, was +0.40, based on growth during 3 years of implementation.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: NR

No studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the effects of Middle Start on parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: ●

Middle Start provided documentation that offered explicit citations to support all core components of the model: organization and governance, professional development, technical assistance, curriculum, instruction, student assessment, and data-based decision making. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: ◕

Based on documentation provided by Middle Start, the model offers a formal process for establishing an initial understanding of Middle Start and strategies to develop faculty buy-in for some but not all of its schools. However, Middle Start offers only an informal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. Middle Start also provides formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is moderately strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ◕

Middle Start provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, and capacity building. However, Middle Start does not offer training specifically for new staff. Additionally, Middle Start provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of its core components. Middle Start also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development in all areas except budgeting requirements and district roles. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is moderately strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

Middle Start has specific requirements for school organization and governance. To start, a school must have 80-percent buy-in from faculty, including teachers, principals, the superintendent, and the teachers' association.

Distributed leadership and sustainable partnerships is one of four Middle Start principles. Thus, a Middle Start school's first step is to create collaboratively a school leadership team that includes the principal and other administrators, teachers, students, and family representatives. The leadership team is expected to manage the school's improvement process and the implementation of Middle Start. Middle Start supports this process in several ways:

- Helps to develop and sustain the school leadership team
- Assists the team in developing and setting priorities

- Develops the capacity of school staff to use data to improve classroom practice, student achievement, and behavior
- Helps select and implement a professional development program
- Conducts professional development through leadership seminars, quarterly meetings, study groups, and summer institutes

Curriculum and Instruction

Although Middle Start does not mandate a specific curriculum, it requires schools to develop an academically rigorous curriculum based on high standards. To support student learning, Middle Start encourages schools to match a strong curriculum with instructional strategies that are based on best practices and meaningful assessments. Middle Start also emphasizes instructional practices that promote deep understanding, higher order thinking, and experiential learning.

Middle Start requires schools to assess and address students' needs in literacy and math. Each school works with Middle Start to identify and implement a literacy curriculum that meets the needs of the school's population. Each school also establishes literacy and math goals. To meet those goals, each school must arrange for professional development, through either Middle Start or an outside provider.

Middle Start encourages teachers to use multicultural curricula and a variety of instructional modalities to meet the diverse needs of students. Teachers work in small learning communities and teacher teams within grade levels and across subject areas to foster collaboration and networking and to share knowledge and skills. For example, teacher teams have common planning times to align curricula and analyze student data.

Middle Start schools use the Achievement by Continuous Improvement (ABCI) model for educational change. Schools implement ABCI based on their needs and resources. According to Middle Start, if an assignment is worth doing, then it should be worth doing well. Middle Start's teachers are required to design challenging and engaging lessons, and students are required to complete all assignments and tests at a proficient level. Generally, proficiency is defined as C or above. A grade below a C is considered incomplete and must be made up. Daily and weekly progress reports serve as monitoring tools to prevent students from falling through the cracks and to support high expectations and standards.

The ABCI model encourages accountability at multiple levels. Students are responsible for completing their assignments well and being active learners; teachers are expected to create high-quality, rigorous activities; and families and communities are engaged to be active participants who support student assignments.

Scheduling and Grouping

Small learning communities—another principle of Middle Start—are an important aspect of full implementation. According to Middle Start, small learning communities strengthen student achievement and foster such positive outcomes for students as improved behavior and increased peer collaboration. To develop these communities effectively, Middle Start helps schools to develop and sustain teacher teams, use a reflective cycle of inquiry and instructional decision making, implement common planning times, and develop heterogeneous grouping strategies.

Teachers work together during common planning time within grade levels and across subject areas to coordinate curriculum, instruction, and assessment; develop interdisciplinary units of instruction; communicate with families; review student work; and develop future learning goals for students. School teams also work closely with the school leadership team to make decisions about school policies and practices.

Middle Start provides guidance, materials, and strategies to include students with special needs and English language learners within the regular classroom.

Middle Start also encourages cooperative learning and heterogeneous flexible grouping within all classrooms and subjects. For example, students, within a group of 28 in a cooperative learning environment, could be divided into groups of four. Each student would have a role within that group, such as facilitator or recorder. Students rotate roles so that each can experience a sense of responsibility to the group. According to Middle Start, heterogeneous flexible grouping is an antitracking approach whereby students are constantly assessed and regrouped.

Technology

Middle Start does not require the use of specific technology.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

Student assessment and data-based decision making are integral parts of Middle Start. Middle Start seeks to develop a school's capacity to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data that can be used to inform classroom instruction and promote academic improvement. Schools assess student progress through a variety of assessments, including standardized tests and performance- and project-based assessments. Performance- and project-based assessments provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery. Teachers individually and collaboratively use rubrics and standards to assess student work through an inquiry process that includes reflection and data analysis.

Middle Start coaches work with schools to identify gaps in student learning, achievement, and opportunities. Middle Start coaches also help schools use a self-assessment that can help to identify the underlying causes of such gaps. The school conducts the self-assessment after the 1st and 3rd years of implementation. The results from each self-assessment are compared to determine the rate of change and improvement at the school.

Family and Community Involvement

Middle Start encourages parent, family, and community involvement to help sustain the model. The school leadership team helps families understand the needs of young adolescents and approaches that can be taken to support students academically and developmentally. The team also provides families with information about and access to resources and community agencies and services. Parents are encouraged to tutor students, volunteer at the school, and serve on committees. Schools establish a family resource room with a family liaison to further promote family and community involvement. Teacher teams are encouraged to regularly contact and schedule conferences with parents. The conferences are meant to inform parents about student progress, not just about problems. Some schools offer opportunities for parents to shadow their children for a school day.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Middle Start provides extensive professional development and technical assistance to teachers and administrators before and during implementation. Before implementation, the school leadership team attends 2 days of summer orientation and participates in leadership seminars throughout implementation. Six leadership seminars are offered yearly during years 3–5 of implementation. The day-long seminars cover such topics as developing internal accountability, building trust, defining and building professional learning communities, and developing small learning communities. Within these topics, the seminars address collaborative assessments, goal development, rubrics, and best practices.

Middle Start's coaches provide ongoing technical assistance to schools. Generally, schools receive 16–40 days of onsite coaching support per school year from a regionally based Middle Start coach who is affiliated with a local professional development organization or university. Coaches provide support to individual or groups of teachers as they implement new strategies and refine literacy and math practices in their classrooms. Middle Start also provides support through professional development providers who are contracted through Middle Start.

During implementation, Middle Start provides approximately 12 days of support through seminars and study groups. Once Middle Start is fully implemented, additional workshops and seminars are offered to the school leaders based on each school's needs and the requested level of support. Middle Start schools are expected to develop a professional learning community through interdisciplinary teams, common planning times, and a reflective cycle of inquiry.

School staff engages in an internal review process that includes classroom walkthroughs and peer observations. During the 3rd year of implementation, Middle Start schools undertake the Middle Start Collegial Peer Review (CPR). CPR fosters reflective practice into teaching and learning and helps schools deepen and sustain professional learning communities. CPR is directly tied to school improvement goals, plans, and strategies to improve teaching and learning.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

Middle Start provides a comprehensive set of benchmarks: the Middle Start Principles, Practices, and Rubrics. The rubrics define Middle Start's core principles and practices and provide guidelines and standards of implementation. Within each of the core principles, the rubrics are divided into three levels of implementation—emerging, implementing, and sustaining—to determine the school's level of implementation. For example, "Principle 1: Reflective Review and Self-Assessment" is divided into five specific practice areas, and the practice areas are described for each of the three levels of implementation.

The rubrics are intended to be used by school leadership teams to create baseline information, identify goals and areas of need, identify progress and successes, guide development of action plans and professional development, guide visits to other schools, and reflect on current practices.

Middle Start schools undertake a five-step Cycle of Inquiry to engage in an ongoing and continuous flow of learning and overall improvement:

1. Organize the school for continuous improvement by collecting and analyzing data, establishing and refining communication among the school community, and asking purposeful guiding questions
2. Develop, prepare, implement, and monitor action plans and teaching strategies
3. Review student work and conduct internal audits on a regular basis
4. Participate in external reviews and assess progress toward goals
5. Reflect on progress, communicate lessons learned to the school community, and plan next steps

In the last stage of this cycle, a school may use the Middle Start Principles, Practices, and Rubrics to reflect on its progress and to develop new goals for the next Cycle of Inquiry. A complete cycle may take 1–3 years.

Special Considerations

Middle Start works with schools for 3–5 years to develop full implementation, at which time the school should be able to sustain implementation without direct assistance from Middle Start. To assess implementation

and sustainability, Middle Start conducts an informal followup during year 5 of implementation.

According to Middle Start, it provides a process for change but does not prescribe a curriculum. As such, schools that are seeking to implement curriculum changes would have to look outside Middle Start for such changes. Middle Start provides choices in professional development and customizes implementation to the local context and the district's initiatives that are already in place. Doing so builds on the district's strengths and investments in previous reform efforts.

The model provider noted that Middle Start continues to evolve into a model that can be sustained in an environment in which no dedicated funding source (e.g., federal comprehensive school reform grants) exists. Although Middle Start rigorously maintains fidelity to its mission and focus, the changing landscape has resulted in greater flexibility and variability in terms of costs and components. Furthermore, the model provider encourages decision makers to consider the array of qualitative studies on Middle Start schools, most particularly for the Mid South Middle Start schools. These studies provide detailed descriptions of the implementation of Middle Start under various circumstances.

Model Studies Reviewed

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Mertens, S. B., & Flowers, N. (2006). Middle Start's impact on comprehensive Middle School reform. *Middle Grades Research Journal, 1*(1).

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Wilson, B., Corbett, D., & Haring, C. (2005). *Michigan Middle Start impact and implementation: An in-depth look at two cohorts of comprehensive school reform grantees.* Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development.

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Modern Red SchoolHouse—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Review Results
Model Name:	Modern Red SchoolHouse (MRSH)
Model Mission/Focus:	MRSH is a professional development model that believes that all students are able to master state standards of learning if given the appropriate time, instructional skills, and instructional strategy development.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1996
Grade Levels Served:	K–12

Number of Schools[1]

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
344	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	192	109	43

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	$50,000–$100,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 2	$50,000–$100,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 3	$50,000–$100,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Years 4+	$25,000–$50,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:	
a. Evidence of positive overall effects	⊘
b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	NR
c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas	NR
2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes	NR
3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	NR
4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	●
5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:	
a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	◕
b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	●

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative NR = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

[1]This is the total number of schools that receive either comprehensive or targeted assistance from MRSH.

Model Description

The Modern Red SchoolHouse (MRSH) school reform model grew out of the Hudson Institute as one of the New American Schools' original reform designs. In 1996, the model was piloted in six school districts in four states. Full implementation began in 1997 when the MRSH Institute was established as a nonprofit organization. Currently, MRSH's staff has collaborated with more than 300 schools and 175 school districts in 32 states.

MRSH seeks to serve the needs of all students. At its inception, the model was based on the theory that for all students to achieve high academic standards, school and classroom practices should accommodate the different needs of each student. MRSH does not offer a standard, preset program. Instead, MRSH custom designs programs to meet the needs of each school and district.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards, the following were identified as core components of MRSH: organization and governance, professional development, technical assistance, curriculum, instruction, student assessment, and data-based decision making. Core components are considered essential to the successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

According to MRSH, its mission is to help all students master core academic subjects by incorporating research-based findings on elements that lead to higher achievement. The guiding principles are:

- All students are able to learn if given appropriate time and instructional strategies.
- Teachers and administrators need flexibility to organize an effective instructional program.
- Schools need research-based instructional programs.
- Teachers need ongoing data collection to continually assess student progress.
- Schools need advanced technology to improve communication, to manage student progress, and to offer computer-based learning to students.
- Schools should focus on the richness of diverse cultures.
- Schools should build collaborative relationships with parents.

MRSH focuses on six elements: curriculum and instruction, standards and assessment, school organization and finance, technology, parent and community partnerships, and professional development.

Goals/Rationale

The overarching goals of MRSH are to help schools achieve schoolwide academic progress that aligns with state and local standards and to empower local school administrators and staff to manage school planning, monitor schoolwide data collection, design effective instructional programs for all students, and meet state standards for learning requirements. Within these broader goals, MRSH seeks to:

- Improve schoolwide achievement of all students
- Expand building capacity through school-based professional development and technical support
- Encourage inter- and intracommunication of staff and community
- Develop collegial relationship among teachers, administrators, and community
- Empower staff to effectively manage resources, instructional programs, and professional development

Costs

The cost of implementing MRSH varies based on a number of factors, including the location and size of the school or district and the grade levels served. The location of the school and the associated travel costs depend on the number of other schools in the area. MRSH staff work with all teachers, so the size and grade levels of the school also affect the costs of the model. The average total operating cost for full implementation falls between $50,000 and $100,000 for the first 3 years and between $25,000 and $50,000 for year 4 of implementation. Targeted assistance models, as opposed to comprehensive school improvement plans, are less expensive. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact MRSH.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Overall Effects

Rating: ⊘

The CSRQ Center reviewed four quantitative studies for effects of MRSH on student achievement at the middle and high school levels. None of these studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. Therefore, the overall rating of the effects of this model on student achievement is zero. (Appendix K reports on the four studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

Evidence of Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: NR

No studies of MRSH at the middle and high school levels met the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas

Rating: NR

No studies of MRSH at the middle and high school levels met the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: NR

No studies of MRSH at the middle and high school levels met the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: NR

No studies of MRSH at the middle and high school levels met the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: ●

Based on documentation provided by MRSH, explicit citations support all the core components of the model: organization and governance, professional development, technical assistance, curriculum, instruction, student assessment, and data-based decision making. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: ◕

Based on documentation provided by MRSH, the model offers a formal process for establishing an initial understanding of MRSH and strategies to develop faculty buy-in. However, MRSH only offers an informal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. MRSH also provides formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is moderately strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

MRSH provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, MRSH provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of the model's core components. MRSH also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is very strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

Prior to adoption, the Modern Red SchoolHouse staff meets with district and school staff to develop a profile of the local school or district. School leaders share student achievement data, teacher and student mobility rates, parent and community participation, teacher certification, and other information with MRSH.

MRSH staff also schedules interviews with principals and teachers and conducts classroom observations to gain a better understanding of the district and schools. Based on the findings, MRSH staff outlines the services to be provided, a timeline for implementation, and an itemized budget. Generally, MRSH requires that a minimum of 80% of the teachers at a school votes in favor of using MRSH prior to implementation.

Implementing the MRSH model does not require districts or schools to make substantial changes to their existing school structure and operations. The expectations and guidance given to a school depends on its specific needs. However, district personnel must collaborate with site leadership and MRSH facilitators to develop a coherent professional development plan. Principals are expected to participate fully in the implementation by establishing common planning periods, granting periodic release time to teachers, mentoring teachers, and attending training sessions. Teachers and paraprofessionals participate in professional development and task forces that are developed in coordination with MRSH over a period of 3 years. The task forces are developed in coordination with MRSH to address particular school needs and are comprised of school personnel, parents, small business representatives, and school board members.

No additional staff is required for implementation. However, according to the model, schools that are able to have a full- or part-time MRSH facilitator on staff may experience smoother implementation. MRSH does not require any formal monitoring of the implementation process. MRSH staff does offer baseline and annual surveys to teachers and principals to help assess implementation efforts.

Curriculum and Instruction

MRSH emphasizes the alignment of curriculum with the appropriate standards. The model does not require a specific curriculum and generally relies on the

curricula and textbooks that schools already use. MRSH staff helps teachers think collaboratively about ways to strengthen the instructional program to meet the needs of the student body through these actions:

- Develop a classroom culture where questioning, respect, and risk-taking are encouraged
- Engage students' interests and make connections to the outside world
- Integrate new learning with what students already understand
- Identify students' misconceptions and develop accurate understandings
- Provide a broad context for a given concept so students understand how it fits
- Establish opportunities for students to organize, experience, and apply new concepts
- Teach students problem-solving strategies and foster a commitment to excellence

The MRSH instructional approach helps all students through a standards-driven approach, performance-based assessments, differentiated instructional approaches, constructivist methods (active and authentic learning), and opportunities for reteaching if misunderstanding occurs.

The essential question posed by MRSH staff is, "What do we expect students to be able to do with what they learn?" The task of identifying essential knowledge, targets, benchmarks, performance assessments, and criteria for mastery are assigned to the local school planning team. Integral to that planning initiative are the roles and responsibilities of the teacher in implementing the instructional plan.

One major emphasis of MRSH's instructional design is the balance of teacher-led instruction and student-centered learning. MRSH promotes explicit instruction of both skills and strategies. Along with the direct teaching approach, the design includes opportunities for students to engage in self-directed activities that nurture independence. For students who experience misconceptions and misunderstandings, the instructional design team stresses the importance of re-teaching using alternative approaches. MRSH provides teachers with resource guides to help them implement these instructional strategies and to offer guidance for effective teaching.

MRSH aims to help disadvantaged learners whose limited motivation often interferes with academic learning. The model includes methods for building background knowledge to help disengaged students make connections with subject content. One example cited on the MRSH Web site was the teaching of the concept of renaissance in historically African American urban schools. The suggestion was to first address the idea of change in the Harlem Renaissance and then relate that personal experience to the European Renaissance.

Generally, schools continue to use the curricula and materials that they were using before MRSH was being implemented. Teachers are expected to assist with the development of units of instruction and curriculum maps for their school.

Scheduling and Grouping

MRSH staff collaborates with schools to customize an approach that fits the school culture. Therefore, MRSH does not require dedicated instructional blocks or specific grouping strategies for implementation. MRSH may recommend grouping based on a number of factors, including assessments of progress and skill mastery. Students may be periodically grouped and regrouped within a class, across the same grade level, and across different grade levels. MRSH staff can provide assistance with these grouping strategies.

Technology

MRSH helps schools integrate technology within the classroom, but the use of technology is not required for implementation. The model promotes technology as a way for educators to improve communication, manage instruction, monitor progress, and increase student achievement.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

MRSH advocates ongoing monitoring of student progress and performance through teacher developed assessments, commercial diagnostics, and state assessments. MRSH staff expects teachers to develop student performance assessments to evaluate their students' strengths and weaknesses. The model emphasizes the use of performance assessment data to inform instructional practices and organizational decisions. State assessments and teacher-developed assessments are used to guide instruction. Organizational decisions within schools are based on data from school surveys, test results, and other sources.

During the diagnostic visit by MRSH staff, the school learns strategies for monitoring schoolwide progress. Schools acquire strategies to improve their data collection methods through the modeling of data investigation, review of teacher skills and knowledge, classroom observations, and individual interviews both inside and outside of school staff.

Family and Community Involvement

MRSH encourages family and community involvement. Parent and community volunteers are asked to participate in student classrooms, work as tutors, support students with homework, and participate in schoolwide task forces. MRSH staff assists schools in developing a comprehensive plan to reach out to families and the community for support. The model also offers workshops to inform parents about in-home math and reading support activities.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

MRSH offers a fully developed professional development plan to all schools that implement the model. MRSH offers professional development and technical assistance on a variety of topics that fall under six general topics:

- Leadership for communities of practice
- Effective classroom practice
- Curriculum design
- Literacy
- Math
- School and community

MRSH professional development entails a systematic approach for implementing sustainable change in schools that includes a four-step process:

- **Step 1: Conduct a diagnostic visit with local school staff to understand the current organizational challenges.** During the visit, MRSH staff examines school test data, mobility rates, attendance records, and demographic statistics and reviews teacher certification and staff training to understand the knowledge base of the faculty; observes different classrooms to see the instructional practices that are taking place; and interviews students, teachers, administrators, and parents to obtain a multidimensional view of the school.
- **Step 2: Prepare a professional development proposal for local schools that entails the services, timeline, and budget required for implementing the training plan.** Although the sequence of the training is basically predetermined by the MRSH model, the methodology and arrangement of

training events are tailored to meet the needs of the school. The ultimate goal is to involve the school in the training process so that it may eventually assume ownership of the model.

- **Step 3: Set concrete outcomes with school staff at each professional development session.** The intent is to gather evaluations from school staff regarding the effectiveness of the training. The important consideration is the transfer of the knowledge, skills, and strategies into the classroom. The final goal is for the training to directly impact schoolwide student achievement to meet state accountability standards.
- **Step 4: Build school capacity so that local schools and school districts can independently assume ownership of the training process.** The intent is to provide leadership training with administrators, specialists, curriculum coordinators, and professional development staff. Additionally, MRSH staff assists schools in monitoring yearly progress to meet state accountability requirements. Through a partnership with Learning Technology Systems, an electronically based tracking system is available to monitor student achievement in relationship to state standards of learning. The model also offers specific professional development for the following areas: technology, instructional grouping, data-based decision making, and family and community involvement. After completing professional development offerings, teachers may apply for continuing education units through their district or state.

MRSH offers a variety of professional development opportunities to administrators, the entire instructional staff, and paraprofessionals. A mentor is assigned to assist each principal during the implementation of MRSH. The mentor also trains the school's leadership team. Leadership team training may include such topics as problem-solving strategies and communication plans.

Task forces, as recommended by MRSH, present another opportunity for professional development for all school staff. Task forces perform functions similar to committees. Task forces are comprised of school personnel, parents, small business representatives, and school board members. MRSH proposes six schoolwide task forces: standards and assessments, curriculum, technology, community and parent partnerships, organization and finance, and professional development. MRSH staff provides assistance with developing action plans for each of these task forces.

On average, MRSH trainers provide 25–30 days of onsite professional development each year. MRSH trainers specialize in particular areas of the model and have an average of 20 years of experience in public education. For example, one school may work with an onsite MRSH team that includes a leadership coach, a curriculum specialist, and a classroom management expert. MRSH staff conducts all professional development through these training sessions, mentoring, and coaching.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

MRSH offers implementation benchmarks to guide efforts in the areas of curriculum and instruction, technology, leadership, professional development, standards and assessment, organization and finance, and parent and community partnerships. Each benchmark has three levels of implementation indicators. For example, one benchmark for curriculum and instruction focuses on instructional strategies to assist teachers in identifying common misconceptions held by students. One indicator of this benchmark is met when teachers design units of instruction that help them to identify these misconceptions. Another indicator of this benchmark is met when teachers integrate instructional strategies that assist students in constructing accurate understandings.

Progress toward achieving implementation benchmarks is assessed through an annual survey of teachers and principals, onsite observations, a review of student achievement data, and teacher self-assessment. The MRSH model also provides school staff members who participate in onsite trainings with opportunities to evaluate each training session.

School staff, with additional guidance from MRSH, uses implementation assessment data to establish school goals for subsequent years and to adjust program implementation. MRSH staff provides schools with feedback on their strengths and weaknesses of program implementation.

Special Considerations

MRSH is a capacity-building model in which a school generally receives 3–5 years of support from the model. More than half of the professional development that is provided to schools focuses on instructional issues. Professional development can typically be broken down as follows: 32% for classroom instruction, 26% for task force training, 16% for curriculum alignment, 10% for leadership diagnostics and support, 8% for assessments, 5% for learning environment, and 3% for overview/change process. The professional development offerings are designed to address the strengths and weaknesses that exist within each school. When MRSH team members are onsite, they primarily work with teachers in small groups to build capacity.

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More Effective Schools—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Review Results
Model Name:	More Effective Schools (MES)
Model Mission/Focus:	The mission of MES is to make certain that all students, regardless of their family backgrounds, meet or exceed local and state performance goals in all content areas. The Association of Effective Schools, MES's provider, seeks to build a school's capacity to meet this goal by aligning school culture with Effective Schools research and by supporting school leaders through professional development, technical assistance, and recognition of success.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1982
Grade Levels Served:	K–12

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
405[1]	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	241	71	87

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	$60,000–$90,000	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
Year 2	$60,000–$90,000	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
Year 3	$60,000–$90,000	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
Years 4+	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:	
a. Evidence of positive overall effects	Limited
b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	NR
c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:	
Reading, language arts, math, science, social studies, and foreign language	Limited
2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes	NR
3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	NR
4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	Very Strong
5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:	
a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	Very Strong
b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	Very Strong

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

[1]This number includes elementary, middle, and high schools; one K–12 school; and five other schools that did not fall into any of these classifications.

Model Description

In 1966, James Coleman discussed the effectiveness of American public schools in *The Equality of Educational Opportunity,* a federal paper funded by the U.S. Department of Education. In it, Coleman claimed that a student's family background determined whether a student was able to learn, regardless of what a school did. A group of education researchers led by Ronald Edmonds, then Director of the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University, responded to Coleman's claim by acknowledging that a student's family background influenced a student's academic experience but did not necessarily prevent that student from learning. To counter the claim, Edmonds' group searched for schools in which the majority of students were achieving academic success despite being from low-income families. Using student achievement data, the group identified schools in low-income areas that were meeting high academic standards despite economic and social obstacles and compared such schools with similar schools that were not as successful. According to the Association of Effective Schools, Inc. (AES), the comparison resulted in the following conclusions:

- Public schools can be successful, even with students from low-income backgrounds.
- Children with low socioeconomic status (SES) can meet high academic standards.
- Schools that are successful despite socioeconomic obstacles have a common set of characteristics called *correlates* that are associated with student success. These correlates formed the basis for what is now known as Effective Schools research.
- These correlates are found in all types of successful schools: suburban, rural, and urban; elementary, middle, and high; and low, middle, and high SES communities. These correlates are not found in low-performing schools.

In 1982, Dr. Robert E. Sudlow, then Assistant Superintendent of Instruction for the Spencerport Central School District in Spencerport, New York, decided to implement these correlates in his district. This implementation marked the beginning of the More Effective Schools (MES)/Teaching Project, now known as the MES process. In the early years of the MES/Teaching Project, Edmonds and Lawrence Lezotte, both Effective Schools researchers, were consultants to the project. Ben Birdsell, then an employee of the New York State Department of Education, worked with Sudlow, Edmonds, and Lezotte to disseminate and train educators on Effective Schools research in the mid-1980s.

In 1989, Birdsell founded AES, a nonprofit organization, in an effort to disseminate Effective Schools research and help schools nationwide implement the MES process. Since 1989, AES has trained more than 400 schools in more than 20 states on the MES process.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center standards, the following were identified as core components of MES: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

According to AES, the mission of MES is to make certain that all students, regardless of their family backgrounds, meet or exceed local and state performance goals in all content areas. AES seeks to build a school's capacity to achieve this mission by aligning school culture with Effective Schools research and by supporting school leaders through professional development, technical assistance, and recognition of success. MES requires each school to apply the seven correlates of Effective Schools at the classroom, school, and

district levels. According to AES, the seven correlates are characteristics of school culture that are unique to schools that achieve high academic success:

1. A clear school mission that is articulated and shared by all staff. The mission should address instructional goals, assessment, and school priorities.
2. All staff should believe that all students are capable of meeting high expectations for academic success and that as teachers, they are capable of helping students achieve mastery.
3. The school principal is the instructional leader.
4. Student progress is monitored frequently using multiple assessment tools, and assessment data are used to guide instruction.
5. A significant percentage of time is spent on classroom instruction, and a high percentage of instructional time is spent using whole-class, teacher-directed activities.
6. The school environment is safe and orderly to promote teaching and learning.
7. Parents understand the MES model and are given opportunities to be involved in their child's education.

Goals/Rationale

MES is designed to improve student achievement in all content areas to enable students to have the skills and knowledge needed to move to the next grade level. AES helps schools achieve this goal through the MES process. According to AES, the MES process requires the involvement of classroom, school, and district leaders:

- A district leadership committee develops policy about school and student expectations; annual reporting; and alignment of state, local, and course standards.
- A school leadership team is formed that oversees the planning and implementation of the change process and analyzes data and research to make decisions and solve problems.
- The school leadership team develops a school improvement plan.
- Staff members receive professional development that helps them meet expectations that are set by the district.
- The leadership skills of school faculty are developed, and new leaders are provided with support and encouragement.
- The district's leaders monitor each school's progress toward meeting district expectations and produce an annual report that describes such progress.

Costs

According to AES, the costs to implement MES are based on the reform plan that is developed jointly by the school or district and AES. Costs vary depending on the needs and size of the school or district and on the types of service provided by AES. On average, implementation costs for each school are between $60,000 and $90,000 per year for 3 years. For more specific information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, schools or districts should directly contact AES.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: 

The CSRQ Center reviewed four quantitative studies for effects of MES on student achievement at the middle

and high school levels. Two of these studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. The CSRQ Center considers the findings of these studies to be *suggestive,* meaning that the CSRQ Center has limited confidence in the studies' results. Because no studies of MES were considered to be conclusive, the overall rating of the effects of MES on student achievement is limited. The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards is described below. (Appendix L reports on the two studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

The first study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and is considered to be suggestive used a longitudinal, cohort design. The study reported outcomes for students in one middle school in the midwestern United States that served an all-African American, predominantly low SES student population. The researchers tracked the performance trends of eighth-grade students in reading, language arts, and math. Although statistical tests of significance were not performed on the study's findings,[2] trends from the scores in 1981 (before implementation) compared with scores in 1987 (after 6 years of implementation) showed increases in (a) the percentage of students who scored at or above the national norm on the reading, language arts, and math subtests of the California Achievement Test and (b) the overall percentage of students who passed the Basic Essential Skills Test (a total score that includes reading, math, and government/economics).

The second study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and is considered to be suggestive also used a longitudinal, cohort design. This study reported outcomes of students in one suburban high school in New York that served a predominantly white, low SES student population. The researchers tracked the performance trends of high school students who voluntarily took the New York State Regent's tests. Trends[3] from the scores in 1983 (before implementation) compared with scores in 1989 (after 6 years of implementation) showed overall increases in the percentage of students who passed the tests for math 11, earth science, biology, chemistry, social studies, Spanish, and French.[4]

Evidence of Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: NR

No studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined MES's effects for diverse student populations. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

The CSRQ Center urges readers to not necessarily judge a no rating or a low rating in this category as evidence that MES cannot be effective in Title I schools or other schools with similar student populations. One study of MES that met the CSRQ Center's standards included schools that served primarily minority students from low-income families. Thus, readers may interpret the CSRQ Center's overall rating in the category of positive overall effects on student achievement as an indicator of the model's effectiveness in working in challenging settings.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

Rating: 

One of the two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards indicated a positive effect of MES on reading achievement. After 6 years of MES implementation,

[2]Level of statistical significance is determined by a statistical test and demonstrates whether the observed changes are likely to have occurred by chance alone.

[3]The study used a test for statistical significance of differences between MES and non-MES students at different points in time. However, because baseline equivalence of the MES and non-MES groups was not established, only longitudinal trends were included in this review.

[4]The New York State Regent's test of Comprehensive English was also included as an outcome in this study. However, some students in the analysis did not have a baseline measure. Therefore, the CSRQ Center did not include results from the English test in this report.

the percentage of eighth-grade students who scored at or above the national norm on the reading section of the California Achievement Test increased from 40.1% to 68.3%. However, the study did not conduct tests to determine whether the change was statistically significant. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Language Arts

Rating:

One of the two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards indicated a positive effect of MES on language arts achievement. After 6 years of MES implementation, the percentage of eighth-grade students who scored at or above the national norm on the language arts section of the California Achievement Test increased from 30.7% to 70.7%. However, the study did not conduct tests to determine whether the change was statistically significant. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Math

Rating:

The two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards indicated a positive effect of MES on math achievement. After 6 years of MES implementation, the percentage of eighth-grade students who scored at or above the national norm on the math section of the California Achievement Test increased from 34.3% to 69.5%. For high school students who took the New York State Regent's exam, the percentage of students who passed the math exam for grade 11 showed positive trends. However, neither study conducted tests to determine whether the change was statistically significant. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Science

Rating:

One of the two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards indicated a positive effect of MES among students who took the New York State Regent's exams on earth science, biology, and chemistry. After 6 years of MES implementation, the percentage of high school students who passed (a) earth science increased from 54.6% to 67.4%, (b) biology increased from 50.3% to 73.3%, and (c) chemistry increased from 27.7% to 57.6%. Effects of MES on student achievement on the physics exams were mixed. However, the study did not conduct tests to determine whether the changes in any subject were statistically significant. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Social Studies

Rating:

One of the two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards indicated a positive effect of MES among students who took the New York State Regent's exam on social studies. After 6 years of MES implementation, the percentage of high school students who passed the social studies exam increased from 51.8% to 81.1%. However, the study did not conduct tests to determine whether the change was statistically significant. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Foreign Language

Rating:

One of the two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards indicated a positive effect of MES among students who took the New York State Regent's exams on French and Spanish. After 6 years of MES implementation, the percentage of high school students

who passed (a) the French exam increased from 13.8% to 40.2% and (b) the Spanish exam increased from 5.6% to 41.4%. However, the study did not conduct tests to determine whether the changes in either exam were statistically significant. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: (NR)

No studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined MES's effects on additional outcomes. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: (NR)

No studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined MES's effects on parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: ●

AES provided documentation that offered explicit citations to support all the core components of MES: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of readiness for successful implementation

Rating: ●

Based on documentation provided by AES, MES offers a formal process for establishing an initial understanding of the model and strategies to develop faculty buy-in. Additionally, MES offers a formal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. MES also provides formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is very strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

MES provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, MES provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of its core components. MES also offers a comprehensive plan to help build a school's capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is very strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

The MES process requires simultaneous implementation of two strands at the classroom, school, and district levels:

- Strand 1: Organizational alignment and changing culture

- Strand 2: Classroom application (described in detail in the section titled "Curriculum and Instruction")

Strand 1 focuses on helping districts and schools to modify current policies and practices to improve student achievement and on aligning the school environment with Effective Schools research. Strand 1 emphasizes teamwork and includes the formation of four leadership teams: district improvement team, school improvement team, leadership team, and grade-level/content-area team. Although AES explicitly describes the process for creating these teams, AES acknowledges that modifications may be necessary if not all schools in a district participate in MES or if similar teams already exist.

The implementation of Strand 1 begins at the district level. Although AES encourages all schools in the district to adopt MES, AES does not require all schools in the district to participate. If all schools do not participate, the district may give more decision-making power to school-level leaders. AES normally begins working with the district at a preplanning meeting that includes an MES consultant (an AES employee), the district superintendent, and a person selected to be the MES liaison (usually the assistant superintendent for instruction). During the meeting, AES shares information about the MES process and Effective Schools research. After the meeting, district leaders form the district improvement team. This team consists of the principal and key teachers from each school that is implementing MES; the superintendent of the district; and other stakeholders who are selected to represent the district, such as members of the board of education, parents, support staff, students, and/or community representatives. The district improvement team develops a district plan and creates policy, both of which are aligned with Effective Schools research.

AES provides the district improvement team with 3 days of inservice training on Effective Schools research and on how to develop a districtwide school improvement process. On the 3rd day of the inservice, the team breaks into two committees to draft the district improvement plan. The first committee determines the district's standards of effectiveness, the mission of the district, timelines for implementation, and method for selecting members of school improvement teams. This committee also determines which stakeholders will be surveyed to determine the needs of the district and each school.

The second committee (which should include the district's testing expert) determines what instruments will be used to measure student learning and sets expectations for achievement on such instruments. After the two committees complete their portions of the plan, the district improvement team reconvenes for 2 days to discuss the plan and finalize a draft. The draft is submitted to the district's superintendent and board of education for approval. Upon approval of the plan, the district improvement team has the option to dissolve or to maintain its membership for the purpose of ongoing communication and coordination throughout the implementation process.

AES works with leaders at the school level to develop a school improvement team. Team members are selected based on policy described in the district improvement plan. The principal, teachers, and parents must be on the team. It may also include students, support staff, and community members. The team oversees the improvement efforts, analyzes student achievement data, administers MES surveys, and develops annual plans for school improvement.

AES provides the school improvement team with 1 day of training on Effective Schools research and the MES process. The team, then, administers MES surveys to school staff, students, and parents. The surveys provide information about the presence of the seven correlates of Effective Schools. AES works with the school improvement team to analyze the results of the surveys and to disaggregate student achievement data. Next, the team reconvenes for a 2-day session to develop an annual school improvement plan that is based on the data analysis. The plan must address curriculum and

instruction. The team submits the school improvement plan to school faculty for approval. If the faculty does not approve the plan, the school improvement team drafts a new plan. Once approved, the school improvement team coordinates efforts to implement the plan.

As part of the implementation, two other school teams are formed: the leadership team and the grade-level/content-area teams. The leadership team meets monthly to develop knowledge and skills to implement MES at the classroom level. This team comprises the principal and leaders from each grade-level/content-area team. Each grade-level/content-area team meets weekly to design curriculum and instruction based on professional development provided by AES. In elementary schools, these teams normally include all teachers in a particular grade level, and in middle and high schools, these teams typically include all teachers in a particular content area.

After the 1st year of implementation, the school improvement team meets 4 days per year to update the school improvement plan. MES expects the school improvement team to readminister the MES surveys each year and reevaluate student achievement data. The data should inform revisions to the plan. The school improvement team is also expected to create an annual evaluation report that is submitted to district leaders.

The district office (superintendent and MES liaison) should communicate with the school throughout the development and implementation of the school improvement plan. Either the superintendent or MES liaison is expected to support and supervise the school improvement team. At the end of each academic year, MES requires the superintendent or the MES liaison to write an evaluation report, which is different from the evaluation written by the school improvement team, that describes the progress that the district and its schools made toward implementing MES. This report should be presented to the board of education during an open public session.

Curriculum and Instruction

Strand 2 focuses on implementing MES, specifically the curriculum and instruction components, at the classroom level. MES does not require schools to adopt a specific curriculum or materials. Instead, MES views educational standards developed by each state education agency as extensive curriculum frameworks that should be used as blueprints to create local content and performance standards. Local content standards clarify a general state curriculum framework by indicating what each teacher should teach at each grade level and in each course. Performance standards outline assessments and indicators that are required to demonstrate the degree of mastery of each content standard. AES provides training on and expects teachers to develop grade-level and course-specific standards that are based on state standards.

Because the structure and format of state standards varies from state to state, MES provides two sequences for aligning local curriculum with state standards. If states provide schools with only general guidelines that describe key content and levels at which students will be assessed, then schools should begin with Sequence 1. If a school's state standards provide specific descriptions of what teachers should teach and what students should learn at each grade level and in each course—instead of general guidelines—then schools do not need to develop local content and performance standards. Therefore, these schools can begin with Sequence 2.

Sequence 1 begins with the development of districtwide standards and curriculum committees for each subject area addressed by the state standards. The committees consist of principals and key teachers from all grade levels and schools, the district's curriculum expert, and other such representatives as parents and community members. After the committees are formed, AES provides committee members with a 1-day inservice training on Effective Schools research, standards, and a collection of information on standards at the respective schools.

After the training, committees separate into building-level subcommittees. These committees develop a plan for surveying teachers about existing content and performance standards. According to AES, the survey process requires each committee to share samples of grade/course-level standards with teachers for the grade/course they are currently teaching and the grade/course preceding and after that course. School staff then responds by confirming whether the content they teach aligns with these standards. These responses are provided to the districtwide standards and curriculum committee. This committee uses teacher responses to draft local content standards for each grade level and course. According to AES, the standards must include performance indicators that articulate the level of mastery required for each standard. The committee submits a draft version of the standards to school staff, parents, and the community for review. Based on recommendations, the draft version is modified and then sent to the district's superintendent for approval. When the standards are approved, the school moves to Sequence 2.

Sequence 2 focuses on aligning the school curriculum with standards. The sequence requires teachers to meet in their grade-level/content-area teams to review state standards and determine whether they align with the content that is currently being taught. If needed, teachers may refine standards with consensus from the team.

Next, each team determines the number of instructional days in each marking period, the units taught during that period, and the number of days required to teach each unit. Then the teams assign standards to each unit and develop a timeline for student mastery of each standard. For each unit of instruction, the team must also develop a unit focus, essential questions, assessments, vocabulary, and resources. This process is ongoing. Thus teachers are encouraged to begin with units of instruction that take place immediately and then use weekly grade-level/content-area team meetings to continue the alignment process.

Before implementing the units of instruction, teachers receive 2 days of training on how to integrate the standards within lessons and how to use performance assessments. Teachers also receive training on instructional strategies, such as cooperative learning, that will help teachers engage all students in lessons.

Scheduling and Grouping

MES does not require schools to use any specific scheduling or grouping strategies. However, MES encourages schools to use cooperative learning when appropriate and to monitor the amount of instructional time spent teaching each standard using MES's online curriculum mapping tools. For information about these tools, schools should directly contact AES.

Technology

MES does not require schools to use any specific technology. However, MES recommends that teachers use MES Online, an Internet-based workspace that allows teachers to access an electronic version of their grade/course standards, to view or edit curriculum maps, and to develop and store units of instruction and performance assessments. For information on MES Online, schools should directly contact AES.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

Strand 2 of the MES process also describes the development of performance indicators. After standards and performance indicators are approved by the superintendent, MES requires grade-level/content-area teams to set timelines for mastery of each standard and to develop performance assessments. AES provides training on the development and implementation performance assessments and strategies to embed these assessments within daily instruction. The 1st year of implementing performance assessments is considered a trial period.

Before the 2nd year of MES implementation, AES provides teachers with additional training to review performance assignments, revise old assessments, and write additional assessments. Teachers share and discuss the effectiveness of their assessments during weekly grade-level/content-area meetings.

Furthermore, the school improvement team annually analyzes student achievement data on state assessments. These data guide revisions to the school improvement plan and form the basis of an annual evaluation report that is submitted to district leaders.

Family and Community Involvement

According to AES, parent, family, and community involvement is one of the seven correlates of Effective Schools. Therefore, MES requires parent and community members to join the district and school improvement teams. In addition, parent and community members are encouraged to support students through volunteerism at the school and classroom levels.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

AES provides training on Effective Schools research and the required tasks of each leadership team. The following descriptions reflect the minimum training requirements of MES. During the 1st year of implementation, the district improvement team receives 4 days of training on setting improvement goals, creating an annual report, and developing an implementation plan. During the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years of implementation, the school improvement team receives 5 days of training on (a) analyzing student achievement and survey data and school improvement strategies and (b) creating a school improvement plan and evaluation report. During each year of implementation, the leadership team receives 1 day of training on facilitation skills, instructional programming, and peer mentoring. During each year of implementation, the grade-level/content-area teams receive 1 day of training on curriculum, instruction, and the alignment of the school culture with Effective Schools research.

In addition, AES provides training targeted toward specific components of the MES process. The standards and curriculum committee receives 1 day of training for each subject area on aligning instruction with standards. During the 1st year of implementation, grade-level/content-area teams receive 2 days of training on curriculum mapping and creating units of instruction. Throughout implementation, all teachers receive at least 4 days of training on research-based instructional strategies and 4 days of training on creating and implementing performance-based assessments. Throughout the first 2 years of implementation, teachers meet with the MES trainer for feedback, technical assistance, and strategies to improve implementation of the standards and assessments. Furthermore, throughout the school year, AES provides technical assistance to teachers and administrators on MES Online, MES's technology component. Each teacher and administrator can request up to 2 hours of assistance per year in implementing the technology component.

AES also provides ongoing support and assistance to schools through an MES consultant. On an as-needed basis, the consultant will facilitate grade-level/content-area team meetings, coach or mentor members of the leadership team and teachers, conduct classroom observations, and provide guidance on the change process to the district and school improvement teams. The MES consultant also helps to organize and facilitate the initial planning process for the district and school improvement teams.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

AES provides each school with benchmarks for implementing the MES process at the classroom, school, and district levels. These benchmarks are based on the seven correlates of Effective Schools research and are divided into two strands: the district and school

improvement plans and standards and classroom application. The benchmarks are distributed to school administrators and are also available on AES's Web site. Throughout both strands, the benchmarks indicate MES's expectations of administrators, school staff, and parents concerning all core components of MES and the types of training and support that AES provides to these stakeholders.

As discussed in the section titled "Organization and Governance," AES expects the school improvement team to track implementation and prepare an annual evaluation report for district leaders. Furthermore, AES requires either the superintendent or MES liaison to monitor implementation of the model in schools throughout the district and to prepare an annual report that is presented to the board of education during an open public session.

Special Considerations

AES provides schools with a change process that is based on Effective Schools research. Although AES explicitly describes the MES process and provides benchmarks for implementation, district and school leaders have control over instruction, grouping, scheduling, and technology and are responsible for monitoring implementation of the model. In a conversation with a school principal who was implementing MES, the principal noted that MES helps schools articulate their mission and focus on monitoring student progress through performance assessments.

Although MES does not provide a specific curriculum as part of its implementation, MES does require teachers to align curriculum, standards, and assessments. Schools willing to adopt MES need to be ready to make significant time for teachers to complete this work.

Notably, one of the seven correlates of school effectiveness, and for this reason a critical component of the MES process, is a clearly articulated school mission. AES expects all staff to demonstrate an understanding of the school's mission and a commitment to achieving this mission. Furthermore, AES expects each school to establish a timeline for student mastery of local and state standards.

AES also establishes partnerships with universities to facilitate the implementation of MES. For information on the AES university partnerships, schools should directly contact AES.

Model Studies Reviewed

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Sudlow, R. E. (1992). *More Effective Schools/Teaching Project* (Proposal submitted to the Program Effectiveness Panel of the National Diffusion Network of the U.S. Department of Education). Spencerport, NY: Spencerport Public Schools.

Young, R., Jr. (1988). A process for developing more effective urban schools: A case study of Stowe Middle School. *The Journal of Negro Education, 57,* 307–334.

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Onward to Excellence II—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Quality Review Results
Model Name:	Onward to Excellence II (OTE II)
Model Mission/Focus:	OTE II seeks to improve schools by engaging all stakeholders in the school system—from parents to students to faculty—to reach a set of common goals. OTE II is a process for change, not an established plan that mandates specific changes to a school.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1981
Grade Levels Served:	K–12

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
1,000+	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	N/A	N/A	N/A

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	$18,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 2	$18,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 3	$18,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Years 4+	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:	
a. Evidence of positive overall effects	⊘
b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	NR
c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:	
Reading and math	⊘
2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes	NR
3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	NR
4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	●
5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:	
a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	◑
b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	●

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative NR = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

Model Description

Onward to Excellence (OTE) was first developed in 1981 at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) in Portland, Oregon. The model is based on research conducted on several school improvement practices, including parent and community involvement, strong administrative leadership, flexible grouping strategies, and progress monitoring. The OTE model was first piloted in schools in three states in 1981 and was made available across the country in 1984.

In 1999, some aspects of the model were strengthened and new components were added to incorporate new research on effective school practices. These changes included an expanded role for the local school board, the addition of a school improvement coordinator and a critical friends team, and more specific techniques for monitoring implementation. The updated model is now referred to as Onward to Excellence II (OTE II) and is used in grades K–12 across the country. Since its inception in 1981, the model provider estimates that more than 1,000 schools have used the model. More than 100 schools have implemented the updated version, OTE II, and of these, approximately half are middle or high schools. The national center continues to be based in Portland, but the model has also opened regional centers in California, Kansas, and West Virginia.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center standards, the following components of OTE II were identified as core: organization and governance, professional development, technical assistance, student assessment, and data-based decision making. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation.

Model Mission/Focus

The mission of OTE II is to help school communities work together to set student achievement goals, use data to drive the decision-making process, build capacity for continuous improvement, and use research-based practices for teaching. To support its mission, OTE II focuses on the following seven school improvement outcomes:

- Quality and equity in learning of all students
- Agreement to a widespread commitment to a mission and to student learning goals
- Alignment of content, instructional methods, and assessments to the mission and goals, as well as to each other
- Application of the mission and goals to drive human, financial, and other resource decisions
- Involvement of stakeholders who represent the community's diverse perspectives and cultural composition when planning and making improvements
- Collection and use of data to improve decision making
- Creation and sustainability of a "learning organization" that uses its own experience and knowledge, and that of others, in carrying out its work

To work toward these school improvement outcomes, OTE II helps schools choose and implement new practices rather than mandate specific changes. The model implementation is a cycle that lasts 2–3 years and follows seven steps: (1) organizing for success; (2) assessing current status; (3) establishing consensus; (4) aligning to state standards; (5) learning from research; (6) monitoring and improving implementation; and (7) renewing the continuous improvement cycle. The model encourages a collaborative effort in which students, families, community members, and school faculty work together to develop a set of goals and a path for change within the school. OTE II developers believe that through this process, schools develop

the capacity to design their own comprehensive school reform efforts based on research and experience.

Goals/Rationale

The model uses a four-step process to help schools build a capacity to improve student achievement:

- **Setting direction.** Each school brings all stakeholders together to establish a common purpose and a shared mission and vision. All stakeholders work together to establish common standards for student learning and goals for school improvement.
- **Planning action.** Cross-department study teams use research-based information to make decisions and develop a strategy for change. Each school maps out its curriculum, aligns it with state standards, develops a full implementation plan, and creates a timeline. Schools also establish a school leadership team (SLT) and an external study team (EST).
- **Taking action.** Schools implement agreed-upon changes, schedule professional development opportunities, monitor progress, and troubleshoot. These initial changes should set the stage for more substantial changes in the future.
- **Maintaining momentum.** Schools review progress and make changes for subsequent years, continue to use professional development resources, and renew the SLT and EST. Each school is responsible for reporting progress back to the community.

All key stakeholders, including students and community members, are asked to get involved in the school improvement process. They are expected to work together to establish and reach a common set of goals. The model stresses the importance of collaboration across all departments when setting goals and determining a course of action. OTE II believes that each staff member, regardless of the department in which he/she works, can help a school reach its stated goals.

Costs

OTE II does not have a set cost. But the model provider estimates that a 3-year contract with OTE II costs approximately $54,000, payable over the 3 years. Costs include a formal professional development plan with 20 to 22 days of training, including sessions for the EST, SLT, and entire school staff. OTE II does not supply instructional materials but does provide materials to guide schools through the implementation process, including sample school profiles, research syntheses, and implementation guides for the SLT. The model expects teachers to develop instructional materials, particularly curriculum maps and units of instruction.

The model provider estimates that schools could pay up to $30,000 in other costs not included in the OTE II fee. Other costs may include a part-time school improvement facilitator (usually a staff member allocated at 25–50% of full time), release time for three to six team members to attend 8 training days per year, time for the entire faculty to participate in at least 6 days of professional development in the 1st year, consultants for follow-up professional development activities, instructional materials, Focus on Reading or Focus on Math add-on packages, and a travel surcharge for schools that are not near the national center in Portland. Schools may be able to lower costs by sharing training sessions with up to three other schools in the same area.

The OTE II Web site includes a cost calculation worksheet (http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/ote/costcalc.asp) that can be used to provide a better cost estimate. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact the model provider.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: ⊘

The CSRQ Center reviewed seven quantitative studies for effects of OTE II on student achievement at the middle and high school levels. One of these studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. The CSRQ Center considers the findings of this study to be *suggestive,* meaning that the CSRQ Center has limited confidence in the study's results. Because this study does not report results on statistical significance, the overall rating of the effects of OTE II on student achievement is zero. This study is described below. (Appendix M reports on the six studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards for full review.)

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and is considered to be suggestive used a quasi-experimental, longitudinal cohort design.[1] The study reported outcomes for eighth-grade students in seven OTE II schools in Mississippi. The study reported the average NCE (normal curve equivalent) scores on the reading and math subtests of the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) test over a 4-year period.[2] Average NCE scores on the SAT reading subtest did not appear to change over time, and average NCE scores on the SAT math subtest showed a slightly negative trend. Follow-up analyses conducted by the CSRQ Center confirmed that the changes across the 4 years were not statistically significant.[3] The quality of OTE II implementation varied among middle schools in the study. So, the study also reported only the outcomes on the SAT reading subtest for eighth-grade students in one high-implementation school. Results were mixed. The study did not report a level of statistical significance for these results. A follow-up analysis conducted by the CSRQ Center confirmed that the changes across the 4 years were not statistically significant among students at the high-implementation school.[4]

Evidence of Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: NR

No studies of OTE II that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the impact of the model on the achievement of diverse student populations. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is no rating.

The CSRQ Center urges readers to not necessarily judge a no rating or a low rating for this subcategory as evidence that OTE II cannot be effective in Title I schools or other schools with similar student populations. The one study of OTE II that met the CSRQ Center's standards included schools that served primarily minority students from low-income families. Thus, readers may interpret the CSRQ Center's overall rating in the category of positive overall effects on

[1]This study reported other findings from a research methodology that was not eligible for full review. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, the CSRQ Center focused only on the longitudinal data.

[2]The study reported data on an additional 2 years. However, these data were not reviewed because they were based on a different standardized achievement test that had no baseline data or comparable intervals between posttests.

[3]For students in eighth grade from 1991 to 1994, the average NCE scores on the SAT reading subtest were 42.5, 42.6, 42.2, and 42.3, and on the math subtest, the average NCE scores were 47.6, 48, 48.7, and 46.7. In the absence of tests of statistical significance, NCE gains of fewer than 8 points are considered not statistically significant (Slavin & Fashola, 1998; Slavin, 1991).

[4]For students in eighth grade from 1991 to 1994 at the high-implementation school, the average NCE scores on the SAT reading subtest were 45.1, 49, 48.2, and 46.8. In the absence of tests of statistical significance, NCE gains of fewer than 8 points are considered not statistically significant (Slavin & Fashola, 1998; Slavin, 1991).

student achievement as an indicator of the model's effectiveness in working in challenging settings.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

Rating: ⊘

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and is considered to be suggestive demonstrated no statistically significant changes in reading scores over time. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Math

Rating: ⊘

The one study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and is considered to be suggestive demonstrated no statistically significant changes in math scores over time. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: NR

No studies of OTE II that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the impact of OTE II on additional outcomes. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: NR

No studies of OTE II that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the impact of OTE II on parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: ●

OTE II provided documentation that offered explicit citations to support all the core components of the model: organization and governance, professional development, technical assistance, student assessment, and data-based decision making. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: ◑

Based on documentation provided by OTE II, the model offers a formal process to help school staff establish an initial understanding of OTE II and strategies to develop faculty buy-in. However, the model does not provide a process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. OTE II also provides formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is moderate.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

OTE II provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, and capacity building but does not offer professional development specifically designed for new staff. OTE II also provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of the model's core components. Additionally, OTE II offers a comprehensive plan to

help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is very strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

OTE II requires that each school hold an introductory session with staff and community members prior to implementation to acquaint them with the four steps of the OTE II process. Each school must provide the OTE II staff with documentation that such a meeting was held and that the stakeholders reached a consensus to use the OTE II model before implementation can begin. In addition to the school-level meeting, the local board of education and the school's superintendent must attend a 90-minute session conducted by OTE II staff and must agree to actively support the process.

OTE II stresses the need for full cooperation from both the school principal and the district before beginning the OTE II process. For the process to work successfully, OTE II states that large school districts must be willing to decentralize decision making and budgeting. Furthermore, the school principal must agree to provide release time for teachers and other staff members to attend training sessions and other professional development activities throughout the year. In larger high schools, principals often tend to delegate duties. However, for OTE II to be successful, the model advocates that principals must fully participate in the implementation of OTE II.

Each school is required to form an SLT and EST. The OTE II model places much of the responsibility for implementation in the hands of these two groups. Each school also must select a site facilitator from the staff to oversee the work of the EST and SLT and to monitor the entire OTE II transition process. The site facilitator needs to devote approximately one half to one fourth of his/her time to OTE II. The selected staff member should have well-developed skills in facilitation and communication.

The EST is heavily involved in the first phase of the OTE II process (setting direction) and is generally composed of members from the community, central office staff, local university professors, and representatives from other schools. At the beginning of the implementation process, the team is responsible for creating a school profile and establishing school improvement goals based on school and student achievement data, classroom observations, faculty and community input, and other sources. The EST also provides general support to the SLT by collecting and analyzing data and acts as a "critical friend" by providing feedback and helping the school to assess its progress. Each school must also select one academic and one nonacademic area to focus on as key areas for improvement with the help of the EST. The EST is then responsible for monitoring the school's progress in these areas.

The SLT typically comprises school staff, community members, and at the middle and high school level, students. The team is responsible for managing transitions within the school and must learn to work with the entire school community to make decisions and implement change. The SLT is actively involved in the second phase of the OTE II process (planning action), during which time team members are responsible for helping schools to implement strategies to address the goals outlined by the EST. The SLT uses the school profile provided by the EST as the basis for carrying out its role as manager of the reform process. OTE II does not require any specific changes to a school structure besides the establishment of the EST and SLT. Instead, the model encourages site-based autonomy in most areas under the guidance of these two teams. The SLT and EST are expected to help schools determine what changes are needed and to successfully implement these changes with support from the model.

Curriculum and Instruction

OTE II does not require or recommend specific curricula, but it does require that schools align their curricula with state and district standards and assessments. The model helps teachers work together to reach an agreement about the alignment of the school's curriculum and state standards. The model also expects schools to improve alignment across grades and subjects in the primary academic and nonacademic focus areas.

Although no specific curricula are required, the model recommends that teachers use certain instructional strategies, such as small-group instruction and hands-on activities, in the classroom. OTE II encourages teachers to work in study groups to investigate and develop research-based instructional strategies. The strategies become the centerpiece of the school's improvement plan. While OTE II does not require any specific instructional strategies for the classroom, each school is expected to work with its EST and SLT to develop its own list of instructional strategies for classroom use.

Scheduling and Grouping

OTE II offers general recommendations, but no specific guidance, on inclusion or grouping strategies. The model recommends that schools provide teachers with collaborative work time and staff development time so teachers and administrators can determine their own grouping and scheduling needs.

Technology

The OTE II model does not address technology in its professional development activities and makes no comment on the role technology plays in participating schools. Instead, the model expects each SLT to make decisions regarding the role of technology in the school.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

The model places a strong emphasis on the use of data-based decision making to shape implementation. The EST and SLT are responsible for the collection and review of data on student performance changes on a biannual basis. As a part of the OTE II process, the EST must continually collect and interpret data on student achievement and behaviors, teaching and learning practices, and model implementation. The SLT is responsible for using the information provided by the EST to make changes to the school's implementation plan. Teachers must also complete self-assessments, which are used by the SLT on an as-needed basis. The model helps teachers use these assessments to align their curricula with state and district standards and to create curriculum maps. Model trainers also help the EST set improvement goals and monitor progress.

Family and Community Involvement

OTE II strives to include family and community members in all aspects of implementing the model. However, the model acknowledges that parents of older students are often reluctant to engage in school improvement efforts. OTE II has outlined five key strategies for building and maintaining family and community involvement:

- **Membership on governance committees.** Spots are reserved for family and community members on both the SLT and EST. Family members also are invited to attend regular update meetings held at the school.
- **Initial goal setting.** Prior to implementation, family and community members are invited to an initial meeting designed to raise awareness about the model. Along with school staff, family and community members also are invited to participate in the goal setting process. All stakeholders must

work together to review data and reach a consensus about key areas to target for improvement.

- **Model implementation.** When possible, the model encourages family and community members to take part in learning, planning, and implementing new practices in key areas such as instruction, curriculum, assessment, and technology.
- **Home-based involvement.** Parents and family members are expected to help their children with homework and school assignments. Regular communication with teachers is also encouraged. The model publishes regular newsletters to keep parents aware of changes occurring in the school.
- **Volunteering.** Parents are strongly encouraged to volunteer at their child's school. The model's premise is that parents are more likely to understand and buy in to the OTE II process when they are actively involved in the school and the model implementation.

OTE II believes that the involvement of family and community members is critical for an OTE II school to reach its desired goals. As such, it strongly encourages schools to create an open and inviting atmosphere for parents in which their participation is actively sought and rewarded. For schools with large populations of hard-to-reach parents, OTE II is available to help schools work with large-scale parent involvement programs.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

OTE II offers a formal professional development and technical assistance plan to all schools both prior to and during implementation of the model. Prior to implementation, teachers, administrators, and district leaders are expected to attend a half-day workshop as an introduction to the model. During implementation, the model offers 20 days of training over the 2- to 3-year implementation period. The training days are split between sessions for the SLT and sessions for the full staff. Additionally, 2 technical assistance days are made available on an as-needed basis for specific problems that may arise in a school. OTE II also incorporates job-embedded strategies—such as study groups and peer observations—within the professional development plan.

The professional development workshops cover a wide range of areas to help make the necessary decisions for change. Workshop titles include Focusing on School Improvement Goals, Aligning and Mapping the School Curriculum, Deciding on Best Practices, Assessing Current Practices, Developing an Implementation Plan, and Preparing New Leaders. The model helps schools build capacity to provide their own professional development through site-based coaching and administrative roles in building capacity.

OTE II trains experienced staff members to deliver the professional development sessions. The trainers are generally available on a monthly basis. Training sessions are held at predetermined intervals and occur more frequently in the 1st year than in the 2nd and 3rd years. The 1st month of implementation devotes 3 days to introducing the model to school staff, the school board, and the community.

At the end of the process, the model requires a renewal workshop for the SLT, site facilitator, and key central office staff to ensure the improvement cycle is continued. The goal of the renewal session is to explain the importance of continuing the OTE II process, identify steps that will ensure the sustainability of the OTE II process, and implement a renewal plan. At this workshop, the school also makes plans to appoint a new SLT and to take stock of the successes and shortcomings identified during the OTE II process.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

The model provides each school with a series of formal benchmarks to guide the implementation process. The benchmarks are distributed through the site facilitator and serve to promote better communication among stakeholders, encourage commitment to continual involvement, and clarify self-evaluation processes. The benchmarks are grouped by OTE II workshop themes and cover a wide range of topics, including governance, instructional practices, and progress monitoring.

Self-assessments are used as the indicators of implementation. SLTs are asked to rate their school on a scale of 1 to 5 for each benchmark. For example, one of the professional development workshops, Aligning and Mapping the School Curriculum, focuses on curriculum mapping. One of the benchmarks for this workshop is helping teachers use curriculum maps to plan individualized curricula. A school would rate itself "1" if "All staff design their yearly, weekly, and daily instructional plans by building from the framework provided by the maps"; the rating would be "5" if "The framework provided by the maps is never used in planning the curriculum."

The information collected from the benchmarks is reviewed by a model trainer and the SLT on an as-needed basis when schools do not make adequate progress.

The model helps the SLT to use the data by providing strategies for improved implementation based on the team's interpretations and recommendations. Schools are encouraged to use the feedback to change implementation for subsequent years.

OTE II also uses state and district assessments and formative and summative evaluations to monitor progress and to adjust model implementation for subsequent years. Formative and summative evaluations occur regularly in most schools. Formative evaluations are generally conducted every 2 years, and summative evaluations are conducted as funding becomes available. The number of schools that participate in these evaluations fluctuates depending on the level of funding available for research. Both external and internal evaluators are used for these evaluations.

Special Considerations

The OTE II model should be considered a process for change, not a traditional model with a list of mandated changes. The model places most of the decision-making responsibilities in the hands of school staff and community members, although OTE II helps guide schools through this process. OTE II recommends that schools identify and contract with experts who can provide specific training on the improvement goals selected by the school that go beyond the model's materials and training. The model expects each school to reapply yearly to the national center.

References

Slavin, R. E. (1991). Normal curve equivalent gains: Handle with care. *ERS Bulletin, 9,* 311.

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Model Study Reviewed

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Kushman, J. W., & Yap, K. (1997). *Mississippi Onward to Excellence impact study.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

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Project GRAD USA—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Review Results
Model Name:	Project GRAD (Graduation Really Achieves Dreams) USA (Project GRAD)
Model Mission/Focus:	Project GRAD seeks to establish a feeder pattern of schools that set high expectations for all students, regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic background. Project GRAD's goal is that at least 80% of its students graduate from high school and 50% of those graduates enter and graduate college.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1993
Grade Levels Served:	K–16

Number of Schools[1]

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
208	201	0	7
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	146	34	28 (of which 7 schools are K–12)

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	5–7% of per-pupil costs of the public school that is implementing Project GRAD[1]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 2	5–7% of per-pupil costs of the public school that is implementing Project GRAD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 3	5–7% of per-pupil costs of the public school that is implementing Project GRAD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Years 4+	5–7% of per-pupil costs of the public school that is implementing Project GRAD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. **Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:**
   - a. Evidence of positive overall effects
   - b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations
   - c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:
     - Reading and math
2. **Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes:**
   - a. High school graduation and college attendance rates
   - b. High school attendance and grade promotion rates
3. **Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement**
4. **Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design**
5. **Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:**
   - a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation
   - b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

[1]Local Project GRAD sites are required to establish a local nonprofit organization [501(c)(3)], which then establishes a diverse funding base to support implementation. For more information, see the sections titled "Costs" and "Organization and Governance."

Model Description

Project GRAD began in Houston through a school–business partnership in 1981 between Tenneco and Davis High School. Through this partnership, Tenneco supported the integration of several programs at Davis: implementation of Communities in Schools (CIS), a dropout prevention program;[2] a summer leadership training program for selected Davis students; college scholarship funds for graduates that earned a 2.5 GPA or higher; a summer "bridge" program for transitioning from middle to high school; and summer jobs. However, these programs did not seem to be making a significant difference at Davis.

Thus, James L. Ketelsen, Chairman and CEO of Tenneco, expanded the company's support to Davis by increasing scholarship offerings. He also searched for curricular, methodological, and student and family support components to develop a more comprehensive program to support Davis's students. In 1993, with the support of principals and teachers, Davis's feeder elementary and middle schools adopted Project GRAD. (A feeder system is the collection of all elementary and middle schools that "feed" students to the same high school.)

Under Ketelsen's leadership, Project GRAD expanded to five feeder systems, serving 72 inner-city schools, in Houston. With support from the Ford Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education, Project GRAD took on a national focus in 2001, hence Project GRAD USA. According to the model provider, Project GRAD ensures high-quality implementation, establishes processes for replication, and supports sites across the country. Since 2001, Project GRAD has expanded to local sites in 12 cities.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards, the following were identified as core components of Project GRAD: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum and instruction; inclusion; time and scheduling; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Project GRAD also identified an additional core component: the high school program, which includes academic enrichment, college counseling, summer institutes, and scholarships. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

According to Project GRAD, its mission is that 80% of students graduate from high school and 50% of those graduates enter and graduate college. Project GRAD works across all education levels (K–16) and focuses on high-quality curriculum and instruction aligned with high academic standards. In addition to improving student academic achievement, Project GRAD also seeks to improve several nonachievement outcomes: student attendance, retention, promotion, and discipline; student graduation rates; teacher satisfaction; school climate and culture; and family satisfaction.

Goals/Rationale

Project GRAD believes that systemic improvements should begin in kindergarten and continue throughout all grades and should address all aspects of a student's life. To this end, Project GRAD has five structural components.

- **Feeder system.** Project GRAD provides academic consistency both vertically and horizontally across a feeder system of all elementary and middle schools that feed students to one high school.

[2] CIS is a dropout prevention and social service agency (http://www.cisnet.org) that provides extensive site-based services, such as counseling and family-case management, to at-risk children. The section titled "Family and Community Involvement" provides an indepth description of this component.

- **Local Project GRAD organization.** Project GRAD requires each local site to establish a nonprofit organization [501(c)(3)] to oversee local implementation.
- **Project GRAD USA.** The national office provides technical assistance, quality assurance, and some funding for local sites.
- **Community involvement and collaboration.** Communities participate in implementation at local Project GRAD sites.
- **Use of existing assets.** Project GRAD works with educators within its schools through intensive training and support.

These five structural components underlie the theory of change promoted by Project GRAD: Reforms need to create a strong academic program and to improve instruction in basic skills.

Costs

According to the model's provider, Project GRAD is designed to be cost effective and sustainable for the long term. Project GRAD requires that the cost of implementation not exceed 5–7% of the annual per-student spending in a school district. For example, if a school district spends $8,000 per pupil per year, then the cost of implementing Project GRAD in that district should not exceed $400–$560 per pupil.

Project GRAD requires and provides support so that each local site can establish a nonprofit organization that will establish a diversified funding base for implementation, oversee implementation, and build sustainability. Approximately 25% of the funding comes from federal sources, 50% from the partner district through funds or such in-kind contributions as materials, and 25% from such locally generated funding sources as donations from businesses. Although the funding mix varies by district, the long-term contribution of the district amounts to approximately 30% of the model's costs.

Budgeting for the implementation of Project GRAD is a customized and intensive process that could take several months, depending on local factors. Actual program implementation takes three to five years. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact Project GRAD USA.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating:

The CSRQ Center reviewed seven quantitative studies for effect of Project GRAD on student achievement at the middle and high school levels. Two of the seven studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. Based on the studies' research designs, the CSRQ Center considers the findings of one study to be *conclusive,* meaning the CSRQ Center has confidence in the study's results. The CSRQ Center considers the findings of one study to be *suggestive,* because a less rigorous research design was used, meaning the CSRQ Center has limited confidence in the study's findings. Overall, the two studies reported mixed results, suggesting both positive impact and no effect of Project GRAD. These results are consistent with an overall rating of limited. The studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards are described below. (Appendix N reports on the five other studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards).

The one study that met standards and was considered to be conclusive used a quasi-experimental, matched comparison group design to examine Project GRAD's impact in one high school that served predominantly low socioeconomic status (SES) students in the

south-central United States. Student achievement outcomes on state standardized tests in reading and math showed no statistically significant differences between Project GRAD and comparison students.

The one study that met standards and was considered to be suggestive was a longitudinal comparison of cohorts of middle and high school students who received Project GRAD instruction with earlier cohorts that did not. Participants in the study attended five middle schools and three high schools in Texas.[3] All schools served predominantly low SES, minority (African American and Hispanic) populations. Student achievement outcomes on state and national standardized tests in reading and math showed consistent positive trends in several different school sites.

Evidence of Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: NR

The two studies of Project GRAD that met the CSRQ Center's standards did not examine effects on the achievement of diverse student populations. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

The CSRQ Center urges readers to not necessarily judge a no rating or a low rating in this subcategory as evidence that Project GRAD cannot be effective in Title I schools or other schools with similar student populations. The studies on Project GRAD that met the CSRQ Center's standards included schools serving primarily low SES, minority students. Thus, readers may interpret the CSRQ Center's overall rating in this subcategory of positive overall effects on student achievement as an indicator of Project GRAD's effectiveness in working in challenging settings.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

Rating:

The two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined student achievement in reading. The one study that was considered to be conclusive showed no statistically significant effect of Project GRAD on reading. The one study that was considered to be suggestive reported a consistent increase over time in percentages of students at several sites who passed national and state standardized tests in reading. However, the study did not conduct tests of statistical significance.[4] Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Math

Rating:

The two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined student achievement in math. The one study that was considered to be conclusive showed no statistically significant effect of Project GRAD on math. Although the one study that was considered to be suggestive reported a consistent increase over time in percentages of students at several sites who passed national and state standardized tests in math, the study did not conduct tests of statistical significance. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes

High School Graduation Rate

Rating:

The two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined on-time graduation rates (i.e., graduating

[3]Additional middle and high schools reported in the same study were not reviewed by the CSRQ Center because they did not present longitudinal data or compare outcomes to students in non-Project GRAD schools with sufficient rigor to meet the CSRQ Center's standards.

[4]Level of statistical significance is determined by a statistical test and demonstrates whether the observed changes are likely to have occurred by chance alone.

within 4 years from high school). The one study that was considered to be conclusive found no statistically significant effect of Project GRAD. The one study that was considered to be suggestive found consistent increases in graduation rates over time. However, this study did not conduct tests of statistical significance. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is limited.

High School Attendance Rate

Rating: ⊘

The one study that was considered to be conclusive examined attendance rates and found 90% or better attendance at the Project GRAD high school and at four other comparison high schools in the district. Any differences found were not considered to be statistically significant. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is zero.

Grade Promotion Rate

Rating: ⊘

The one study that was considered to be conclusive examined the rates of promotion from grade 9 to 10 in one Project GRAD high school and four comparison high schools in the district. Although Project GRAD schools seemed to have marginally better promotion rates than comparison schools, none of the differences were statistically significant. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is zero.

College Attendance Rate

Rating: ◔

The one study that was considered to be suggestive examined college attendance rates. The study reported a consistent increase in the number of students who attend college over time. However, the study did not conduct tests of statistical significance. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: (NR)

The studies that met CSRQ standards did not examine the impact of Project GRAD on parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: ●

Based on documentation provided by Project GRAD, explicit citations support the following core components of the model: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; time and scheduling; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, according to the CSRQ Center's standards, the rating in this subcategory is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: ◕

Based on documentation provided by Project GRAD, the model offers a formal process for establishing an initial understanding of Project GRAD and its strategies to develop faculty buy-in. Additionally, Project GRAD offers a formal process for allocating such

school resources as materials, staffing, and time. However, Project GRAD provides formal implementation benchmarks for fewer than half of its core components. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is moderately strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

Project GRAD provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, Project GRAD provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of its core components. Project GRAD also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is very strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

The development of a new Project GRAD site takes places in four phases: exploratory, development, approval, and start-up. Project GRAD USA disseminates a *New Site Development Handbook* that outlines each phase, provides sample documents, and includes job descriptions for key personnel. The exploratory phase includes the application process, meeting preconditions, and establishing key contacts. To be eligible to apply to become a local Project GRAD site, a prospective site must demonstrate low academic achievement, a high dropout rate, high poverty rate, a low high school graduation rate, and a low college attendance rate. Thus, the prospective site must submit achievement and demographic data to Project GRAD USA. A prospective site must also meet additional preconditions for implementation, including community support and a proposed funding base. When the basic preconditions are met, Project GRAD USA issues a formal invitation to begin the application process. Project GRAD USA and the local site sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that outlines the development process for the new site.

Once the MOU is signed, the application process begins and lasts approximately 1 year. During the application process, the local site must identify two key contacts, one community/business "champion, and one district "champion." Project GRAD USA assigns a site coordinator to work with the key contacts and "champions" to build a base of support with all local stakeholders.

In the development phase, the prospective site formulates a comprehensive plan for implementation and submits it to Project GRAD USA for approval. This phase contains seven distinct steps:

1. Selecting the targeted feeder pattern within the district
2. Collecting baseline data
3. Developing a strategic plan for the implementation of the programmatic components (discussed in detail in the section titled "Curriculum and Instruction")
4. Formulating a 3-year budget
5. Establishing buy-in
6. Writing a preliminary development plan
7. Submitting the final proposal to Project GRAD USA

The approval phase includes the following five steps:

1. Establishing a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
2. Recruiting board members for the organization
3. Finalizing and obtaining approval from the board for the 1st year's budget

4. Hiring and training an executive director
5. Finalizing the development plan

The executive director initiates the start-up phase by working with the new site coordinator to build infrastructure and hire key personnel for the nonprofit organization.

Aside from the executive director, implementing Project GRAD at a local site requires specific personnel. Recommended formulas for additional personnel include one literacy coach for every five schools, one math coach for every three schools, one consistency management and cooperative discipline (CMCD)[5] coach for every three to five schools, one or more case managers for social services, and one scholarship coordinator for each high school. This personnel structure allows each coach to visit each school approximately 1 or 2 times each week. The local Project GRAD organization hires, manages, and pays the salaries of site coaches. All site coaches at local sites meet monthly to discuss and assess implementation. Project GRAD also recommends school-based coaches for reading, math, and CMCD; typically these are teachers granted release time to fulfill this role.

Curriculum and Instruction

The instructional model for Project GRAD includes five interrelated components.

- **MOVE-IT Math (Math Opportunities, Valuable Experiences, Innovative Teaching Math).** MOVE-IT Math was developed at the University of Houston. Project GRAD schools are recommended, but not required, to implement MOVE-IT Math. If a school chooses not to implement MOVE-IT Math, then Project GRAD expects the school to select a scientifically based math curriculum. MOVE-IT Math is a K–8 math curriculum that uses manipulatives to demonstrate concepts and promote student discovery, reasoning, and communication to support mathematical understanding. Teachers receive intensive professional development and resource material for instruction and ongoing support through a math consultant from Project GRAD. A daily lesson cycle in MOVE-IT Math includes time for homework review, warm-up practice, problem solving, a focused lesson, centers, and reflection.
- **Success for All (SFA).**[6] Project GRAD does not require but highly recommends SFA to be used as the reading and writing curriculum for K–8 students. If a school chooses not to implement SFA, then Project GRAD expects the school to select a scientifically based reading curriculum. SFA requires a daily 90-minute block of uninterrupted reading instruction and 20-minute tutorial sessions for students who are performing below grade-level expectations. The curriculum incorporates the use of flexible homogenous groups with assessments every 8 weeks to determine student progress and provide interventions as needed. To provide instruction in reading, teachers follow a specific set of processes and procedures that includes cooperative learning activities. The curriculum provider and a trained site-based SFA facilitator deliver intensive professional development to teachers before and during the implementation of SFA.
- **CMCD.** Project GRAD requires CMCD implementation. CMCD is a pre-K–12 instructional management system that integrates classroom organization with student self-discipline. Teachers and students share responsibility for learning and classroom organization. CMCD contains five central themes: prevention, organization, caring, cooperation, and

[5]CMCD is one component of Project GRAD's instructional design. CMCD is described fully in the section titled "Curriculum and Instruction."

[6]The CSRQ Center reviewed Success for All in an earlier report, The *CSRQ Center Report on Elementary School Comprehensive School Reform Models.* The report can be accessed on the Web at http://www.csrq.org. Additional information is available on Success for All's Web site: http://www.successforall.net.

classroom and community communication. Through the cooperative discipline component, students take active leadership roles in the classroom by collaborating to create a classroom constitution and to assume job responsibilities that are normally completed by the teacher. CMCD consultants provide initial training to teachers and conduct site-based visits (or walk-abouts). Project GRAD USA provides ongoing CMCD training and support throughout implementation.

- **CIS and Campus Family Support (CFS).** CIS is a dropout prevention and social service agency (http://www.cisnet.org) that provides extensive site-based services, such as counseling and family-case management, to at-risk children. CFS is an alternative component that provides services similar to CIS. CFS is an initiative developed by Project GRAD to serve similar functions in communities without access to CIS. The section titled "Family and Community Involvement" provides an indepth description of these components.
- **High School Program.** Project GRAD does not require high schools to implement specific curricular components but they are required to implement CMCD, CIS or CFS, and a strengthened academic program. Project GRAD recommends that high schools consider restructuring into small learning communities such as houses or academies (e.g., ninth-grade academies and/or career academies). Project GRAD's focus in high schools is preparing students for college, not only through a strengthened academic program but also through such ancillary offerings as Advanced Placement coursework, college visits, and classes for SAT/ACT preparation and study skills. Students in need of additional support in reading and math receive a double block of instruction in these subjects.

Furthermore, students and parents may sign a contract that sets out specific criteria for the student to meet during high school. If met, the contract provides the student with a Project GRAD college scholarship (typically $1,000 per academic year at any accredited college or university in the United States). The criteria state that students must graduate from a participating Project GRAD high school, complete a college preparatory academic program, graduate with a 2.5 or higher grade point average in core academic subjects, attend and complete two Summer Institutes at participating universities, and graduate in 4 or fewer years. This contract forms the heart of Project GRAD's high school program.

The Summer Institute is a 4-week plus instructional program at a participating university for students in grades 10 and 11 of a Project GRAD high school. Instruction focuses intensively on such subjects as math, reading, writing, study skills, time management, critical thinking, science, and the development of leadership skills to prepare students to be successful in college. University teachers provide the majority of instruction. Students receive a stipend of $150 to attend the institute, provided they meet the attendance requirements. Project GRAD claims that students can better envision themselves in college following participation in the Summer Institute.

Early in the fall of the ninth-grade year, Project GRAD employees of a local site, along with community volunteers, conduct "Walk for Success," during which time they visit every single home of entering ninth-grade students. The employees and volunteers introduce families to Project GRAD and the requirements for earning a scholarship. At that time, students and parents may commit to the program and sign a contract. According to Project GRAD, Walk for Success results in many students changing their postsecondary goals to ones that are college based and in increased parental support and commitment through the contract. The CSRQ Center spoke with three Project GRAD executive directors, and each noted the value and importance of Walk for Success.

Project GRAD is conducting a pilot program in some of its high schools that provides a summer transition program for students entering ninth grade. The summer transition program introduces students to high school and provides academic support to strengthen students' skills in math and literacy.

Scheduling and Grouping

Local Project GRAD sites are required to implement the model through a local feeder system—that is, elementary schools that feed into the same middle school that feed into the same high school. At times, local district organizational patterns do not permit the feeder system. For example, one executive director who spoke with the CSRQ Center stated that the district allows students to attend the high school of their choice within the district. In these instances, Project GRAD supports the local site in setting up a virtual feeder system to disseminate information about the model to create increased awareness and about the model's scholarship component to nearby elementary and middle school students.

Project GRAD high schools are encouraged to establish small learning communities through such structures as houses, ninth-grade academies, and/or career academies. Project GRAD also recommends block scheduling and an after-school tutoring program. Project GRAD does not require specific grouping strategies but encourages schools to implement differentiated instruction with whole groups and small groups and through individual support.

Technology

Technology is not addressed specifically in Project GRAD's design. Local sites maintain a scholarship database that is provided by Project GRAD USA. Project GRAD is currently developing a Web-based communication tool to add additional layers of support to local sites.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

Local Project GRAD sites are required to use formative assessment data to assess implementation and to track individual student progress. Summative data—such as achievement test scores, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment/graduate rates—are also used to assess implementation.

Family and Community Involvement

Project GRAD schools are required to implement CIS or CFS. The community/family support program's goal is to ensure that all children experience the five "basics" of a school: a personal relationship with a caring adult; a safe place to learn; a healthy start; having a marketable skill upon graduation, such as technology training or college preparation; and a chance to give back through community service opportunities. CFS is an alternative component that provides services similar to CIS and is implemented in cities where a CIS organization is not available to support Project GRAD schools.

Secondary schools may have a CIS/CFS project manager and one to three case managers. The project team provides support for the scholarship component and the social services that were described previously. CIS/CFS staff members sponsor activities, such as parent/student college visits; guest speakers; and assistance with scholarship, loan, and college applications. Furthermore, Project GRAD provides assistance to students regarding any type of family or personal problem that could interfere with a student's academic success.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Project GRAD provides extensive professional development for all its components. For the math program, teachers receive 4 days of initial onsite training that is facilitated by a Project GRAD math trainer, a 1–2 day onsite refresher course during implementation, implementation visits twice a year, weekly visits from site

coaches, and daily modeling and weekly component meetings from the school-based math peer coaches. Administrators receive a half-day of initial training, refresher training, and ongoing feedback from site-based coaches and school-based peer coaches. The site-based coaches (one coach per three schools) participate in 4 days of initial training, a 2-day new coach orientation, a 2-day national conference, a 2-day coach's conference, and monthly meetings that are facilitated by math leaders from the local Project GRAD site. School-based peer coaches receive the same initial training. School personnel receive similar professional development training to implement the SFA reading program.

Teachers, paraprofessionals, site coaches, and school-based coaches receive intensive professional development for CMCD. This professional development begins with pre- startup, grade-level, or departmental meetings; attendance at the CMCD National Winter Conference; the Universal Teaching Strategies course; and a half-day retreat provided by the CMCD's national organization for teachers and administrators. During implementation, teachers participate in a series of six, 2-hour workshops during the 1st year, spring and fall implementation visits, and a spring retreat. During the 2nd year of implementation, CMCD provides a 1-day academy, 3-hour fall and spring workshops, fall and spring implementation visits, and a spring retreat. For year 3 and beyond, teachers and administrators receive ongoing professional development through site coaches and peer coaching. Paraprofessionals participate in a 1-1/2 day retreat and a 1-day paraprofessional workshop during the 1st and 2nd years of implementation. Site coaches attend a 4-day National CMCD Training Conference; a series of six, 2-hour workshops in year 1; a 1-day Teachers Academy; 3-hour fall and spring workshops; and a spring retreat. The school-based coaches receive the same professional development and also participate in spring and fall implementation visits. Project GRAD and staff from component programs (MOVE-IT Math, SFA, and CMCD) provide training on an ongoing basis to meet the needs of new teachers and coaches.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

Project GRAD USA provides each new site with a new site implementation checklist. This detailed checklist, organized by specific steps in the implementation process, requires the site to identify the staff person responsible for each activity, ongoing status, and completion date. Examples of activities on the checklist are to identify the feeder pattern for the local site, secure commitment for the funding of scholarships, and complete the buy-in approval process.

The *New Site Development Handbook* includes a detailed timeline for the development and approval phases of implementation; detailed job descriptions that outline the duties for the local Project GRAD staff, such as the scholarship coordinator and the executive director; and forms to organize and present school data to Project GRAD USA.

At the beginning of the 2nd year of implementation, implementation staff from Project GRAD USA, in conjunction with the local staff, conduct a learning and support visit. The evaluation team takes 2–3 days to visit the local site and schools to assess the successful components and to identify areas that need increased support. The team visits schools, interviews staff, examines data, and analyzes the site's budget. Based on the results of the visit, a new development plan is written that includes strategies to address needs and subsequent goals. The timelines, implementation checklists, and the learning and support visit serve as implementation benchmarks for local Project GRAD sites.

Special Considerations

The CSRQ Center spoke with Project GRAD USA personnel, who emphasized how strong participation

and support from a school's principal is critical to successful implementation. Principals must oversee the entire implementation process to build internal capacity. Project GRAD USA expects sites to become financially self-sustaining after 3 years. Project GRAD USA also stressed the importance of obtaining district support and strong district buy-in before implementation. One executive director with whom the CSRQ Center spoke also stated that district and school board support is essential to successful implementation. Furthermore, the executive directors and personnel from Project GRAD USA noted the importance of taking adequate time during the start-up and development phases before actual implementation begins.

Whatever it Takes: Transforming American Schools—The Project GRAD Story (Holland, 2005) provides extensive details about Project GRAD's history and its development in five cities across the United States.

Reference

Holland, H. (2005). *Whatever it takes: Transforming American schools—The Project GRAD story.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Model Studies Reviewed

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Opuni, K. A., & Ochoa, M. L. (2002). Project GRAD: *A comprehensive school reform model.* Houston, TX: University of Houston.

Met Standards (Conclusive)

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School Development Program—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Review Results
Model Name:	School Development Program (SDP)
Model Mission/Focus:	The goal of SDP is to mobilize schools and communities to support students' healthy development, resulting in greater academic success, improved school climate, and increased contributions to civic life.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1968
Grade Levels Served:	K–12

Number of Schools[1]

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
195	158[1]	N/A	37
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	143	32	20

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
Year 2	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
Year 3	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
Years 4+	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies

1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:	
a. Evidence of positive overall effects	◑
b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	NR
c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:	
Reading and Math	◑
2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes:	
a. Attendance rate	⊘
b. Student discipline	◔
c. School climate	◔
3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	◔
4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	●
5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:	
a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	●
b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	●

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative NR = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

[1]Urban and suburban schools are combined.

Model Description

In 1968, a team of professionals led by Dr. James P. Comer, professor of child psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine, provided intervention services to two low-performing elementary schools in New Haven, Connecticut. This original work eventually led to the approach known today as the Comer Process.

The Comer Process equips teachers, administrators, and communities to support child development through systems of organization and management. Principles of child and adolescent development provide the foundation for the Comer Process. According to Dr. Comer, healthy child and adolescent development is a progression along six developmental pathways: physical, cognitive, psychological, language, social, and ethical. The Comer Process requires schools, with the help of parents, teachers, and administrators, to create learning environments that foster maturation along all six pathways. The School Development Program (SDP) incorporates the Comer Process into a comprehensive school reform model.

SDP serves elementary, middle, and high school levels. The model has also expanded its efforts to the district level. SDP believes that support from district school boards and administrators is critical to the success of the Comer process.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center standards, the following components of SDP were identified as core: organization and governance; professional development; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

According to SDP, the model's goal is to mobilize schools and communities to support students' healthy development, resulting in academic success, improved school climate, and increased contributions to civic life.

Goals/Rationale

SDP offers a structure and process for mobilizing teachers, administrators, and community members to support students' maturation along six developmental pathways: physical, cognitive, psychological, language, social, and ethical. Underlying the model's structure are three assumptions that provide the foundation for model implementation:

- Many students experience severe developmental gaps due to a lack of support from adult caretakers. While SDP acknowledges these gaps, the model expects all students to meet high standards and, therefore, students are not labeled or tracked.
- All students, regardless of their level of academic achievement, are entitled to opportunities for development. SDP requires schools to provide all students with developmental support and opportunities to meet their highest potential.
- Teachers and administrators alone cannot provide developmental support. SDP encourages schools to partner with parents and community members who can provide additional support and resources. Through the efforts of teachers, parents, and administrators, SDP also targets nonachievement outcomes such as student attendance, student discipline, school climate, teacher satisfaction, and family satisfaction.

Costs

The cost to implement SDP is based on adoption of the model by a school district. For school districts, the minimum administrative fee charged by SDP is $1,000 for each school. This estimated cost includes training

manuals, research data, publications, and other materials that support the implementation process.

The model offers professional development activities for teachers and administrators. SDP holds National Academies at Yale University to train school staff in the Comer Process. These academies cost $850 per attendee. Teachers, central office staff, principals, parents, and paraprofessionals are all encouraged to attend these academies. SDP consultants conduct these academies. These consultants also visit SDP schools twice a year to assist with implementation. The cost to schools for these site visits is $1,000 per day per consultant. SDP also provides leadership training at regional SDP professional development centers located in Chicago, Illinois, and Prince George's County, Maryland. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should contact an SDP regional center.

SDP encourages schools to adopt curricular services provided by the SDP Learning, Teaching, and Development Unit. These services include the Balanced Curriculum Process and Teachers Helping Teachers. The model recommends that schools purchase additional training that includes complementary materials and consultation for successful implementation of the model.

Implementation materials included in the model costs are: SDP publications, benchmarks, and training materials. SDP does not require schools to purchase additional materials. However, the model does not have its own curriculum and, therefore, schools need to supplement the model with curricular programs for reading and math. The costs of these programs are not included in the implementation costs. For more specific information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact the model provider.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: ◑

The CSRQ Center reviewed seven studies of SDP for effects on student achievement at the middle and high school levels. Three of the seven studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. The CSRQ Center considered the findings of two of three studies to be *conclusive,* meaning that the CSRQ Center has confidence in the studies' results. The findings of the other study are considered to be *suggestive,* meaning that the CSRQ Center has limited confidence in the study's results.

Overall, the three studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards reported a mix of results that showed positive and no effects of SDP. The three studies reported on four academic achievement findings with a level of statistical significance. The three studies focused primarily on student achievement in reading and math. About half of the findings among these studies demonstrated statistically significant positive effects. These results are consistent with an overall rating of moderate for the overall effects of SDP on student achievement. The three studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards are described below. (Appendix O reports on four studies that did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards for full review.)

The two studies that were considered to be conclusive were randomized controlled trials, which is one of the most rigorous study designs. One of the two studies was a randomized controlled trial that was conducted in Chicago. It examined the average growth rate of students' academic outcomes in 10 SDP schools versus nine control schools during 4 years of SDP implementation. Students in the sample attended schools that served predominantly low socioeconomic status,

minority populations. Student achievement was measured using the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in reading and math. This study found statistically significant differences in favor of students in SDP schools in both subject areas. However, effect sizes were not reported.

The second study that was considered to be conclusive was a randomized controlled trial in one suburban school district in Maryland. It examined students' academic outcomes in 13 SDP schools versus 10 control schools.[2] Students in the sample were primarily middle class and White. Student achievement was measured using the Maryland State Readiness Test scores in math and the official quarterly Grade Point Averages according to the county's 5-point scale. The study found no statistically significant differences between students in SDP and control schools at the end of eighth grade.

The one study that was considered to be suggestive used a longitudinal design but did not report demographic characteristics of the sample. The study examined high school students' SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) scores in reading and math. This study did not conduct tests of statistical significance.[3] Therefore, positive or negative effects of SDP could not be discerned from this study.

Evidence of Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: NR

No studies of SDP that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the impact of the model on student achievement for diverse student populations. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is no rating.

The CSRQ Center urges readers to not necessarily judge a no rating or a low rating for this category as evidence that SDP cannot be effective in Title I schools or other schools with similar student populations. At least one study of SDP that met the CSRQ Center's standards included schools that served primarily low socioeconomic status, minority students. Thus, readers may interpret the CSRQ Center's overall rating for the category of positive overall effects on student achievement as an indicator of the model's effectiveness in working in challenging settings.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

Rating: ◑

Among the three studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards, the effects of SDP on reading achievement were mixed. Two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined reading achievement. One of two studies that were considered to be conclusive demonstrated a positive effect of SDP on reading achievement. However, the effect size was not reported. The one study that was considered to be suggestive did not report a level of statistical significance for its findings, so the direction of the effect could not be discerned. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is moderate.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Math

Rating: ◑

Among the three studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards, the effects of SDP on math achievement were mixed. Each of the three studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined math achievement. One of the two studies that were considered to be conclusive demonstrated a positive effect on math achievement among middle school students. However, effect size was not reported. A second study that was considered to be conclusive demonstrated no effects of SDP on the math achievement of middle school

[2]This study examined three cohorts of students. Two of the three cohorts did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards because of insufficient fidelity of implementation. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, the CSRQ Center focused only on the findings among the third cohort of students.

[3]Level of statistical significance is determined by a statistical test and demonstrates whether the observed changes are likely to have occurred by chance alone.

students. The one study that was considered to be suggestive did not report a level of statistical significance for its findings, so the positive or negative effects of SDP could not be discerned.

Because about 50% of the findings with a reported level of statistical significance demonstrated a positive effect of SDP on math achievement, the rating for this subcategory is moderate.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Attendance Rate

Rating: ⊘

One study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and was considered to be conclusive examined absentee rates among eighth-grade students. The study did not find statistically significant differences regarding absentee rates in favor of students in SDP schools. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Student Discipline

Rating: ◔

Two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards and were considered to be conclusive examined negative behavior outcomes among middle school students. One study showed statistically significant positive effects of SDP on students in acting out negative behavior and among students' conventional beliefs about negative behavior. The study did not find statistically significant differences of SDP on substance abuse by students. The study did not report effect size. A second study examined three main indicators of students' negative behavior: petty misbehaviors, friends' problem behaviors, and illicit substance abuse. In this study, SDP did not have a positive effect on such indicators.

Another aspect of student discipline is students' positive behavior. The two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards and were considered to be conclusive also examined positive behavior among middle school students. One study examined eight different indicators of students' positive behavior: participation in extracurricular activities, friends' disapproval of drugs, friends' engagement in positive actions, disapproval of misbehavior, valuing temper control, valuing community participation, valuing achievement of mainstream adult outcomes, and importance of friends. SDP did not demonstrate a statistically significant positive effect on any of these eight indicators. The second study examined four indicators of positive behavior among students: time spent in clubs or lessons, time spent playing sports, time spent doing homework or free reading, and time spent in unstructured activities. SDP did not demonstrate a statistically significant positive effect on any of these four indicators.

Across these studies, the positive findings constituted about 11% of the student discipline outcomes with a reported level of statistical significance. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Of note, a rating of limited or higher in this subcategory indicates that the research on a model provides evidence of positive effects for additional outcomes. Furthermore, few of the models reviewed by the CSRQ Center had evidence that met the CSRQ Center's standards in this subcategory. SDP is commended for offering detailed additional evidence that met the CSRQ Center's standards for this subcategory.

School Climate

Rating: ◔

The CSRQ Center reviewed two quantitative studies for effects of SDP on school social and academic climate. Both studies were considered to be conclusive and examined school climate using student and teacher surveys. Across these studies, the positive findings

constituted about 7% of the school climate outcomes with a reported level of statistical significance. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Of note, a rating of limited or higher in this subcategory indicates that the research on a model provides evidence of positive effects for additional outcomes. Furthermore, few of the models reviewed by the CSRQ Center had evidence that met the CSRQ Center's standards for this subcategory. SDP is commended for offering detailed additional evidence that met CSRQ Center's standards for this subcategory.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: 

Both studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards and were considered to be conclusive examined parental involvement. One study conducted phone interviews with a random sample of parents and examined eight indicators of parental involvement. Two indicators—the number of invitations to parents and the level of satisfaction in school–parent relationship—showed statistically significant differences in favor of SDP. Six other indicators—school as a caring setting, attending social events, attending governance meetings, amount of volunteering in school, homework, and parent–child communication—did not demonstrate statistically significant differences in favor of SDP.

Both studies also examined parental involvement using teacher surveys. In one study that assessed three indicators of parental involvement, teachers in SDP schools reported greater interaction with parents about their children. A second study did not find a positive effect on teachers' reports of parental involvement. Across studies, about 21% of the findings showed a positive effect, with an average effect size of +1.11 (where effect sizes were reported or calculable). Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Of note, a rating of limited or higher in this category indicates that the research on the whole-school improvement model provides evidence of positive impact on parent, family, and community involvement. SDP is the only model reviewed for this report that had evidence that met the CSRQ Center's standards for this category. Therefore, SDP is commended for offering a number of empirical findings in studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: 

SDP provided documentation that offered explicit citations to support all of the core components of the model: organization and governance; professional development; and parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: 

Based on documentation provided by SDP, it offers a formal process to help school staff establish an initial understanding of the model and strategies to develop faculty buy-in. Additionally, the model offers a formal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. SDP also provides formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is very strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

The model provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, SDP provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of the model's core components. SDP also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is very strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

Prior to adopting SDP, the model encourages school principals to learn about the theoretical foundation of SDP by reading SDP publications and viewing the model's Web site (http://info.med.yale.edu/comer/).

To implement the model, SDP requires a minimum commitment from district administrators and four schools within that district to implement the model over 5 years. The district must agree to establish a district steering committee that is responsible for ensuring implementation fidelity within each school. In addition, the district must agree to appoint a district SDP facilitator who guides the day-to-day implementation of the Comer Process in schools, trains school staff members, and provides consultation to school management teams. The district SDP facilitator can be a current staff member, but the district needs to plan for funds to pay the facilitator for the added responsibilities of the position. Facilitators should have strong organizational and collaborative skills. SDP suggests that the district superintendent oversees the work of the district SDP facilitator.

The model requires schools to replace traditional organization and governance strategies with the SDP operating system. The operating system consists of three structures: the school planning and management team, the student and staff support team, and the parent team.

Three principles guide the work and structure of the SDP operating system. The first principle is "no-fault," which requires each team member to be accountable for the model's success. The second principle, "consensus," requires teams to use dialogue and compromise as a means of decision making. If consensus is reached, teams will share a vision for school improvement and academic achievement. The final principle, "collaboration," encourages team members to work closely with the school principal. Collectively, these principles provide the theoretical groundwork for problem solving and reform within teams and, ultimately, within schools.

The central structure of the SDP operating system is the school planning and management team. The principal leads this team but the decision-making body also includes parent, teacher, student, and support staff representatives. SDP provides guidelines for appointing members to this team. To work effectively and efficiently, SDP suggests that schools limit membership to 12 to 15 members and that all team members are selected by the peer groups that they represent. These team members include one support staff member, a teacher representative for each grade level in the school, and a representative from the student and staff support team. SDP expects all team members to attend biweekly meetings and to report back to their peers after each meeting. According to SDP, the meeting agendas and the notes from the previous meeting should be distributed before each meeting. The school planning and management team is expected to complete three major tasks during its biweekly meetings:

- Compose a comprehensive school plan that outlines curriculum, instruction, and assessment activities and goals for reforming school climate

- Plan and coordinate daily school activities
- Monitor implementation, resource allocation, and staff development

The school planning and management team divides into four subcommittees to accomplish these tasks: curriculum, instruction, and assessment committee; social committee; public relations committee; and the staff development/parent training committee. A member of the management team chairs each subcommittee.

The supporting structures of the SDP operating system are the student and staff support team and the parent team. The student and staff support team addresses problems with individual students and works to prevent recurring student problems. The parent team develops strategies to involve parents in daily implementation of the SDP model and appoints representatives to the school planning and management team.

Curriculum and Instruction

The model does not have its own curriculum. Because SDP is a model that focuses on organization and governance, SDP encourages schools to adopt strong academic programs to supplement the model. SDP created the Learning, Teaching, and Development Unit to focus on the area of curriculum and instruction. This unit is a team of SDP consultants that helps schools set academic goals (using Comer's six developmental pathways) and allocate the appropriate resources to meet these goals. The unit designs, refines, and field tests all processes and products before offering them to schools. This unit currently provides two curricular and instructional services:

- Balanced Curriculum Process
- Teachers Helping Teachers

In the future, the unit plans to address math, early childhood learning, and teacher preparation.

The Balanced Curriculum Process is a method designed by SDP for planning a curriculum that accounts for teacher preparation, students' developmental abilities, existing materials and guidelines, and state or local standards. The school planning and management team selects teachers and supporting staff members to join school teams. These teams, along with the school principal, attend five SDP-sponsored workshops to learn the Balanced Curriculum Process. Specifically, the workshops teach the school teams how to do the following:

- Select units of instruction with specific beginning and end dates
- Design shared units of instruction for each grade level and subject area that includes two to five significant tasks
- Align significant tasks with state and local standards
- Develop formative assessments for classroom use
- Ensure teachers implement the balanced curriculum in their school

After each workshop, the school teams and principal are responsible for training faculty and formulating a plan for accomplishing the stated tasks. Although the school teams initiate the process, the entire faculty is expected to contribute to the effort. SDP suggests that schools give faculty 1 year to complete this process.

The Teachers Helping Teachers process aims to sharpen teachers' instructional practices. The process has three components: training, group dialogue, and partnership. These components take up to 2 years to implement. Initially, SDP consultants train teachers during a 2-day workshop on instructional models, peer dialogue, and best practices to strengthen their grasp of concepts presented in the workshops. SDP provides teachers with training manuals and follow-up consultation. Following the workshop, teachers form teams to maintain a dialogue about their teaching strategies and the instructional models covered during

the workshop. The process ends with an intensive partnership between two teachers who talk about classroom experiences and observe each other's teaching styles.

Scheduling and Grouping

Three teams determine scheduling requirements and instructional grouping strategies: school planning and management team, student and staff support team, and parent team According to the model, the school planning and management team should outline scheduling requirements and instructional grouping strategies in its comprehensive school plan. This team also plans the annual school calendar, which includes Parent Teacher Association meetings, social and academic events, and professional development activities.

Technology

The use of technology for instruction or management is left to the discretion of the school planning and management team, student and staff support team, and parent team. The technology needs of the school and the community form the basis for decisions made by these teams. The management team should outline the school's use of technology in its comprehensive school plan.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

The model expects the school planning and management team to include goals for assessment and data-based decision making in its comprehensive school plan. This plan will include student achievement goals on state and district assessments as well as strategies for modifying instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners.

If schools choose to implement the Balanced Curriculum Process, SDP trains teachers to align units of instruction and learning objectives with state and district standards. SDP also trains teachers to design formative assessments with formats and content similar to state or district tests. SDP encourages teachers to use the outcomes of these formative assessments to modify instruction and, ultimately, improve achievement on state and district assessments.

Family and Community Involvement

Parent and community involvement is essential to the SDP implementation process. For participating schools, the model provides publications that describe ways to create a school climate that welcomes parents and families. These publications also emphasize the importance of sustained parent involvement. SDP recommends that schools form a parent–teacher organization that meets on a monthly basis. The model also recommends appointing a parent liaison and creating support for all forms of parental involvement including informational notes, phone calls, and e-mail.

The model provides a three-level approach to parental involvement. Level 1 assumes that parents will participate in general information sharing activities, such as parent conferences and fundraising activities. Level 2 encourages parental involvement in the day-to-day activities at the school, including chaperoning field trips, assisting at the library, and tutoring students. For example, parents might assist students in choosing books to read and work with teachers to help students with classroom projects. Level 3 is limited to parents who serve on the school planning and management team. These parents participate in the decision-making process and work to foster open lines of communication between the community and the school.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The Professional Development and Consultation Unit of SDP coordinates all professional development and

technical assistance services. The unit provides services at the national and regional levels.

Prior to adoption of the model, SDP suggests that a district team attend Leadership 101 of the Comer Process Institute. The team should include a district administrator and representatives of the following groups: principals, teachers, parents, and noninstructional staff. The institute provides attendees with an overview of the process and trains attendees to deliver presentations about the Comer Process to other teachers, administrators, and principals. This institute is held annually at Yale University. In addition, SDP has demonstration schools in three districts (Prince George's County, Maryland; New Haven, Connecticut; and Detroit, Michigan) where school teams can get first-hand knowledge of the model implementation process. Schools and districts can arrange visits to demonstration schools through the regional SDP professional development center.

SDP provides other academies and workshops on various topics but does not require administrators or teachers to attend. The events offered at Yale University include a National Leadership Academy, a Literacy Institute, an Institute on Understanding and Managing Student Behavior, and the Academy for Developmentally Centered Education. Sessions on special topics are also offered at regional SDP professional development centers. These academies and workshops strive to provide teachers and administrators with knowledge about child development, effective leadership, and strategies for implementing the SDP operating system.

If schools choose to implement the Balanced Curriculum Process, SDP provides training on each of these processes. In addition, the model builds school capacity to provide professional development through Teachers Helping Teachers. During the Teachers Helping Teachers process, SDP trains teachers to evaluate their teaching styles and to try out various instructional approaches by working in teams and teacher partnerships.

SDP also provides consultation services at the district and school level. SDP staff members offer onsite coaching for the three school teams as well as phone and e-mail consultation to school and district administrators. The model also provides informational sessions and facilitation to the district steering committee.

SDP does not provide schools with instructional materials. If schools choose to implement the Balanced Curriculum process, SDP trains teachers to create units of instruction, align their curriculum with state and local standards, and design formative assessments.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

Full implementation of the Comer Process usually takes schools 5 years to achieve. SDP provides district administrators and principals with a formal set of benchmarks to guide implementation. The central focus of the benchmarks is the development of the SDP operating system in participating schools, in particular the creation of the school planning and management team, the student and staff support team, and the parent team. Guidelines for curriculum, instruction, technology, and scheduling may vary depending on the school's comprehensive school plan.

SDP provides schools with timelines and checklists to ensure that benchmarks are met. SDP consultants also provide onsite observations and distance consulting throughout the implementation process. If schools are willing, SDP conducts annual implementation evaluations and provides feedback on the schools' implementation progress. SDP does not designate schools as official SDP schools until they complete the 5-year implementation process.

Special Considerations

SDP focuses on organization and governance. Specifically, SDP requires schools to replace their

traditional management system with three teams: the school planning and management team, the student and staff support team, and the parent team. Rather than require schools to implement a prescribed curriculum, SDP expects these teams to develop a comprehensive plan for reform that addresses curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Therefore, schools should ensure that they adopt strong reading and math programs that align with the mission and goals of SDP.

Model Studies Reviewed

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Diamond, J. B. (1996). Implementing the Comer Process in a high school: A case study of the school planning and management team. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 57* (10), 4200. (UMI No. 9708118)

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Cook, T. D., Habib, F., Phillips, M., Settersten, R. A., Shagle, S. C., & Degirmencioglu, S. M. (2000). Comer's School Development Program in Chicago: A theory-based evaluation. *American Educational Research Journal, 37,* 535–597.

Cook, T. D., Habib, F., Phillips, M., Settersten, R. A., Shagle, S. C., & Degirmencioglu, S. M. (1999). Comer's School Development in Prince George's County, Maryland: A theory-based evaluation. *American Educational Research Journal, 36,* 543–597.

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Success for All–Middle Grades—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Review Results
Model Name:	Success for All–Middle Grades (SFA–MG)
Model Mission/Focus:	SFA–MG seeks to accelerate achievement of middle school students through a program that is designed specifically to meet the unique developmental needs of adolescents. SFA's middle school model is based on its elementary school model.
Year Introduced in Schools:	2001
Grade Levels Served:	5–8

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
1,510	604	302	604
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	1,400+	100+	10

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	$53,000	$20,000	$18,000	N/A	$15,000 (trade books for reading program)
Year 2	$51,000	$11,000	$40,000[1]	N/A	N/A
Year 3	$51,000	$11,000	$40,000	N/A	N/A
Years 4+	Varies	Varies[2]	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:	
a. Evidence of positive overall effects	◑
b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	NR
c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:	
Reading	◑
2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes	NR
3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	NR
4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	●
5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:	
a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	●
b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	●

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative NR = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

[1]Since the humanities and science components are optional, cost of materials varies based on individual school selections.

[2]The cost of ongoing support and professional development varies according to individual school contracted services.

Model Description

Success for All (SFA) began in the 1970s through research that focused on cooperative learning strategies. Through these research efforts, developers of SFA realized that, to be effective and to bring about change in instructional processes, cooperative learning strategies needed to be embedded into the curriculum.

The Success for All Foundation (SFAF) began offering its middle grades (SFA–MG) model in 2001. SFA–MG comprises structured curricula, instructional methods, and professional development that are specifically designed to meet the needs of middle school students. SFA–MG's design is based on the following structures and practices, as outlined in *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century* (Jackson & Davis, 2000):

- Rigorous curriculum relevant to young adolescents
- Instructional methods to prepare students for higher standards
- Expert teachers trained through ongoing professional development
- Ongoing relationships established through smaller learning communities
- Shared decision making among all school staff
- Safe and healthy school environment
- Parent and community involvement

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards, the following were identified as core components of SFA–MG: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

According to SFAF, the model seeks to improve literacy, create a positive school climate, and engage students in the learning process through a flexible and solutions-oriented program. In this way, students can enter high school prepared to learn with appropriate literacy skills.

Goals/Rationale

SFAF is founded on a set of core beliefs:

- All children can learn.
- Schools can make a difference.
- Family and community involvement is essential.
- Research needs to guide the use of solutions.
- All educators need to work relentlessly to help children.

According to SFAF, its programs are designed to provide teachers and schools with a proven set of instructional practices, procedures, materials, understandings, and assessments. SFA–MG targets achievement outcomes—reading, writing, science, and the humanities—and non-achievement outcomes—student attendance, retention and promotion, and discipline rates.

SFA–MG incorporates the following elements within its program:

- Goal setting and progress monitoring
- Instructional strategies
- Classroom management and motivation
- Diversity
- Special education
- Schoolwide planning and intervention

Coaches from SFAF work with schools to design a model that is tailored to meet the specific needs of the student body. Schools have the option of choosing some or all of the program elements and implementing the model at some or all of the middle grades in the school.

Costs

The average cost to implement SFA–MG is based on schools with approximately 500 students and 20 teachers. For year 1 of implementation, the total operating cost is approximately $53,000. This includes $20,000 for training, $18,000 for materials, and $15,000 for trade books used with the Reading Edge curriculum. The total operating costs for years 2 and 3 are $51,000, with $11,000 for training and approximately $40,000 for materials. In years 2 and 3, the cost of materials includes approximately $20,000 for humanities and $20,000 for science. However, according to the model, it is difficult to estimate costs for materials for humanities and science because there are many different ways in which schools schedule the use of the instructional units. Schools also may contract for more or less training and support. The estimated costs noted here allows for approximately five on-site visits and a series of four scheduled phone conferences. For more specific information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact SFAF.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: ◑

The CSRQ Center reviewed six quantitative studies of the effects of SFA–MG on student achievement. Two of these studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. Based on a review of the research design, the CSRQ Center considers this study's findings to be *conclusive,* meaning that the CSRQ Center has confidence in the study's findings. The majority (80%) of the findings reported in this study demonstrated positive effects. The average effect size of these significant results was +0.30.[3] Therefore, the overall rating for the effects of SFA–MG on student achievement is moderate. The two studies that were considered to be conclusive are described below. (Appendix P reports on the other four studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

The first study that was considered to be conclusive was a randomized controlled trial which was conducted in two rural middle schools serving predominantly white, low socioeconomic status (SES) population, located in two states in the South Atlantic region. On entry to sixth grade, students were randomly assigned to teachers, and teachers were randomly assigned to the SFA and comparison groups. Students participating in the "The Reading Edge," a central component of the SFA-MG model, for one year had statistically significant higher total scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests.

The second study that was considered to be conclusive used a quasi-experimental, matched comparison group design. The sample included 16 middle schools in several states in the mountain, pacific, and south central regions of the United States. Intervention schools included in this study served primarily low SES, minority students. The study examined reading achievement on state standardized tests among students in grades 6–8. Students attending SFA–MGs in Arizona, Louisiana, and Washington had significantly higher

[3] For more information on the strength of effect sizes, please refer to "About Effect Sizes," an inset in the "Methodology" section of this report.

reading scores than their counterparts in matched comparison schools.[4]

Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: (NR)

No studies of SFA–MG that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined effects for diverse student populations. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is no rating.

The CSRQ Center urges readers to not necessarily judge a no rating or a low rating in this subcategory as evidence that SFA–MG cannot be effective in Title I schools or other schools with similar student populations. One study of SFA–MG that met the CSRQ Center's standards included schools that served primarily low SES, minority students. Thus, readers may interpret the CSRQ Center's overall rating for the category of positive overall effects on student achievement as an indicator of the model's effectiveness in working in challenging settings.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

Rating: ◑

The two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards focused on the effects of SFA–MG on student achievement in reading. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is moderate.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: (NR)

No studies of SFA–MG that met CSRQ Center's standards examined the impact of the model on additional outcomes. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: (NR)

No studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the effects on parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: ●

Based on documentation provided by SFA–MG, explicit citations support all core components of the model: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

Based on documentation provided by SFA–MG, the model offers a formal process to help school staff

[4]Findings from Missouri did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards because the study did not account for baseline differences between the intervention and matched comparison schools in reading achievement. Findings from Colorado and Indiana did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards because of low fidelity of implementation in the schools examined.

establish an initial understanding of SFA–MG and strategies to develop faculty buy-in. Additionally, SFA–MG offers a formal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. SFA–MG also provides formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is very strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

SFA–MG provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, SFA–MG provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of the model's core components. SFA–MG also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is very strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

SFA–MG requires schools to make changes to curriculum, instruction, budgets, and scheduling. Principals are expected to support implementation of the model through attendance at professional development opportunities, shared decision making, provision of release time for teachers for professional development, and service on the solutions team. (For more information on the solutions team, see the section titled "Family and Community Involvement.")

SFA–MG recommends, but does not require, that schools organize students into interdisciplinary teams. Each team has one teacher for each subject. The teams provide students with a core group of peers and adults. Each student is placed in a reading class according to his/her skill level.

An SFAF coach is assigned to each middle school. The coach makes, at minimum, quarterly visits to observe classrooms; meet with the staff and administrators; review implementation progress and student achievement data; answer questions, especially with regard to assessments; and support goal setting for the next quarter. For an additional fee, schools can request additional visits (e.g., monthly) from the SFAF coach. Coaches also provide assistance through regularly scheduled phone conferences and informal communications through phone and e-mail.

Each middle school also designates an individual as the SFA–MG facilitator. Generally, the school does not assign classroom teaching responsibilities to the SFA–MG facilitator. Instead, the facilitator oversees day-to-day implementation by supporting teachers in curriculum implementation, observing classrooms and providing feedback, organizing assessment data for grouping, and facilitating coordination across all staff.

SFAF approaches implementation as a goal-focused process. Each quarter, the SFAF coach works with the school's leadership team to produce the initial achievement plan and continues the process of updating the plan each quarter. The achievement plan focuses on one area, with specific targets and measures, and includes a plan for implementation, indicating specific actions to be taken and the person responsible for each action. At the end of the quarter, school staff compiles and reviews the results with the SFAF coach who is assigned to the school site. The coach and school facilitator work with teachers and use assessment data to tailor instruction as part of the achievement plan process.

Curriculum and Instruction

SFA–MG's Cycle of Effective Instruction includes four phases: (1) setting the stage and providing active instruction, (2) practicing the new skill or strategy with partners and/or teams, (3) monitoring progress

through ongoing assessment, and (4) acknowledging successes and recognizing student achievement. Depending on the needs of students, teachers may move backward or forward through the phases during instruction rather than following each phase in a sequential manner.

The Reading Edge curriculum forms the backbone of SFA–MG. The school administers a standardized reading assessment to all students at the beginning of the school year to determine baseline achievement for each student. Students are then placed in homogeneous groups for reading instruction and progress at their own pace. All instructional personnel in the school teach reading to maximize the number of classes and reduce class size. Reading is taught during one to three common periods, eliminating schedule changes as students progress to higher level classes. In this way, students receive more personalized instruction.

The Reading Edge addresses a variety of reading levels, from beginning reading through eighth grade, and focuses on:

- Building fluency
- Developing vocabulary and word knowledge
- Refining word recognition skills, such as breaking down multisyllabic words, identifying word parts, and using phonetic clues (for students in need of additional instruction in this area)
- Understanding and applying comprehension strategies (e.g., predicting, asking questions, and summarizing) using fictional and nonfictional texts
- Writing in response to reading

Teachers use high-interest fiction and nonfiction, reader's theater, short stories, poetry, and novels. Classrooms in grades 2–8 use a set of tradebooks for instruction. These sets may be purchased through commercial vendors.

Materials for the Reading Edge curriculum include:

- Detailed teacher's manual with daily lesson plans
- Student materials
- Reading strategy cards
- Team study tools for comprehension strategies
- Student assessment tools
- Teacher and student materials to track student achievement
- Teacher study guides and videos to support implementation
- Materials kit

SFA–MG also has curricula for science, humanities, and social and academic problemsolving. The science curriculum is designed to prepare students for high school science courses and to stimulate interest in science-related careers. To this end, the curriculum incorporates hands-on activities, simulations, cooperative learning, observation, and research. Students work in teams to connect science learning to real-world issues. At the beginning of the school year, students engage in foundational units, such as safety in the science laboratory. Subsequent units present a problem or scenario. For example, in a unit on earthquakes, students learn about a fictitious town built on a fault. As students recommend solutions related to land use, building designs, and seismic activity, they also study such earth science concepts as plate tectonics.

The humanities curriculum focuses on two content areas: language arts and social studies. This curriculum can be used in separate social studies and language arts (English) classes or integrated within a larger block of instruction. For social studies, students study themes or topics, connect their findings to their own lives, and present findings in various formats, including

writing. The English curriculum presents students with opportunities to explore a range of genres, write original pieces, and learn and practice the basic conventions of good writing and grammar. Curricula for both subjects use textbooks, primary sources, literature, and experts in the field. Similar to the science curriculum, students participate in several foundational units of study, such as the conventions of writing, the steps in the writing process, and peer review strategies. The remaining units focus on a problem or scenario (e.g., a unit on ancient Egypt and a tomb robbery). In this way, students learn about life in ancient Egypt and apply critical thinking skills to solve the mystery of the robbery.

Getting Along Together is a K–8 curriculum that focuses on the development of social problem-solving skills. Three components make up the curriculum:

- **Learn About It.** At this stage, students read and listen to literature to learn key problem-solving skills.
- **Think It Through.** Students learn to "self-talk" their way through problems.
- **Talk It Out.** The three parts of this component—peace path, roundtable, and class councils—present students with opportunities to practice problem-solving skills in a structured format.

Each teacher receives a manual to implement the Getting Along Together curriculum and 2 weeks of introductory lessons. The class sets include student handouts and sets of tradebooks for class readings.

According to SFA, cooperative learning, basic classroom management strategies, and the refinement of literacy skills are interwoven into all curricula areas as key components of a successful learning experience for students. Students participate in structured learning teams of four to work on projects and academic work. According to SFA, teams should include students who are diverse in skills, gender, and ethnicity. Each student must ultimately demonstrate individual mastery of the content.

Scheduling and Grouping

In addition to forming interdisciplinary teams, students are also grouped into separate classes for reading instruction according to individual reading levels. Grouping strategies are guided by ongoing progress monitoring assessments and are flexible to allow for regrouping to occur as needed. Teachers monitor student progress through informal and formal assessments from the Reading Edge curriculum. Both types of assessments are administered every 8 weeks. Additionally, teachers provide individual feedback weekly to each student, and students are encouraged to set personal goals in reading and to monitor their own progress. As students progress in their reading skills, they are moved to the next level.

The SFAF coach provides teachers with guidance on instructional strategies to help them meet the needs of each student. SFA–MG supports inclusion and believes in "never streaming," meaning that students are provided the proper instructional support before they fall behind.

Technology

The use of technology by teachers and with students is recommended based on availability but not required for implementation. The curriculum materials include print materials and media. For more specific information about the use of and costs associated with technology in SFA–MG, schools should directly contact SFAF.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

SFA–MG uses a range of assessments. The model requires the use of model-specific assessments to evaluate student progress. It also advocates for the use of commercial diagnostic tools and district- or state-mandated assessments.

SFA uses the Goal-Focused Achievement Planning Process with SFA–MG-developed 4Sight Benchmark Assessments. 4Sight assessments parallel state assessments in content and format and are designed to predict student achievement in reading. According to SFA, the overall scores can predict students' scores on state assessments and provide data on key subskills, such as interpreting text, drawing conclusions, and understanding the purpose of text.

Assessment materials include five test forms (in packets of 30 with answer sheets), scoring overlays, and the scoring and administration guide. Teachers administer these benchmark assessments five times each year to monitor student progress. The administration of the assessment takes approximately 1 hour. Classroom teachers score the tests using scoring masks and rubrics to quickly determine students' strengths and weaknesses. An online reporting tool provides charts and summarizes scores by grade, class, and student.

Based on these data, the school may select topics for future professional development and modify instructional strategies. Teachers, school leaders, and the SFAF coach meet quarterly to review assessment results and plan goals for the following quarter. For example, a student who does not make adequate progress may be identified for additional instruction through the use of interventions.

A summative assessment is conducted quarterly through external and internal evaluations. SFA–MG conducts a formative evaluation every 3 months. As part of the formative process, teachers use an *Individual Self-Assessment Guide,* and the school uses the Goal-Focused Achievement Planning Process.

Family and Community Involvement

SFA–MGs are required to establish a solutions team and program that are focused on family support. The components of the family support program are attendance, school-based intervention, parent involvement, and service integration. To this end, the solutions team supports the development of:

- Prevention and intervention plans for special student populations
- Mechanisms within the school to achieve 95% attendance
- Interventions before students are referred to special education
- Partnerships with families and the community

The team is responsible for organizing resources to establish a strong link between school and home. The resources and the school–home link help to ensure that all students are successful. Most notably, the solutions team arranges support for students who are not making progress despite interventions.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

SFA provides extensive professional development and technical assistance before and during implementation. Professional development is required for teachers, administrators, and specialized personnel. Professional development includes:

- Five-day initial training in the implementation of the Reading Edge and Getting Along Together curricula
- One half-day training for school leaders on test administration and interpretation
- Four to eight sessions for principals and lead teachers on progress monitoring and data-based decision making and intervention planning
- One day of initial training for the solutions team

Additional technical assistance is provided by the SFAF coach via 8–10 onsite support visits during the school year; four followup, scheduled telephone

conferences; and unlimited, informal telephone support by SFAF staff.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

SFAF provides all SFA–MGs with benchmarks and *Implementation Self-Assessment Guide* to assess the model implementation process. Each teacher uses the self-assessment guide to monitor his/her classroom implementation of the reading program. The guide provides an extensive checklist for each teacher to connect instruction and student learning to goals for student achievement. The guide is available in electronic format, which allows for flexible use. Teachers can self-assess in different areas, such as their use of modeling; the preparation of objectives, questions, and Think Alouds; and the use of team-building activities.

Additional strategies to monitor implementation are onsite observations, timelines, checklists, student achievement data, and teacher self-assessment as indicators, which schools use to adjust model implementation and to establish school goals for subsequent years. At the school level, the model provides feedback in the form of successful indicators of implementation, weaknesses, strengths, and strategies for improvement. Schools must use this feedback to guide implementation.

Special Considerations

SFA–MG focuses on improvement in reading and other academic literacy skills to help middle school students gain confidence, develop critical thinking skills, and have access to rigorous curriculum. Each middle school student is enrolled in a proficiency-based reading class. Given SFA–MG's focus on reading, all instructional staff are expected to address students' reading needs, which may require a shift in thinking about responsibilities for reading instruction in some middle schools. To address other academic subjects, SFA–MG provides interrelated units of instruction in science, humanities, and social problemsolving. SFA–MG emphasizes active learning strategies, cooperative learning in small teams of students, and established routines and practices for classroom management.

Reference

Jackson, A. W., & Davis, G. A. (2000). *Turning points 2000: Educating adolescents in the 21st century.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Model Studies Reviewed

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Chamberlain, A., Daniels, C., Madden, N., & Slavin, R. E. (2006). *A randomized evaluation of the Success for All Middle School reading program.* Baltimore: Success for All Foundation and Johns Hopkins University.

Slavin, R. E., Chamberlain, A., Madden, N. A., Daniel, C., Smith, D., Andrews, D., et al. (2005). *The Success for All Middle School. Evaluator report.* Baltimore: Success for All.

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Talent Development High School—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Quality Review Results
Model Name:	Talent Development High School (TDHS)
Model Mission/Focus:	The TDHS model is designed to change school organization, management, curriculum, and instruction and provide professional development to assist high schools that have serious problems with student attendance, discipline, achievement scores, and dropout rates.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1994
Grade Levels Served:	9–12

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
68	50	0	18
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	0	0	68

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	$82,000	$50,000	$17,000	Varies[1]	$15,000[2]
Year 2	$175,000	$49,000	$108,000	Varies	$18,000
Year 3	$160,000	$49,000	$96,000	Varies	$15,000
Years 4+	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:	
a. Evidence of positive overall effects	◑
b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	⊘
c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:	
Reading and Math	◑
Writing and Science	⊘
2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes:	
a. Attendance rate	◑
b. Grade promotion and dropout rates and completion of college preparatory courses	⊘
c. Student discipline	◔
3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	(NR)
4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	●
5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:	
a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	◕
b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	●

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative (NR) = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

[1]Personnel costs could not be obtained for TDHS. However, a TDHS is required to have one full-time equivalent (FTE) staff member to serve as the organizational facilitator, and the district is required to dedicate three FTEs as curriculum coaches. Curriculum coaches can be shared by two TDHSs.

[2]Additional costs may include partnership fees and attendance at the annual curriculum coach conference and the annual national conference.

Model Description

Talent Development High School (TDHS) was initiated in 1994 through a partnership with Johns Hopkins University (JHU) Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR) and Patterson High School, both of which are in Baltimore. TDHS began work in additional Baltimore high schools and in Philadelphia high schools in 1997. TDHS works in 18 states. TDHS emerged and continues to develop through partnerships between university-based reform providers at JHU and troubled urban high schools.

According to TDHS, the term *talent development* comes from the research of A. Wade Boykin, director of the Developmental Psychology Graduate Program at Howard University and CRESPAR, and other education theorists who advocate high standards and demanding curricula for all students. The underlying foundation of TDHS is that all students can learn at high levels when given adequate resources and supports.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards, the following were identified as core components for TDHS: organization and governance, professional development, technical assistance, curriculum, instruction, time and scheduling, instructional grouping, student assessment, and data-based decision making. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

The goal of TDHS is to transform high schools into respectful and motivating learning communities that challenge all students and adults to develop and realize their highest academic and human potential.

TDHS uses multiple whole-school reform approaches to fundamentally reorganize large high schools and address the challenges of anonymity, apathy, and diversity that many high schools face. TDHS implementation focuses on six main strategies:

- Establishing small learning communities
- Creating interdisciplinary teacher teams that share students and have common daily planning time
- Developing curricula that lead to advanced English and math
- Providing extra help for students
- Offering professional development for staff
- Involving parents to foster the career goals of students

TDHS works with educators to develop a concrete plan and then provides the support necessary for implementation.

Goals/Rationale

TDHS is designed to provide students with learning opportunities, motivation, and support to overcome weak academic preparation and to complete a core curriculum in college preparation. TDHS also provides support for teachers to teach standards-based lessons and encourage active participation and contextual learning during 90-minute scheduling blocks.

TDHS strives to meet the following seven goals:

- Improve overall school climate
- Raise engagement and attendance among all students and staff
- Increase students' awareness of their own talents
- Strengthen teachers' capacity for reflection and improvement

- Increase the number of students who perform at or above grade level in math, English, and other core subjects
- Increase the passing rates of students in college-preparatory courses and on proficiency exams
- Increase graduation rates

Costs

TDHS recommends that schools make a 3-year commitment to the model. Year 1 is considered the planning year, and TDHS supports schools with implementation during years 2 and 3. The following costs are based on a 3-year commitment from a school with 2,000 students, of which one third are freshmen. Personnel costs are not included in these estimates. However, the school is required to have one full-time equivalent (FTE) staff member to serve as the organizational facilitator, and the district is required to dedicate three FTEs as curriculum coaches. The curriculum coaches can be shared by two schools.

TDHS costs $82,000 for the planning year, of which $50,000 goes toward technical assistance and training for three curriculum coaches. The materials for the planning year cost approximately $17,000. An additional cost of $15,000 covers the partnership fee and conference fees (i.e., tuition, room, board, and transportation) for the annual curriculum coach conference and the annual national conference.

TDHS costs $175,000 in year 2: $49,000 for technical assistance and training, $108,000 for curriculum-based and other materials, and $18,000 for the partnership fee, conference fees, and other expenses.

TDHS costs $160,000 in year 3: $49,000 for technical assistance and training, $96,000 for curriculum-based and other materials, and $15,000 for the partnership fee and conference fees.

Costs are not included for year 4 because funding depends on the specific needs of the school. After year 3, schools remain part of the TDHS network, and new teachers receive training. However, the relationship between the school and TDHS is less formal. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, schools should directly contact TDHS.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: ◑

The CSRQ Center reviewed six studies for effects of TDHS on student achievement at the middle and high school levels. Four of these studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. The CSRQ Center considered the findings of two of these studies to be *conclusive,* meaning the CSRQ Center has confidence in the results of each study. The CSRQ Center considered the findings of the other two studies to be *suggestive,* meaning the CSRQ Center has limited confidence in the results of each study.

Overall, the four studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards reported positive effects of TDHS on student achievement. Findings on eight separate academic achievements were examined in the four studies. Six of the eight separate achievement findings demonstrated a statistically significant positive effect, with an average effect size (across studies and outcomes) of +0.40.[3] Because only four studies met the CSRQ Center's standards, results of TDHS's effects on student achievement are consistent with an overall rating of moderate.

[3]For more information on the strength of effect sizes, please refer to "About Effect Sizes," an inset in the "About This Report" chapter of this report.

The four studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards are described individually below. (Appendix Q reports on the two other studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

The two studies that were considered to be conclusive used a matched-group, quasi-experimental design. One of these two studies examined the effects of TDHS on ninth-grade students who attended nonselective[4] high schools that served a predominantly low socioeconomic status (SES) minority population in urban districts in the northeastern and mid-Atlantic regions of the United States.[5] The study examined the effects of TDHS on students' achievement in reading and math in a ninth-grade instructional program after 1 year of TDHS implementation. In one district, the achievement of students in two TDHS schools and three comparison schools were measured using an abbreviated version of the California Test of Basic Skills 5—the Terra Nova Achievement test. In another district, the achievement of students in three TDHS and three comparison schools were measured using the Stanford Achievement Test 9. The study found significant differences in favor of TDHS students in both reading and math.

The second study that was considered to be conclusive reported on the effects of TDHS in a large urban Pennsylvania school district. The study compared students in five nonselective, low-performing TDHS schools and six comparison schools. The study did not report the demographic characteristics of students in the sample. English language learners and special education students were excluded from the sample; the analysis focused only on students who attempted at least one course credit in ninth grade. Student achievement was measured using the reading and math subtests of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment. In addition, the study examined the total number of credits earned by students in grades 9, 10, and 11. The study found statistically significant differences in favor of TDHS students in math and number of course credits earned.

The two studies that were considered to be suggestive used a longitudinal design. One of these two studies was conducted in a nonselective high school in an urban district in Maryland. The high school was reported as being a low-performing school with frequent student discipline problems. The study tracked the percentage of ninth-grade students who, over 3 years of TDHS implementation, passed the Maryland Functional Tests in reading, writing, and math. Although this study did not conduct tests of statistical significance, the trends over time showed mixed trends among scores on reading, writing, and math exams. Therefore, positive or negative effects of TDHS could not be discerned from this study.

The second study that was considered to be suggestive examined five large urban high schools in the northeast that served a predominantly low SES population. The study reported on passing rates among students in reading, math, and science courses from the planning year through year 3 of implementation.[6] Although this study did not conduct tests of statistical significance, the trends over time showed a consistent positive increase in the passing rates for reading courses and mixed trends in the passing rates for math and science courses. Therefore, positive or

[4]Nonselective high schools in this particular study were public high schools within a school district that did not have an admissions process or requirements for entry.

[5]The study also reported outcomes of students in two other urban districts in the northeastern United States. However, findings from each of these subsamples were not reviewed, because the study did not use a comparison group.

[6]The study also reported on outcomes of other math and reading tests. However, findings for these outcomes were not reviewed, because the study did not report baseline measures.

negative effects of TDHS could not be discerned from this study for outcomes in math and science.[7]

Evidence of Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: ⊘

One study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and was considered to be conclusive examined the impact of TDHS on students repeating ninth grade.[8] The study reported no statistically significant effects of TDHS on the credits earned by those students. Therefore, the rating for this category is zero.

The CSRQ Center urges readers to not necessarily judge a no rating or a low rating in this category as evidence that TDHS cannot be effective in Title I schools or other schools with similar student populations. The studies of TDHS that met the CSRQ Center's standards included schools that served primarily minority students from low-income families. Thus, readers may interpret the CSRQ Center's overall rating for the category of positive overall effects on student achievement as an indicator of the model's effectiveness in working in challenging settings.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

Rating: ◑

In the studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards, the effects of TDHS on reading achievement were positive. One study that was considered to be conclusive reported statistically significant greater gains in reading among TDHS students than comparison students; the effect size across samples reviewed for this study was +0.29. The second study that was considered to be conclusive examined reading achievement of TDHS students in 11th grade, after 3 years of TDHS implementation.[9] This study found a statistically significant difference that favored TDHS schools and reported an effect size of +0.32. One of the two studies that was considered to be suggestive showed no improvement in reading scores over time among TDHS students. The second study that was considered to be suggestive reported a consistent positive increase in passing rates of TDHS students in reading courses over 3 years of program implementation, but no statistical significance was reported.

Therefore, because three studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards reported consistently positive findings of TDHS on reading achievement, the rating for this subcategory is moderate.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Math

Rating: ◑

In the studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards, the effects of TDHS on math achievement were mixed. One study that was considered to be conclusive reported statistically significant greater gains in math among TDHS students than comparison students; the effect size across samples reviewed for this study was +0.35. The second study that was considered to be conclusive examined math achievement of TDHS students in 11th grade, after 3 years of TDHS implementation.[10] This study found a statistically significant difference that favored TDHS schools and reported an effect size of +0.65. One of the two studies that was considered to be suggestive did not report a level of statistical significance among the

[7] Level of statistical significance is determined by a statistical test and demonstrates whether the observed changes are likely to have occurred by chance alone.

[8] According to the study, students whose records indicated that they were in the ninth grade during the time of the study and were also in the ninth grade during the previous year were considered to be repeaters of ninth grade. Such students did not earn enough credits to be promoted to the 10th grade on time or during midyear. The study reported that about one third of the intent-to-treat sample met such criteria.

[9] This analysis is based on a sample of two earlier implementing schools. The CSRQ Center's review focused on the most recent cohort reported.

[10] This analysis is based on a sample of two earlier implementing schools. The CSRQ Center's review focused on the most recent cohort reported.

findings. However, the trend was positive, showing a consistent increase from 28% to 56% of the student sample passing the math exam over a 4-year period.The second study that was considered to be suggestive reported mixed trends in the rates at which TDHS students passed algebra 1 between the planning year and the 3rd year of implementation. This study did not report a level of statistical significance for this outcome.

Therefore, because two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards reported statistically significant positive findings of TDHS on math achievement, the rating for this subcategory is moderate.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Writing

Rating: ⊘

One of the two studies that were considered to be suggestive examined writing performance of ninth-grade students. However, the study did not report a test of statistical significance, so the CSRQ Center could not discern the impact of TDHS on writing achievement. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Science

Rating: ⊘

One of the two studies that were considered to be suggestive examined the rate at which TDHS students passed science courses. The study reported mixed trends between the planning year and the 3rd year of implementation. However, the study did not report a test of statistical significance, so the CSRQ Center could not discern the impact of TDHS on science achievement. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Attendance Rate

Rating: ◑

Two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards (one conclusive and one suggestive) investigated the effects of TDHS on attendance rates.[11] One of the two studies that was considered to be conclusive reported statistically significant differences in attendance rates that favored students in TDHS schools; the effect size was +0.20. The same study also reported a greater increase in attendance of students who had to repeat ninth grade in the TDHS schools than such rates by similar students in comparison schools; the effect size was +0.10. In TDHS schools, one of the two studies that was considered to be suggestive reported an increase in attendance rates and a decline in percentage of students who missed 20 school days or more. However, the study did not conduct a test of statistical significance, so the CSRQ Center could not discern the direction of the effect. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is moderate.

Grade Promotion and Dropout Rates

Rating: ⊘

Two studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards (one conclusive and one suggestive) investigated the effects of TDHS on grade promotion and dropout rates. One of the two studies that was considered to be conclusive reported no statistically significant differences in the grade promotion and dropout rates between students in TDHS and comparison schools. One of the two studies that was considered to be

[11] The study considered to be suggestive also reported that TDHS had a positive effect on school climate and student problem behavior. However, these outcomes were not reviewed by the CSRQ Center, because the part of the study concerned with those outcomes did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design.

suggestive reported an increase in grade promotion rates by TDHS students over 3 years of program implementation. However, the study did not conduct a test of statistical significance, so the CSRQ Center could not discern the direction of the effect. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Completion of College Preparatory Courses

Rating: ⊘

One study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and was considered to be suggestive investigated the effects of TDHS on completion of college preparatory courses. In one school, the percentage of students who completed a minimum sequence of college preparatory courses (2 years of math, science, and foreign language and 4 years of English) increased from 53% to 80% after 2 years of implementation. In another school, the percentage of parallel students raised from 17% to 54% after 2 years of implementation. In comparison schools, the percentage of parallel students raised from 29% to 57%. However, the study did not examine the levels of statistical significance for the comparison students. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is zero.

Student Discipline

Rating: ◔

One study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and was considered to be suggestive investigated the effects of TDHS on student problem behavior. The average number of arrests, as reported by police departments, declined from 20 to 19 in five TDHSs and increased from 27 to 44 in comparison schools. In addition, the average number of fires, as reported by fire departments, declined from 4 to 2.5 in five TDHSs and increased from 8 to 13.8 in comparison schools. However, the study did not report a level of statistical significance for these findings. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is limited.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: (NR)

No studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the effects of TDHS on parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: ●

TDHS provided documentation that offered explicit citations to support all the core components of the model: organization and governance, professional development, technical assistance, curriculum, instruction, time and scheduling, instructional grouping, student assessment, and data-based decision making. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: ◕

Based on documentation provided by TDHS, the model offers a formal process for establishing an initial understanding of TDHS and strategies to develop faculty buy-in. Additionally, TDHS offers a formal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. However, TDHS does not provide formal implementation benchmarks for all of its core components. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is moderately strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

TDHS provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, TDHS provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of its core components. TDHS also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating for this subcategory is very strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

To adopt TDHS, a school must complete an application process that involves making a commitment to the model. As part of the application process, TDHS recommends that schools conduct a survey or straw poll to develop evidence that school faculty reach a consensus on the need for school change. Full implementation of TDHS occurs over 3 years, and the model requires several changes in the organization and governance structure of a school. TDHS requires schools to hire additional staff, use four-period days, offer Twilight School, and create small learning communities (SLCs)—ninth-grade success academy and 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-grade career academies.

TDHS requires an onsite team to facilitate implementation. The onsite team consists of an organizational facilitator and three curriculum coaches (English, math, and Freshman Seminar). Schools are required to dedicate one full-time position as organizational facilitator. The organizational facilitator must have strong communication skills. The district is required to dedicate three full-time positions as curriculum coaches for each school. However, the three coaches may be shared between two schools within a district. Each curriculum coach should be certified in the specific discipline area. The Freshman Seminar curriculum coach should be certified in social studies.

TDHS also requires that schools implement four 90-minute periods each day. The core set of college preparatory academic courses and electives should be scheduled within these blocks. The extended periods allow students to complete year-long coursework during an 18-week term. TDHS provides curricula for two sequenced courses in a subject during the year to provide extra help to struggling students.

Twilight School is another part of TDHS that provides assistance to struggling students. Twilight School is offered from 3:00–7:00 p.m. as an alternative to the regular school day for students who have serious attendance or discipline problems or who are returning to school from incarceration or suspension from another school. The program enables students to recover two classes.

In addition to staffing and block scheduling requirements, TDHS requires the use of SLCs. TDHS believes that SLCs help to counter the anonymous character of traditional, large high schools. TDHS recommends that schools organize into such SLCs as ninth-grade success academies and 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-grade career academies. Each academy is a self-contained school-within-a-school. Each academy should have its own part of the building, its own entrance, and its own faculty. By matching students' interests with the appropriate academy, TDHS believes that students' motivation and commitment to school will increase.

Curriculum and Instruction

TDHS stresses a college-preparatory curriculum for all students. To support this emphasis, TDHS cites research that indicates that all students reach higher academic achievement when the content of courses is

demanding. Students are placed in courses based on a standardized test that is given at the end of the school year or on a pretest that is given at the start of the school year. Courses that are taken during the first semester are considered "double-dose" because they are designed to prepare students for required core courses that are taken during the second semester. Curricula under the TDHS model incorporate various instructional strategies, such as direct instruction, small-group instruction, hands-on activities, discussion, cooperative learning, and content reading strategies.

TDHS offers specific courses for students who are one or more grade levels behind in reading, writing, and math in grades 9–11:

- Freshman Seminar (grade 9)
- Strategic Reading (grade 9)
- Reading and Writing in Your Career (grade 10)
- College Preparatory Reading and Writing (grade 11)
- Transition to Advanced Math (grade 9)
- Geometry Foundations (grade 10)
- Algebra II Foundations (grade 11)

Freshman Seminar (Grade 9). Freshman Seminar is designed specifically to prepare first semester ninth-grade students for the social and academic rigors of high school. Freshman Seminar consists of eight units of 7 to 18 lessons each. Each class lasts for 80 to 90 minutes. Lessons focus on suggestions for required materials and a daily behavioral objective and include such activities as small-group discussion, opportunities for note taking, reading, individual and team presentations, journal writing, and homework. Freshman Seminar emphasizes team building and cooperative learning. The units are designed to address issues that may not be directly addressed in courses taken as part of the high school curricula but are important for long-term success. Units include high school orientation, study skills, careers, postsecondary decisions, human relations, social skills, technology, and creating a career portfolio.

Strategic Reading (Grade 9) and Reading and Writing in Your Career (Grade 10). These courses use a balanced-literacy approach. In these courses, a specified number of instructional minutes each day are allotted to each of the following four components:

- Reading showcase. The teacher reads aloud to students.
- Focus lesson. Teachers use direct instruction to emphasize a skill or concept.
- Student team literature. Students work intensively in one of five core texts on prereading activities, team discussions, partner activities, individual questions, and vocabulary and literature tests.
- Self-selected reading and writing learning centers. Students develop independent reading and writing skills.

Strategic Reading includes five texts that range from fourth- through ninth- grade reading levels, lesson plans, and student materials. Strategic Reading helps students build reading skills and strategies that they may have missed in earlier grades and understand how reading is relevant to their own lives and future learning. Reading and Writing in Your Career is for students who are still reading at least 2 years below grade level and includes seven texts and a variety of accompanying activities. This course is designed to accelerate students' literacy growth, to prepare them for the English course that is required to be taken during the second semester of 10th grade, and to explore careers and life goals.

College Preparatory Reading and Writing (Grade 11). This course also uses a balanced-literacy approach and is designed for students who are still reading 2 years below grade level when they reach

11th grade. Each class lasts 80 to 90 minutes. In this course, a specified number of instructional minutes each day are allotted to each of the following four components:

- Reading colloquy. Students read independently and engage in partner work and discussion. Teachers use evaluation rubrics and scoring tools for this component.
- Focus lesson. Teachers use direct instruction to emphasize elements of literature, aspects of research, and analytical thinking and writing skills.
- Literature exploration. Students write responses to and discuss one of four texts.
- Project-based applications. Students perform such activities as delivering a 2-minute persuasive speech, participating in a formal debate, and completing a typical college application.

Transition to Advanced Math (Grade 9), Geometry Foundations (Grade 10), and Algebra II Foundations (Grade 11). These courses are offered during the first semester of each respective grade level. The courses are designed to support students in the sequence of standards-based high school math. The classes last 80 to 90 minutes. In these courses, a specified number of instructional minutes each day are allotted to each of the following four components:

- Peer-assisted starter activities. Students work with a partner to solve problems.
- Whole-class discovery. Students engage actively in learning the core knowledge and math approaches included in the units of the course.
- Differentiated individual and small group instruction and activities. Teachers provide individual or small group instruction while other students are engaged in learning stations, study groups, and other activities.
- Geometry foundations and algebra connections and reinforcements. Students review geometric and algebraic concepts.

Transition to Advanced Math includes six units: mathematical reasoning, data analysis and probability, rational numbers, measurement, integers and coordinate geometry, and patterns and functions.

Geometry Foundations includes five units: introduction to geometry, measurement, properties of objects, coordinate geometry, and the language of geometry.

Algebra II Foundations includes three units: algebra as a language, stepping through graphing, and functions and graphs.

Scheduling and Grouping

TDHS requires schools to implement a four-period day that includes 90-minute instructional blocks that are dedicated to language arts, math, social studies/history/Freshman Seminar, and science or an elective. Students take the same four courses each day and complete them in one semester. This allows students to receive additional support in the common core curriculum. The schedule for the school is organized around the SLCs/career academies so that teachers within each SLC have a common planning time and common lunch to communicate about students and coordinate activities.

TDHS offers strategies to help teachers organize students into heterogeneous groups within ranges of student abilities for all classes and all grades. For example, to problem solve or review skills through direct instruction, TDHS indicates that a teacher could place students into groups based on the grade levels at which they perform—perhaps students on a fifth- to seventh-grade level in one group and students on an 8th- to 10th-grade level in another group.

TDHS includes all students in career academies but does not provide targeted services or curricula to specific special needs populations. However, teachers of special needs students are invited to participate in professional development offerings, and curricular materials can be translated for English language learners.

Technology

TDHS recommends, but does not require, the use of computers for both teachers and students. Freshman Seminar requires students to gain familiarity with computers. Technology and Research is one of the eight units within Freshman Seminar. The unit covers basic keyboarding skills, an introduction to the Internet and the research process, and simple PowerPoint presentations. According to TDHS, one of the goals is for students to recognize technology and the computer as a tool for learning—similar to that of a book.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

Students take a pretest that focuses on English language arts, math, and Freshman Seminar. Results of this pretest are used to assess knowledge and skills of students and to determine their appropriate placement in classes and heterogeneous groups within classes. Throughout the year, student performance is measured on a daily basis through quizzes, unit tests, projects, and presentations. Data from these performance measures are used to guide instruction, form instructional groups, and identify students in need of intervention. Students take posttests at the end of each semester to assess course knowledge and skills and to help teachers determine areas in which students still require practice and assistance.

TDHS also uses student data and data from site-based meetings to conduct formative and summative assessments for each school on a quarterly basis. Schools are provided with feedback on strengths and weaknesses regarding implementation of the TDHS model and strategies to improve implementation.

Family and Community Involvement

TDHS recommends that schools involve parents, families, and the community in activities that encourage students' career and college development. Parents may become members of a governance committee and/or support students with homework. TDHS encourages continued involvement by parents through meetings, newsletters, and recognition of the contributions of families.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

TDHS provides professional development and technical assistance on organizational and curricular components, both before and during implementation. During the planning year (the 1st year), approximately 30 days of professional development and technical assistance are provided to build awareness and commitment to the school reform effort. TDHS recommends professional development in the following areas: the four-period day, interdisciplinary teaming in grade 9, and developing SLCs. Additional professional development includes curriculum integration, blending academic and vocational curricula, and work-based learning through building partnerships with industry and the community. During the planning year, training for teachers, school administrators, district leaders, and school-based planning team members focuses on how to achieve organizational change. Throughout the planning and implementation stages, the organizational facilitator and curriculum coaches, who are part of the onsite school team, receive additional training from TDHS and are supported by the instructional facilitators from JHU.

During the planning and implementation stages, TDHS offers professional development on curricular

components of the model. Four tiers of teacher support are available for each of TDHS course. First, the model offers 2–3 days of summer training followed by monthly 2- to 3-hour workshops during the school year for each course. The professional development workshops preview upcoming activities by modeling instructional strategies, reviewing content knowledge, and classroom management techniques. Second, school-based curriculum coaches provide weekly in-classroom implementation support. This support may include modeling, troubleshooting, and material support. Third, instructional facilitators from JHU are available for implementation checks and troubleshooting via phone, e-mail, and school visits (when possible). Fourth, teachers may participate in cross-school and cross-district networks for additional support.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

TDHS sets and reviews expectations for schools through the development of school benchmarks and by conducting quarterly site reviews with each school. TDHS sets benchmarks for passing rates, promotion rates, performance on state assessments, and graduation rates based on school baseline data. Those benchmarks are shared with each school. TDHS also conducts quarterly site reviews with each school. The reviews allow information about progress, successes, and challenges during implementation to be shared between TDHS and the respective school.

TDHS uses the *Planning Tool for Site Review* to conduct the quarterly review. The planning tool has two main components: one to review each course being implemented and one to review the academies (i.e., the ninth-grade success academy and the 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-grade career academies). The component for reviewing courses includes the following measures:

- Number of teachers who attend the initial training for each course and the followup professional development
- Training for coaches
- Services provided by the coaches
- Materials
- Classroom organization
- Classroom management
- Implementation of curricular components
- Use of instructional strategies

The planning tool uses five categories to rate the level at which each course is being implemented: strong, emerging, low, not implementing, and implementing a successful variation of the program. The tool describes what each of the categories of implementation would look like for each course.

The planning tool for the success and career academies includes questions about the dedicated academy leader, support staff, teaching staff, and dedicated area of the building. The tool also reviews the block schedule, student cohorts, academy staff planning meetings, teacher teams, and coursework within each academy. Overall, the planning tool gathers and shares information with the school about progress and next steps for each course. Feedback is provided to each school regarding implementation successes, challenges, and next steps with respect to school organization.

TDHS also offers other strategies to guide implementation, including onsite observations, timelines, student achievement data, student attendance rates, teacher self-assessments, and an annual climate survey. Attendance is gathered on a daily basis and shared with the principal, teacher teams, academy leaders, and the school's administration. Each spring, teachers complete an annual climate survey. TDHS analyzes the climate survey and shares responses and results with each school.

Special Considerations

TDHS is a model that provides (a) detailed curricula for English language arts, math, and Freshman Seminar and (b) other elements of comprehensive school reform. According to school administrators who were contacted by the CSRQ Center, having all of the curricular materials outlined and available was a core benefit of TDHS. One school administrator indicated that teacher buy-in is essential because TDHS cannot be successful if teachers are unwilling to implement the curriculum the way it is designed. A second school administrator indicated that teacher buy-in is also important for implementation because the quantity and complexity of TDHS materials and manuals can be overwhelming at first. Thus, teachers must be committed to TDHS from the outset.

Model Studies Reviewed

Met Standards (Suggestive)

McPartland, J., Balfanz, R., Jordan, W., & Legters, N. (1998). Improving climate and achievement in a troubled urban high school through the Talent Development model. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk,* 3, 337–361.

Spiridakis, K., Useem, E., Morrison, W., & Neild, R. (2003). *Year three of the Talent Development High School Initiative in Philadelphia: Results from five schools, 2001-2002.* Philadelphia: Philadelphia Education Fund.

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Balfanz, R., Legters, N., & Jordan, W. (2004). *Catching up: Impact of Talent Development ninth grade instructional interventions in reading and mathematics in high-poverty high schools* (Rep. No. 69). Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk, Johns Hopkins University.

Kemple, J. J., Herlihy, C. M., & Smith, T. J. (2005). *Making progress toward graduation: Evidence from the Talent Development High School model.* New York: MDRC.

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Turning Points—Secondary

Overview:	Basic Model Information and Quality Review Results
Model Name:	Turning Points
Model Mission/Focus:	Turning Points seeks to improve student learning in middle schools by creating small learning communities that provide equitable and caring environments for adolescents. To meet this goal, Turning Points aims to increase teacher collaboration and data-based decision making through coaching and professional development opportunities.
Year Introduced in Schools:	1998
Grade Levels Served:	5–9

Number of Schools

Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:
71	56	7	8
	Elementary:	**Middle:**	**High:**
	0	71	0

Costs

	Total Operating Costs	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	$50,000–$100,000[1]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 2	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 3	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Years 4+	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1.	**Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:**	
a.	Evidence of positive overall effects	⊘
b.	Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations	NR
c.	Evidence of positive effects in subject areas	NR
2.	**Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Student Outcomes**	NR
3.	**Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement**	NR
4.	**Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design**	●
5.	**Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:**	
a.	Evidence of readiness for successful implementation	●
b.	Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation	●

● = Very Strong ◕ = Moderately Strong ◑ = Moderate ◔ = Limited ⊘ = Zero ⊖ = Negative NR = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the implementation of the model in middle and high schools and its costs in the 2005–2006 school year. The CSRQ Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

[1]Costs vary depending on the number of students who are enrolled in the school and the status of the school as reported in official state reports (e.g., schools in need of restructuring, under corrective action).

Model Description

Turning Points is a whole-school reform model designed to create change in middle schools by establishing caring and equitable learning communities that value adolescents. Turning Points design is based on *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century,* a 1989 report published by the Carnegie Corporation, and *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century,* which was published in 2000. The reports identified the risks that adolescents face during the "turning point" from childhood to adulthood. The reports also discuss two reasons why many adolescents experience academic failure in middle schools:

- The disparity between curricula and organizational structure of a school and the social, cognitive, and physical needs of adolescents
- The misguided belief that adolescents do not have critical thinking skills

To address these challenges to academic success, the reports recommended that middle schools increase the rigor of their curricula, create supportive learning communities, offer every student an opportunity to develop a relationship with an adult, and target the mental and physical health of students. Throughout the 1990s, the original report received attention from educators and policymakers. Specifically, the Middle Grade Schools State Policy Initiative awarded grants to states committed to implementing the report's recommendations in 1990 and to urban middle schools in 1994. However, the focus of middle school reform initiatives in the early 1990s was school reorganization (block scheduling, teaming, advisory groups) instead of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Thus, despite reform efforts, many urban middle schools still struggled to provide high-quality instruction to students. In response, the Carnegie Foundation asked the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) to use the recommendations and principles from the 1989 report—and lessons learned from the reform efforts in the early 1990s—to design a whole-school reform model.

CCE designed the Turning Points model and in 1999 started the National Turning Points Network, a group of urban middle schools working to build their capacity to improve learning, teaching, and assessment for all students using the Turning Points model. Since the network's inception, CCE has supported Turning Points schools through an annual leadership conference, a Web site, network meetings, and technical assistance guides. However, CCE claims that the most effective way to support educators is to have them collaborate with and learn from the experiences of other educators who live and work nearby. For this reason, CCE works collaboratively with eight regional centers that voluntarily affiliate with the model and train Turning Points coaches. Through the National Turning Points Network and Turning Points regional centers, CCE supports more than 70 schools in 13 states.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards, the following were identified as core components of Turning Points: organization and governance, professional development, technical assistance, time and scheduling, instructional grouping, student assessment, and data-based decision making. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

The mission of Turning Points is to change teaching, learning, and assessment in middle schools by creating small learning communities that provide equitable and caring environments for adolescents. To meet this goal, Turning Points aims to increase teacher collaboration and data-based decision making through coaching and professional development opportunities. The focus of Turning Points is rooted in the vision of

the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform.[2] According to Turning Points, the key elements of this vision are:

- Middle schools should be *academically excellent* and provide students with appropriate curriculum, instruction, assessment, support, and time to meet their cognitive needs. To maintain a rigorous academic environment, school staff should become engaged in professional learning.
- Middle schools should be *developmentally responsive* to meet the social, emotional, and ethical needs of adolescents. Developmentally responsive schools create small learning communities that promote mental and physical health and reach out to families and communities.
- Middle schools should be *socially equitable.* Schools should work to prevent lowered expectations and variations in resources related to race, class, gender, or ability and help all students to meet high academic goals.

Furthermore, Turning Points has a focused vision for middle school teachers. According to Turning Points, research on effective teaching strategies for middle school students has not reached the classroom because of the focus of teacher preparatory programs, poor instructional leadership, and a lack of resources. Thus, Turning Points seeks to equip middle school teachers with the skills, knowledge, and experience to meet the complex needs of adolescents. Turning Points believes that by providing school staff with opportunities for collaboration, job-embedded professional development, and technical assistance, teachers will have the tools to improve teaching, learning, and assessment.

Turning Points expects teachers and school leaders to maintain high expectations for all students. According to Turning Points, all middle school students should gain the skills to think creatively; identify and solve complex problems; know their passions, strengths, and challenges; communicate with others; lead healthy lives; and become ethical and caring citizens.

Goals/Rationale

Turning Points design is based on principles described in reports about the model that were published in 1989 and 2000. According to CCE, these principles are teaching a curriculum based on standards, using instructional strategies that are designed to prepare all students, preparing teachers through ongoing professional development to teach adolescents, organizing relationships by creating a caring learning community, having school staff govern the school democratically, providing a safe and healthy environment, and involving parents and communities.

Turning Points schools commit to a multiyear change process that turns these principles into educational practice. Schools participate in the National Turning Points Network and work with Turning Points regional centers to create a comprehensive action plan that can be tailored to a school's needs but must address six key educational practices:

1. **Improving learning, teaching, and assessment for all students.** Includes strategies to set academic standards, embed these standards within curriculum, create assessment, and monitor student progress.

[2]The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform (http://www.mgforum.org), which was established in 1997, is an alliance of more than 60 stakeholders in education. The forum seeks to improve academic and developmental outcomes for all students in middle grades. The forum identifies and disseminates information on best practices, promotes effective policies, supports the development of leaders of middle grades, and engages the public in reform discussions. Turning Points' vision aligns with the forum's vision—middle schools that are academically excellent, developmentally responsive, and socially equitable.

2. **Building leadership capacity and a professional collaborative culture.** Outlines the process for creating a democratic governance structure, establishing common planning time, and providing meaningful professional development opportunities.
3. **Using data-based inquiry and decision making.** Is a process for using student assessment data and data collected from school staff on school climate, leadership, and student behavior to guide the change process.
4. **Creating a school culture to support high achievement and personal development.** Addresses the allocation of resources through scheduling and grouping strategies.
5. **Networking with like-minded schools.** Encourages schools to share ideas and information with other Turning Points schools.
6. **Developing district capacity to support school change.** Focuses on the capacity of district leaders to facilitate the change process.

Costs

The cost of implementing Turning Points varies according to the size of the school. For schools with up to 750 students, Turning Points costs $50,000 per year for the first 3 years of implementation. These costs include the services and materials required to implement the model. During the 4th year, a limited number of services and materials are provided at lower costs. If a school has more than 750 students, the cost is approximately $75,000. However, the model provider notes that during implementation additional costs may arise. For more specific information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, schools or districts should directly contact the model provider.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: ⊘

The CSRQ Center reviewed five quantitative studies for effects of Turning Points on student achievement at the middle and high school levels. Of these studies, none met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. Therefore, the overall rating of the effects of Turning Points on student achievement is zero. (Appendix R reports on the five studies that were reviewed but did not meet CSRQ Center's standards.)

Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: NR

Because no studies met the CSRQ Center's standards, the impact of Turning Points on student achievement for diverse student populations is unknown. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas

Rating: NR

No studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for review. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: NR

Because no studies met the CSRQ Center's standards, the CSRQ Center was not able to evaluate the effects of Turning Points on additional outcomes. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: NR

No studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for review. Therefore, the rating for this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating:

Turning Points provided documentation that offered explicit citations to support all the core components of the model: organization and governance, professional development, technical assistance, time and scheduling, instructional grouping, student assessment, and data-based decision making. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating:

Based on documentation provided by Turning Points, the model offers a formal process for establishing an initial understanding of Turning Points and strategies to develop faculty buy-in. Additionally, the model offers a formal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. The model also provides formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating:

Turning Points provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, Turning Points provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of its core components. Turning Points also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, the rating for this category is very strong.

Central Components

Organization and Governance

Before committing to Turning Points 3-year process for reform, Turning Points strongly encourages schools to determine whether Turning Points is appropriate for the school. This process normally takes 1–6 months. Turning Points recommends that schools use tools for selecting externally developed comprehensive school reform models, such as *Making Good Choices: A Guide for Schools and Districts.*[3] To help guide the decision-making process, schools should create an "exploring team" that is representative of the school faculty. This team is responsible for using Turning Points benchmarks to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the school's vision for reform. Subsequently, the team should learn about Turning Points design by reviewing the model's reports, visiting schools that implement the model, and discussing the model with the Turning Points staff. Comparing information about Turning Points with the needs and vision of the school should help the team determine whether Turning Points is a viable option for the school. Turning Points requires

[3] *Making Good Choices* (http://www.centerforcsri.org/pubs/mgcSchoolsandDistricts.pdf) is a product of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. The CSRQ Center's Web site (http://www.csrq.org/resources.asp) provides a list of resources to help schools select a school reform model.

that 80% of school staff be committed to the Turning Points model. If such support is reached, then the school can seek funding to implement the model and sign a contract with Turning Points.

To fully commit to Turning Points, the school should develop district capacity to support school change; this is the sixth of six Turning Points key educational practices. This process requires districts to develop a vision for reform, reallocate resources, create flexibility for budgeting and staffing, and collaborate on research and professional development.

Schools that commit to implementing Turning Points are also agreeing to implement Turning Points principles and practices; develop a governance structure that includes teams; appoint an inhouse facilitator; embrace a model of shared leadership between the principal, faculty, and community; allot time for faculty meetings, study groups, and professional development; participate in regional and national networks; and conduct an annual assessment that measures progress toward implementation.

During the 1st year of implementation, Turning Points focuses on building leadership capacity and a collaborative culture, which is the second of six Turning Points key educational practices; gaining buy-in for a collaborative work environment; creating teams to work together; agreeing on a process for working in teams; working as a faculty to develop a school vision; articulating goals for reaching this vision; and developing a decision-making process. With help from a coach from Turning Points, the school begins by appointing an inhouse facilitator to guide the implementation process. Then, the school works to create five types of teams that share leadership and decision-making responsibilities:

- The leadership team consists of the principal, teacher representatives from all grade levels and content areas, specialists, parents, and community members. This team meets every 2 weeks for 2 hours to organize professional development, manage data-based decision making, and develop a system of communication.
- Academic teams consist of two to six teachers who share the same students. These teams meet at least two times a week for 45 minutes to review instructional practices using Turning Points' protocols and peer observation forms.
- Study groups consist of five to eight members who may be teachers, administrators, parents, or community members who are interested in a specific topic related to curriculum, instruction, or assessment. These groups meet biweekly for 1–2 hours to investigate and discuss a given topic. Often these topics are barriers to success that have been identified by the full faculty.
- Discipline-based teams include all teachers who teach a specific subject. These teams meet every 4 weeks for 1 or 2 hours to map the curriculum and identify best practices.
- The full faculty also gathers monthly as a group to make decisions about schoolwide issues.

Guide to Collaborative Culture and Shared Leadership, a technical assistance guide from Turning Points, describes the characteristics of effective teamwork and outlines the expectations of various team members.

Furthermore, a Turning Points coach and the school principal work together to foster and develop a culture of shared leadership. The principal does not act as the only decision maker or expert. Instead, he/she expects staff to share in decision making through membership on various teams. The principal supports each team by setting goals, providing feedback, and monitoring progress. More generally, the principal acts as the instructional leader by obtaining resources and offering professional development opportunities.

Curriculum and Instruction

Turning Points does not require its schools to use any specific curricula or materials. However, Turning Points first of six key educational practices—improving learning, teaching, and assessment for all students—provides the foundation for the model. Through collaborative work completed during team meetings, teachers develop a rigorous curriculum, learn to use new instructional approaches, and create assessments to monitor students' learning.

When the Turning Points coach begins to work with a school, he/she conducts a school walkthrough. During the walkthrough, the coach uses Turning Points Vision for Effective Classroom Instruction for the Young Adolescent Learner, a Turning Points observational rubric to assess the quality of instruction and curriculum in each classroom. According to Turning Points, the rubric focuses on the presence of a coherent curriculum and five instructional components: critical thinking; structures to support student learning; meaningful work; essential questions and goals; and ongoing, authentic assessments. The walkthrough takes the coach a minimum of 400 instructional minutes. Using the rubric, existing curricular materials, and student achievement data, Turning Points develops a report on the quality of teaching and learning in the school. The school then uses this report to develop an action plan that addresses curriculum design, instruction, and assessment.

CCE provides schools with *Guide to Curriculum Development,* a technical assistance guide that outlines a generic process for designing a curriculum based on standards. Turning Points does not provide a prescribed pattern for developing the curriculum. Some teachers begin with state standards, and others may begin with ideas for a unit or activities. However, Turning Points does require the curriculum to be organized around themes (e.g., power, balance, relationships) that unify the content and essential questions about the theme. Using the theme and essential questions, Turning Points requires teachers to develop learning goals that incorporate habits of mind (ways to think and ask questions), skills (what a student should be able to do), and standards (the content a student should learn). Developing appropriate assessments is integral to this curriculum design process. (Assessments are described in more detail in the section titled "Monitoring Student Progress and Performance.") Turning Points also requires teachers to use curriculum mapping to ensure that the curriculum is coherent within and between grade levels. The curriculum design and mapping process takes place during weekly team meetings.

CCE also provides schools with principles for creating an effective numeracy program. These principles include creating a schoolwide approach to math instruction; allowing exploration and debate; expecting all students to excel; integrating reading and writing; and using direct instruction for calculation, application, and communication. Turning Points also provides *Teaching Literacy in the Turning Points School,* a technical assistance guide that describes a process for creating a literacy curriculum that is taught across disciplines. *Teaching Literacy* includes instructional strategies and templates for various forms of reading assessments.

Notably, the curriculum and instructional approaches in Turning Points schools are designed to address the intellectual, social, physical, emotional, and moral development of adolescents. The model embraces Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences.[4] This theory asserts that students have a unique combination of eight types of intelligences: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist. Furthermore, Turning Points claims that adolescent learners bring a

[4]For more information on the theory of multiple intelligences, refer to *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983) by Howard Gardner.

variety of assets and challenges to the middle school classroom. Because of the unique needs and intelligences of each student, teachers are expected to differentiate instruction. To differentiate, Turning Points requires teachers to use research-based strategies, such as project-based learning, service learning, cooperative learning groups, and flexible grouping strategies. For more information on the instructional requirements of the Turning Points model, schools should reference *At the Turning Point: The Young Adolescent Learner,* a technical assistance guide from Turning Points.

Scheduling and Grouping

Turning Points requires schools to adhere to the fourth of six key educational practices—creating a school culture to support high achievement and personal development, which includes allocating resources (financial, time, material, and staff), structures for grouping staff and students, and scheduling arrangements. To build equitable and caring learning environments that adhere to this practice, Turning Points expects schools to implement the following strategies:

- Form small learning communities, based on trust and respect, in which a team of teachers shares responsibilities for a group of students, has common planning time, and develops mentoring relationships with students in the community.
- Increase the length of instructional blocks.
- Adopt innovative grouping strategies that replace tracking.
- Reduce the student-to-teacher ratio.
- Create structures that allow students from diverse backgrounds to build relationships with each other.

School Structures That Support Learning and Collaboration is a technical assistance guide from Turning Points that provides guidance on the development of small learning communities. According to this guide, large middle schools should be broken into smaller learning communities known as academies. In these academies, a team of two to four teachers, also known as an academic team, is responsible for a group of 50–100 students. These teachers share a common planning time. The school is responsible for providing teams with a master version of a block scheduling format. The master schedule should allow teams to organize instructional blocks to fit the curricular and instructional needs of students. Schools should consult the *School Structures* technical assistance guide for more information on the benefits of academic teams, ways to create and support teams, and responsibilities of the team.

Turning Points requires students to be grouped heterogeneously for instruction. Teachers are required to differentiate instruction based on learning styles, intelligences, and needs of students. *School Structures* provides guidelines for a differentiated classroom, including flexible grouping, opportunities for collaboration (project-based learning and cooperative learning groups), and such additional support for students as mentoring and cross-age tutoring programs.

Furthermore, Turning Points encourages schools to adopt such grouping strategies as looping and multigrade grouping. Looping is the practice of keeping students in the same class with the same teacher(s) for more than 1 academic year. According to Turning Points, benefits of looping include opportunities to (a) develop strong relationships between students and teachers; (b) apply teachers' prior knowledge of students' skills, strengths, and weaknesses to instruction; and (c) form an ongoing dialogue between teachers and parents. Multigrade grouping is a practice of blending two or more grades into one classroom. According to Turning Points, benefits of grouping include the ability to address the varying social and academic needs of students, opportunities for students

to take on the role of mentor, and a setting for cooperative learning among students in different grades.

Technology

Turning Points does not require the use of any specific technology. However, CCE does provide online technical assistance to schools in the National Turning Points Network, including an interactive Web site, online technical assistance guides, discussion forums, and an e-mail listserv.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

As noted previously, the cornerstone of Turning Points is the practice of improving learning, teaching, and assessment for all students. Turning Points requires schools to develop formative and summative assessments at both the classroom and school levels. Turning Points views these assessments as integral to the learning process, not as a form of testing. According to Turning Points, when assessment is viewed as learning instead of testing, it

1. Is used on an ongoing basis instead of as an endpoint
2. Takes many forms instead of being one standardized assessment
3. Guides instruction instead of deciding failure or ranking
4. Occurs in multiple venues instead of only in a quiet classroom
5. Supports students in learning and applying effective ways to self-assess their own work

Turning Points provides teachers with a six-step process for designing assessment as learning at the classroom level:

1. Teachers create a classroom culture that supports formative and summative assessments by exploring teacher and student assumptions about assessment and its purpose.
2. Teachers develop clear learning goals and share these goals with their students. The section titled "Curriculum and Instruction" provides information on methods that teachers can use to create learning goals. After learning goals are established, students help teachers to develop criteria and rubrics that will determine whether students have mastered the learning goal.
3. Teachers select and create forms of assessment that are appropriate ways to demonstrate mastery of learning goals. Turning Points recommends that teachers use essays, student performances, products, selected responses, observations, and portfolios.
4. After deciding on the type of assignment, teachers model how the assignment should be completed, offer time for students to practice, and provide feedback to students.
5. During this practicing phase, teachers guide students in the use of self-assessment strategies, such as journals and graphic organizers.
6. Students are given an opportunity to share their learning with the teacher and peers and parents. Sharing could take place during a presentation or exhibition, a student-led parent conference, or as part of a portfolio.

Because classrooms function within the larger school environment, Turning Points also provides schools with a four-step process for changing assessment from testing to learning at the school level.

1. Change the school culture. A school culture that promotes assessment as learning is characterized by having student work displayed throughout the building, using common language to describe expectations for learning, and developing consistent learning goals across grade levels.

2. Provide teachers with adequate professional development to create appropriate classroom assessments. According to Turning Points, key elements of professional development are teacher teams, schoolwide study groups, release time, and a well-developed decision-making process.

3. Develop common assessment practices and expectations for the school. Although Turning Points acknowledges that schoolwide standardized tests are required by states and districts, Turning Points also expects schools to develop additional schoolwide assessments that allow students to demonstrate their learning. These assessments may include a common school rubric, literacy and math assessments, and faculty discussions of student work. *Looking Collaboratively at Student and Teacher Work* is a technical assistance guide that provides six protocols for reviewing and analyzing student work in teams.

4. Rethink communication regarding student achievement. Turning Points recommends that schools rethink traditional methods of communicating student achievement, such as report cards, and consider using portfolios or narrative progress reports.

Family and Community Involvement

Involving parents and community members in the school reform process is critical to Turning Points. Thus, such involvement is one of the model's principles. Turning Points strongly encourages schools to invite parents and community members to share in leadership and decision making by joining various teams, as described in the section titled "Organization and Governance." Turning Points also provides *Creating Partnerships, Bridging Worlds: Family and Community Engagement,* a technical assistance guide to help schools structure the process of involving parents and the community. The Turning Points framework described in this guide is based on the research of Dr. Joyce Epstein and her colleagues at the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University.[5] The framework provides strategies for six types of involvement: parenting, communicating with the school, volunteering, supporting learning opportunities, participating in school decision making, and working with the community.

To ensure that a school works to increase parental involvement, Turning Points encourages schools to establish a study group that uses a data-based inquiry process, which was designed by Turning Points, to assess the current practices at the school.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Turning Points provides professional development and technical assistance to schools before, during, and after implementation. Turning Points provides detailed guides to support core components of the model. These guides cover such topics as leadership, curriculum and instruction, parental involvement, and assessment. The guides are available online at http://www.turningpts.org/guides.htm.

Each Turning Points school receives between 30 and 35 days of onsite coaching from a coach trained by the Turning Points regional centers. Each coach is an expert in whole-school reform and effective instructional practice at the middle school level and has experience working in middle schools as a lead teacher, professional development provider, or an administrator. Furthermore, Turning Points seeks to

[5]The Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships (http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm) seeks to conduct research and disseminate informational reports to provide new knowledge and practices to help families and communities work to strengthen schools.

hire coaches who have knowledge of the district in which they will be working. Turning Points believes that coaches should build strong relationships with their schools and maintain that relationship throughout the implementation period. In an effort to build these relationships, the Turning Points coach will work with school teams to identify the school's needs and develop action plans to address the needs. The coach also provides one-on-one consultation to the school's principal and inhouse facilitator to ensure a strong knowledge base about the reform process.

As discussed in the section titled "Curriculum and Instruction," the Turning Points coach also performs a school walkthrough during the initial stage of implementation. Using data from the school walkthrough, the Turning Points coach develops a plan for professional development. According to Turning Points, this plan may include a variety of professional development opportunities, such as:

- **Lab classrooms.** An opportunity for teachers to participate in a structured observation of another teacher's classroom.
- **Interdisciplinary teams.** A common planning time facilitated by the Turning Points coach to support teachers in analyzing student achievement data, using instructional strategies, and creating lessons and units.
- **Subject-matter teams.** Sessions during which the coach demonstrates instructional practices and follows up with teachers on classroom observations.
- **Teacher leader training.** Opportunities to build the capacity of teachers to facilitate team and subject-area meetings, conduct professional development sessions, and review student work.

Furthermore, Turning Points provides several ways in which staff can receive professional development on specific content and instructional strategies:

- Guides designed by CCE to cover all Turning Points practices
- Online tools (e.g., information briefs, literacy guides, and observation protocols) developed by Turning Points coaches and experts in middle school reform
- A bibliography of useful books and articles on school reform
- Turning Points newsletters
- A collection of recommended Web sites

Finally, Turning Points expects schools to engage in professional development and technical assistance by networking with like-minded schools, which is the fifth of six Turning Points key educational practices. The National Turning Points Network and regional centers hold annual conferences and institutes for principals and school staff to bring practitioners together to share strategies, ideas, and success stories. Turning Points also encourages schools to visit other Turning Points schools and attend roundtable meetings hosted by schools in the national and regional networks.

Turning Points promises to support schools through the National Turning Points Network and regional centers. Through a leadership conference, interactive Web site, and network meetings, the national network provides opportunities for middle schools to share best practices. The regional centers support schools through a Turning Points coach who provides onsite technical assistance and training. The regional centers also provide schools with professional development opportunities and help schools conduct a biannual

Turning Points self-study survey, which was developed by the Center for Prevention Research and Development. The survey helps schools collect information from school faculty and parents about student demographics; school climate; and assessment, instruction, and organizational structures.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

Turning Points requires schools to use a process known as data-based inquiry and decision making, which is the third of six Turning Points key educational practices. Using student achievement data, student work, and data from the Turning Points self-study survey, schools create a school mission, identify strengths and areas in need of improvement, develop action plans to addresses these needs, and set annual goals. (The Turning Points self-study survey is described in the section titled "Organization and Governance.") *Guide to Data-Based Inquiry and Decision Making,* a technical assistance guide from CCE, provides indepth guidance on this process.

Turning Points requires each school to assess progress toward achieving annual goals and implementing the model using Turning Points benchmarks. The benchmarks are organized around six Turning Points key educational practices and are arranged in four phases: beginning implementation, partial implementation, demonstrating implementation, and systemic implementation. Turning Points expects schools to move through these phases of development during the multiyear reform process.

Because these benchmarks can be used for multiple purposes within a school, Turning Points provides two sets of benchmarks: full benchmarks and streamlined benchmarks. Turning Points expects schools to use the streamlined benchmarks to focus the school mission, analyze challenges to the reform process, develop action plans, and conduct an annual assessment. The annual assessment is conducted by the leadership team in the 1st year and by the whole faculty in subsequent years. The annual assessment requires schools to cite evidence that they have met annual goals and to develop new goals based on progress.

The full benchmarks should be used for the School Quality Review. Local and national Turning Points staff members conduct this review every 4 years. The review includes three steps:

1. The school's faculty develops a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates its progress toward full implementation of Turning Points.
2. The Turning Points team conducts a 3-day school visit, reviews the portfolio, and writes a formal report on the school's progress.
3. The school creates action plans and implementation goals based on the report. In the final report, the Turning Points team recommends whether the school should remain within the Turning Points National Network as a school working toward implementation or should be labeled a demonstration school that has fully implemented the Turning Points practices.

For more information on the review process, schools should consult *School Quality Review,* a technical assistance guide.

Special Considerations

In conversations with three school principals, each commented on the collaborative nature of Turning Points. One principal noted that the model focuses the school improvement efforts and increases the effectiveness of team meetings. However, one principal noted the importance of working closely with CCE to ensure that the coach assigned to work with a school is a good match and attentive to the unique needs of the school.

Although Turning Points does not provide a specific curriculum for implementation, it requires teachers to develop a rigorous curriculum, learn how to use new instructional approaches, and create assessments to monitor students' learning. Together, these elements require a significant amount of time for teacher collaboration. Schools willing to adopt Turning Points need to be ready to make significant time for teachers to complete this work.

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Appendix A: Accelerated Schools PLUS—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Twelve studies of Accelerated Schools: Powerful Learning Unlimited Success (AS PLUS) did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. The 12 studies were not eligible for full review because of the following reasons:

- Four studies combined results from more than one comprehensive school reform model, making it impossible to attribute any of the results solely to AS PLUS.
- Three studies did not examine achievement outcomes of students in AS PLUS schools.
- Two studies were not eligible for further review because a more recent version of the study was available.
- Three studies were qualitative in nature: One was only a case study, and the other two examined only implementation.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2002). *Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: A meta-analysis* (Rep. No. 59). Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.

Byrd, S. P. (2000). The Accelerated Schools Project: Initiating and sustaining school reform. *Dissertation Abstract International, 61* (01), 1231. (UMI Number: 9969480)

Fashola, O. S., Slavin, R. E., Calderon, M., & Duran, R. (1997). *Effective programs for Latino students in elementary and middle schools* (Rep. No. 11). Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.

Gaziel, H. (2001). Accelerated Schools programmes: Assessing their effectiveness. *International Review of Education, 47,* 7–29.

Herman, R., Aladjem, D., McMahon, P., Masem, E., Mulligan, I., O'Malley, A. S., et al. (1999). *An educators' guide to schoolwide reform.* Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Kallianis, E. (2001). *A follow-up study of trained adolescent students in the workforce who graduated from Robert E. Abbott Accelerated middle school, Waukegan, Illinois.* Unpublished master's thesis, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

McCollum, H. (1994). *School reform for youth at risk: An analysis of six change models. Volume I: Summary and analysis.* Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.

O'Donoghue, R., & Ragland, M. (1998). *Collaborative models to promote equity and excellence for all children.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). *Evidence-based reform: Advancing the education of students at risk.* Washington, DC: Center for American Progress and the Institute for America's Future.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). *Show me the evidence: Effective programs for elementary and secondary schools.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

Sterbinsky, A., & Ross, S. (2003). *Summary of CSRTQ reliability studies.* Memphis, TN: Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis.

St. John, E. P., Loescher, S., Jacob, S., Cekic, O., Kupersmith, L., & Musoba, G. D. (2000). *Comprehensive school reform models: A study guide for comparing CSR models (and how well they meet Minnesota's learning standards).* Naperville, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Traub, J. (1999). *Better by design? A consumer's guide to schoolwide reform.* Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

The Education Alliance at Brown University. (2004). *Implementing for Success. An analysis of five CSR models. Accelerated School summary.* Providence, RI: Author.

Viadero, D. (2001, January 9). Study shows test gain in Accelerated Schools [Electronic Version]. *Education Week, 21.*

Not Eligible for Full Review

Benson, J. T. (1999). *The comprehensive school reform demonstration program in Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction first year evaluation.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Boyd, T. (2006). *Accelerated Schools PLUS: Research base for selected services.* Storrs, CT: National Center Accelerated Schools PLUS.

Brunner, I., Davidson, B. M., & Mitchell, P. H. (1997). *Accelerated Schools as learning organizations: Cases from the University of New Orleans Accelerated School Network.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.

Brunner, I., & Hopfenberg, W. (1992). *Growth and learning in Accelerated Schools: Big wheels and little wheels interacting.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Burmaster, E. (2004). *Comprehensive school reform program (CSR): Annual evaluation and progress analysis.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Burmaster, E. (2002). *Comprehensive school reform demonstration program (CSR): Wisconsin year 3 evaluation.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Finnan, C. (1992). *Becoming an Accelerated Middle School: Initiating school culture change.* Stanford, CA: The Accelerated Schools Project, Stanford

University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED360459)

Gines, B. E. (2005). *Comparing two comprehensive reform models: Their effect on student achievement.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia.

Hopfenburg, W. S. (1991). *The Accelerated Middle School: Moving from concept toward reality.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.

Jacobus, K. (1997). *A study of the change process utilized by Colorado high school principals: The concordance of practice and theory.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.

Spencer, D. E. (2002). The effect of the Accelerated Schools model on academic achievement of urban middle school students. *Dissertation Abstract International, 63* (10), 3466. (UMI Number: 3067684)

Zhang, Y., Shkolnik, J., & Fashola, O. (2006). *Evaluating the implementation of comprehensive school reform and its impact on growth in student achievement.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Benson, J. T. (2000). *The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program in Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction second year evaluation.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Appendix B: America's Choice School Design—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Four studies of America's Choice School Design did not meet CSRQ Center standards. The four studies were not eligible for full review because of the following reasons:

- Two studies were descriptive and did not include quantitative data.
- One study did not include student achievement outcomes.
- One study was not eligible for full review because a more recent version of the study was available.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

America's Choice. (2004). *Results! From schools, districts and states using the America's Choice design.* Washington, DC: Author.

Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2002). *Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: A meta-analysis* (Rep. No. 59). Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.

Herman, R., Aladjem, D., McMahon, P., Masem, E., Mulligan, I., O'Malley, A. S., et al. (1999). *An educators' guide to schoolwide reform.* Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Legters, N., Balfanz, R., & McPartland, J. (2002). *Solutions for failing high schools: Converging visions and promising models.* Baltimore: Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University.

Ray, C. A., & Mickelson, R. A. (1993). Restructuring students for restructured work: The economy, school reform, and non-college-bound youths. *Sociology of Education, 66,* 1–20.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). *Evidence-based reform: Advancing the education of students at risk.* Washington, DC: Center for American Progress and the Institute for America's Future.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). *Show me the evidence: Effective programs for elementary and secondary schools.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

St. John, E. P., Loescher, S., Jacob, S., Cekic, O., Kupersmith, L., & Musoba, G. D. (2000). *Comprehensive schools reform models: A study guide for comparing CSR models (and how well they meet Minnesota's learning standards).* Naperville, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Supovitz, J., & Klein, V. (2003). *Mapping a course for improved student learning: How innovative schools systematically use student performance data to guide improvement.* Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

Supovitz, J., & Poglinco, S. M. (2001). *Instructional leadership in a standards-based reform.* Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Traub, J. (1999). *Better by design? A consumer's guide to schoolwide reform.* Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

Not Eligible for Full Review

Bach, A. J., & Supovitz, J. A. (2003). *Teacher and coach implementation of Writers Workshop in America's Choice Schools, 2001 and 2002.* Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

Corcoran, T., Hoppe, M., Luhm, T., & Supovitz, J. A. (2000). *America's Choice, comprehensive school reform design: First-year implementation evaluation summary.* Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

Poglinco, S. M., Bach, A., Hovde, K., Rosenblum, S., Saunders, M., & Supovitz, J. (2003). *The heart of the matter: The coaching model in America's Choice schools.* Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

Supovitz, J., Poglinco, S. M., & Bach, A. (2004). *Implementation of the America's Choice literacy workshops.* Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Berends, M., Kirby, S. N., Naftel, S., & McKelvey, C. (2000). *Implementation and performance in New American Schools three years into scale-up.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Education.

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Center for Policy Research in Education. (2001). *Moving mountains: Successes and challenges of the America's Choice comprehensive school reform design.* Philadelphia: Author.

Mason, B. (2005). *Achievement effects of five comprehensive school reform designs implemented in Los Angeles Unified School District.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pardee RAND Graduate School.

May, H., Supovitz, J., & Perda, D. (2004). *A longitudinal study of the impact on America's Choice on student performance in Rochester, New York, 1998-2003.* Philadelphia: Center for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

May, H., Supovitz, J., & Lesnick, J. (2004). *The impact of America's Choice on writing performance in Georgia: First-year results.* Philadelphia: Center for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

Supovitz, J., Taylor, B., & May, H. (2002). *The impact of America's Choice on student performance in Duval County, Florida.* Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Appendix C: ATLAS Learning Communities—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Four studies of ATLAS (Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment for All Students) Learning Communities did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. One of the four studies was eligible for full review because it used a quasi-experimental design. However, the findings of this study were considered to be inconclusive because the study did not control for preexisting differences between the intervention and comparison groups.

The remaining three studies did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. These three studies were not eligible for full review because of the following reasons:

- One study was a review article comprised of several research studies. The article did not present original research.
- Two studies examined the implementation of ATLAS Learning Communities but did not examine student achievement.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Aladjem, D. K., & Borman, K. M. (2006, April). *Summary of findings from the National Longitudinal Evaluation of Comprehensive School Reform.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Fashola, O. S., & Slavin, R. E. (1997). *Effective and replicable programs for students placed at risk in elementary and middle schools.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

Hatch, T. (1998). The differences in theory that matter in the practice of school improvement. *American Educational Research Journal, 35,* 3–31.

Herman, R., Aladjem, D., McMahon, P., Masem, E., Mulligan, I., O'Malley, A. S., et al. (1999). *An educators' guide to schoolwide reform.* Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Ross, S. M., Sanders, W. L., Wright, S. P., Stringfield, S., Wang, L. W., & Alberg, M. (2001). *Two- and three-year achievement results from the Memphis Restructuring Initiative.* Memphis, TN: Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). *Show me the evidence: Effective programs for elementary and secondary schools.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

Sterbinsky, A., & Ross, S. (2003). *Summary of CSRTQ reliability studies.* Memphis, TN: Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis.

St. John, E. P., Loescher, S., Jacob, S., Cekic, O., Kupersmith, L., & Musoba, G. D. (2000). *Comprehensive school reform models: A study guide for comparing CSR models (and how well they meet Minnesota's learning standards).* Naperville, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Not Eligible for Full Review

Manset, G., St. John, E. P., Musoba, G. D., Gordon, D., Klingerman, K., Chung, C. G., et al. (2000). *Comprehensive school reform in Michigan. Implementation study for 1999-2000.* Bloomington: Indiana Education Policy Center.

New American Schools. (1997). *Working towards excellence: Results from schools implementing New American Schools designs.* Arlington, VA: Author.

Squires, D. A., & Kranyik, R. D. (1999). Connecting school-based management and instructional improvement: A case study of two ATLAS schools. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 4,* 241–258.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive)

Frenkel, S., Friedlaender, D., Pearlman, J., & Adefuin, J. (2004). *Evaluation of the ATLAS Communities comprehensive school reform model.* Oakland, CA: Social Policy Research Associates.

Appendix D: Coalition of Essential Schools—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Twenty-three studies of Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. Four of the 23 studies were eligible for full review because they used sufficiently rigorous quasi-experimental or longitudinal designs:

- One study used a quasi-experimental design to test the effects of CES in middle and high schools in the Pacific region of the United States.
- Two studies used quasi-experimental or single-group longitudinal designs and examined data over a 3-year period. One of these longitudinal studies examined five urban and rural CES schools. The other study reported longitudinal trends at two schools in the midwestern United States.
- One study used a quasi-experimental cohort design to examine the effects of CES in one suburban high school in the Pacific region of the United States.

However, the findings in each study of these four studies were considered to be inconclusive because they lacked sufficient information about program implementation to make a definitive conclusion about the effects of CES.

The remaining 19 studies did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. The 19 studies were not eligible for full review because of the following reasons:

- Eight studies compared CES schools to non-CES schools without establishing a baseline on which to compare posttest scores.
- Two studies examined pretest to posttest changes without a comparison group.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

- One study did not use a comparison group and did not establish a baseline for comparison of scores.
- Eight studies were either (a) qualitative articles that did not report student achievement data or (b) review articles that combined and analyzed several comprehensive school reform models, making it impossible to disaggregate effects of CES between one model and another.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Benson, J. T. (1999). *The comprehensive school reform demonstration program in Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction first year evaluation.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Brennan, M. (2000). *A new generation of high schools for the ACT.* Canberra, Australia: University of Canberra.

Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2002). *Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: A meta-analysis* (Rep. No. 59). Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.

Burmaster, E. (2002). *Comprehensive school reform demonstration program (CSR): Wisconsin year 3 evaluation.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Center for Collaborative Education. (2001). *How Boston pilot schools use freedom over budget, staffing, and scheduling to meet student needs.* Boston: Author.

Desmond, C. T. (1992). *A comparison of the assessment of mastery in an outcome-based school and a Coalition of Essential Skills school.* Paper presented at the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Feldman, J., Tung, R., & Ouimette, M. (2003). *How are Boston pilot school students faring? Student demographics, engagement, and performance 1998-2002.* Boston: Center for Collaborative Education.

Foote, M. (2005). *The New York Performance Standards Consortium: College performance study.* New York: New York Performance Standards Consortium.

Herman, R., Aladjem, D., McMahon, P., Masem, E., Mulligan, I., O'Malley, A. S., et al. (1999). *An educators' guide to schoolwide reform.* Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Lee, V. A., & Smith, J. B. (1995). Effects of high school restructuring and size on early gains in achievement and engagement. *Sociology of Education, 68,* 241–270.

Legters, N., Balfanz, R., & McPartland, J. (2002). *Solutions for failing high schools: Converging visions and promising models.* Baltimore: Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University.

Ouimette, M., Feldman, J., & Tung, R. (2006). *Engaging parents in an urban public high school: A case study of Boston Arts Academy.* Boston: Center for Collaborative Education.

Slavin, R. E. (2006). *Show me the evidence: Effective programs for elementary and secondary schools.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

Stringfield, S., Millsap, M. A., Winfield, L., Brigham, N., Yoder, N., & Moss, M. (1997). *Urban and suburban/rural special strategies for educating disadvantaged children: Second year report.* Baltimore and Cambridge, MA: Johns Hopkins University and Abt Associates.

Stringfield, S., Millsap, M. A., Winfield, L., Puma, M., Gamse, B., & Randall, B. (1994). *Urban and suburban/rural special strategies for educating disadvantaged children: First year report.* Baltimore and Cambridge, MA: Johns Hopkins University and Abt Associates.

Swanson, A. D., & Engert, F. (1995). *School district effects and efficiency. Special report* (Rep. No. ED 391 249). Buffalo: Graduate School of Education Publications, State University of New York at Buffalo.

Traub, J. (1999). *Better by design? A consumer's guide to schoolwide reform.* Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

Tung, R., Ouimette, M., & Feldman, J. (2004). *How are Boston pilot school students faring? Student demographics, engagement, and performance 1998-2003.* Boston: Center for Collaborative Education.

Not Eligible for Full Review

Ancess, J., & Ort, S. W. (1999). *How the coalition campus schools have re-imagined high school: Seven years later.* New York: National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, & Teaching; Teachers College; Columbia University.

Burmaster, E. (2004). *Comprehensive school reform program (CSR): Annual evaluation and progress analysis.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Center for Collaborative Education. (2006). *Progress and promise: Results from the Boston pilot schools.* Boston: Author.

Coalition of Essential Schools. (2000). *Principles at work.* Oakland, CA: CES National.

Coalition of Essential Schools. (2001). *Principles at work.* Oakland, CA: CES National.

Coalition of Essential Schools. (2002). *Students thrive in schools that promote intellectual rigor and personalize learning.* Oakland CA: CES National.

Coalition of Essential Schools. (2004). *Pilot school study addendum.* Oakland, CA: CES National Research.

Cushman, K. (1991). Taking stock: How are Essential Schools doing? *Horace, 8*(1).

Darling-Hammond, L., Ancess, J., & Ort, S. W. (2002, Fall). Reinventing high school: Outcomes of the Coalition Campus Schools Project. *American Educational Research Journal, 39,* 639–673.

EdVisions Schools. (2005). *EdVisions five-year report: Less, more and better.* Henderson, MN: Author.

Kitchen, S. A. P. (1999). An analysis of nine K-12 school districts that have established membership with the Coalition of Essential Schools. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 65* (11), 4093. (UMI No. 9935412)

Leachman, R. (1999). Student performance in Missouri high schools in the Coalition of Essential Schools. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 60* (09), 3220. (UMI No. 9946272)

Legters, N., Balfanz, R., & McPartland, J. (2002). *Solutions for failing high schools: Converging visions and promising models.* Baltimore: Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University.

Lockman-Pruitt, C. O. (1996). The success of school reform in suburban high schools: A comparative study of twelfth grade students in Coalition of Essential Schools and twelfth grade students in non-Coalition of Essential Schools. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 58* (01), 46. (UMI No. 9718137)

Mounts, D. A. C. (2004). A comparison of student achievement between Coalition of Essential School participants and non-participants. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 65* (11), 4093. (UMI No. 3154275)

Muncey, D. E., & McQuillan, P. J. (1993). Preliminary findings from a five-year study of the Coalition of Essential Schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 74,* 486–489.

Riedel, J. A. (2002). Academic engagement in two RE:Learning high schools. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 63* (01), 46. (UMI No. 3038330)

Weinholtz, D. (1991). *Restructuring an urban high school. Fastback 323.* Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Zuckerman, D. W. (1998). Reinventing high school: A case study of the Coalition Campus Schools Project, 1992-1995. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 59* (10), 3712. (UMI No. 9909433)

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive)

Benson, J. T. (2000). *The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program in Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction second year evaluation.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Jobs for the Future. (2000). *Reinventing the high school: Six journeys of change.* Boston: Author.

Stringfield, S., Millsap, M. A., Herman, R., Yoder, N., Brigham, N., Nesselrodt, P., et al. (1997). *Urban and suburban/rural special strategies for educating disadvantaged children.* Washington, DC: Planning and Evaluation Service, U.S. Department of Education.

WestEd. (2002). *Secondary school literacy project: A summary of student outcomes on the Degrees of Reading Power Test, academic year 1999-2000* (Rep. No. ED 473 950). San Francisco: Author.

Appendix E: Expeditionary Learning—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Eleven studies of Expeditionary Learning did not meet the CSRQ Center standards. Three of the 11 were eligible for full review because they used quasi-experimental or longitudinal research designs. However, findings in the three studies were considered to be *inconclusive* because of the following reasons:

- Two of the studies used quasi-experimental designs to examine outcomes of students in urban middle schools in the northeastern United States. However, these studies lacked sufficient information about the equivalence of treatment and comparison groups and did not account for any initial non-equivalence in analysis of the outcome variables.
- One study used a longitudinal design to examine outcomes of suburban and urban middle and high school students in the mountain region of the United States. However, this study did not use a baseline measure to determine any effects of Expeditionary Learning.

Eight studies did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. The eight studies were not eligible for full review because of the following reasons:

- One study did not use a comparison group or establish a baseline for comparison of scores.
- Seven studies were comprised of qualitative review articles that did not report student achievement data. Furthermore, analyses in the articles combined several comprehensive school reform models, making it impossible to disaggregate any effects of Expeditionary Learning from one model to another.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Benson, J. T. (1999). *The comprehensive school reform demonstration program in Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction first year evaluation.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2002). *Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: A meta-analysis* (Rep. No. 59). Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.

Burmaster, E. (2002). *Comprehensive school reform demonstration program (CSR): Wisconsin year 3 evaluation.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Cadena, J. (2000). *Comparison of TAAS results: New American Schools (NAS) to non New American Schools.* Retrieved September 13, 2006, from http://www.mrsh.org/mrsh_action/our_results_report_cadena.htm

Herman, R., Aladjem, D., McMahon, P., Masem, E., Mulligan, I., O'Malley, A. S., et al. (1999). *An educators' guide to schoolwide reform.* Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). *Evidence-based reform: Advancing the education of students at risk.* Washington, DC: Center for American Progress and the Institute for America's Future.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). *Show me the evidence: Effective programs for elementary and secondary schools.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

Traub, J. (1999). *Better by design? A consumer's guide to schoolwide reform.* Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

Not Eligible for Full Review

Academy for Educational Development, Inc. (1996). *Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound. Summary report.* New York: Author.

Berends, M., Kirby, S. N., Naftel, S., & McKelvey, C. (2000). *Implementation and performance in New American Schools three years into scale-up.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Education.

Burmaster, E. (2004). *Comprehensive school reform program (CSR): Annual evaluation and progress analysis.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound. (1997). *Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound: Evidence of success.* Cambridge, MA: Author.

McQuillan, P., Kraft, R., O'Conor, A., Timmons, M., Marion, S., & Michalec, P. (1994). *An assessment of Outward Bound USA's urban/education initiative.* Boulder: School of Education, University of Colorado.

New American Schools. (1997). *Working towards excellence: Results from schools implementing New American Schools designs.* Arlington, VA: Author.

Thomas, J. W. (2000). *A review of research on project-based learning.* San Rafael, CA: The Autodesk Foundation.

Weddle, K. D. (1997). *Evaluation of the implementation of Expeditionary Learning at Outward Bound at Middle College High School.* Memphis, TN: Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive)

Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound. (2001). *Evidence of success: Expeditionary Learning in year eight.* Garrison, NY: Author.

Sterbinsky, A. (2002). *Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning. Evaluation report.* Memphis, TN: Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis.

Ulichny, P. (2000). *Academic achievement in two Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound demonstration schools.* Providence, RI: Department of Education, Brown University.

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Academy for Educational Development, Inc. (1995). *Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound Project: Final report.* New York: Author.

Benson, J. T. (2000). *The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program in Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction second year evaluation.* Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Appendix F: First Things First—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Six studies of First Things First did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. The six studies were not eligible for full review for the following reasons:

- Two studies did not use a comparison group or establish a baseline for comparing test scores.
- One study examined pretest to posttest changes without a comparison group.
- Two studies used a nonequivalent group design that examined only posttest data.
- One study was qualitative in nature and did not report student achievement data.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Connell, J. P. (2002). *Getting off the dime: First steps toward implementing First Things First.* Toms River, NJ: Institute for Research and Reform in Education.

Connell, J. P., Legters, N., Klem, A. M., & West, T. C. (2005). *Getting ready, willing and able: Critical steps toward successful implementation of small learning communities in large high schools.* Toms River, NJ: Institute for Research and Reform in Education.

Estacion, A., McMahon, T., & Quint, J. (2004). *Conducting classroom observations in First Things First schools* (MDRC Working Papers on Research Methodology). New York: MDRC. Retrieved August 29, 2006, from http://www.mdrc.org/publications/390/full.pdf

Gambone, M. A., Klem, A. M., Moore, W. P., & Summers, J. A. (2002). *First Things First: Creating the conditions and capacity for community-wide reform in an urban school district* (Full Report). Philadelphia: Gambone & Associates.

Hood, L. (2003). *Immigrant students, urban high schools: The challenge continues.* New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Institute for Research and Reform in Education. (2004). First Things First. In R. Smith (Ed.), *The history and impact of whole school high school reform models.* Wilmington, NC: University of North Carolina, Wilmington.

Klem, A. M. (2004). *Examining adequate yearly progress in No Child Left Behind in two districts.* Philadelphia: Institute for Research and Reform in Education.

Klem, A. M., & Connell, J. P. (2004). *Relationships matter: Linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement.* Paper presented at the 10th biennial meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence, Baltimore.

Klem, A. M., Levin, L., Bloom, S., & Connell, J. P. (2003). *First Things First's family advocate system: Building relationships to support student success.* Philadelphia: Institute for Research and Reform in Education.

Kronley, R. A., & Handley, C. (2003). *Reforming relationships: School districts, external organizations, and systemic change.* Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University.

Legters, N., Balfanz, R., & McPartland, J. (2002). *Solutions for failing high schools: Converging visions and promising models.* Baltimore: Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University.

Quint, J. C. (2002). *Scaling up First Things First: Site selection and the planning year.* New York: MDRC.

Quint, J. (2006). *Meeting five critical challenges of high school reform: Lessons from research on three reform models.* New York: MDRC.

Southern Rural High School Study Initiative. (2004). *Beating the odds: High performing, small high schools in the rural south.* Arlington, VA: Rural School and Community Trust.

Not Eligible for Full Review

Akey, T. M. (2006). *School context, student attitudes and behavior, and academic achievement: An exploratory analysis.* New York: MDRC.

Case, S. B. (2001). The Kansas Collaborative Research Network, KanCRN: Teaching science content through process. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 62* (08), 2717. (UMI No. 3022969)

Gambone, M. A., Klem, A. M., Summers, J. A., Akey, T. A., & Sipe, C. L. (2004). *Turning the tide: The achievements of First Things First education reform in Kansas City, Kansas Public School District.* Philadelphia: Youth Development Strategies, Inc.

Institute for Research and Reform in Education. (2003). *Kansas City, Kansas School District trends on the Kansas State Assessment since district-wide implementation of First Things First: 2001 to 2003.* Philadelphia: Author.

Quint, J. C., Byndloss, D. C., & Melamud, B. (2003). *Scaling up First Things First: Findings from the first implementation year.* New York: MDRC.

Williams, D. T. (2004). *Shaw High School: A case study in rural high school improvement.* Arlington, VA: Rural School and Community Trust.

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Quint, J., Bloom, H. S., Black, A. R., Stephens, L., & Akey, T. M. (2005). *The challenge of scaling up educational reform.* New York: MDRC.

Appendix G: High Schools That Work—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Forty-eight studies of High Schools That Work did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. The 48 studies were not eligible for full review for the following reasons:

- Eight studies examined pretest to posttest changes without a comparison group.
- Eight studies used a nonequivalent group design that examined only posttest data.
- Twenty-nine studies reported posttest changes for only one group only.
- One study reported longitudinal and comparison school data without establishing a baseline.
- Two studies were qualitative in nature and did not report student achievement data.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2002). *Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: A meta-analysis* (Rep. No. 59). Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.

Bottoms, J. E., Feagin, C. H., & Han, L. (2005). *Making high schools and middle grades schools work.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Daugherty, R., & Lord, J. (2005). *Getting serious about high school graduation.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Herman, R., Aladjem, D., McMahon, P., Masem, E., Mulligan, I., O'Malley, A. S., et al. (1999). *An educators' guide to schoolwide reform.* Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). *Show me the evidence: Effective programs for elementary and secondary schools.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Alabama: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/ALstateprofile.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Arkansas: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/ArkansasProgressReport.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Delaware: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/DelawareProgressReport.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Hawaii: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/HawaiiProgressReport.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Florida: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/FLstateprofile.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Georgia: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/GAstateprofile.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Indiana: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/IndianaProgressReport.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Kansas: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/KansasProgressReport.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Kentucky: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/KYstateprofile.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Louisiana: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/LAstateprofile.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Maryland: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/MDstateprofile.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Massachusetts: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/01V11_MassachusettsProgressReport.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in North Carolina: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/NCstateprofile.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Ohio: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/01V12_OhioProgressReport.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Oklahoma: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/OKstateprofile.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Pennsylvania: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/PennsylvaniaProgressReport.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in South Carolina: A progress report.*

Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/SCstateprofile.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Tennessee: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/TNstateprofile.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Texas: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/TexasProgressReport.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in Virginia: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/VAstateprofile.pdf

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work in West Virginia: A progress report.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved August 30, 2006, from http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/state_reports/WVstateprofile.pdf

Not Eligible for Full Review

Bottoms, G. (1997). *The 1996 High Schools That Work assessment: Good news, bad news and hope* (Research Brief No. 1). Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G. (2001). *State leadership in improving high schools for more students.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G. (2005). *Students at Kentucky HSTW sites. How well are they doing?* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., & Anthony, K. (2005). *Raising achievement and improving graduation rates: How nine High Schools That Work sites are doing it.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., & Bearman, A. (2000). *Improving reading and writing skills in language arts courses and across the curriculum.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., & Creech, B. (1997). *Mathematics performance of career-bound students: Good news and bad news from the 1996 High Schools That Work assessment* (Research Brief No. 3). Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., & Creech, B. (1997). *Reading performance of career-bound students: Good news and bad news from the 1996 High Schools That Work assessment* (Research Brief No. 2). Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., & Feagin, C. H. (1997). *The 1996 High Schools That Work assessment: Science—Good news, bad news and actions* (Research Brief No. 4). Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., & Feagin, T. (1999). *The 1998 High Schools That Work assessment: Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) sites are improving.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., & Mikos, P. (1995). *Seven most-improved High Schools That Work sites raise achievement in reading, mathematics, and science.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., & Presson, A. (1997). *The 1996 High Schools That Work assessment: Good news and bad news for health occupations programs* (Research Brief No. 5). Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., & Presson, A. (2000). *Finishing the job: Improving the achievement of vocational students.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., & Presson, A. (2000). *Using lessons learned: Improving the academic achievement of vocational students.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., & Thayer, Y. (1997). *The 1996 High Schools That Work assessment for family and consumer sciences: Good news and bad news* (Research Brief No. 6). Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., & Thayer, Y. (1997). *The 1996 High Schools That Work assessment: Good news and bad news for business and marketing programs* (Research Brief No. 11). Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., & Young, M. (2005). *High Schools That Work follow-up study of 2002 high school graduates.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., Fox, J. H., & New, T. (2000). *The 2000 "High Schools That Work" assessment: Improving urban high schools.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., Presson, A., & Han, L. (2004). *High school reform works—When implemented: A comparative study of high- and low-implementation schools.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, G., Presson, A., & Han, L. (2005). *Rigor, relevance and relationships improve achievement in rural high schools. High school reform works when schools do the right things.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bottoms, J. E., Feagin, C. H., & Han, L. (2005). *Making high schools and middle grades work. Final report.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Bradby, D., & Dykman, A. (2003). *Effects of "High Schools That Work" practices on student achievement.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Castellano, M., Stringfeld, S., & Stone, J. R., III (2002). *Helping disadvantaged youth succeed in schools: Second-year findings from a longitudinal study of CTE-based whole-school reforms.* Columbus, OH: National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education.

Downing, J., Frome, P., Hayward, B., Lasater, B., & McNeil, R. (2005). *Evaluation of Making Schools Work: Evaluation report.* Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International.

Flowers, J. (2000). High schools that work and tech prep: Improving student performance in basic skills. *Journal of Vocational Education Research, 25.*

Frome, P. (2001). *High Schools That Work: Findings from the 1996 and 1998 assessments.* Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute.

Johnson, E. M. (2003). *High Schools That Work: The effectiveness of selected variables on two sites. Dissertation Abstracts International, 64* (03), 850. (UMI No. 3085385)

Kaufman, P., Bradby, D., & Teitelbaum, P. (2000). *High Schools That Work and whole school reform: Raising academic achievement of vocational completers through the reform school practice.* Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

Kozikowski, J. A. (2004). *A comparative study on the efficacy of High Schools That Work in vocational high schools in Massachusetts. Dissertation*

Abstracts International, 66 (06), 2040. (UMI No. 3136747)

Southern Regional Education Board. (1997). *Case study: Hoke County High School, Raeford, North Carolina.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (1997). *Case study: North Laurel High School, London, Kentucky.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (1997). *Case study: Sussex Technical High School, Georgetown, Delaware.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (1997). *Case study: Walhalla High School, Walhalla, S.C.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (1998). *Case study: Randolph County Vocational Technical Center, Elkins, W.Va.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (1999). *Case study: Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School, Orangeburg Consolidated Five Technology Center, Orangeburg, S.C.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (1999). *Case study: Swansea High School, Swansea, S.C.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (1999). *Case study: Wallace-Rose Hill High School, Teachey, N.C.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2000). *Case study: Gilmer County High School, Glennville, W.Va.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2000). *Case study: Loganville High School, Loganville, Georgia. High Schools That Work.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2000). *Case study: Los Fresnos High School, Los Fresnos, Texas. High Schools That Work.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2001). *Case study: Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2003). *Case study: POLYTECH High School, Woodside, Delaware.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2004). *Case study: Paint Valley middle and high schools, Bainbridge, Ohio.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2006). *Case study: Garden City High School, Garden City, Kansas.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2006). *Case study: Henry W. Grady High School, Atlanta, Georgia.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2006). *Case study: Stemmers Run Middle School, Baltimore County, Maryland.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2006). *Case study: Swain County High School, Bryson City, North Carolina.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2006). *Case study: Waynesville High School, Wayne Local Schools, Waynesville, Ohio.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Stern, D., Byrnes, M., Levesque, K., & Lauen, D. (2000). *Enabling high schools to assess schoolwide results of reform: A pilot test.* Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

Appendix H: Knowledge Is Power Program—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Seven studies of the Knowledge Is Power Program did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. Of those studies, one was eligible for full review because it used a quasi-experimental research design. The findings, however, were considered to be *inconclusive* because the analysis did not take into account the initial differences between the experimental and comparison groups.

The remaining six studies were not eligible for full review because they did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design:

- Two studies examined pretest to posttest changes without a comparison group.
- Two studies used a nonequivalent group design that examined only posttest data.
- One study was qualitative in nature and did not report student achievement data.
- One study had a more recent version available for review.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Fraser, J. C. (2004). *Juvenile structured day and alternative learning programs: Impact and process study.* Chapel Hill: Center for Urban and Regional Studies, University of North Carolina.

James, D. W., & Partee, G. (2003). *KIPP academies.* Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum.

Not Eligible for Full Review

David, J. L., Woodworth, K., Grant, E., Guha, R., Lopez-Torkos, A., & Young, W. M. (2006). *San Francisco Bay area KIPP schools.* Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

Educational Policy Institute. (2005). *Focus on results: An academic impact analysis of the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP).* Virginia Beach, VA: Author.

Kitchen, R., DePree, J., Celedon-Pattichis, S., & Brinkerhoff, J. (2004). *High achieving schools initiative. Final report.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico.

Ross, S. M., McDonald, A., & Gallagher, B. M. (2004). *Year 1 evaluation of the KIPP DIAMOND Academy: Analysis of TCAP scores for matched*

program-control group students. Memphis, TN: Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis.

Shapley, K. S., Pieper, A. M., Way, P. J., & Bush, M. J. (2003). *Profiles of high-performing Texas open-enrollment charter schools.* Austin: Texas Center for Education Research.

Thompson, S., McDonald, A., & Sterbinsky, A. (2005). *KIPP DIAMOND Academy year three (2004-2005) evaluation report.* Memphis, TN: Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive)

Doran, H. C., & Drury, D. W. (2002). *Evaluating success: KIPP educational program evaluation.* Arlington, VA: New American Schools.

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Gallagher, B. M., & Ross, S. M. (2005). *Analysis of year 2 (2003-2004) student achievement outcomes for the Memphis KIPP DIAMOND Academy.* Memphis, TN: Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis.

Appendix I: Making Middle Grades Work—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Seven studies of Making Middle Grades Work did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. The seven studies were not eligible for full review for the following reasons:

- Two studies examined pretest to posttest changes without a comparison group.
- Two studies used a nonequivalent group design that examined only posttest data.
- One study reported only posttest changes for one group.
- Two studies were qualitative in nature and did not report student achievement data.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Bottoms, G., Murray, R., & Bottoms, G. (2005). *Improving reading achievement in middle grades rural schools.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Cooney, S., & Lasater, B. (2006). *Implementing school reform: Making Middle Grades Work for all students.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Heller, R., Calderon, S., Medrich, E., Bottoms, G., Cooney, S., & Feagin, C. H. (2002). *Academic achievement in the middle grades: What does research tell us?* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Not Eligible for Full Review

Bottoms, J. E., Feagin, C. H., & Han, L. (2005). *Making high schools and middle grades work. Final report.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Cooney, S., & Bottoms, G. (2003). *What works to improve student achievement in the middle grades. A Making Middle Grades Work research report.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Downing, J., Frome, P., Hayward, B., Lasater, B., & McNeil, R. (2005). *Evaluation of Making Schools Work: Evaluation report.* Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International.

Dunham, C., & Frome, P. (2003). *Guidance and advisement: Influences on students' motivation and course-taking choices.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Frome, P., & Dunham, C. (2002). *Influence of school practices on students' academic choices.* Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2004). *Case study: Paint Valley Middle And High Schools, Bainbridge, Ohio.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2004). *Case study: Stemmers Run Middle School, Baltimore County, Maryland.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Appendix J: Middle Start—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Thirteen studies of Middle Start (MS) did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. Two of the 13 were eligible for full review because those studies used a quasi-experimental design. However, the findings were considered to be *inconclusive* because of the following reasons:

- One study lacked sufficient information about the equivalence of treatment and comparison groups and did not account for any initial nonequivalence in analyzing the outcome variables.
- In one study, the majority of schools did not report a sufficient level of implementation fidelity.

The remaining 11 were not eligible for full review because of the following reasons:

- Three studies compared MS schools to non-MS schools without establishing a baseline on which to compare posttest scores.
- One study examined pretest to posttest changes without a comparison group.
- Three studies did not use a comparison group or establish a baseline for comparing scores.
- Four studies were comprised of either qualitative articles that did not report student achievement or review articles that analyzed MS along with several other comprehensive school reform models, making it impossible to disaggregate any effects of MS.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Mertens, S. B., & Flowers, N. (2003). *Middle Start CSRD: Show me the evidence of effectiveness!* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.

Not Eligible for Full Review

The Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2002). *Mid South Middle Start: Arkansas progress report (1998/99-2000/01).* Champaign, IL: Author.

The Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2002). *Mid South Middle Start: Louisiana progress report (1998/99-2000/01).* Champaign, IL: Author.

The Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2002). *Mid South Middle Start: Mississippi progress report (1998/99-2000/01).* Champaign, IL: Author.

The Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2005). *Analysis of the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) achievement data for 2001-2004.* Jackson, MS: Mid-South Middle Start.

The Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2005). *Analysis of Louisiana Education Assessment Program (LEAP 21) achievement data for 2001-2004.* Jackson, MS: Mid-South Middle Start.

The Center for Prevention Research and Development (2005). *Analysis of Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) achievement data for 2001-2004.* Jackson, MS: Mid-South Middle Start.

Flowers, N. (2000). How teaming influences classroom practices. *Middle School Journal, 32,* 52–59.

Manset, G., St. John, E. P., Musoba, G. D., Gordon, D., Klingerman, K., Chung, C. G., et al. (2000). *Comprehensive school reform in Michigan. Implementation study for 1999-2000.* Bloomington: Indiana Education Policy Center.

Mertens, S. B., & Flowers, N. (2003). Middle School practices improve student achievement in high poverty schools. *Middle School Journal, 35*(1).

Plucker, J. A., Lim, W., Patterson, A. P., St. John, E. P., Simmons, A. B., et al. (2003). *Implementing comprehensive school reform: Lessons from Michigan, 2002.* Naperville, IL: North Central Regional Education Laboratory.

Rose, L. W., & Cheney, N. (2005). *Mid South Middle Start: Studies of three Middle Start schools in the Mid South Delta.* New York: Academy for Educational Development.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive)

Mertens, S. B., Flowers, N., & Mulhall, P. F. (1998). *The Middle Start initiative, phase I: A longitudinal analysis of Michigan middle-level schools.* Champaign: The Center for Prevention Research and Development, University of Illinois.

Middle Start. (2006). *Cohort 1 Michigan Middle Start Schools after the end of comprehensive school reform funding.* New York: Author.

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Mertens, S. B., & Flowers, N. (2006). Middle Start's impact on comprehensive Middle School reform. *Middle Grades Research Journal, 1*(1).

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Wilson, B., Corbett, D., & Haring, C. (2005). *Michigan Middle Start impact and implementation: An in-depth look at two cohorts of comprehensive school reform grantees.* Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development.

Appendix K: Modern Red SchoolHouse—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Four studies of Modern Red SchoolHouse (MRSH) did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. The four studies were not eligible for full review because of the following reasons:

- One study included two samples, one of which did not use a comparison group or establish a baseline for comparison of test scores. The other sample included baseline test scores but did not include a comparison group.
- Two studies examined several comprehensive school reform models and combined analyses, making it impossible to disaggregate any effects of MRSH from one model to another.
- One study analyzed students in grades K–10 and did not include a comparison group in the study design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2002). *Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: A meta-analysis* (Rep. No. 59). Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.

Cadena, J. (2000). *Comparison of TAAS results: New American Schools (NAS) to non New American Schools.* Retrieved September 12, 2006, from http://www.mrsh.org/mrsh_action/our_results_report_cadena.htm

Kilgore, S. (2001). *Evidence of success: The Modern Red SchoolHouse design.* Nashville, TN: Modern Red SchoolHouse Institute.

Herman, R., Aladjem, D., McMahon, P., Masem, E., Mulligan, I., O'Malley, A. S., et al. (1999). *An educators' guide to schoolwide reform.* Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Hill, P. W., & Russell, V. J. (1999). *Systemic, whole-school reform of the middle years of schooling.* Melbourne, Australia: Centre for Applied Educational Research, University of Melbourne.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). *Evidence-based reform: Advancing the education of students at risk.* Washington, DC: Center for American Progress and the Institute for America's Future.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). *Show me the evidence: Effective programs for elementary and secondary schools.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

Sterbinsky, A., & Ross, S. (2003). *Summary of CSRTQ reliability studies.* Memphis, TN: Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis.

St. John, E. P., Loescher, S., Jacob, S., Cekic, O., Kupersmith, L., & Musoba, G. D. (2000). *Comprehensive schools reform models: A study guide for comparing CSR models (and how well they meet Minnesota's learning standards).* Naperville, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Not Eligible for Full Review

Berends, M., Kirby, S. N., Naftel, S., & McKelvey, C. (2000). *Implementation and performance in New American Schools three years into scale-up.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Education.

Murley, R. C. (2003). Standardized test scores and teacher perception of one whole school reform model, Modern Red SchoolHouse: Evaluation of a rural middle school. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 64* (06), 1959. (UMI No. 3095677)

New American Schools. (1997). *Working towards excellence: Results from schools implementing New American Schools designs.* Arlington, VA: Author.

Peevely, G., & Henson, R. K. (2002). *Modern Red SchoolHouse: Summary report of student achievement data.* Nashville: The Center for Excellence for Research and Policy on Basic Skills, Tennessee State University.

Appendix L: More Effective Schools—Secondary

The following is a description of the studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Two studies of More Effective Schools did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. The two studies were not eligible for full review because of the following reasons:

- One study did not examine student achievement data.
- One study used a non-equivalent group design that examined only posttest scores.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Eligible for Initial Review

Taylor, B. O. (1990). *Case studies in Effective Schools research* (Rep. No. ED 353 682). Madison, WI: National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development.

Warnock, C. M. (1987). Student achievement and dropout rates in Georgia school districts. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 48* (08), 1958. (UMI No. 87424665)

Not Eligible for Full Review

Birdsell, B. (1995). *Comparative analysis of reading and mathematics: First cohort of Kentucky Effective Schools (1990-1994).* Stuyvesant, NY: Association for Effective Schools.

Dobbs, J. D. (2004). The role of effective schools correlates among alternative placement programs in the prediction of dropout rates in Kentucky public high schools. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 65* (06), 2095. (UMI No. 3135556)

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Sudlow, R. E. (1992). *More Effective Schools/Teaching Project* (Proposal submitted to the Program Effectiveness Panel of the National Diffusion Network of the U.S. Department of Education). Spencerport, NY: Spencerport Public Schools.

Young, R., Jr. (1988). A process for developing more effective urban schools: A case study of Stowe Middle School. *The Journal of Negro Education, 57,* 307–334.

Appendix M: Onward to Excellence II—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Six studies of Onward to Excellence II (OTE II) did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. The six studies were not eligible for full review because of the following reasons:

- Two studies examined pretest to posttest changes without a comparison group.
- One study used a nonequivalent group design that examined only posttest data.
- One study reported only posttest changes for one group.
- Two studies reported aggregate-level data that combined elementary students with middle and high school students and presented data only at the district level, making it impossible to disaggregate any effects of OTE II from other factors.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Blum, R. E., Yap, K. O., & Butler, J. A. (1990). *Onward to Excellence impact study.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2002). *Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: A meta-analysis* (Rep. No. 59). Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.

Herman, R., Aladjem, D., McMahon, P., Masem, E., Mulligan, I., O'Malley, A. S., et al. (1999). *An educators' guide to schoolwide reform.* Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Kawagley, A. O., & Barnhardt, R. (1999). *A long journey: Alaska Onward to Excellence in Yupiit/Tuluksak schools. Case study.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Kushman, J. W., & Barnhardt, R. (1999). *Study of Alaska rural systemic reform. Final report.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Leonard, B. (1999). *Creating a strong, healthy community: Ella B. Vernetti School, Koyukuk. Case study.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Miller, B. (1999). *Community voice and educational change: Aniak and Kalskag villages. Case study.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). *Show me the evidence: Effective programs for elementary and secondary schools.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

Not Eligible for Full Review

Barnhardt, C. (1999). *Kuinerrarmiut Elitnaurviat: The school of the people of Quinhagak. Case study.* Fairbanks: University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Kushman, J. W. (1999). *It takes more than good intentions to build a partnership: Klawock City Schools. Case study.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Kushman, J. W., & Yap, K. (1999). What makes the difference in school improvement? An impact study of Onward to Excellence in Mississippi schools. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 4,* 277–298.

Landis, S. (1999). *Making school work in a changing world: Tatitlek Community School. Case study.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Lipka, J. (1999). *Closing the gap: Education and change in new Stuyahok. Case study.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. (2002). *Broadway High School: Moving ahead in math. Onward to Excellence II: Committing to CHANGE with OTE II.* Portland, OR: Author.

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Kushman, J. W., & Yap, K. (1997). *Mississippi Onward to Excellence impact study.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Appendix N: Project GRAD USA—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Five studies of Project GRAD did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. Two studies were eligible for full review because they used a quasi-experimental research design. However, their findings were considered to be *inconclusive* because the studies (a) lacked sufficient information about the equivalence of treatment and comparison groups and (b) did not account for any initial nonequivalence in analysis of the outcome variables.

The remaining three studies were not eligible for full review because of the following reasons:

- Two studies examined pretest to posttest changes without a comparison group.
- One study was qualitative in nature and did not report student achievement data.[1]

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Burke, M. A., & King-Berg, Y. (2005). *Social contexts of educational praxis: Ecologies of Latino parents' engagement and community development.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

Fashola, O. S., & Slavin, R. E. (1998). Effective dropout prevention and college attendance programs for students placed at risk. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 3,* 159–183.

Opuni, K. A. (1995). *Project GRAD 1994-1995 program evaluation report.* Houston, TX: Houston Independent School District.

Opuni, K. A., & Ochoa, M. L. (2004). *Project GRAD—Houston: Problems with comparisons between Project GRAD and other Houston ISD high schools.* Houston, TX: Center for Research on School Reform.

Project GRAD. (2002). *Working to close the academic achievement gap.* Houston, TX: Author.

Not Eligible for Full Review

Opuni, K. A. (2005). *Project GRAD—Newark: Program evaluation report 2003-2004.* Houston, TX: Center for Research on School Reform.

[1]The CSRQ Center was unable to obtain a copy of the following study: Ketelsen, J. L. (1994). *Jefferson Davis Feeder School Project.* Houston, TX: Tenneco Corporation, Project GRAD.

Opuni, K. A., & Ochoa, M. L. (2004). *Project GRAD—Houston: Formative evaluation report 2002-2003.* Houston, TX: Center for Research on School Reform.

Tenneco, I. (1994). *Making a difference: Update 1994. The Jefferson Davis Educational Collaborative.* Houston, TX: University of Houston.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive)

Ham, S., Doolittle, F. C., Holton, G. I., Ventura, A. M., & Jackson, R. (2000). *Building the foundation for improved student performance.* New York: MDRC.

Opuni, K. A. (1999). *Project GRAD: Graduation Really Achieves Dreams. 1998-99 program evaluation report.* Houston, TX: Houston Independent School District.

Met Standards (Suggestive)

Opuni, K. A., & Ochoa, M. L. (2002). Project GRAD: *A comprehensive school reform model.* Houston, TX: University of Houston.

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Snipes, J. C., Holton, G. I., Doolittle, F. C., & Sztejnberg, L. (2006). *Striving for student success: The effect of Project GRAD on high school student outcomes in three urban school districts.* New York: MDRC.

Appendix O: School Development Program—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Four studies of School Development Program did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. The four studies were not eligible for full review because of the following reasons:

- Three studies examined differences between treatment and comparison groups but examined only posttest achievement scores.
- One study was a qualitative article that did not report student achievement data.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

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Habib, F. (1994). A three-year study of Comer middle school program quality (1991-1993). *Dissertation*

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Joyner, E., Haynes, N. M., & Comer, J. P. (1994). Implementation of the Yale School Development Program in two middle schools: An ethnographic study. In N. M. Haynes (Ed.), *School Development Program. Research monograph* (pp. 59–89). New Haven, CT: Yale Child Study Center.

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McCollum, H. (1994). *School reform for youth at risk: An analysis of six change models. Volume I: Summary and analysis.* Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.

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Swanson, A. D., & Engert, F. (1995). *School district effect and efficiency* (Rep. No. ED 391 249). Buffalo: State University of New York at Buffalo.

Traub, J. (1999). *Better by design? A consumer's guide to schoolwide reform.* Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

Not Eligible for Full Review

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Met Standards (Suggestive)

Diamond, J. B. (1996). Implementing the Comer Process in a high school: A case study of the school planning and management team. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 57* (10), 4200. (UMI No. 9708118)

Met Standards (Conclusive)

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Appendix P: Success for All–Middle Grades—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Four studies of Success for All–Middle Grades (SFA–MG) did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. The four studies were not eligible for full review for the following reasons:

- One study compared SFA–MG to another comprehensive school reform model, thus removing any true control group and making it impossible to attribute results solely to SFA–MG.
- One study was descriptive in nature and did not examine achievement outcomes of SFA–MG students.
- Two studies were not eligible because more complete versions of the respective study were available.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Eligible for Initial Review

Fashola, O. S., & Slavin, R. E. (1997). *Effective and replicable programs for students placed at risk in elementary and middle schools.* Unpublished manuscript. Johns Hopkins University.

Pedroza A., Mueller, G., & Whitley, J. (1998, April 14). *Reconstructing special education services in middle school: Success for All.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Slavin, R. E. (2003). *Success for All/Roots and Wings Summary of research on achievement outcomes.* Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). *Evidence-based reform: Advancing the education of students at risk.* Washington, DC: Center for American Progress and the Institute for America's Future.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). *Show me the evidence: Effective programs for elementary and secondary schools.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

Sterbinsky, A., & Ross, S. (2003). *Summary of CSRTQ reliability studies.* Memphis, TN: Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis.

Not Eligible for Full Review

Daniels, C., Madden, N. A., & Slavin, R. E. (2004). *The Success for All Middle School: Third year evaluation report.* Washington, DC: Institute

of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Daniels, C., Madden, N. A., & Slavin, R. E. (2005). *The Success for All Middle School: Adding content to middle grades reform.* Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Gines, B. E. (2005). *Comparing two comprehensive reform models: Their effect on student achievement.* Doctoral Dissertation. University of Missouri, Columbia.

McCollum, H. (1994). *School reform for youth at risk: An analysis of six change models. Volume I: Summary and analysis.* Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Chamberlain, A., Daniels, C., Madden, N., & Slavin, R. E. (2006). *A randomized evaluation of the Success for All Middle School reading program.* Baltimore: Success for All Foundation and Johns Hopkins University.

Slavin, R. E., Chamberlain, A., Madden, N. A., Daniel, C., Smith, D., Andrews, D., et al. (2005). *The Success for All Middle School. Evaluator report.* Baltimore: Success for All.

Appendix Q: Talent Development High School—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Two studies of Talent Development High School (TDHS) did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. The two studies were not eligible for full review for the following reasons:

- One study examined only posttest data of TDHS schools.
- One study was qualitative in nature and did not report student achievement data.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2002). Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: A meta-analysis (Rep. No. 59). Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk, Johns Hopkins University.

Boykin, A. W. (2000). The Talent Development model of schooling: Placing students at promise for academic success. Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 5, 3–25.

Herman, R., Aladjem, D., McMahon, P., Masem, E., Mulligan, I., O'Malley, A. S., et al. (1999). An educators' guide to schoolwide reform. Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Jordan, W., McPartland, J. M., Legters, N. E., & Balfanz, R. (2000). Creating a comprehensive school reform model: The Talent Development High School with career academies. Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 5, 159–181.

Kemple, J. J., & Herlihy, C. M. (2004). The Talent Development High School model: Context, components, and initial impacts on ninth-grade students' engagement and performance. New York: MDRC.

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McPartland, J., Legters, N., Jordan, W., & McDill, E. L. (1996). The Talent Development High School: Early evidence of impact on school climate, attendance, and student promotion (Rep. No. 2). Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk, Johns Hopkins University.

Pugh, W. C. (2003). American urban high school reform: Talent Development—The Philadelphia story. Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education, 2.

Quint, J. (2006). Meeting five critical challenges of high school reform. Lessons from research on three reform models. New York: MDRC.

Slavin, R. E. (2005). Show me the evidence: Effective programs for elementary and secondary schools. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

St. John, E. P., Loescher, S., Jacob, S., Cekic, O., Kupersmith, L., & Musoba, G. D. (2000). Comprehensive schools reform models: A study guide for comparing CSR models (and how well they meet Minnesota's learning standards). Naperville, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Useem, E. (2001). The Talent Development High School: First-year results of the ninth grade success academy in two Philadelphia schools, 1999-2000. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Education Fund.

Useem, E. (2002). The Talent Development High School: Second-year results of the ninth grade success academy in two Philadelphia schools, 2000-2001. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Education Fund.

Not Eligible for Full Review

Legters, N., Balfanz, R., Jordan, W., & McPartland, J. (2002). Comprehensive reform for urban high schools: A Talent Development approach. New York: Teachers College Press.

Manset, G., St. John, E. P., Musoba, G. D., Gordon, D., Klingerman, K., Chung, C. G., et al. (2000). Comprehensive school reform in Michigan. Implementation study for 1999-2000. Bloomington: Indiana Education Policy Center.

Appendix R: Turning Points—Secondary

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Five studies of Turning Points did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. The five studies were not eligible for full review because of the following reasons:

- One study examined pretest to posttest changes without a comparison group.
- One study used a nonequivalent group design that examined only posttest data.
- One study reported posttest changes for one group.
- Two studies reported only baseline data.

Not Relevant for Initial Review: Study was not quantitative or on a comprehensive school reform model or on secondary school students.

Not Eligible for Full Review: Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive): Study had critical threats to causal validity.

Met Standards (Suggestive): Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

Met Standards (Conclusive): Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Not Relevant for Initial Review

Anfara, V. A., Jr., & Lipka, R. P. (2003). Relating middle school concept to student achievement. *Middle School Journal, 35.*

Brown, K. M., & Roney, K. (2003). "Turning Points" to success: A case study of reform in a charter middle school. *Middle School Journal, 34.*

Brown, K. M., Roney, K., & Anfara, V. A., Jr. (2003). Organizational health directly influences student performance at the middle level. *Middle School Journal 34*(5), 5–15.

Feldman, J., & Ouimette, M. (2006). *Examining the Turning Points comprehensive middle school reform model: The role of local context and innovation.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Felner, R. D., Kasak, D., Mulhall, P., Flowers, N., Jackson, A. W., & Brand, S. (1997). The impact of school reform for the middle years: Longitudinal study of a network engaged in comprehensive school transformation. *Phi Delta Kappan 78*(7), 528–532, 541–550.

Gallagher-Polite, M. M. (2001). From Turning Points to transformation points: A reinvention paradigm for middle schools. *Middle School Journal, 33.*

Johns, D. A. (2001). The implementation of Turning Points recommendations in Ohio middle schools and its influence on student achievement. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 62* (07), 2301. (UMI No. 3019317)

National Turning Points Center. (2001). *Turning Points: Transforming middle schools.* Boston: Center for Collaborative Education.

Not Eligible for Full Review

Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2001). *An analysis of self-study data from the Peoria Turning Points schools.* Champaign, IL: Author.

Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2002). *2001/2002 baseline analysis of self-study data—Illinois Turning Points schools.* Boston: National Turning Points Center, Center for Collaborative Education.

Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2003). *2001/2002 baseline analysis of self-study data—Massachusetts Turning Points schools.* Boston: National Turning Points Center, Center for Collaborative Education.

Mertens, S. B., & Flowers, N. (2004). *Assessing the success of Turning Points in Boston public schools.* Paper Presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Rabinovitch, B. A. (2004). A comparative case study of four middle schools response to state mandated reform. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 65* (03), 883. (UMI No. 3126394)

Appendix S: Letters From Model Providers

On August 28, 2006, the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center provided all model developers with background information on this report and with an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the Center's review of the provider's comprehensive school reform model. In most instances, this contact was a followup to ongoing communication with the model providers throughout the development of this report.

The CSRQ Center invited providers to share questions and concerns about the reviews and provide documentation for any information they needed to be corrected. Many providers engaged in telephone and e-mail communication with the CSRQ Center to provide valuable insight and information on improving the report. The CSRQ Center considered all concerns and suggested edits for the final narrative.

The CSRQ Center also encouraged providers to submit a two-page letter about the review of their model that could be published along with the report. The letters received from the model providers give consumers additional information that they can consider in making decisions about adopting a model. The following model providers submitted letters of comment:

- High Schools That Work—Secondary
- Making Middle Grades Work—Secondary
- Project GRAD USA—Secondary
- Turning Points—Secondary

All letters have been reproduced as submitted to the CSRQ Center.

Letter From High Schools That Work—Secondary

(Reproduced As Submitted)

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High Schools That Work Response to the CSRQ Center Narrative

High Schools That Work (HSTW) acknowledges that no research studies conforming to the methodology used by the CSRQ Center have been conducted. Having done so would have enabled the center to rate the model on evidence of positive effects on student achievement, on additional outcomes and on parent, family and community involvement. *High Schools That Work* welcomes an evaluation using a rigorous, experimental design since all of our data and anecdotal evidence support the effectiveness of the model in raising student achievement. Data collected on the *High Schools That Work* model were designed for ease of use by practitioners. New evaluation criteria, based on experimental or quasi-experimental research designs with both pre- and posttests that evaluate the high school model with a control group, are a more recent phenomenon established after the model's data system was designed and the model was implemented.

From the inception of the model, *High Schools That Work* developers have taken a different approach to determine how well the model was working and used a program evaluation approach as outlined by Gary D. Gottfredson of Johns Hopkins University in his work, "A Theory-Ridden Approach to Program Evaluation: A Method for Researcher-Implementer Collaboration."[1] Using Gottfredson's approach to help guide development of the program, *High Schools That Work* developers built into the model a system for collecting information that would help model developers, state leaders and school leaders and teachers continuously improve the model by determining the extent to which the model is being implemented in any school by using a series of benchmark indicators and determining progress in meeting benchmarks.

Over the past 20 years this field-based approach has enabled model developers, states and school leaders and teachers to use information collected to determine refinements needed in the key practices around which the model was developed and their implementation on an incremental basis. *High Schools That Work* developers and their constituents have used information from annual reports from school leaders and biennial reports based on teacher surveys; high school senior surveys; high school senior achievement tests in reading, mathematics and science, all referenced to the National Assessment of Educational Progress; and follow-up studies of high school graduates one year after completing high school. The three surveys and annual report contain questions that focus directly on numerous activities representing implementation of each Key Practice and the conditions under which it is being implemented.

The field-based continuous improvement research approach *HSTW* utilizes allows schools to benchmark school and classroom practices as perceived by faculty and students and to link these to students' performance on reading, mathematics and science achievement over a period of time. This enables schools to see that as they make changes in school and classroom

[1] Gary D. Gottfredson, "A Theory-Ridden Approach to Program Evaluation: A Method for Researcher-Implementer Collaboration," *American Psychologist*, October, 1984.

practices, they get changes in student achievement. The approach also allows each school to benchmark itself against high-achieving schools with students of similar racial and socioeconomic backgrounds and makes it possible for schools to gain insight into why similar schools have made greater gains in student achievement than they have. This provides school and teacher leaders opportunities to make changes in the school and classroom that are associated with higher student achievement. As they make these changes, they see improvement in student achievement. This builds their confidence that as adults in the school building change the quality of teaching and learning, all groups of students can learn at a much higher level if schools 1) promote rigor for all groups of students, 2) engage students in challenging and meaningful assignments, 3) provide students the extra support and assistance needed to meet performance standards, 4) assist every student with involvement of their parent to set goals and craft a program of studies to achieve that goal, 5) engage the school and faculty in a continuous reflection of what is working; what is not working and take actions needed to further improve school and classroom practices. It allows schools to take ownership of their own improvement.

To help schools and states understand how to collect and use data to guide continuous school improvement, *High Schools That Work* developers have created a workshop process for reviewing and interpreting data collected through *High Schools That Work* instruments and other school-based data that include graduation rates, dropout rates, state test scores, course failure rates, attendance and other information. *High Schools That Work* leaders work with state and school leaders and teachers to review and discuss the results of all information collected to determine not only how to customize professional development and technical assistance services to high school leaders, but also to help *High Schools That Work* developers and state leaders determine state policies and leadership initiatives needed to help additional low-performing high schools and subgroup populations that are underperforming.

The field-based continuous improvement model makes it possible for the network to disaggregate data by groups of schools and to see that as minority students and students with lower socioeconomic backgrounds experience the same quality of school and classroom practices they too make similar gains in achievement as other groups of students. The process encourages schools to go beyond the act of sorting students into those who can and those who cannot and to teach all groups of students to grade-level standards.

Another key feature of our field-based continuous model is the opportunity for schools to network with each other in a variety of ways. In fact, we have a learning community of high school leaders and teachers willing to share with each other what is working. They are free to look beyond their school's boundary for fresh ideas and perspectives, to evaluate those ideas, to see where they fit with their values and if there is sufficient data for advancing achievement. They can then implement those promising practices into their own repertoire of school and classroom practices.

Letter From Making Middle Grades Work—Secondary

(Reproduced As Submitted)

SREB 

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RESPONSE TO CSRQ CENTER

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) acknowledges that no research studies conforming to the methodology used by the CSRQ Center have been conducted. We would welcome an evaluation using a rigorous, experimental design as all of our data and anecdotal evidence support the effectiveness of the model in raising student achievement and preparing middle grades students for the challenges of high school. Data collected on the Making Middle Grade Work (*MMGW*) model were designed for ease of use by practitioners. New evaluation criteria are a more recent phenomenon established after the model's data system was designed and the model was implemented.

The importance of the middle grades to high school transition is supported by data that indicate 15 to 25 percent of ninth graders do not earn enough high school credits to advance to the tenth grade. *MMGW* helps middle grades schools align their curricula and standards with high schools, and academic standards in their attendance areas. The model encourages dialog between middle grades and high school teachers. Getting agreement on what constitutes readiness to succeed in college-preparatory level courses in middle grades is a key to ensuring that middle grades students are prepared for high school. An informal follow-up survey of eighth-graders in *MMGW* schools conducted before NCLB was passed established baseline data against which the effectiveness of transition efforts can be assessed.

A special and critical feature of *Making Middle Grades Work* is its commitment to establishing partnerships among schools, districts and states. When *MMGW* began, few SREB states had personnel assigned specifically to the middle grades in their education departments. SREB was founded to help its member states pursue policies that support improved educational achievement. SREB provides credible, unbiased data to policymakers so that they can develop policies based on accurate information. To fulfill its mission, SREB uses field-based, action research to report on current conditions and to examine possible policy solutions. It is a two-way street; SREB reports to policymakers on "what is," and then examines possible changes and their effect on students, teachers and communities.

Making Middle Grades Work is a continuous improvement model that integrates theory and actions. It's assessment system measures changes in school and classroom practices and in achievement for all groups of students. *MMGW* employs a series of interventions over time designed to generate knowledge and to support organizational change and growth. *MMGW* examines educational environments, creates implementation strategies and focuses on both long- and short-term goals. This model of program development focuses on field-based refinements. New schools must meet some critical benchmarks related to change and then become more concerned with implementation standards to ensure fidelity to a continuous improvement process. A site development workshop ensures that leadership teams and faculty are knowledgeable about *MMGW*'s Key Conditions and practices.

While not requiring a specific academic curriculum, *MMGW* emphasizes increased learning time and provides examples of how schools can alter schedules and resources to gain academic learning time. The model seeks to build capacity for leadership at all levels – state, district, school and classroom. SREB's leadership curriculum is divided into 14 learning modules, 12 based on critical success factors, and 2 focusing on literacy and numeracy. Increasing leadership capacity is a necessary component of continuous improvement models.

An extensive study of the middle grades climate found that no matter how strongly a school caters to students' affective and social needs, academic excellence depends upon high academic expectations and firm demands. Conversely, in order to succeed in schools that demand academic rigor, students need strong personal support as well. *MMGW* encourages schools to adopt a teacher-as-advisor approach to mentoring, and it requires that all students leaving eighth grade have a five-year educational plan developed in concert with their family and teacher-advisor.

MMGW is committed to improving educational opportunities and achievement in the middle grades. Through a continuous improvement focus, it tests theories and policies through field-based actions. It helps schools, districts and states establish clear, measurable intermediate outcomes and generate creative strategies to attain the outcomes. It involves practitioners through leadership training and by engaging them in specifying measurable goals and outcomes. Most practitioners will not acquire the skills needed to systematically conduct rigorous research evaluations; they will improve as practitioners by being part of a model that supports setting clear goals, establishing benchmarks of progress, gathering data and reviewing progress over time.

Letter From Project GRAD USA—Secondary

(Reproduced As Submitted)

Project GRAD USA

Graduation Really Achieves Dreams

Response to CSRQ Center Narrative on Project GRAD

Project GRAD is pleased to be a part of the CSRQ Center study of comprehensive school reform models and is gratified that the CSRQ Center study has rated its model as "very strong" in terms of the link between the components being researched in the study and the GRAD model.

Indeed, Project GRAD is embarking on a next generation model to amplify its program and thus focus more tightly on some of the elements cited in the study.

- **Creating Safe and Effective Schools:** Creating Safe and Effective Schools is a school transformation initiative designed to enable school leaders and teachers to use data to articulate a vision for school climate and academic achievement and develop specific strategies for reaching the goals of that vision. (CSRQ Center Standards: inclusion, data-based decision-making, curriculum/instruction)
- **Parental Engagement and Constituency Development** A locally-rooted, focused constituency of parents and community leaders advocating on behalf of low-income students and schools is critical to achieve lasting school reform. GRAD's Parental Engagement and Constituency Development Program is an innovative, effective mechanism that empowers parents with the knowledge and skills to advocate for their children's education and postsecondary success. Specific activities to build constituencies to support education, provide academic support, develop parents as leaders, and increase college access awareness are implemented. (CSRQ Center Standards: family and community involvement)
- **Enhanced Academic Model:** The next generation academic model strengthens the academic foundation of all students in GRAD schools, extending that foundation through middle and high school. Based on lessons learned in high school implementation across the country, major features have been added to GRAD's model. Those include support for the transition to high school; ninth grade interventions, including schedule modification to personalize instruction to meet needs for acceleration and enrichment of all ninth graders; increased academic rigor for tenth through twelfth grades; and teacher support in the form of in-depth professional development in teaching strategies for reaching all students, as well as in the sophisticated content of the college preparation curriculum and on-going school-based coaching support of data-driven instructional decision making. (CSRQ Center Standards: professional development, curriculum/instruction, data-based decision making, time and scheduling, inclusion, student assessment)
- **College Access Program:** GRAD's College Access Program (CAP) coordinates with GRAD's Parental Engagement and Constituency Development Program and the Enhanced Academic Model. CAP is based on the idea that GRAD must work to change expectations and reality at the same time, tipping a vicious cycle into a virtuous one. The GRAD scholarship, made available to all incoming ninth graders, is the culmination of CAP in each local site. Beyond the GRAD scholarship, CAP has been strengthened in several important ways. First, the model requires an enhanced role for college access professionals who work directly with students. These professionals provide critical college guidance and awareness functions in close collaboration with existing guidance counselors and social service providers. Even more importantly, they individually monitor and counsel all students to ensure that they are prepared

academically and on track to receive the GRAD scholarship and enter college. Second, the model supports the significant number of GRAD students now enrolled in college through regular communication, including on-going mentorship, on-line support, and college visits.
(CSRQ Center Standards: student assessment, data-driven decision making, inclusion, family and community involvement)

Where rigorous evaluations of Project GRAD exist, they provide only partial views of the GRAD model's impact because they are snapshots at different stages of development of the model, which is rolled out over time in each site. Thus, while they show positive trends in many areas addressed, these trends are too early in the development of the model to be statistically significant. These findings result in most of the ratings of "limited" cited in the CSRQ study. Project GRAD recognizes that additional research is needed. The American Institutes of Research[1] will soon publish a pilot comparative study dealing with high school graduation rates in GRAD's most mature site, Houston, Texas. The study examines graduation rates using three different methods of assessment. GRAD plans to use this study as a prototype for a larger study of this element of the model. Project GRAD has contracted with independent researchers from Case Western University to conduct a three-year site study of the GRAD Knoxville program. Additionally, GRAD is actively seeking to engage in additional rigorous studies of other components of its next generation model.

[1](Footnote added by AIR) AIR conducts many projects that involve staff on different project teams. The project team for AIR's CSRQ Center did not interact with the AIR project team for the pilot comparative study of Project GRAD. Given the variety of work that AIR conducts, rigorous institutional safeguards have been established to guarantee that any potential conflict of interest is avoided.

Letter From Turning Points—Secondary

(Reproduced As Submitted)

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Critical Elements of the Turning Points Model

1) The Turning Points coaching team model is long term and stable throughout the life of the CSR grant and beyond.
Research clearly documents that schools with verified success in achieving whole school reform proceed through several, predictable stages. These stages range from outright resistance on the part of many staff members to a guarded willingness by key staff to participate in small initiatives, and finally to a growing desire by a critical mass of staff to build upon the accomplishments that their own hard work has achieved. Maintaining strong and trusting relationships between external coaches and all members of a school staff is essential to achieving such momentum. To insure that such relationships develop, Turning Points maintains a stable group of experienced coaches who work intensively within a school throughout the grant period and beyond.

Whole school reform is complex, calling upon a wide range of skill sets and experiences, and involves working with a highly diverse group of stakeholders within any one school. The Turning Points experience underscores the fact that having multiple sets of eyes, hands, and minds is more effective in facilitating transformed school practice than the singleton coach. In response, Turning Points has developed a model of team coaching which allows us to draw upon the collective experience of our veteran coaches, while maintaining a stable team of coaches within an individual school throughout the life of the grant.

2) Turning Points coaches are experts in whole school reform on the middle school level.
Whole school reform in middle schools, while similar in many respects to reform that is pursued on other levels, is distinctive in critical ways. All Turning Points coaches are experts in whole school reform on the middle level, and have worked exclusively on that level for many years—as lead teachers, as professional developers with expertise in content coaching and effective middle school principles, as administrators, and as dedicated practitioners in effective whole school reform on the national and regional level. In addition, we bring extensive experience working with LEP students and special education populations.

In order to respond effectively to the developmental needs of young adolescents, the Turning Points coaches draw upon their collective expertise in their work with middle school staff to, for example:

- Ensure that all staff are experts in the intellectual and social capacities of young adolescents, understand the importance of connecting key academic concepts to their students' prior knowledge and interests, and know how to take advantage of such connections in order to ensure high academic achievement for all;

- Engage in high quality instructional practices, academically challenging curriculum, and multiple forms of assessment that enable all young adolescent students to achieve at high levels;
- Create schedules that provide for extended time for students in core academic areas as well as provide opportunities for all students to explore and integrate the arts, technology, and physical education into their growing sense of personal identity and accomplishments;
- Create stable structures and regularly scheduled dedicated time for the adults working in the school to address the academic and social challenges faced by the school as a whole and in individual classrooms, and establish a process to institute research-based, effective changes;
- Develop the capacity and motivation of school staff on every level to work collaboratively and continuously to transform the school into a professional learning community dedicated to the high achievement of all its students; and
- Work effectively with the families and communities of their students in ways that draw upon their assets (as well as recognize challenges) to support high achievement for all.

3) Turning Points coaches have extensive experience in integrating effective instructional practice into whole school reform.

In order to effectively teach the key concepts and skills in literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking to every student, middle school staff needs focused exposure to best practices *in their schools, during team meetings, and in their own classrooms*. Faculty need to work with highly trained facilitators/coaches who are skillful practitioners of effective instructional strategies for young adolescent learners across the curriculum, and they should be provided with dedicated time to discuss, reflect upon, and try out these best practices.

National Turning Points is committed to integrating the research on whole school reform with effective instructional practices for young adolescents. We have developed a set of practices that create a bridge between the teaming structures that mark highly effective middle schools and the work by individual teachers within their own classrooms. These strategies include:

- De-privatizing individual classrooms by building internal capacity to conduct “lab lessons” in effective instructional practices for colleagues to observe, through lesson study tied to relevant state content goals, and by an ongoing cycle of team discussions to learn from and build upon in-house expertise;
- Professional development on how to analyze and institute effective assessment strategies to improve student achievement aligned to state standards across the curriculum;
- Professional development and ongoing support for using academic teams’ common planning time and department meetings to systematically examine student work and teacher assignments, aligned with relevant state standards and tests and
- Provide opportunities for different groups of faculty to see examples of particular aspects of the reform modeled in the appropriate settings, for example:
    - Align standards with effective instructional practices for young adolescent learners (aimed at teachers, content coaches, department chairs, administrators);
    - Develop agendas for leadership teams, academic team meetings, and whole school faculty meetings focused on teaching and learning (aimed at administrators, teacher leaders, CSR coordinators).

Appendix T: Study Findings Summary Tables

Table T–1. Quantitative Study Findings Used to Rate Evidence of Overall Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Comprehensive School Reform Model	Number of Studies					Number of Findings	Percentage of Positive Findings
	Initially Relevant	Eligible for Full Review	Meeting Standards	Conclusive	Suggestive		
Accelerated Schools PLUS—Secondary	13	2	1	0	1	5	0%
America's Choice School Design—Secondary	10	6	6	5	1	14	44%
ATLAS Learning Communities—Secondary	4	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Coalition of Essential Schools—Secondary	23	4	0	0	0	0	N/A
Expeditionary Learning—Secondary	13	5	2	0	2	6	50%
First Things First—Secondary	7	1	1	1	0	10	5%
High Schools That Work—Secondary	48	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Knowledge Is Power Program—Secondary	7	2	1	1	0	3	44%
Making Middle Grades Work—Secondary	7	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Middle Start—Secondary	15	4	2	1	1	3	33%
Modern Red SchoolHouse—Secondary	4	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
More Effective Schools—Secondary	6	2	2	0	2	9	78%
Onward to Excellence II—Secondary	7	1	1	0	1	2	0%
Project GRAD USA—Secondary	7	4	2	1	1	30	23%
School Development Program—Secondary	8	3	3	2	1	4	50%
Success for All–Middle Grades—Secondary	6	2	2	2	0	5	80%
Talent Development High School—Secondary	6	4	4	2	2	8	88%
Turning Points—Secondary	6	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
TOTAL	**197**	**41**	**27**	**15**	**12**	**99**	

Note. Some studies examined more than one comprehensive school reform model. Such studies were reviewed and counted once per model discussed. In these cases, a single study is counted more than once, and therefore, the total of the columns in this table exceeds the total number of studies reviewed.

Key:
Initially Relevant: Of the nearly 1,500 studies screened, the number of studies per model found to be relevant to this review.
Eligible for Full Review: The number of studies per model that used research designs that were sufficiently rigorous and included student achievement outcomes.
Meeting Standards: The number of studies per model considered to be *suggestive* or *conclusive* according to the causal validity rubrics of the CSRQ Center's Quality Review Tool.
Conclusive: The number of studies per model that used a rigorous research design (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) with no critical threats to validity.
Suggestive: The number of studies per model that used a less rigorous research design (e.g., longitudinal) with no critical threats to validity.
Number of Findings: The total number of individual measured outcomes found in the studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards.
Percentage of Positive Findings: The percentage of total findings in the studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards that were statistically significant and indicated that a model had a positive impact. The N/A designation provided in this column indicates models in which zero studies met the CSRQ Center's standards.

Table T–2. Summary of Basic Information by Model

Comprehensive School Reform Model	Grade Levels Served	Number of Schools	Year Introduced in Schools	Costs (Year 1)	Evidence of Positive Overall Effects	Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations	Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas	Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes	Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation	Evidence of Professional Development/ Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation
Accelerated Schools PLUS—Secondary	K–12	143	1986	$61,500	⊘	NR	⊘	NR	NR	●	◕	●
America's Choice School Design—Secondary	K–12	364	1998	$80,000–$100,000 (MS) $85,000–$105,000 (HS)	◑	◔	Reading and math: ◑ Writing: ◔	NR	NR	●	●	◕
ATLAS Learning Communities—Secondary	K–12	100	1993	$60,000–$80,000	⊘	NR	NR	NR	NR	◔	●	●
Coalition of Essential Schools—Secondary	K–12	600	1984	Varies	⊘	NR	NR	NR	NR	◕	◕	●
Expeditionary Learning—Secondary	K–12	150	1993	N/A	◔	NR	Reading and math: ◔ Language arts, science, and social studies: ⊘	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
First Things First—Secondary	K–12	69	1996	$315,000[1]	◔	NR	Reading: ◔	School climate (teacher and student engagement) and student support: ◔ Attendance, graduation, retention, dropout rates, and school climate (teacher support): ⊘	NR	●	●	●

[1] Although this is the total cost, costs per school are based on the number of schools within a district that implement the model. These costs are shared among all of the district's schools and reduced with more schools implementing the model.

Table T–2. Summary of Basic Information by Model (continued)

Comprehensive School Reform Model	Grade Levels Served	Number of Schools	Year Introduced in Schools	Costs (Year 1)	Evidence of Positive Overall Effects	Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations	Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas	Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes	Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation	Evidence of Professional Development/ Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation
High Schools That Work—Secondary	9–12	1,094	1987	$38,400 (an additional $32,000 for personnel)	⊘	NR	NR	NR	NR	●	◕	●
Knowledge Is Power Program—Secondary	5–12	52	1994	N/A	◔	NR	Reading, math and language arts: ◔	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Making Middle Grades Work—Secondary	6–8	280+	1997	$26,672	⊘	NR	NR	NR	NR	●	◑	◕
Middle Start—Secondary	6–8	39	1994	$66,000[2]	◔	NR	Reading: ◔ Math: ⊘	NR	NR	●	◕	◕
Modern Red SchoolHouse—Secondary	K–12	344	1996	$50,000–$100,000	⊘	NR	NR	NR	NR	●	◕	●
More Effective Schools—Secondary	K–12	405	1982	$60,000–$90,000	◔	NR	Reading, math, language arts, science, social studies, and foreign language: ◔	NR	NR	●	●	●
Onward to Excellence II—Secondary	K–12	1,000+	1981	$18,000	⊘	NR	⊘	NR	NR	●	◑	●
Project GRAD USA—Secondary	K–16	208	1993	5–7% of per-pupil costs in the school implementing the model	◔	NR	Reading and math: ◔	Graduation rates and college attendance: ◔	NR	●	◕	●

[2]Cost may vary considerably beyond this depending on schools and districts' choices of Middle Start program components, intensity of engagement, and adaptations made to address particular needs and interests.

Table T–2. Summary of Basic Information by Model (continued)

Comprehensive School Reform Model	Grade Levels Served	Number of Schools	Year Introduced in Schools	Costs (Year 1)	Evidence of Positive Overall Effects	Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations	Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas	Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes	Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation	Evidence of Professional Development/ Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation
School Development Program—Secondary	K–12	195	1968	Varies	◑	NR	Reading and math: ◑	Attendance rate: ⊘ Student discipline and school climate: ◔	◔	●	●	●
Success for All–Middle Grades—Secondary	5–8	1,510	2001	$53,000	◑	NR	Reading: ◑	NR	NR	●	●	●
Talent Development High Schools—Secondary	9–12	68	1994	$82,000	◑	⊘	Reading and math: ◑ Writing: ⊘	Attendance rate: ◑ Grade promotion, dropout rates, and completion of college preparatory courses: ⊘ Student discipline: ◔	NR	●	◕	●
Turning Points—Secondary	5–9	71	1998	$50,000 (up to 750 students)	⊘	NR	⊘	NR	NR	●	●	●

Note. Readers are encouraged to use this table in conjunction with the entire report, which explains in detail how the approaches were reviewed and rated. The report also provides detailed information about each model's ratings and offers in-depth descriptions of each model's services.

Table T–2. Summary of Basic Information by Model (continued)

Key:

Grade Levels Served: Although this report focuses on a review of models implemented at the elementary school level, the grade levels served represents the full range of grades that the model serves.

Number of Schools: This reflects the number of schools using the model as reported by the model provider. This number includes all schools regardless of the length of time implemented or the level of implementation.

Year Introduced in Schools: This date refers to the year in which schools first implemented the model. This is included so that readers can judge whether the ratings are influenced by the relative newness of the model.

Costs (Year 1): The costs are estimates provided by the model provider. The full report provides additional details on costs for each model.

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects: This rating focuses on a model's overall effects on student achievement. The rating is a function of the number of studies that were rated as *suggestive* and *conclusive*, the percentage of findings in the suggestive and conclusive studies that demonstrated a positive impact, and the average effect size of those findings. The final rating reflects the amount of rigorous research and the strength of the effects reported in that research. The full report provides complete information about the methodology used to produce all ratings in this report.

Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations: This rating refers to positive effects for the achievement of students from diverse backgrounds, such as low socioeconomic status, minority, special needs, or English language learners.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: This rating refers to positive effects on achievement in specific subject areas, such as reading, math, writing, science, or social studies.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes: This rating refers to positive effects on additional outcomes, such as student discipline, student attendance, school climate, retention/promotion rates, or teacher satisfaction.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement: This rating refers to positive effects for improvement in family and community involvement, such as involvement in school governance, participation in family nights, or homework support.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design: This rating refers to evidence that the model developer can provide explicit links between research and the core components of the model. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation.

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation: This rating refers to evidence that the model provider ensures initial commitment from schools, tracks and supports full implementation, and helps schools allocate resources for successful implementation.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation: This rating refers to evidence that the model provider offers comprehensive training opportunities and supporting materials, ensures that professional development effectively supports full model implementation, and develops the school's internal capacity to provide professional development.