LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND ESSENTIAL SUPPORTS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORT BEFORE AND AFTER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANT (SIG)

A Dissertation

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Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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Executive Summary

Dr. Pamela D. Tucker, Advisor

Background: A small yet important percentage of schools are failing to provide a high quality education to a significant portion of their students, with the number of schools under scrutiny, seemingly increasing.

Purpose: To investigate the changes that occurred in the leadership practices and essential organizational structures, during two phases of an improvement effort.

Setting: A small, secondary school serving grades 6-12 in a high poverty neighborhood located in a major northeastern city that came under increased scrutiny at the end of the 2010-11 school year.

Research Design: A comparative case study analysis was employed in order to make meaning of school improvement, comparing the same site at similar points in two different school years, before and after the implementation of a major school improvement effort,

Data Collection and Analysis: Interviews were conducted with 20 participants including administrators, teachers, and partners. Surveys were administered to the entire staff as well as parents and students. Analytic induction was used to make sense of the data, resulting in assertions and sub-assertions (Erickson, 1985).

Findings:

1. The leadership team exhibited more successful practices and spent more time in setting direction and developing the organization than they did in building relationships. Managing the direction of the organization was their weakest area, largely due to struggles with organizing time, a consistent theme across both years.
2. The school did not make progress in all four of organizational supports, as driven by changes in the leadership practices, possibly limiting improvements in student learning.
3. There were four factors outside of the school leaders' control that indirectly and directly hindered the ability of the leaders to effectively direct the school improvement effort. These included a concentration of students with high needs, the density of social conditions in the community, the nature of district support, and the requirements of the School Improvement Grant (SIG).

Conclusions: Due to complications with implementing two grants and several major partnerships as well as the day-to-day demands of school leaders' time, the school leaders were not able to make significant progress in all of the areas of improvement during year one.

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APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation, "Leadership practices and essential supports: A comparative case study of a school improvement effort before and after the implementation of a School Improvement Grant (SIG)" has been approved by the Graduate Faculty of the Curry School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and my stepfather, both life-long educators, who taught me the importance of school in a young person's life as well as the responsibility that a teacher assumes when they choose to enter the world of public education. My stepdad taught me to question the system and not to be complacent, and my mother taught me to love unconditionally. This dissertation is also dedicated to the teachers and students at RHS, who are living the reality of unequal access to quality schooling every day of their lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation was completed with the support of a number of important people. The assistance and encouragement of my mother, Christine Butler was invaluable to successfully completing this task. My mother served as both a sounding board for all problems big and small throughout the entire graduate school process. She also willingly provided her editing skills to early drafts. I also want to thank my sisters, Angie, Lauren, and Rachel, and my niece and nephew, Sophie and Aidan Comi, for all of their support over the last four years. I also want to acknowledge my partner Bill Farella, who provided not only a shoulder to cry on when things got tough but also helped me keep perspective throughout the final stages of writing. He provided love and support through stressful times. Lastly, I want to thank my stepfather, Randy Butler, whose dedication to public schools influenced my entire career.

My dissertation chair, Dr. Pamela Tucker, has been an invaluable guide through the dissertation process from forming an idea to the final editing stages. Her attention to detail as well as her patience with my APA struggles will not be forgotten. Her frank feedback helped me to form a more succinct final draft. I truly appreciate her dedication as an advisor over the last four years.

I am very grateful for the valuable assistance provided by my dissertation committee members: Dr. Michelle Young, Dr. Daniel Player, and Dr. Nancy Deutsch.

Their willingness to meet with me regarding questions, to provide resources to support my methods, and to provide feedback on my dissertation were extremely helpful.

Thanks also to my longtime Charlottesville friends who supported me by providing meals and much needed breaks along the way: Melissa White, the Patrizias, the Shullaws, the Moores, the Laverys, and the Weinberg/Gewirtzes. I am lucky to have you all as friends. Also, thanks to the members of the Curry community who provided me with support both emotionally and academically: Kendra China, Amy Reynolds, and Lieve Pitts.

I also appreciate the leaders and teachers of Reconstituted High School who allowed me to carry out this study. They opened the doors of the school and the classrooms to me. They are dedicated educators who truly want to see the school improve and whose hard work and inquisitive minds will make a lasting impression on the school for years to come.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This analysis is a comparative case study exploring a school improvement effort before and after the implementation of a $3 million, federal School Improvement Grant (SIG). Specifically, this study investigates the changes that occurred in the leadership practices and essential organizational structures, during two phases of an improvement effort: (a) the year prior to the grant, when the leadership team began to make major shifts in the school structure in order to improve student learning and (b) the first year of the grant implementation, when the leadership team enacted a more integrated, systematic theory of action in order to improve student learning.

The school selected for this study is in a large, urban district in the northeast region of the United States and was identified by the state as a school in need of a turnaround, due to reporting student achievement data in the lowest quintile. A turnaround is defined by the federal government as one of four primary models required for federal funding: (a) transformation, (b) turnaround, (c) restart, and (d) school closure (Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010). The school selected the transformation model, which required a change in leadership and an increase in structures supporting teacher quality and instructional reform. Since the school had recently had a shift in leadership, the leadership team was allowed to continue in their positions and was asked to submit an application to receive funding from the federal government to support an improvement plan that would focus on the school's identified areas of need.

Using publically available data, survey data, and data from observations and interviews, this study sought to determine the process the leaders and staff underwent to implement the plan, the changes that occurred as a result of the improvement plan, and the contextual factors that hindered or helped that plan, including the benefits and concerns about this model of federal support. The results are reported in this dissertation, which is organized into six chapters: (a) an introduction (Chapter 1), including a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the conceptual model for improvement; (b) a literature review (Chapter 2), providing background on school effectiveness research as well as current research in the areas included in the conceptual model; (c) the methodology (Chapter 3), outlining the data collection and analysis strategy; (d) a detailed description of the site (Chapter 4), explaining the school's important contextual factors; (e) the findings (Chapter 5), providing the analysis and results of the data collected; and (f) the conclusion (Chapter 6), including a discussion of the data and recommendations for further research.

Statement of the Problem

Providing all students with a high-quality education is the primary goal of schools; yet in a noteworthy number of secondary schools in the United States, students are not succeeding. The accountability era has led to a rise in the exploration of school success (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005). The increased emphasis on measuring student learning has helped to identify those schools struggling to educate their students. Low performing schools are often identified as "schools in need of improvement" and are mandated for ‘‘significant changes in the operation, governance, staffing, or instructional

program of a school'' (US Department of Education, 2010, p. 2). According to the Wallace Foundation:

> More than 5,000 schools, representing 5 percent of schools in the United States, are chronically failing, according to the latest U.S. Department of Education statistics. The number of failing schools has doubled over the last two years, and without successful interventions, could double again over the next five years. (Kutash et al., 2010, p. 3)

A small yet important percentage of schools are failing to provide a high quality education to a significant portion of their students, with the number of schools under scrutiny, seemingly increasing. At least a quarter of schools in need of improvement have been in decline for several years prior to an improvement effort (Duke, 2009). While there is agreement that there is a need for improvement in these schools, it has been difficult to establish a clear set of practices and structures that influence the school's academic and social environment in these schools.

There are various approaches to understanding the world of these low performing schools and how to initiate lasting change. One body of research on school reform focuses on the characteristics and practices of schools deemed as effective (Kannapel, Clements, Taylor, & Hibpshman, 2005), while alternatively, another set of studies emphasizes the characteristics and practices of struggling schools (Murphy & Meyers, 2009; Payne, 2009). While some studies attempt to understand what leads to decline, other research explores low performance after it occurs (Duke, Carr, & Sterrett, 2013; Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2010). Additionally, there is research on school improvement that discusses the different stages of turnaround from initiating to sustaining change, as well as what elements of the organization allow for successful improvement (Duke, 2009). Similarly, the literature explores the role of the stakeholders,

primarily the school leader, in initiating and sustaining school reform (Duke, Carr, & Sterrett, 2013; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b; Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010; Leithwood, 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1998; Marks & Printy, 2003; Rhim, Hassel, & Redding, 2007; Silins & Mulford, 2002). All of this research helps to contribute to school and district level planning for improvement.

Significance of the Study

There are two key reasons to conduct this research study. The first is that all students have the right to a high quality education. Schools in need of improvement are disproportionately located in high-poverty areas in urban settings (Duncan, 2009). According to the report by Kutash et al. (2010), most of the schools identified as failing serve students from high-poverty families and students of color, reinforcing the need to address this problem. Also, of the schools in this five percent, there are high proportions of students struggling with their academic performance, further exacerbating the problem. The law requires that all children attend school, and, therefore, the opportunity for a high quality education should be available to all students. Any additional studies that can contribute to the understanding on how to improve schools located in high needs urban areas will help to bring schools one step closer to educating a greater number of students.

The federal government is aware of this problem and has put structures and resources into supporting low performing schools; however, federal policy has shifted towards a competitive model for school improvement funds, such as School Improvement Grants (SIGS). These grants are awarded to states by the U.S. Department of Education under section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Most people are familiar with an iteration of this law, known as No Child Left Behind

(NCLB, 2001). As of the winter of 2015, ESEA had not been reauthorized, until it is, the federal government decided to allocate these funds, as well as additional funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, to states that submit proposals for waivers from No Child Left Behind (Kutash et al., 2010). This money is commonly referred to as Race to the Top funds. These states then distribute these funds to local education agencies to help to fund school improvement efforts.

There is variability in both how a state distributes funds and how they monitor implementation (Hurlburt, Le Floch, Therriault, & Cole, 2011). In the state included in this study, districts determine schools that are eligible for the grant and then those individual schools apply for the funding (U. S. Department of Education, 2013). Schools receive grants based on their application, which includes a detailed improvement plan, requiring outside partnerships, a budget, and a timeline. The state will withhold funding if the applicants do not earn the predetermined cutoff score on the grant proposal, and the money will be held for the next cohort of applicants.

While grant honorees are determined by the quality of the proposal, suggesting that the plan has merit and is aligned with beliefs about what will lead to successful improvement, there is little research on the process of the implementation, or on the attainment of the goals. Interestingly, grant awardees typically develop school specific plans, as opposed to adopting previously vetted school improvement models, such as Success for All (Slavin, 2007). Despite ongoing interest and repeated calls for research, there has been little work done to document and analyze the experience of schools receiving federal funding (Dee, 2012; Hurlburt, Therriault, Le Floch, & Cole, 2011; Hurlburt, Therriault, & Le Floch, 2012). The need for such work is particularly pressing

in light of a federal shift towards competitive funding for school improvement and the political trend to close schools that are deemed as failing.

To provide assistance to failing schools and districts using SIG funding has been central to the current government's educational policy agenda at the federal and state level, without significant evidence that additional funding and extra external resources will successfully improve the school without overextending the capacity for change or failing to develop sustainable change. By studying the implementation of these grants using qualitative and quantitative methods, capturing descriptive and exploratory data, both before and during the initiation of the SIG, this study captures the change process and provides findings to both support or refute the research on school improvement and capture the structures and practices that hinder and help school change.

Purpose of the Study

This study considers the role of school-level leadership in undergoing change in the school's essential organizational supports both before and after the initial year of an integrated, systematic improvement effort. While federal and state governments often require schools to create improvement plans, there is substantial variability in success among schools that have similar demographics (Duke, Tucker, Salmonowicz, & Levy, 2007; Harris & Chapman, 2002). This inconsistency is believed to be dependent on site-based school leadership (Jacobson, Brooks, Giles, Johnson, & Ylimaki, 2007) as well as organizational factors in the school (Brown, Anfara, & Roney, 2004).

The number one predictor of student success is the quality of the teachers in the classroom, but school leaders, in particular the principal, also influence student achievement (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010). The effects that school leaders have on

student achievement are largely indirect (Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Leithwood, & Gu, 2009; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2007) and statistically significant (Bell, Bolam, & Cubillo, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Day, Sammons, Leithwood, & Hopkins, 2011).

School leaders influence school effectiveness and student achievement indirectly through actions they take to create successful school and classroom conditions (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a; Hallinger & Heck, 1996b; Witziers, Bosker & Kruger, 2003). Moreover, school leadership is even more critical in schools undergoing turnarounds (Duke, 2009; Murphy, 2008; Rhim, Hassel, & Redding, 2007; Yukl, 2002). In order to add to the literature on school improvement, there is a need to determine how the leadership practices and organizational supports influence whole school change as a school undergoes a turnaround effort.

Much of the research on schools with lower performance is focused on high achieving, high poverty schools that have "beat the odds" (Picucci, Brownson, Kahlert, & Sobel, 2002). While this research has been helpful in determining what leadership practices and organizational factors influence the success of a school turnaround, there has been very little research done on the aspects of the day-to-day realities of schools that help or hinder the process of restructuring a school (Corallo & McDonald, 2002; Duke, 2006; Housman & Martinez, 2001). In particular, there is a gap in the research that explores how schools struggle to reach their goals as they undergo an improvement effort, often showing little improvement or having mixed results (Orr, Berg, Shore, & Meier, 2008).

Leadership practices and organizational factors are closely linked to school improvement efforts and are intended to result in an improvement of student learning

(Leithwood, 2010; Orr, Byrne-Jimenez, McFarlane, & Brown, 2005). Although the research on planning school turnarounds has contributed to the development of school improvement models, there is less understanding of the enactment of an improvement process, as driven by the school leader (Hall & Hord, 2011). In order to explore the process of school improvement, this study focuses on analyzing and evaluating the process of a systematic, integrated school improvement effort at an urban high school mandated to initiate a turnaround effort or face the possibility of school closure.

This study adds to the literature on school improvement by monitoring the improvement as the effort unfolds. Most studies look at schools that are matched on various characteristics, such as geographic location, student body, size, and structure, to compare successful and less successful schools and to determine how to improve the lower performing schools. Very few studies actually describe and explore the process of a struggling school as they initiate and carry on an improvement effort that aligns very closely with the literature base on school improvement, particularly the areas of focus identified by Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010), as necessary for a school to turn around their downward trajectory. The study is able to document the process in real time both before and after a federally funded systemic school improvement effort in which three million dollars was awarded based on the merit of the ideas to change the school for the better.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study seeks to explore the following research questions in an effort to make sense of the leadership practices, organizational supports, and contextual factors that influence school improvement:

1. How does the leadership team understand and shape the organizational supports at a small, urban, secondary school with a history of low-performance, before and after the first year of the implementation of an integrated, systematic improvement effort supported by a federal, School Improvement Grant (SIG)?
2. In what ways, if any, do the leadership practices contribute to change in the essential organizational supports both before and after the first year of the implementation of an integrated, systematic improvement effort supported by a federal, School Improvement Grant (SIG)?
3. What are the organizational and contextual factors that hinder or facilitate effective leadership practices in a low-performing school, before and after the first year of the implementation of an integrated, systematic improvement effort supported by a federal, School Improvement Grant (SIG)?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the research of Bryk et al. (2010), who offer a model of school improvement that includes organizational-level factors, as well as classroom-level and student-level factors. This model suggests there are five essential supports for school improvement, with the first essential support being leadership as the driver of a school improvement effort. The additional essential supports are: instructional guidance; professional capacity; school learning climate; and family, school, and community ties. These school-level organizational factors, which the authors claim should be the focus of most reform efforts, influence the classroom level "black box of instruction" (Bryk et al., 2010). Additional research supports the notion that school leaders influence student learning, which is at the center of school improvement

since it is the "technical core" of schooling (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1998; Rhim, Hassel, & Redding, 2008; Silins & Mulford, 2002; Waters, et al. 2003). Figure 1 shows this conceptual model for school improvement.

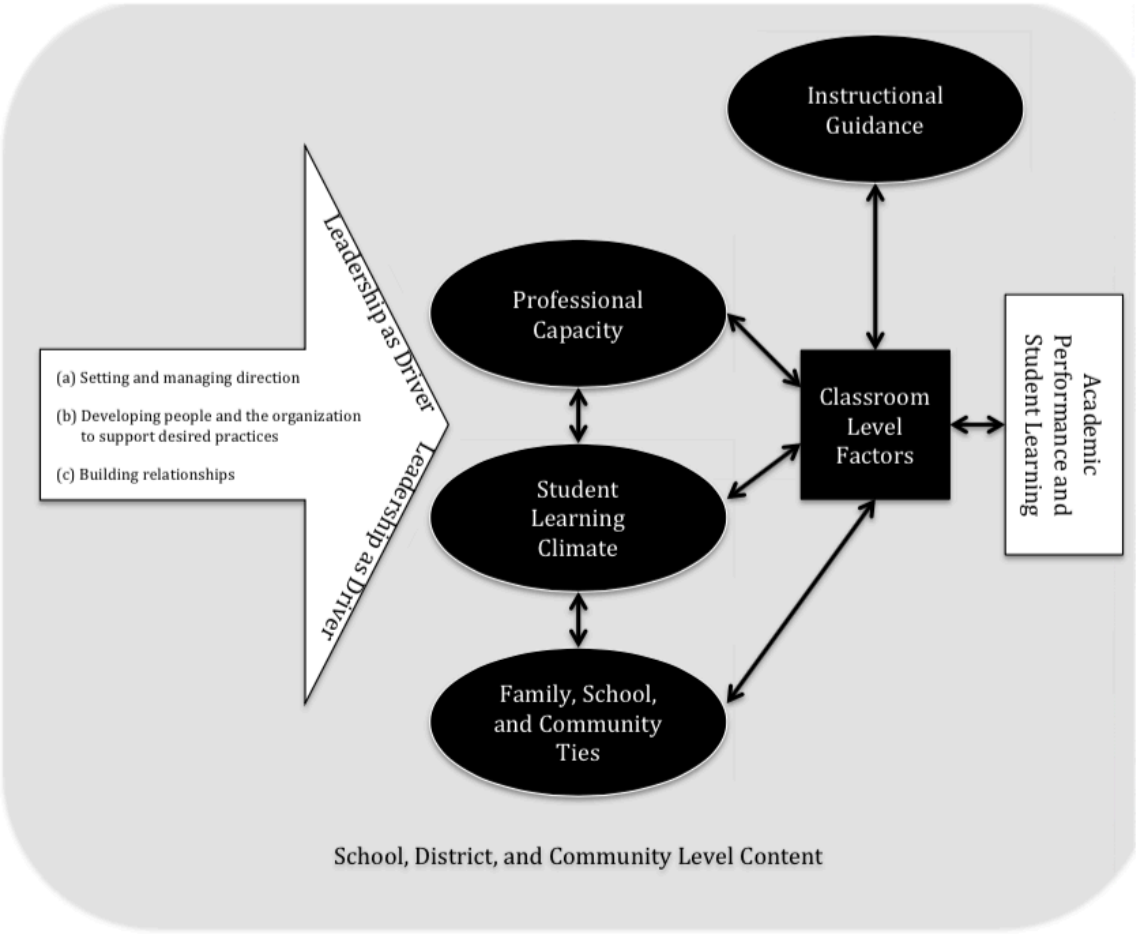


Figure 1. Conceptual model for improvement. Adapted from *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*, by A. S. Bryk, P. B. Sebring, E. Allensworth, S. Luppescu, and J. Q. Easton. (2010). Copyright 2010 by the University of Chicago Press.

The Bryk et al. (2010) framework guides this study, suggesting that leadership, as the first essential support, is the driver for the improvement effort. The remaining essential supports, which are also being measured in this study, are the organizational-level factors of instructional guidance, professional capacity, a student-centered learning climate, and family/school/community ties. Improvements in the essential supports influence classroom level factors such as teacher quality and expectations and student

understanding and engagement, which then directly result in student academic performance and student learning.

Bryk et al. (2010) presented leadership as one of the five essential supports, yet also indicated that the leaders drive the changes. In addition to this model for school improvement, Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi's (2010) research on leadership effects also influences the theoretical basis for this study. As shown in Figure 2, leadership practices are mediated by the organizational supports and result in the classroom conditions, while on the other hand, teachers interact directly with students to influence student learning.

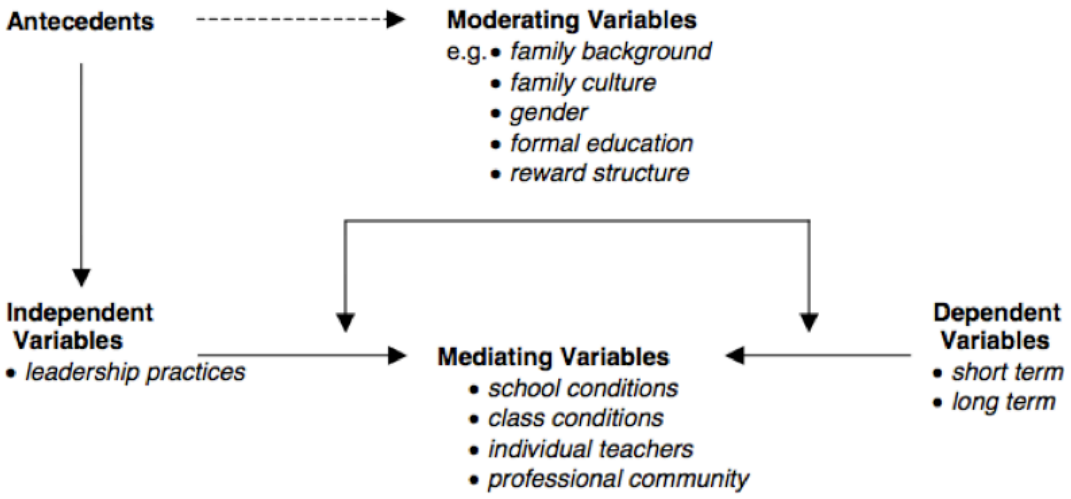


Figure 2. Leadership effects framework. Reprinted from "Testing a conception of how leadership influences student learning," by K. Leithwood, S. Patten, and D. Jantzi, 2010, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46 (50), p. 673. Copyright 2010 by Sage Publications.

Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi (2010) define leadership practices as the independent variable that has an indirect effect on the dependent variable, in this case, student learning. Leadership practices also influence the organizational factors and classroom conditions, or mediating variables. These mediating variables are the essential supports outlined in Bryk et al.'s (2010) model. By incorporating Leithwood, Patten, and

Jantzi's (2010) model of leadership effects into the Bryk et al. (2010) model of school improvement, this study is framed by the assertion that school leadership is the key school-level factor for understanding school improvement and that leadership practices determine the strength or weakness of the other four essential supports.

School leaders influence school effectiveness and student achievement indirectly through actions they take to influence school and classroom conditions (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003). The turnaround literature suggests that there are major leadership practices that will lead to improvement. This study will focus on the following practices (a) setting direction; (b) managing direction; (c) building relationships; and (d) developing people and the organization to support desired practices (Leithwood, 2013).

The model in Figure 3 helps to explain the role that the leader plays in understanding, shaping, and changing the school through an improvement process. These leadership practices are enacted within a greater political and social context consisting of school, district, and community level factors.

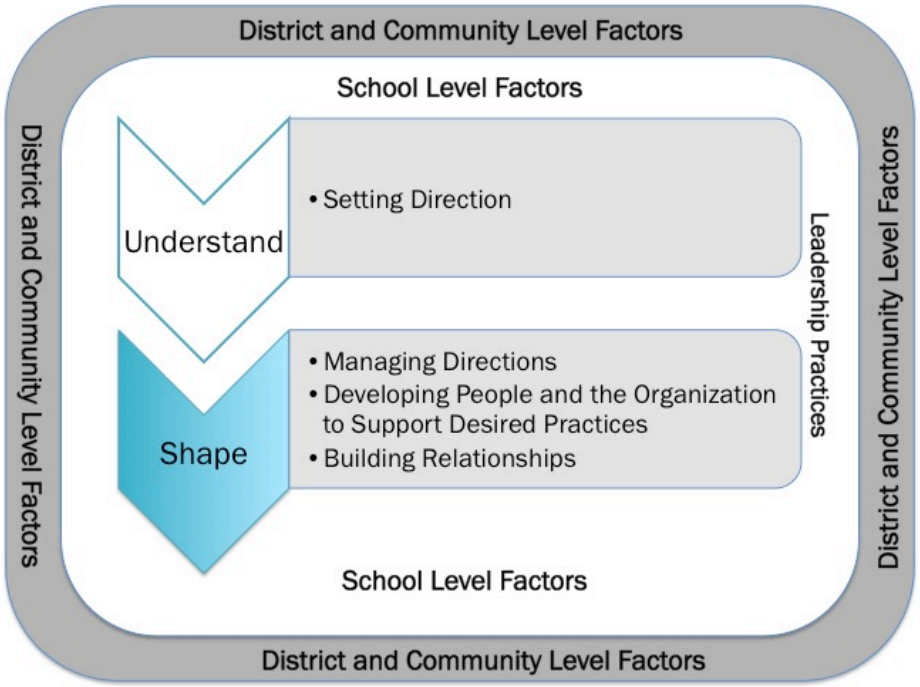


Figure 3. Conceptual model for the leadership practices. Adapted from "*Leading school turnaround: How successful leaders transform low performing schools*, by K. Leithwood, K. Harris, and T. Strauss, 2010, San Francisco: CA: Jossey-Bass. Copyright 2010 by Jossey-Bass.

Since this study intends to describe how the leaders understand and shape the academic and social school environment to effect change in the organization, it will only focus on how the school leaders set and manage direction to develop people and the organization and how they build realtionships to help ensure the success of that direction. It will not explore the additonal leadership practice of improving the instructional program (Leithwood, 2013).

Setting and Managing Direction

The leader must first understand the school in order to begin improvement (Duke, Carr, & Sterrett, 2012). Using the information that they gather about the school, the leaders plan to shape the school's change effort. This leadership practice encompasses the

vision and goal setting for a school. In order to set direction, there needs to be a shared vision built among stakeholders, including school leaders, staff, students, and parents. Aligned with this vision, there must be specific, short-term goals set, which create high performance expectations. The leaders are responsible for communicating this vision and the accompanying goals as well as ensuring that they are monitored and adapted when necessary (Leithwood, 2013). These goals should focus on the problems identified by the school as areas of need.

Developing People and the Organization to Support Desired Practices

As mentioned in the model put forth by Bryk et al. (2010), the organizational supports that are developed in a school are essential to improvement. The leaders must begin by allocating resources that support the school's shared vision and goals. Importantly, the school leader is the driver of developing the organization and must structure the organization to facilitate professional growth and collaboration by shaping the professional capacity in the school. It is the responsibility of the school leaders to develop people by providing support for individual staff members to help them improve professional capacities that will lead to high expectations of student learning. This growth and development should be done with the school's vision in mind, which should also be modeled by the leaders in order to guide a professional culture.

Moreover, the leaders must maintain a safe and healthy school environment where students are supported and respected, while also ensuring that teachers and students have high expectations for student learning. Finally, the leaders must build productive relationships with families and communities while also connecting the school to its wider environment. The organization must be structured in a manner to support the desired

practices set forth in the vision by supporting instruction, developing people and relationships, building community, and creating a positive school climate (Bryk et al., 2010; Leithwood, 2013).

Building Relationships

In addition to developing people, the leaders need to build trusting relationships with staff, parents, and students and provide opportunities for staff to build relationships with each other (Bryk et al., 2010; Leithwood, 2013). In order to support relational trust, leaders must be open and transparent in their actions and act with both respect and integrity (Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Leithwood, 2013). Together these leadership practices should result in changes in the organizational level factors and improve student learning.

The Grant and the Framework

The theory of action for the SIG is driven by a clear delineation of leadership practices and the essential supports articulated in Bryk et al.'s (2010) model of school improvement. In both Bryk's et al. (2010) model and the grant's improvement plan, the increased development of student learning is the desired outcome, defined more broadly by achievement scores and other measures of performance and engagement, such as credits accumulated and student attendance.

The crosswalk shown in Figure 4 outlines the close alignment of the theory of change for the grant and Bryk et al.'s (2010) essential supports. The grant will be explained in detail in Chapter 4.

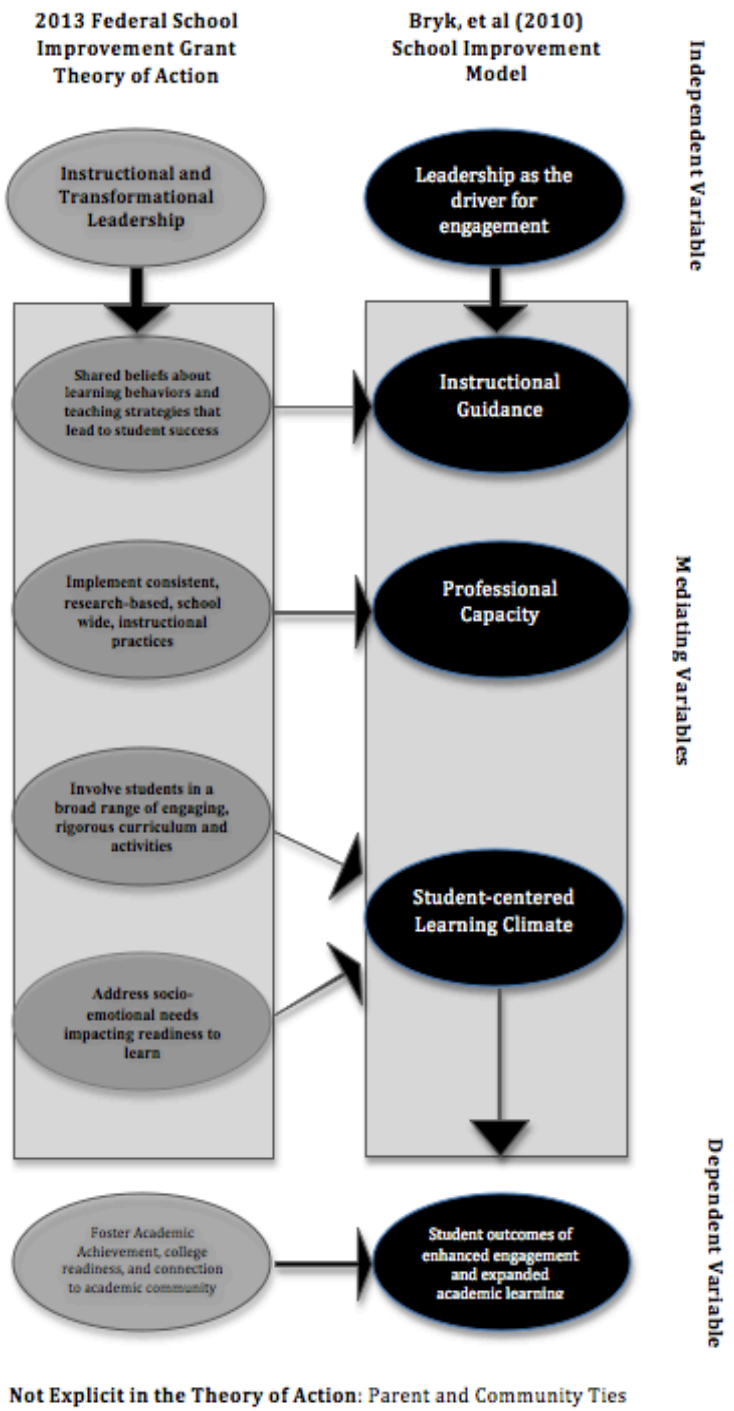


Figure 4. Crosswalk of grant theory of action and Bryk et al. framework

As suggested in Figure 4, leadership is the independent variable that influences student learning through the organizational factors that mediate the practices enacted by both formal and informal school leaders. Each organizational factor that mediates the

influence of leadership practices on student outcomes is discussed briefly in the following sections. There is evidence that gains in the organizational supports, driven by the leadership practices, will lead to lasting school improvement.

Organizational Essential Support: Instructional Guidance

One area to be explored in this study is what Bryk et al. (2010) refer to as instructional guidance, which is the primary function of the leadership team in the theory of change for the grant. Bryk et al. (2010) define instructional guidance as school wide supports to promote student learning, which include the existence of curriculum alignment, the nature of academic demand, and the tools to support academic demand (Bryk et al., 2010). These aspects of successful instructional guidance are encapsulated in the next step of the improvement effort outlined in the grant, developing shared beliefs about learning behaviors and teaching strategies that lead to student success. Essentially, this organizational structure includes all aspects of guiding the technical core of instruction through a mission focused on student learning and facilitated by setting goals that focus on instructional practice, curriculum alignment, and student learning.

Organizational Essential Support: Professional Capacity

The second essential support is the need to build professional capacity or to focus on the quality of the teaching staff (Bryk et al. (2010). This idea is included in the first goal of the grant, which is to implement consistent, research-based, school wide, instructional practice. This area of interest for the study includes the development of a high quality teaching staff that works together to implement instructional strategies that are found to be successful for student learning.

Organizational Essential Support: Student-centered Learning Environment

The last essential support is to create and sustain a student-centered learning environment in which students feel safe, supported, and respected across the school (Bryk et al., 2010). In order for this to occur, the environment should be focused on high expectations for all students and should have high levels of academic press (Bryk et al., 2010). This organizational factor encompasses the other two goals of the grant: to involve students in a broad range of engaging, rigorous curriculum and activities, and to address socio-emotional needs affecting their readiness to learn. This area of school improvement focuses on providing an environment that is conducive to learning and to supporting students' cognitive as well as social and emotional needs.

Organizational Essential Support: Family, School, and Community Ties

This study will explore the role of parent and community ties as an essential organizational support, but there is some evidence for it as a moderating variable instead of a mediating variable (Leithwood, 2010; Bryk et al., 2010). Leithwood et al.'s research (2010) suggests that family-related variables are moderating variables in determining leadership effects, as indicated by the framework for guiding leadership effects research (see Figure 2). While there is extensive research on the role of community and parent involvement at the elementary and middle school level (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2005), there is less conclusive research at the high school level (Jeynes, 2007; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). Also, the relationship between parents and schools is complicated in areas with high amounts of poverty, inequity, and racial segregation (Payne, 2009).

School, District, and Community Level Factors

These leadership practices and organizational supports do not take place in a vacuum. There are contextual factors at the school, district, and community level that intersect with the practices of the school's administration and influence the improvement effort. These influential, contextual factors may vary based on the school's size and setting (Bryk et al., 2010) as well as societal and economic factors influencing the local community (Payne, 2009). The environment that surrounds the essential supports will have an influence on the school improvement effort.

Outcome Measures

The purpose of this school improvement effort is to increase student learning. Bryk et al. (2010) refer to the end goal of their model as the student outcomes of enhanced engagement and expanded academic learning, while the grant suggests that the theory of action should result in fostering academic achievement and a connection to the academic community. These are the outcomes to be measured in this study.

Finally, Bryk et al. (2010) offer a model for improvement that suggests that all of these essential supports are necessary for an increase in student learning. Their work in Chicago suggests that without improvement in all five areas, the school will not see gains in the academic success of the school's students. In fact, they found that schools that had successfully developed all five essential structures were ten times as likely to impact student learning as schools that only improved in one or two areas and that if any one of the essential structures showed sustained weaknesses this could compromise all other efforts for any gains in student learning (Bryk et al., 2010). In order for the leadership team in this study to successfully turn around the school, there will need to be gains in all

of the essential supports, including leadership practices and the organizational level factors explained above.

Delimitations of the Study

The purpose of this study can be broadly defined as trying to explain the necessary structures and practices that contribute to school improvement, while also addressing the federal SIG model for school turnaround. In order to do so, this study would ideally include a sample of all schools undergoing school improvement efforts supported by federal funds. That type of study would be beyond the means of an individual researcher seeking to complete the work in a limited period of time. For that reason, the decision was made to focus on one exemplary school of which the researcher had extensive knowledge and to which she had unfettered access. While the decision could have been made to narrowly focus on one aspect of the improvement effort, the study is based on the premise that the change happens at a systems level, requiring an understanding of how all the school level factors that contribute to school improvement work collectively. For that reason, the study sacrifices a depth of understanding in a particular area for a broader, descriptive understanding of both the positive and negative changes that occur, and the process that the leaders undertake to shape that change.

Overview of the Methodology

In order to answer the stated research questions, this study relies on a cross case comparison model, treating the school before and after the implementation of the grant, as two separate but related cases (Collier, 1993). Multiple types of data were gathered to describe the improvement trends and explore the resulting relationships between different aspects of the improvement efforts. The primary qualitative data collected were

observations, totaling four weeks, two in spring of 2014 and two in the spring of 2013 in which the leaders were observed both planning and implementing their improvement plans. Additionally interviews were conducted during both of those time periods, asking questions about the leadership practices and organizational supports. In addition to this data, the analysis includes survey data from both a city-conducted survey given over several years and the Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning (CALL) given in the spring of 2014. Publically available school-level data were used to measure the outcome variables of attendance, credits earned, and state exam scores.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation also includes five more chapters, in addition to this introduction. The next chapter, Chapter 2, will provide a review of the literature on school improvement, as well at the specific leadership practices and organizational supports included in the conceptual model. This chapter will connect the ideas in the literature base into a coherent framework for evaluating the findings of the study. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology applied in this study by first discussing the epistemological stance guiding the methodological decisions and rationalizing the choice of methods used in the study. This chapter will also outline the data collection approaches and data analysis strategies used to answer the research questions. Because of beliefs about the relevance of the context and the importance of the conditions in the school, Chapter 4 was dedicated to explaining the site, presenting background information on the school and the community, while also incorporating research on how certain political and social realities influence a school's or student's success.

The next chapter is dedicated to presenting the findings derived from an analysis of the data. Chapter Five describes and explores the decisions and actions of the leadership team and the resulting changes in the school's organizational structures from the perspective of the staff, the school leadership team, and outside partners. Using the information acquired through observations and interviews, there is rich description of the school environment both during the 2012-2013 school year, when the school leaders began to institute large scale changes in the absence of a clear plan of action; and during the 2013-2014 school year, when the school began to implement an improvement plan, backed by federal support. This chapter also triangulates those findings with the results of two surveys given to gain a broader perspective on the changes and to consider whether the qualitative findings effectively described the school. This chapter also explored whether there was any connection between the school improvement plan and improvement, as evidenced by student learning data. Not intending to make any causal claims, this study proposed to explore whether any clear pattern emerged in the intended areas of improvement. Finally, the last chapter, Chapter 6, draws together the conceptual work, previous research on the topic, and the findings of this study into conclusions that may contribute to further research on school improvement.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The conceptual framework for this study was developed from two primary sources, the research on practices for effective leadership by Leithwood and his various collaborators (Leithwood, 2013; Leithwood, Dretzle & Wahlstrom, 2010; Leithwood, Harris & Strauss, 2010; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1998; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010) and the work on organizational supports for school improvement from the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR), particularly the work of Bryk et al. (2010). The work of Bryk et al. (2010) informs the overarching framework for school improvement used for the study, which includes leadership as the driver, while Leithwood (2013) elaborated on the definition of leadership and the relationship of leadership to the essential organizational supports. Leithwood's (2012) work is used to explain how leadership drives change in instructional guidance, professional capacity, student learning climate, and family/school ties (Bryk et al., 2010)

The literature selected to support and expand on this framework comes from a multi-year review of research on educational change, school improvement, and school leadership. This review includes books, journal articles, and reports; however, it relies first and foremost on articles written in peer-reviewed journals, which vet the evidence presented. Each journal is given an impact factor to identify how frequently the articles are cited compared to all similar journals in a given year, giving a measure of how the

field is responding to the research. This review also includes reports that synthesize findings based on strong methodological thinking. Many reports are meant to capture the political or social agenda of the organization by selectively summarizing a body of research. Those reports were not included. Finally, this review incorporates books written by school improvement researchers with a long history in the field and a body of research to support their ideas.

In order to identify the journal articles to include, three main strategies were used. First, the Google Scholar site, as well as seven Ebsco databases related to education accessed through the university library system (Education Full Text, H.W. Wilson; Education Index Retrospective: 1929-1983, H.W. Wilson; Education Research Complete; ERIC; Index to Legal Periodicals & Books Full Text, H.W. Wilson; Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, SPORTDiscuss with Full Text) were searched, using terms such as "school improvement," "school reform," "urban school reform," "leadership practices," and "school leadership." Through these inquires, articles were identified to be reviewed for consideration.

Second, this review includes seminal pieces, revealed through coursework, which are relevant to the conceptual framework, including much of the work of Daniel Duke, Kenneth Leithwood, Philip Hallinger, Joseph Murphy, Michael Fullan, Karen Seashore Louis, and the CCSR, as well as their various co-authors. Lastly, the literature these authors included in their own frameworks was examined to ensure that the research on which they based their thinking was also included. Publications that were relevant to the conceptual framework were added to the list. After reviewing more than 200 journal articles, reports, and books, the sample was narrowed to a list of nearly 100 relevant

sources that were directly related to the conceptual framework of this study in which the methods indicated a sufficient level of rigor.

Objectives of the Literature Review

The intentions of this literature review are to expand on the research that frames this in-depth case study of a single school's improvement effort over the first year of implementation. The framework suggests that for a school improvement effort to be successful, leadership will drive change. Effective school leaders, particularly leaders facing a school turnaround, will set and manage the direction for the school, develop the organization and people to support desired practices, and build relationships (Leithwood, 2013). The school leader's influence on school effectiveness, defined using student outcome measures, is indirect, whereas success is more directly the result of successful organization supports or structures that must exist in order for improvement to occur (Bryk et al., 2010).

These structures relate to the technical core of school: teaching and learning. The necessary structures include both systems for instructional guidance and professional capacity. These two supports influence teachers, who have the most direct impact on student learning. A third structure, a student-centered learning climate, is essential for learning. Without a well-structured, positive learning environment, students struggle to learn, regardless of instruction. Finally, the relationship between the school, the families, and the community is important for improvement as those ties help to strengthen the learning environment. This review will expand on the empirical evidence supporting the essential leadership practices and organizational structures that are necessary for a successful school improvement effort.

In order to do so, first this review will discuss the background of the school improvement literature beginning in the 1970's. This knowledge base quickly determined the importance of leadership to school change. Then, this review will expound briefly upon the literature on the four most mentioned types of school leadership: instructional, transformational, managerial, and shared leadership, in order to establish a working definition of leadership for this study.

This will lead to a discussion of the empirical knowledge base for the aforementioned leadership practices: (a) setting and managing direction, and (b) developing people and the organization to support desired practices, the two primary focuses of the improvement effort (Leithwood, 2013). In addition, the review will discuss the role of the leaders in building relationships within the school community (Leithwood, 2013). These leadership actions, in conjunction with the work of teachers, parents, and students, will establish the essential organizational supports necessary for change in struggling schools: (a) instructional guidance, (b) professional capacity, (c) student-centered learning environment; and (d) parent and community ties (Bryk et al., 2010). Both consistent and contradictory findings in all four areas will be pointed out. Then, the review discusses several social factors, including residential segregation and income inequity that influence school success. From there, suggestions on further research that would complement the findings in the study will be made, pointing out the gaps in the current knowledge base**.**

Background on School Improvement Literature

The current school improvement literature evolved from the effective schools movement of the 1970's and 1980's. The early effective schools literature focused

primarily on why certain schools "beat the odds" and was meant as a response to earlier scholars who presumed that low-income children would not be successful students (i.e. Coleman, 1966; Jensen, 1969). This research largely uses exemplary cases or cross-case comparison, specifically focusing on urban, elementary schools, to help explain the differences between effective and ineffective schools. Beginning with the work of Weber (1971), researchers began to establish the importance of instructional leadership in contrast to organizational management. Instructional leadership will be more specifically defined later in this literature review.

Weber (1971) conducted a case study of schools in New York City, Kansas City, and Los Angeles, during the 1970-71 school year. The researcher chose four schools as the focus from a larger sample of schools that were identified as particularly effective teaching reading in an "inner-city" setting. Seven to 14% of the students were non-readers in these schools versus close to 25% -35% in the comparison schools in the sample. This group of schools also had mean reading achievement scores that were at or above the national average. Weber (1971) found eight common factors, which were all related to the organizational structures found in Bryk et al.'s (2010) study. These included strong leadership, high expectations, a strong emphasis on reading, and a good atmosphere for learning.

Madden, Lawson, and Sweet (1976) conducted a similar study; however, they used a matching strategy to compare 21 sets of California elementary schools, paired by similar demographic data and differing achievement data. While many of the findings had to do with specific teacher practices, this study reiterated the importance of an effective leader, finding that teachers in the successful schools were supported by the

principal, who practiced some shared leadership. Madden, Lawson, and Sweet (1976) also found that a successful school environment was more conducive to learning, had high expectations for students, and ensured satisfied, supported students and teachers (as cited in Edmonds, 1974). Years later, Venezky and Winfield (1979) compared two schools serving low-income students, one which was effective and the other which struggled, and found that one of the primary differences was how the leader of the more successful school put student achievement and learning at the center of the school (as cited in May & Supovitz, 2010; Purkey & Smith, 1983).

In 1978, Brookover et al. produced a seminal study on effective schools that began to move away from the principal as manager and expanded the idea of instructional leadership. Using a sample of six improving and two declining schools, as determined by standardized, statewide tests, the researchers conducted interviews and gave surveys to help to explain the differences in the two types of schools. Similar to earlier findings, Brookover et al. (1978) suggested that effective schools were characterized by a climate or culture that was oriented towards learning and based on high standards and expectations. These schools also emphasized basic literacy and skills; had high levels of teacher involvement in decision-making; understood the importance of teacher professionalism; had a cohesiveness/ coordinated curriculum; and stated clear policies regarding behavior and expectations. Again these findings are very similar to the work on current school improvement by researchers such as Bryk et al. (2010).

Edmonds (1979) also studied effective schools with a focus on equity and found that leadership was essential to school success. In this multi-year study, the researchers used data from the 1966 Equal Educational Opportunity Survey (EEOS) to investigate

not only instructional factors but also the effects of racial homogeneity and economic status. By identifying 55 effective schools from the sample, Frederiksen (1975) was able to dispel the belief that students' class and family background were relevant to instructional effectiveness in schools. This project found that that an effective school required all personnel to be responsible and prepared for student learning with a principal who required teachers to set and monitor expectations for all students. These findings begin to suggest the need for the principal to set and manage the direction of the school around common goals, focused on learning. Importantly, Edmonds (1979) was not able to identify one specific model for school success.

The work of Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (1982) questioned Edmonds (1979) and Brookover (1979), stating that this earlier work was not specific about what leaders do and how those acts can translate into student gains. In this review of research, the authors found four main areas of effective principal leadership: (a) goals and production emphasis, (b) organization/ coordination, (c) human relations, and (d) power and decision-making. The first area was defined similarly to the current concept of academic press, with the principal ensuring high expectations for all students using standards and goals. Organization and coordination suggested that principals guide instruction by taking an active role in coordinating and monitoring instruction through observations of classrooms, discussions with teachers, support of teacher development, and teacher and program evaluation.

According to the authors, successful schools will also have structured learning environments where the principal helps to buffer teachers from discipline problems by handling problems in their office and by setting up rules and structures that would

prevent or reduce those distractions (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982). The human relations and decision-making areas of effective leadership identified have to do with leadership practice of building relationships. First, principals need to treat teachers as professionals and help them achieve their individual goals; meanwhile, principals must also recognize that they ultimately have the power for decision-making about curriculum and instruction. Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (1982) posited that the school leader's instructional management behavior influenced two of the organizational structures: (a) climate and (b) instruction and that those actions shaped the social relationships, which translated into teachers and student behaviors. On the other hand, the principal's behavior was formed by factors external to the school, such as the socio-economic context. The researchers called for more research on what structures were necessary for instructional success and how the principal could create those structures.

The most oft-cited early research on effective schools is Purkey and Smith's (1983) review of the literature, mentioned over 2117 times in the school improvement literature (Google Scholar, September 2014). These researchers began their study by implying that the research base was scant, underdeveloped, narrow, and simplistic; however, they found that "theory and common sense" support many of the findings (Purkey & Smith, 1983, p. 424). They revaluated the work of Weber (1971), Brookover (1979), and Venezky and Winfield (1979) as well as four additional case studies all identified as "outlier studies" criticizing them all for having: (a) small and unrepresentative samples; (b) an incomplete list of controls for matching schools; (c) inappropriate comparisons (i.e. comparing effective schools to ineffective schools instead

of average schools; and (d) subjective criteria for evaluating success (Purkey & Smith, 1983, p. 433).

Purkey and Smith (1983) discovered that the theme of instructional leadership was the most supported in the literature and agreed that it was necessary to guide the improvement process. Most importantly, they emphasized the importance of school culture, which they defined as "a structure, process, and climate of values and norms that emphasize successful teaching and learning" (Purkey & Smith, p. 442), which links the structure of the organization and the quality of instruction with the nature of political and social relationships. These researchers viewed schools as dynamic social systems made of interrelated factors, very similar to the view of Bryk et al. (2010). Finally, they identified the need for more longitudinal studies in a variety of school contexts, as well as more focus on the process by which schools gain, lose, and sustain success.

In the late 1980's, Hallinger and Murphy (1986a) continued to establish the importance of instructional leadership in school improvement. Taking a slightly different comparative approach than earlier studies, the two researchers focused on the differences between effective schools that had high and low-SES student populations. Hallinger and Murphy (1986a) found that the socio-economic status of the students was an important factor in school effectiveness, in addition to the role of the principal as instructional leader, the content and breadth of the curriculum, and the nature of expectations from teachers and parent.

Hallinger and Murphy (1986a) found that in both high-SES and low-SES schools, there was a clear school mission where student achievement was the most important goal, but the focus differed between high-SES and low-SES schools. Hallinger and Murphy

(1986a) also found that high-SES schools had a broader and deeper curriculum with more time allotted for a variety of tasks, while low-SES schools often focused their time and energy on basic skills in math and literacy. When investigating instructional leadership, Hallinger and Murphy (1986a) found high-SES schools allowed for more teacher autonomy; whereas in low-SES schools, principals gave more directives. Of note, all eight schools had high expectations but in high-SES schools, those expectations came from the community; whereas in low-SES schools, the principal had more of the burden for creating them. Accordingly, they found that in low-SES school, parents were minimally involved with the school and the principal made less effort to involve them, while in high-SES schools, the parents and the community often shaped the principal's role. These findings led the researchers to question whether effectiveness factors were generalizable to all settings. The previous effectiveness research was concentrated on urban schools that were exceptional in their success, but Murphy and Hallinger (1985a) suggested that those findings might not translate to all types of schools, calling for a focus on social context in the school improvement research.

This body of research had some thematic commonalties. One of the most significant findings across the improvement literature was that leadership mattered for effective schools. Despite debate on how leadership should be defined, there was agreement that effective school leaders must focus on instruction, set high expectations, support teachers and students, and promote a positive learning environment. Questions arose as to how leadership mattered (i.e. direct or indirect) and as to what particular actions a leader need to take to influence effectiveness. Germane to those actions were questions about the organizational structures that needed to be in place for success, as

well as who was responsible for those structures existing. Furthermore, the effectiveness literature began to identify the complexity of school improvement. Adding to this complexity was the interaction of those organization structures as well as the importance of the specific school context. The literature review of more recent research on school improvement will support this early work on effective schools by considering the role of the leader in driving school improvement, as well as the areas of the organization that must be developed in order to improve a school, which align with the early effectiveness literature: instructional guidance, professional capacity, learning climate, and school/family relations (Bryk et al., 2010).

Leadership Practices

After identifying the importance of leadership using primarily case study methodology, researchers sought to quantify the relationship between leadership and school success and to determine the directionality of that relationship. In 1998, Hallinger and Heck were able to establish the first empirical link between leadership, school effectiveness, and student learning by conducting a meta-analysis of 43 studies that were conducted between 1980 and 1995 to identify four main areas in which leadership influenced student learning: mission and vision; structure and social network; people; and organizational culture, as consistent with the aforementioned research. Then Hallinger and Heck (1998) reanalyzed the data from a study by Braughton and Riley (1991) using structural equation modeling to explore the mediated impact of leadership on student learning. They found that this relationship (chi-square/Df ration=1.3, p=.064) was statistically significant and indirect, with the leaders' impact mediated through supervising teacher's classroom practices. While the effect was small, this began to

establish the line of research on principal impact. This study also gave support for the idea that principal effects were meditated through instructional guidance.

Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003) supported Hallinger and Heck's (1998) earlier research by conducting their own meta-analysis (1986-1996) of how principal's actions directly influence student learning, while looking at a specific set of principal behaviors. They found that school leadership had a small positive, significant effect (Z = .02), while also finding an across study variability of effect sizes between -.18 and .26. By considering only the multilevel modeling studies conducted in United States elementary schools, with no covariates that used composite outcome variables and did not use self-reporting, they found an effect size of Z = .11 (p = .07). When looking at specific leadership behaviors effects on student learning, Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003) found the following significant relationships: (a) supervision and evaluation (Z=.02, p <. 10); (b) monitoring (Z = .07, p <. 10); (c) visibility (Z =. 02, p < .10); and (d) defining and communicating the mission (Z =. 19, p <. 10). Again, these researchers established a small, indirect effect of leadership actions on student learning. The leadership actions of supervision and evaluation, monitoring, and visibility are actions related to the concept of instructional guidance (Bryk et al., 2010), while defining and establishing the mission are the primary leadership practices associated with setting direction (Leithwood, 2013).

To further test these relationships, Louis, Leithwood, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2010) conducted a large-scale, 5-year research study, which will be referenced frequently throughout this review. This mixed-methods study was expansive, including data from nine randomly sampled states stratified to represent all four geographic

regions, 43 randomly sampled districts and 180 randomly sampled elementary, middle, and secondary schools nested within those states and districts.

The researchers conducted two interviews a piece with each stakeholder at the state (n = 124), district (n = 34), and school level (n = 581). They administered surveys in the first and fourth year of the study yielding survey data from 8,391 teachers and 471 administrators. In addition, Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) collected classroom level observational data from 312 teachers. Lastly in order to measure student outcomes, they obtained achievement data from state tests at both the elementary and secondary level. These researchers also found that there was an indirect relationship mediated through the support and development of teachers and the school environment ($F = 3.74$, $R^2 =. 19$, $p < .001$). School leadership was secondary only to teaching ($R^2 = .27$) in its influence on student learning. Adding to the prior research connecting the actions of the leader to student learning mediated through instructional guidance, this study helped to establish the connection between leadership and the essential structures of professional capacity and student-centered learning climates.

Principals seem to matter most in the lowest performing schools. When schools are in crisis, the leadership becomes more important (Duke, 2007; Murphy, 2008). The Wallace Foundation (2011) claims, “A good principal is the single most important determinant of whether a school can attract and keep the high-quality teachers necessary to turn around schools” (p. 2). In fact in the research base on school change, there are currently no examples of a school being turned around without a strong leader (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). In schools that need to restructure,

the responsibility of the school leader to set goals and move their staff towards those goals takes on added importance and must be reflected in the actions of the principal.

There are a number of practices and beliefs that have consistently emerged in the studies of school turnaround and school improvement. Leadership practices are the actions the school leader takes or facilitates within the organization. Leithwood defined leadership practices as, "a bundle of activities exercised by a person or group of persons which reflect the particular circumstances in which they find themselves and with some shared outcome(s) in mind" (Leithwood et al., 2010, p. 5). The leadership practices included in the conceptual model for this study, which are supported by the research and elucidated by Leithwood (2013), have elements of four types of leadership: instructional, transformational, shared, and managerial. Particularly for schools undergoing an improvement process, it is necessary to enact all four types of leadership. Current definitions of leadership, including the one used in the framework for this study, recognize the utility and overlap of more than one of these types of leadership, leading to definitions of integrated or tridimensional leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003; Bryk et al., 2010).

Marks and Printy (2003) suggested that combining instructional (Blase & Blase, 1999; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Prestine & Bowen, 1993) and transformational (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999) leadership into what they called integrated leadership leads to high quality pedagogy and increased student achievement. This integrated leadership blends the ideals of transformational leadership, as defined by Marks and Printy (2003) as being mission-centered, performance-centered, and culture centered, with the principal's understanding of their roles as instructional leader in

collaboration with teachers. The transformational practices help to engage teachers and increase a commitment to the agreed upon instructional practices. They found that, "where integrated leadership was normative, teachers provided evidence of high-quality pedagogy and students performed at high levels on authentic measures of achievement" (Mark & Printy, 2003, p. 393). Using hierarchical linear modeling on a sample of 24 (8 each of elementary, middle, and high schools) restructured schools. Marks and Printy (2003) found that schools with integrated leadership had higher instructional quality than schools without it ($SD = .06$, $p < 05$).

Agreeing with this notion that the two types of leadership have relevant overlap, Hallinger (2003) wrote a piece reflecting on the knowledge base on leading for educational change that looked at both transformational and instructional leadership. He compared Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional model (IL) with Leithwood and Jantzi's (1998) transformational model (TL), two of the most influential studies intended to define these terms, and found a great deal of overlap. The IL and TL models both emphasized a mission of high expectations and an incentive system tied to that mission, as well as the principal being highly visible in order to model the schools goals. Both models expressed the need for the leader to set clear goals and emphasized the growth and development of teachers. The biggest difference between the two models was that the IL model suggested that leaders focus their time and energy on coordinating curriculum, supervising and evaluating instruction, monitoring instruction, and protecting instructional time, while the TL model emphasized that the leaders focus on building the school's academic and social culture. Both of these types of leadership are reflected in the leadership practices and essential supports explored in this study.

Additionally, managerial leadership is necessary for a successful school turnaround. To support this notion, Grissom and Loeb (2011) used survey responses from principals, assistant principals, teachers, and parents in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, as well as performance data for state report cards and state tests, to determine which principal skills matter most for student learning (n = 15,842) and used factor analysis of the 42-item task inventory to determine five major categories of leadership practices. Only one of five categories (instructional management, internal relations, administration, external relations, and organizational management) consistently predicted school success: principals' organizational management skills. These researchers defined organizational management through eight types of tasks, including maintaining campus facilities, managing budgets and resources, and developing a safe school environment. A standard deviation increase in organizational management was associated with a .12-point increase in school accountability performance, which is around 10 percent of a standard deviation for an effect size of .08 (1/4 to a ½ as large as student demographics). These differences were consistent across grades. Without managing the direction of the school and taking care of the daily operational tasks, students will continue to struggle to learn.

In fact, Bryk et al. (2010) notes that originally they left this dimension out of their leadership model until practitioners called their attention to the absence of management skills. Bryk et al. (2010) described the concept of leadership as tridimensional, including instructional, inclusive-facilitative (transformational and shared), and managerial leadership. The managerial aspect of leadership included the day-to-day actions such as supporting programming, organizing the school's systems, and providing supplies. An

absence of managerial leadership can cause instability in the school that will take away from the core functions of teaching and learning.

Distributed (Gronn, 2002), shared (Marks & Printy, 2003), or collaborative leadership (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Hallinger & Heck, 2010) is also relevant to defining leadership for this study. While this concept has the smallest literature base, it has emerged as particularly important in times of large-scale change (Bryk et al., 2010). Starting with the early work of Pounder (1999), the suggestion was made that sharing leadership may increase commitment to the common good and motivate teachers to work together, reducing isolation. Additionally, in a case study of 14 highly effective schools, Langer (2000) found that every school had some form of shared leadership.

Another study supporting the use of shared leadership was a path analysis by Leithwood and Mascall (2008). Using 2,570 teacher responses from 90 elementary and secondary schools, the researchers found that collective leadership directly explained a significant proportion of variation across schools in student achievement ($r = .34$, $p < .01$). Also, Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) found that when the leadership was shared with the teachers, the teacher's working relationships were stronger and student achievement was higher, even discovering that collective leadership has a stronger influence on student achievement than individual leadership. These studies supported the notion that sharing leadership helped with developing people and building relationships, specifically by contributing to creating a collaborative structure. This current paper will explore the actions of a leadership team, primarily consisting of a principal and an assistant principal, but to lesser degree also including teacher leaders serving on the leadership cabinet or as a team leader.

These four types of leadership can be distilled into a set of leadership practices that describe effective leadership and incorporate elements of this integrated leadership model. The practices or functions have been discussed by many of the top researchers in educational leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 2013; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). The set of practices have been grouped and renamed a variety of ways over the years, but the actions of effective leaders have been consistent across the research base. For this current study, the leadership practices that will be examined are: setting and managing direction, developing the organization and people, and building relationships. The assumption is that leaders can turn around schools through the following practices and beliefs.

Setting and Managing Direction

One of the most agreed upon practices for effective school leadership is the need to set and manage direction for the school through the use of a shared vision and goal setting (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986a, 1986b, 1987; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger). The primary focus in this area has been referred to as "defining the school's mission" (Hallinger, 2005). Defining a school's mission includes establishing a vision that everyone understands, setting direction for how to achieve that vision, and aligning that vision with external accountability requirements (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Day, et al., 2010; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a; Hallinger & Heck, 1996b; Portin, et al., 2009). Setting and managing direction is especially important for schools undergoing an improvement effort. Duke (2009) suggested that setting direction, particularly at the beginning of a

school improvement effort, will help to avoid drift and detachment by staff, students, and parents.

Considered especially important for a turnaround school, the idea of visioning has become a key school leadership tenet. Kotter (1996) suggested that you cannot underestimate the power of vision and that without developing what he called a "powerful guiding coalition" as well as removing obstacles and communicating that vision, change will not occur. He placed his emphasis on establishing a sense of urgency, developing the coalition of people, forming a vision and strategy, communicating that vision, and then going for short term wins to initiate the change process. These same concepts still appear in the work of school change researchers such as Fullan (2005, 2007), Duke (2004, 2009), Murphy and Meyers (2007), and Leithwood, Harris, and Strauss (2010), as well as in school change handbooks intended to provide school leaders with advice on planning for change (Duke, Carr & Sterrett, 2012; Wagner et al., 2010).

A school wide vision is necessary for establishing a commitment to a set of beliefs and goals by indicating the priorities for improvement. Leithwood (2013) suggests that the primary purpose of the principal is to make sure all stakeholders are working towards the same purpose. Duke, Tucker, Salmonowicz, and Levy (2007) studied 19 principals newly assigned to low performing elementary and middle schools that were part of a turnaround program. The research focused on (a) student achievement and behavior; (b) school programs and organization; (c) staffing; (d) school system concerns; and (e) parents and community to see if the principals needed to differentiate their school leadership. The researchers found that 6 elementary and 4 middle school principals struggled with a lack of focus or lack of clear sense of priorities. On the other hand,

Louis, Leithwood, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2010) found that setting an agreed upon direction for the school and developing a vision was present in all the high-performing schools in their study, grade levels K-12; however, the principals did not always engage with individual teachers to ensure that the vision translated into action. In their large survey sample, 100% of principals and 66.7% of teachers felt that focusing on goals and expectations for student achievement were helpful for teachers' efforts to improve their instruction.

A clear vision increases the collective effort by bringing together individuals around common goals. Those goals should not be too broad and should include specific implications of programs and classroom instruction (Leithwood, 2013). In order to turn the vision of the school into action, the school leaders are responsible for setting shared, school-wide goals. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) performed two meta-analyses: one on 22 studies to compare transformational and instructional leadership and another on 12 studies to look at the effects of specific leadership practices and found that goals and expectations had an average effect size of .42 SD on student outcomes. This finding indicates that the direction the leaders sets will impact student learning. Finally, research suggests that there must be a sense of urgency conveyed by the school leaders that guides the establishing of these goals (Duke, 2004). By grounding the direction of the school in the immediate problems facing the school leaders, the goals can help to increase student learning by improving the school.

In order to set and manage goals, researchers encourage the use of data to track progress and performance towards a school's mission (Barth, 1990; Halverson, Grigg, Pritchett, & Thomas, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2004; Portin et al., 2009). The data has to be

implemented in a purposeful way to create a narrative about individual students and the school as whole (Duke, Tucker, Salmonowicz, Levy, & Saunders, 2008; Portin et al., 2009; West, Ainscow, & Stanford, 2005). Successful school leaders also need to master skills associated with productive planning and the implementation of such plans and be proficient in the large-scale strategic planning processes (Duke, Carr & Sterrett, 2012; Leithwood et al, 2004). Schools rarely achieve success unless the leader has established a vision and then used data to make strategic plans that are supported by the school leaders and viewed as vital by the teachers.

Leithwood (2013) also suggests the vision should be well known and broadly communicated by using both formal and informal opportunities to explain vision and goals. The principal is responsible for communicating the vision and mission of the school to teachers, students, and parents. This is often done through modeling the beliefs of the school, which requires that the principal be visible to all stakeholders. This communication of the shared vision of the school should be reciprocal with the principal not only communicating with staff but also allowing them to have input as to the school's direction. In the already mentioned study, Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003) found that defining and communicating vision had the largest effect on student achievement. (Cohen's d ranging from .30 to .38). To summarize, by setting the direction for the school, through setting goals based on and measured by student data, the school leader can help to establish a shared purpose and ensure that the teachers, students, and parents are aware of and focused on that purpose.

Developing People and the Organization to Support Desired Practices

One of the most important things a leader can do is develop the organization to support desired practices outlined in the vision and goals of the school (Leithwood, 2013). Since teaching is the technical core of a school, the most important practices that have been correlated to student achievement have to do with both guiding the direction of the school's instructional focus and developing teachers to provide high quality instruction (Billman, 2004; Hallinger, 1996; Stein & Spillane, 2005).

Effective leaders should be connecting directly with teachers in their classrooms, doing regular formal and informal observations, and should be informed about the instructional practice of their teachers (Leithwood et al., 2008; Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach, 2003). In addition, school leaders should provide individualized support for teachers and have the ability to nurture teachers (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Portin, DeArmond, Gundlach, & Schneider, 2003). Leaders need to participate in and stimulate staff growth by encouraging the staff to reflect on goals, lead discussions on current practice, facilitate chances for them to learn from each other, and encourage innovation (Leithwood, 2013). These topics will be expanded upon in the section on instructional guidance.

While leaders must hold teachers accountable to both best practices and policy, it is most important that they believe in the importance of empowering others to make significant decisions about instruction (Halverson, Grigg, Pritchett, & Thomas, 2007; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) found that the leadership behavior that was most predictive of student learning was the

principals' participation in the development of teachers and support for professional learning.

Principals cannot be in classrooms all the time and therefore do not directly affect student achievement, but they can give their teachers the resources, experience, and self-reliance to collaborate in order to provide the best instruction possible. Louis, Leithwood, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2010) established the actions taken by the principal to guide and support teaching and learning by enhancing teacher‘s practices. In the teacher interviews, teachers suggested that high scoring principals have a well-developed awareness of teaching and learning; frequent involvement with teachers; and the ability and interpersonal skills to empower teachers to learn and grow. Developing the professional capacity of teachers is a key essential structure that will be discussed in further detail in the subsequent sections.

Quality instruction is key to turning around a failing school. Louis, Leithwood, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2010) found that 100% of principals and 84% of teachers felt that the principal keeping track of professional development was important for improving instruction, while 83.3% of principals, and 37.7% of teachers mentioned formal classroom observation as a desirable practice to improve instruction. Responses from the teacher survey suggested that in high-achieving schools, teachers saw the principal as frequently providing direct instructional support. The study found differences between the top 20% of schools and the bottom 20% of schools in how often the principal engaged in range of activities to develop people. The more often the school leader engaged in activities meant to develop the professional capacity of teachers, the more effective the teachers were in providing instruction to their students.

In addition to the need for individual development, another important element of the leadership practices is to develop the organization to support a collaborative culture through modeling collaboration, structuring the organization to provide opportunities to work together nurturing mutual respect and trust, and being clear about goals and roles. Louis, Leithwood, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2010) found that 91.7% of principals and 66.7% of teachers felt that creating structures and opportunities to collaborate would improve instruction. The most successful school indicated the principal encouraged collaborative work among staff. The effects of collaboration will be discussed in the section about professional community.

Principals also need to create a safe and healthy environment that encourages young people's development, both cognitively and socially. In order to do so, the principal must establish clear standards for behavior and then implement and monitor proper discipline practice, while developing processes to resolve conflict (Leithwood, 2013). School leaders must also establish academic press or academic emphasis and set up school structures to both ensure rigor and support students who are struggling (Duke, 2009; Hoy, 2012; Leithwood, 2013). This notion will be expanded in the section on school climate.

Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) used the same conceptual model put forth in Bryk et al. (2010) to further develop the idea that leadership is the driver for school improvement through the organizational structures. Using survey data from all high school teachers from Chicago Public Schools in the 2006-2007 school year, they used multi-level structural equation modeling to illuminate the paths through which leaders influence student learning, as measured by gains on the ACT test and student grades.

Specifically, the researchers were interested in how leaders contribute to differences in classroom instruction between different schools and among different teachers within the same school.

Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) found that leadership influenced all the organization supports but that the relationships differed when comparing different schools as opposed to comparing different teachers within the same school. The most important organizational factor when comparing the success of different schools was the student-learning climate. Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) found that the principal has positive, significant direct effects on classroom instruction through the quality of the learning climate ($b = .25$, $SE = .09$, $p < .01$).

Breaking apart the concept of the learning climate even further, the researchers looked at how college expectations, academic program quality, safety, and parent and community ties directly and indirectly influenced academic demand and classroom order. Academic demand is similar to the concept of academic press or academic emphasis, defined as the ability for teachers to ask students to meet high expectations, which is evidenced by critical thinking in assignments and discussions. Classroom order is defined as a lack of interruptions to student learning through classroom management and rules.

Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) found that the principal had (a) a positive, significant, indirect effect through safety on academic demand ($b = .03$, $SE =. 01$, $p < .001$) **;** (b) a positive, significant, indirect effect through parent and community ties on academic demand ($b = .03$, $SE = .01$, $p < .001$); (c) a positive, significant, indirect effect through college expectation on academic demand ($b = .07$, $SE = .02$, $p < .001$)**;** and (d) a positive, significant indirect effect through program quality on academic demand (b =

.19, SE = .05, $p < .001$. In other words, academic demand was influenced by school level factors and not just by the expectations set forth by the teacher. The way that the school supported and framed school-wide expectations influenced how individual teachers would able to guide instruction in their classrooms.

Classroom order was the result of a number of school level factors. Furthermore, the principal had: (a) a positive, significant, indirect effect through safety on classroom order ($b = .10$, SE = .01, $p < .001$); (b) a positive, significant, indirect effect through parent and community ties on classroom order ($b = .01$, SE =.01, $p < .05$); (c) a positive, significant, indirect effect through college expectation on classroom order ($b = .07$, SE = .01, $p < .001$); and (d) a positive, significant, indirect effect through program quality on classroom order ($b = .14$, SE =.01, $p < .05$). Accordingly, the teachers' ability to organize and manage an effective classroom had a lot to do with the school's learning climate.

It is also necessary that school leaders build productive relationships with families by developing a welcoming environment, gaining parent trust, fostering staff commitment to engaging parents, helping provide support at home, and tapping into social capital (Leithwood, 2013). Ogbu (2003) conducted a longitudinal case study of schools in Shaker Heights, an affluent community, where the achievement gap between black and white students persisted. He found that there was a lack of parental involvement in school due to alienation and mistrust of the system, specifically black distrust of white people and their institutions. Moreover, Ogbu (2003) suggested that there was cultural belief that the school was responsible for learning. In addition, he found there was a lack of awareness of children's academic problems. Ogbu's (2003)

research had implications for principals who must take the lead in diminishing the effects of this mistrust by engaging parents in the school community and creating a welcoming atmosphere.

Building Relationships

One of the most important things a principal can do to develop relationships is build relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). School leaders encourage trust between stakeholders by exhibiting transparent decision-making (Tshcannen-Moran, 2004). By being open with teachers, students, and families, there is less opportunity for misunderstanding. To develop trust, school leaders should also be confident, optimistic, resilient, and consistent (Tshcannen-Moran, 2004). By displaying that they are capable of the leadership tasks, they garner trust from others. In addition, they should demonstrate respect, care, and personal regard for staff, students, and parents by listening to ideas and by being open to their input (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). They must be highly visible to staff and students, and have high quality interactions with both groups (Hallinger, 2003). Louis, Leithwood, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2010) found that the differences between teachers evaluations of high- and low- scoring principals were statistically significant in all cases, while the largest difference was in response to the question about whether the principal developed an atmosphere of caring and trust ($X = 5.52$ vs. 3.50 on a scale of 1-6).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) conducted case study research and longitudinal statistical analysis from over 400 Chicago elementary schools. This study described relational trust and its influence on achievement. They spent 4 years in 12 school communities observing and interviewing principals, teachers, parents, and community

members. In addition they administered surveys to examine change over a six-year period and analyzed "value added" trends in reading and math achievement. Bryk and Schneider (2002) found that relational trust was a set of mutual dependencies built into day-day exchanges. The principal established an atmosphere of relational trust by demonstrating respect, competence, personal regard and integrity. Specifically, they found that a school with low relational trust had only a one in seven chance of demonstrating improved student learning, whereas 50% of the schools with high relational trust improved. Also, improved schools had an increase of 8% in student learning in reading and 20% increase in student learning in math over a five-year period. The group of schools that was not working on improving relational trust slipped even further in reading and stayed about the same in math. The schools with chronically weak trust throughout the period of the study had virtually no change in reading or math.

Also supportive of the importance of relationships, Price (2011) analyzed the nationally representative Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) from the 2003-2004 school year. In a two-phase design, she looked at principal-teacher relationships to see how the relationships influenced the principal's attitude and how they worked in conjunction to affect teachers' attitudes. She found that principals' relationships with their teachers significantly improved teacher satisfaction, cohesion, and commitment. Furthermore, she suggested that teachers' attitudes improved when principal-teacher relationships in schools created positive affective responses from teachers. Essentially the principal was responsible for creating an environment in which the teachers felt like they were part of a positive community. The teachers' attitudes towards their job and the school were dependent on their relationship with the principal.

Hoy (2012) looked at the entire body of trust literature, particularly the work on trust he conducted with Tschannen-Moran (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). He described collective trust as the result of a leader being benevolent, honest, open, reliable, and competent, similar to Bryk and Schneider (2002). He and Tschannen-Moran found three measures of collective trust: in the principal, in colleagues; and in clients (students and parents). Tschannen-Moran (1998) continued this line of research and found that teacher's trust in their colleagues was positively related to school structure and climate and positively related to teacher professionalism and collaboration (2001). This importance of teacher-to-teacher trust appeared again in the work of Goddard, Salloum, and Berbetisky (2009). They studied a stratified random sample of Michigan elementary schools using 14-item scale based on Bryk and Schnieder (2002), Baier (1996), and Goddard et al.'s (2001) previously developed measures of trust. They found that teacher-to-teacher faculty trust marginally, significantly and positively predicted math achievement (.39 SD's) and reading (SD = .38) in 4th grade. This study indicated that trust affected achievement even when controlling for racial and economic disadvantage. Since teachers' attitudes and relational trust were dependent on the way in which the school leader built and nurtured relationships in the school, the actions of the leaders ultimately influenced the ability of the teachers to grow and collaborate, or their professional capacity, as well as the their ability to engaged positively with students and their families, or a student-centered learning climate.

Organizational Supports

After discussing the background of school effectiveness research and establishing the role that leaders play in school success, this review found that there were four main

aspects of the school that were consistently tied to student achievement. The four essential organizational supports that will be discussed in this next section are instructional guidance, professional capacity, student-centered learning climate, and family, school, and community ties (Bryk et al., 2010).

Instructional Guidance

Instructional guidance, as defined by Bryk et al. (2010) includes: (a) the existence and organization of an aligned curriculum, (b) the development of shared beliefs about learning behaviors and of teaching strategies that have high academic demand, and (c) the existence of school wide supports and tools to support student learning. This organizational structure is the most closely aligned with the leadership practices discussed in the previous section on instructional leadership and shares some overlap in strategies. This aspect of the school could be led by the principal but may also be the work of an outside provider, of experienced and skilled teachers, or of district leaders and employees. One of the most important practices that have been correlated to student achievement is managing the instructional program by giving the necessary instructional support to teachers (Billman, 2004; Hallinger, 1996; Stein & Spillane, 2005).

The first important feature of instructional guidance is the alignment of curriculum. Connected with the work of Bryk et al. (2010) for the Consortium of Chicago School Research that frames the conceptual understanding of this study, Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, and Bryk (2001) defined instructional program coherence as "a set of integrated programs for students and staff that are guided by a common framework for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and learning climate and are pursued over a sustained time" (p. 299). They found that coherence was evident when there is: (a) a

common instructional framework with specific expectations and specific strategies; (b) working conditions that support the framework; and (c) resources are allocated for the framework. Using the 1994 and 1997 surveys from the study of school improvement in Chicago, Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, and Bryk (2001) found a strong, positive relationship between improving coherence and improving achievement with the rate of change on a 10- point scale being .078 in reading and .086 in math, translating into a 19% increase in reading achievement scores and a 19% increase in math scores for schools in the 90th percentile for coherence. Also, the schools that lost coherence over the period of the reform did not improve. Interestingly, only 3 of the 11 schools demonstrated coherence, indicating that this is common problem for struggling schools.

In secondary schools, principals are expected to create a shared instructional framework to support student learning and the provision of support for instructional improvement (Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2008; Portin, DeArmond, Gundlach, & Schneider, 2003; Portin et al., 2009; Stein & Nelson, 2003). The school must develop shared beliefs about learning behaviors and teaching strategies that lead to student success centered around high academic demand. Hoy (2012) discussed the idea of academic optimism, which he describes as a latent construct of emphasis, trust, and efficacy (DiPaola & Wagner, 2012; Hoy, Tarter & Hoy, 2006; Smith & Hoy, 2007; Kirby & DiPaola, 2009; McGuigan & Hoy, 2006; Wagner & DiPaola, 2011). In the series of studies he cites, academic optimism, or a shared expectation about learning is positively associated to student learning.

Also, there must be school-wide supports to promote student learning. In a book by Duke (2009) on planning for school improvement, he discussed the need to strengthen

the entire academic program with a focus on struggling students, while being mindful to also address the needs of high achievers. He mentions the need to develop the capacity to help those students most in need by being aware of the problem, understanding why they are struggling, ensuring teaching competence, and being persistent about offering support. In addition, he suggests matching the best teachers with weakest students. In related research, Duke, Tucker, Salmonowicz, and Levy (2007) found that in all 19 of the turnaround schools in their sample, the biggest area of concern was reading, which implies that literacy needed to become an academic priority. By ensuring that the academic focus and the systems in place to support that focus meet the needs of the students, the school leaders will be more likely to see improvements.

School leaders must provide appropriate models of best practice and beliefs considered fundamental to the organization (Leithwood & Massell, 2008). Effective leaders should connect directly with teachers in their classrooms, doing regular formal and informal observations, and should be informed about the instructional practice of their teachers (Leithwood et al., 2008; Portin et al., 2009). The leader should provide individualized support and have the ability to nurture teachers (Leithwood et al., 2008; Portin et al., 2009).

Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) discovered that planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum has a moderate impact on student outcomes (effect size = .42), particularly (a) collegial discussion of instructional program ((b) actively overseeing and coordinating instruction (c) coordinating the curriculum across levels (d) observations and feedback, and (e) helping staff monitor student progress. In other words, instructional guidance influences student outcomes by ensuring that the

curriculum and instruction are aligned and based on a shared instructional focus, by guaranteeing that the focus meets the academic needs of the students, and by overseeing and evaluating teachers' progress towards those shared goals.

Professional Capacity

The second area of the organization that has been closely linked to student learning is professional capacity. Professional capacity includes two main areas: a focus on the quality of the teaching staff and the development of a professional community. The quality of the teaching staff is influenced both through the recruitment and hiring of new teachers and through the development and mentoring of the current teaching staff. While the responsibility for hiring new teacher falls largely on the principal, district and teacher leaders can also play a role. Also, professional development is often planned and provided by experienced teachers or outside providers but is often organized by the school leader, who may also play a role in delivering instructional support. Professional community has been defined in many different ways, but most generally refers to the existence of a structure in which teachers collaborate on problems of practice. There is a large body of research on this topic that finds links to increased student learning.

The area of professional capacity emphasizes the single technical core of school-teaching. Teacher quality has the single most important effect on student learning (Heck, 2007), therefore, making the hiring and developing of staff members that have high expectations one of the most important actions of a leader (Leithwood, 2013). A principal should try to hire people with extensive pedagogical knowledge, a willingness to grow, general agreement with school goals, and a willingness to collaborate. In addition, the principal should work to retain teachers with those qualities. Duke (2009) found to

sustain success, you need to develop the staff by concentrating on recruitment, staff development, and induction as well as create positive working conditions to retain teachers.

Heck (2007) used a composite index of six measures of climate and culture to look at differences across schools in school quality. He found that the collective qualifications of teachers had positive, significant, independent effects on reading and math level and that improvement in teacher qualifications had a significant, positive impact on math growth rates. Furthermore, Duke, Tucker, Salmonowicz, and Levy (2007) found that all ten elementary principals and 6 of the 9 middle school principals in their turnaround school sample cited personnel problems as contributing to low performance. The nature of those problems varied, with some teachers identified as ineffective, some not matched to the right grade or class, and some actually deemed incompetent.

In many cases the candidate pool may limit the ability of a principal to hire successful teachers and research has shown that the quality of teachers is often lower in struggling schools (Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002). In order to ensure high quality teaching the school must ensure high quality professional development. In Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008)'s analysis of successful schools, they found that promoting and participating in teacher learning and development (informal and formal) had a large effect size (.84 SD) on student outcomes.

In a review of studies, Hallinger (2005) suggests that the principal's effects on classroom instruction permeate through the schools' culture by modeling high-quality instruction rather than through direct supervision and evaluation of teaching. If a leader is

unable to provide professional development in house, he or she should seek out the necessary external support (Chrisman, 2005; Duke et al., 2008; Harris, 2002; Kannapel & Clements, 2005). Duke (2010a) advocated for hiring outside experts when the teaching staff is in need of developing aptitude for helping struggling students quickly. Through whatever means available to the principal, he or she need to work on developing his/her teacher's content knowledge and best practices.

Professional development should be content-specific, teacher-targeted, sustained, and feedback-oriented (King & Newman, 2001). Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2009) conducted a study using survey data from a national probability sample of school districts and nationally representative sample of teachers with a 72% response rate. Similar to the suggestions of King and Newmann (2001), Garet et al., (2009) found that professional development activities that have significant, positive effects on teachers' self-reported increases in knowledge and skills have: (a) a focus on content knowledge ($b = .33$, $SE = .02$, $p < .001$), (b) opportunities for active learning ($b = .18$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$), and (c) coherence with other activities ($b = .42$, $SE = .03$, $p < .001$). A focus on content knowledge ($b = .11$, $SE = .02$, $p < .001$) and coherence with other activities ($b = .21$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$) were also significantly linked to a change in practice.

Along similar lines, Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, and Gallagher (2007) studied professional development and supported the importance of coherence for professional development. Using survey results from 454 teachers involved in 28 different inquiry science programs from geographically diverse schools using 6 different types of professional development, they conducted an HLM analysis. They discovered that the more aligned the professional development was with school and district goals, the more

likely the teachers were to use the knowledge (β = .63; OR = 1.87, CI=1.45, 2,41) and feel prepared to teach (β = .51, ES = .04, t-ratio = 13.02). Furthermore, teachers needed time to incorporate and plan for implementation as well as technical support. If the teachers were given additional professional development on implementation, they felt more prepared to teach using the method of student inquiry (γ = -.01, SE = 00, t-ratio = 2.72). High quality professional learning opportunities are focused on content and coherence. In addition, there should be an opportunity and an expectation that teachers will be given the opportunity to explore strategies discussed in professional development during their planning and teaching.

The other aspect of professional capacity found to be influential on student learning and school effectiveness is the existence of school-based professional community, in which teachers are provided the time to work together and collaboration is encouraged. In the aforementioned case study by Langer (2000) of 14 effective schools, four of the six characteristics she found in effective schools were related to the development of a professional community: (a) fostered teacher participation in professional communities; (b) created activities that provided teachers with agency; (c) valued commitment to professionalism; and (d) had caring attitudes.

Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) used survey data from the Leadership for Learning project for the Wallace Foundation, which included 2,165 completed surveys from teachers in randomly sampled schools in randomly sampled districts, in nine states to perform as a stepwise linear regression to look at the relationship between instruction and efficacy, trust, professional community, and shared leadership. They found that professional community and trust in the principal are the only

significant predictors of student achievement. When building level data is added in the third step, professional community becomes more influential than trust. Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) found that the influence of leadership on student learning is largely the result of strengthening the professional community. The existence of a professional community is a strong predictor of instructional practices associated with student achievement.

Student-centered Learning Climate

Bryk et al. (2010) suggested that a student-centered learning environment is also essential for organizing schools for improvement. By creating and sustaining a school climate in which students feel safe, supported, and respected across the school and in which teachers have high expectations for all students, often referred to as academic press, the opportunity to learn is increased. To put it simply, learning cannot occur without structures in place to eliminate distractions associated with discipline problems. Even the best teachers struggle in schools with an unhealthy climate. Furthermore, student learning is dependent on the type of tasks and expectations that teachers have for their students. The school environment is often primarily the job of the principal but relies heavily on teachers and parents.

Leaders in turnaround schools must focus on reducing behavior problems in an effort to limit distractions from instruction (Duke et al. 2008; Orr, Byrne- Jimenez, & McFarlane, 2005). The principal assumes the responsibility of ensuring that the conditions in the school fully supports rather than inhibits teaching and learning. (Portin et al., 2009) By creating an environment where everyone from the principal to the

students are expected to take responsibility for their achievement and are given the means to do so, principals are enabling the organization to be successful.

Leithwood (2013) described this student-centered learning climate using two terms: academic press and disciplinary climate. He defined academic press as "the concept that administrators and teachers should set high but achievable goals and classroom academic standards" and disciplinary climate as "the idea that the focus on discipline should be at the school level not at the individual student level and covers school culture, teacher classroom management, prevention and intervention at the school level, and differences in cultural values between students and schools" (p. 47).

In order for a positive student-centered climate to exist, there must be academic press or high expectations for all students.. Lee and Smith (1999) from the Consortium for Chicago School Research (CCSSR) looked at 1997 survey reports and using hierarchical linear modeling, they explored the role of social support in student success and found that is moderately and positively related to learning but the relationship is dependent upon the academic press in a school (0.017 SD for reading and 0.021 SD for math)

Similar to academic press, Hoy (2012) defined academic emphasis as the degree to which a school is driven towards high expectations. This academic emphasis involves maintaining a serious learning environment where teachers and leaders believe in success for all students (Hoy, 2012). Lee and Bryk (1998) first identified this concept of academic emphasis as important for learning and then Hoy and his team replicated the finding in four more studies (Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Hoy & Sabo, 1998; Alig-Mielcarek & Hoy, 2005), three middle schools and one elementary school. More importantly, he

found that academic emphasis is positively related to school achievement even after controlling for SES, with a path coefficient of .27 (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006).

Another important characteristic of creating and sustaining a student-centered learning environment is that students feel safe, supported, and respected across the school. Simply put, it doesn't matter how good your teachers are and how much focus was put on hiring highly qualified teachers, the school climate has to be safe and orderly for the students to learn. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) found that ensuring an orderly and supportive environment had a modest, effect size of .27 SD on student outcomes.

To add to the findings on safe and orderly school climate, DeAngelis and Presley (2011) studied the effects of teacher qualifications and school climate conditions on student outcomes, using a sample of Chicago Public Schools that represented 45% of the total CPS student population. This study found that the influence of the quality of teachers was superseded by a lack of a safe and orderly climate. In fact, the impact of an inexperienced math teacher was only slightly significant when controlling for climate, which explained an additional 4 to 12% of difference in math scores. Another important finding in this study by DeAngelis and Presley (2011) was that schools that are perceived to have more positive climates had significantly higher growth in reading, when controlling for demographic factors, than schools with less favorable climate conditions. Across the five climate measures, the impact on reading scores ranged from .2 to .3 of a standard deviation. The results of the math achievement scores were slightly stronger, ranging from .2 to .4 standard deviations. Safety and order had the largest effect of all five measures. This study indicates that even very qualified teachers are unlikely to show

high learning gains in schools that are disorderly and unsafe since both of the interaction terms were both positive and significant. The effect of teacher expertise on reading and math scores depended on a safe and orderly climate.

Also using a national data set, Ripski and Gregory (2009) looked at three dimensions of climate: unfairness, hostility, and victimization. They found that students' basic needs, such as the order and safety at the school, could have strong effects on the motivation and learning of both teachers and students. If students felt like they were victims, they had lower individual engagement and achievement in math and reading. Also, collective perceptions of hostility predicted lower achievement in math and lower engagement. If students felt that they were not safe at school, they struggled to become motivated to learn, which negatively influenced the motivation of the teachers.

Moreover in a review of research on school climate by Thapa, Cohen, Guffey and Higgins-D'Alessandro's (2013), they find that a positive school climate promoted cooperative learning, group cohesion, respect, and mutual trust, which promoted student learning. Additionally in the review, the researchers suggested that teaching and learning were the most important part of school climate, in that teachers and leaders should define the norms, goals, and values that shape the learning climate.

The importance of teachers in creating a positive climate cannot be overstated. Thapa, Cohen, Guffey and Higgins-D'Alessandro (2013) found that you must have positive adult relationships for positive school change. Importantly, the teachers' work environment fully mediates the path between whole school climate interventions and school climate change, meaning that leader ultimately holds responsibility for forming a

positive climate. If students have positive interactions with their teachers, they are more likely to become engaged in school and learn more.

Furthermore, Thapa, Cohen, Guffey and Higgins-D'Alessandro (2013) found that the teachers' perception of how positive the school climate was influenced the factors that contributed to a positive school climate. In other words, the climate also influenced teaching. In fact, a positive school climate is associated with teachers' beliefs that they can affect student learning and has been linked to teacher retention by enhancing or minimizing emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of personal accomplishment.

Lastly, Thapa, Cohen, Guffey and Higgins-D'Alessandro (2013) also discovered that a positive school climate is particularly important for students of color and students living in poverty, although different aspects of the climate mattered more for black students (teacher-child relations) versus Latino students (teacher fairness, caring, praise, and moral order). Interestingly perceptions of the school climate were formed by teachers at the classroom level, such as poor classroom management, and by students at the school level, such as principal turnover and student/teacher relationships.

These researchers found that a positive school climate had an influence on whether or not a student learned, whether they were motivated to learn, how the teacher instructed, and how the students perceived school. If the school did not ensure a positive student-centered climate with an emphasis on academics and a safe and orderly culture that allowed the students to flourish, a high level of academic achievement would be difficult to attain.

Family, School, and Community Ties

The role of parents and communities in the school are also important for school improvement (Bryk et al., 2010). Bryk et al. (2010) identified this as an essential support at the elementary level, but Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi (2010) identified this area as a moderating effect, suggesting that this area may not be as directly tied to the leadership practices. This subsystem consists of two main elements. First of all, schools need to be conscious of supporting parents to support learning. This relationship will look different depending on the school context. Additionally, teachers should have an understanding of students' home culture and community, whether it was similar or different to their own, and take a responsive stance toward it. This organizational quality is the work of everyone in the school, but the principal is often tasked with developing the structures for a positive school/home relationship.

Successful leaders need to engage parents and encourage them to become involved in the school (Billman, 2004; Hattie 2009; Muihs, Harris, Chapman, Stoll, & Russ, 2004). A widely shared sense of community will help to combat the unstable environment in which a significant proportion of the families and children live, who are served by especially challenging schools (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Ryan, 1998). These relationships with family and community also need to be based on a supportive agenda, which can be done through linking families up with other agencies that are able to provide support for students and their families without diverting leaders' attention and influence on teacher learning (Louis, Leithwood, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). In the aforementioned study by DeAngelis and Presley (2011), they

included parent ties as a measure of school climate and found that parent- school relations had the largest effects (.4 standard deviations) on student achievement.

Further support for the importance of family and school ties at the high school level can be found in the work of Jeynes (2007) who established that parent involvement affected academics. In a meta-analysis of 52 studies about parent involvement in secondary education, he found that that parent involvement influenced grades and standardized test scores by about .5 to .55 SD. The more involved parents are in the school community, the greater the benefits for student learning.

It seems that the most important aspect of parent and school relationships is trust. In a review of his body of research, Hoy (2012) noted that collective faculty trust in students and parents are same measure. Bryk and Schneider (2002) and Tschannen-Moran (2001) both found a strong, positive link between collective trust and teacher-parent cooperation, even after controlling for SES. Tschannen-Moran also found that faculty trust in parents and students as opposed to trust in the principal was related to achievement on state tests (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Bryk and Schneider (2002) also found that student- teacher trust operates through parent-teacher trust. Tarter and Hoy (2004) used a sample of Ohio schools to confirm that faculty trust in parents was related to achievement regardless of SES in elementary school. Additionally, Adams, Forsyth, and Mitchell (2009) used multilevel modeling to examine school-level determinants of individual parent-school trust from a sample of 79 schools and 578 parents drawn randomly from a Midwestern state. Parent's perceived influence on school decisions (β= 5.0, $p < .01$) and school identification ($\beta = 2.7$, $p < .01$) had larger individual effects on

parent-school trust than contextual conditions, showing that the school and how it engages with parents does have influence over this relationship.

In other words, the relationship established between a student's teachers and his or her family has an influence the academic achievement of that child. Teachers need to trust parents, and in turn, parents need to trust teachers in order for students to achieve. Additionally, trust can be developed regardless of any barriers that disparate race or economic status may create between families and staff. In order to ensure trust, the school and family needs to have open communication and the school must reach out and engage the parents.

School Context

There are several school level contextual variables that have been linked to school effectiveness. Schools are context bound, as noted in the framework for this study, there are school, district, and societal level influences on a school that are particularly relevant to a school improvement effort. In order to help frame the data, this section expounds on the how social, economic, and political factors affect schooling. As school reform scholar Michael Fullan (2006) stated, "The real reform agenda is societal development. Not in an abstract sense but empirically. Not in broad strokes, but by identifying precise themes and their consequences for better or worse . . . Sick education systems mirror sick societies" (p.1).

As suggested earlier in this review, Purkey and Smith (1983) introduced the importance of context to the school improvement literature. They cited the research of Barr and Dreeben (1981) who found that school systems were nested layers in which each organizational level sets the context and defines the boundaries for the layer below,

while also finding reciprocal influence between the layers (cited in Purkey & Smith, 1983). Barr and Dreeben (1981) described the school as an organization in which the lowest level was the classroom and the next adjacent layer was the school. The school level structures, which were at the center layer, formed the environment where the classroom functions shaped the quality of the classroom. The quality of the classroom would be either enhanced or diminished by the quality of the school. Then, the school operated within a community that mutually influenced the success or failure of the school-level organizational factors necessary for a school to thrive.

The impact of race and re-segregated schooling can be found in several more recent studies in the field of economics looking at how income segregation produces residential segregation and results in school segregation and social isolation (Cutler, Glaeser & Vigdor, 2012; Jargowsky, 1997; Reardon & Bischoff, 2011; Watson, 2009). Using census data from four years (1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000), Watson (2009) found that an increase in income inequality (1 SD) led to an increase in residential segregation (0.4 to 0.9 SD). Moreover, a recently published report on segregation found that residential segregation for black families was declining but is still high, and that that residential segregation was often coupled with high levels of poverty (Reardon & Biscoff, 2011). The researchers found that the typical black student was now in a school where almost 2 out 3 (64%) students are low-income, which was double the levels of for the typical white and Asian student (37% and 39%, respectively). They suggested that for two decades the trend has been towards increasing school segregation for black students. DeAngelis and Presley (2011) added to this finding by exploring segregated schools that were not high poverty but instead were identified as moderate SES schools. They found

that elementary and middle schools that were predominately black had lower quality teachers and less constructive school climates.

In addition to the research on racially isolated schools, there has been an emerging body of research exploring how poverty impacts student outcomes (Duncan, Morris, & Rodriguez, 2011; Duncan & Murnane, 2011; Evans, 2004; Maynard & Murnane, 1979; Murnane & Willet, 2013; Papay, Murnane, & Willet). Duncan and Murnane (2014) summarized much of this research in a book about the impact of economic inequality on schools in the United States. Using data from a compilation of studies, this book presented the argument that the oft-discussed achievement gap aligns with a growing divergence in economic growth. Whereas shifts in the economy once affected low and high income families in a similar manner, from the 1970's on, the family income for low-income families declined while the income for high-income families rose, allowing richer families to invest more in their children's educational attainment than poorer families.

There is a solid set of research that indicates that there are differences in student outcome based on their family's economic status. Figure 5 captures some of these data.

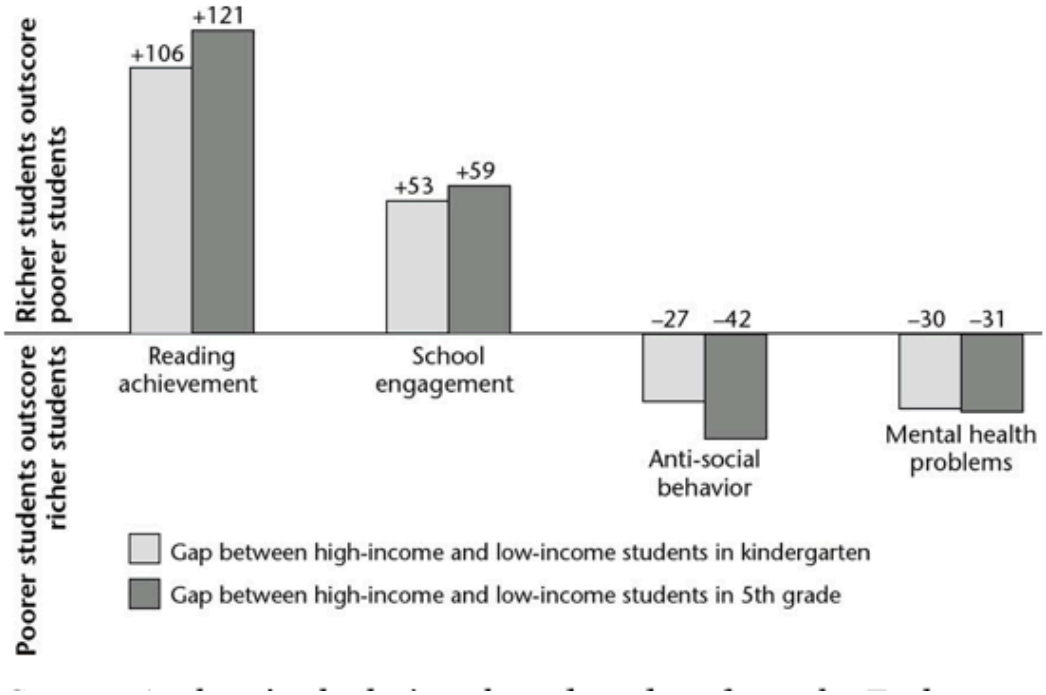


Figure 5. Skills and behavior gaps between low and high income students in kindergarten and 5th grade. Adapted from *Restoring Opportunity: The Crisis of Inequality and the Challenge for American Education* by G. J. Duncan and R. J. Murnane, 2013, Harvard Education Press. Copyright 2013 by Harvard Education Press.

This figure shows the difference between the top and bottom 20% of students in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study in four areas, reading achievement, school engagement, anti-social behavior, and mental health problems. Students from the highest income group already outpaced their lower income peers in reading and school engagement in kindergarten, with lower income students showing a greater tendency towards anti-social behavior and mental health problems. Presenting data from the New Hope study in which a randomly sampled set of families were provided with economic support, the authors suggested that the families that received an income supplement as part of the experiment did significantly better in preschool than the children that did not receive additional funds (Maynard & Murnane, 1979, as cited in Duncan & Murnane, 2014). In addition, Duncan and Murnane (2014) cited the findings from a welfare study

that found that a $3,000 increase in family income resulted in achievement increases equivalent to 20 SAT points, about two-thirds of the current achievement gap, as measured by state tests (Duncan, Morris, & Rodrigues, 2011). Furthermore using Census data, Evans (2004) suggested that more families in poverty are also families of divorce and/or single parent families, with a quarter of children from divorced families in the bottom income quintile in 2000. This evidence suggests that disparities in wealth are related to differences in academic achievement.

There is also a concrete research base in the psychology literature pointing towards the influence that poverty can have on student-level responses (Berliner, 2006; Heckman, 2006; Wilkinson, 2006). Duncan and Murnane also presented research on how factors such as poor nutrition and inadequate health care, more prevalent conditions in low-income families due to an inability to provide those services, affected intellectual development. Evans (2004) provided much of the basis for these claims in his research on how the environment affects kids in poverty, finding that exposure to multiple risks could in fact be a "pathogenic aspect of child poverty" (p. 77). He suggested that children from poverty have more exposure to violence, more contact with aggressive peers, and more affiliation with deviant peers. Most importantly, he provided evidence that children from families with lower incomes were frequently exposed to multiple stressors.

These contextual factors are relevant to the success or failure of an improvement effort. While they are outside of the control of school-level leaders, these realities need to be recognized and when possible and incorporated into planning for school improvement, whether at the state, district, or school level. There are examples of schools succeeding despite the contextual factors holding back student learning; however in order to fully

explore school reform, concerns for schools with high concentrations of racially and economically segregated students who have been exposed to multiple stressors over the course of their lives are unique and important to exploring the effectiveness of low-performing schools.

Conclusion

This body of literature creates the framework for this mixed-methods, cross-case study on a school improvement effort. The essential structures interact within the school's unique social and economic context to determine the success of an improvement effort. School leaders encourage school effectiveness and student achievement indirectly by initiating actions that guide and develop the organizational structures that impact school and classroom conditions directly. Leadership has its greatest influence on student achievement through the practices of setting and managing the school's direction, developing people and the organization, and building relationships within the school community.

While Bryk et al. (2010) found that leadership and the other four essential supports were all related to student learning and a weakness in any one area diminishes the opportunity for change in student learning, other researchers have suggested that instruction or learning climate may take precedence. Collectively, this body of research does seem to suggest that for schools to improve, as measured by increased student achievement, there must be evidence of positive gains in how the leadership guides all four areas.

By providing a coherent framework for student learning and defining the school's instructional focus, the leaders can influence the quality of teaching and learning in the

classroom. Special attention must be paid to both developing individual teachers to grow as professionals and to building a professional community with high relational trust, in which teachers collaborate on designing and implementing curriculum and teaching strategies. These two areas define the instructional direction of the school and the delivery of instruction in the classroom.

High quality teaching will translate into learning when the school environment emphasizes the importance of academics and encourages teachers and students to have high expectations for learning. The school's socio-emotional environment will influence the student's ability to learn. In order to facilitate successful classrooms, the school must be both orderly and safe, provide support for struggling students, and must ensure high quality interactions between students and adults in the building. There needs to be an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust in order for students to respond to the improvement in instruction that will emerge as a result of the focus on instructional guidance and professional capacity. The relationships between students and their school are influenced by the ties that the school has with the families for whom they serve and the community in which they operate. In order to support the school's learning climate, school leaders must also ensure high quality interactions with students' families and increase parent engagement in the schooling process by reaching out to include families and make them feel welcome in the school community. In order for a school to make significant improvements in student learning and academic achievement, school leaders must facilitate improvements in all of these areas.

This review of literature supports the conceptual framework that guides the study. The next chapter will outline my methods for collecting and analyzing data.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This study used a mixed methods case study design because it was both synchronistic with the researcher's paradigmatic assumptions and allowed the researcher to answer the stated research questions (Yin, 2013). This methodology supported an in-depth analysis of the school at similar points, before and after the implementation of a federal SIG, with an emphasis on the similarities and differences in leadership practices and organizational structures at both points in the improvement process.

In accordance with an interpretivist paradigm, this comparative case study of a single school drew on the strengths of qualitative research to understand meaning and processes in a natural context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Through fieldwork and surveys, the researcher explored the staff's perspectives on the improvement process while also being mindful of the school's context. This case study included the perspectives of the principal, assistant principals, teacher leaders, classroom teachers, partner organizations, parents, and students.

The researcher believes that knowledge is constructed through the process of making meaning of experience. This emphasis on making meaning of the world, through entering that world, depends greatly on reflexivity or constant iterative engagement with your findings and your perspectives (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). As a result of the desire to understand individual meaning, the researcher felt it was essential that the data be collected in a social manner, with the researcher entering the site being studied,

thinking both deductively by looking for specific trends put forth in the research and inductively by responding to the distinct character of events found in the school. This study was based on the notion that there is not one true reality but instead reality is locally produced and unique to individuals.

Research Strategy

A comparative case study analysis was employed in order to make meaning of school improvement (Yin, 2013). By comparing the same site at similar points in two different school years, before and after the implementation of a major school improvement effort, the researcher was able to begin an inductive process of concept-formation about school improvement (Collier 1993). This natural discontinuity allowed the researcher to compare the same site as two cases, one case that explores a school improvement effort before the SIG and the second case that looks at a more systematic, school improvement effort after the grant. This strategy also permitted the researcher to analyze data using a small sample, something that cannot be done with statistical analysis. Case study method can be used to make a contribution to theory-building but provides limited opportunity to evaluate a hypothesis; however, the comparative method provides the opportunity for systematic comparison that can at the least help to disconfirm other theories or explanations for a phenomena, making it a stronger research strategy (Lijphart, 1975).

In addition, case study research allows the researchers to explore a contemporary phenomenon in a real world context, which is particularly useful when there are unclear boundaries between the occurrence being studied and the context (Yin, 2013). A case

study strategy allows for investigation of multiple variables and sources of evidence and also allows for description of a complex intervention (Yin, 2013).

Site and Sample

This study used a critical case sampling design focusing on a school in a major, northeastern city that was placed on the priority and focus lists, making it eligible for a forced turnaround and potential closure. The school represented a critical case that allowed the researcher to observe the phenomenon of school change (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2013). Also, the site was selected because the researcher had deep background knowledge of the history of the school.

Site. Reconstituted High School (RHS) was a small, secondary school serving grades 6-12 in a high poverty neighborhood located in a major northeastern city. RHS was located on campus that housed multiple schools in one building that was formerly a comprehensive high school. The school was reconstituted in 2004 as a New Visions school with money from outside contributors. This reform effort disassembled schools with a graduation rate of 45% or less and replaced them with smaller schools, each with a focus on a particular theme (New Visions, 2011). One of the major requirements for these new schools was the existence of school/community partnership. RHS partnered with a local, nonprofit organization that did job training and community development. The new small schools were also expected to use a team teaching model. This school instituted grade level teams, consisting of a teacher for each core subject as well as several specialty teachers.

RHS was a low performing school that came under increased scrutiny at the end of the 2010-11 school year. A new leadership team took over the following school year.

After gaining an understanding of the position and the school during the first year, they began an improvement effort, which was supported by SIG funds starting in the fall of 2013. This improvement effort is the subject of this study, making RHS the ideal site. A detailed description of the site can be found in Chapter 4.

Access/role chosen. The role of the researcher in this study was as a partial participant observer. While the primary focus was to collect thick descriptions of the actions and interactions of the administrative team, the researcher also assisted them by helping with tasks when asked and took a lead role in designing and writing the grant proposal.

Data Collection and Analysis

This study narrows in on data for three schools years: (a) the two school years of the improvement before and after the SIG (2012-2013 and 2013-2014) and (b) the year prior to the improvement effort (2011-2012). During the 2011-2012 school year, the new school leadership team began serving as interim acting administrators, taking the school over from the previous administration. At this point, the school was on the state's priority list of low performing schools. The 2012-2013 school was the first year of the leadership team's improvement effort, prior to the opportunity to apply for a SIG. The 2013-2014 school year was the first year of the implementation of the SIG improvement plan, which included an additional $1 million worth of resources for supporting the school's efforts to increase student learning.

In order to ensure the most complete description of the school improvement effort, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed. This study used a mix of data sources including interviews, observations, and document analysis, as well

as survey data and student learning data, to explore the implementation of a school improvement effort. The model is described in Figure 6.

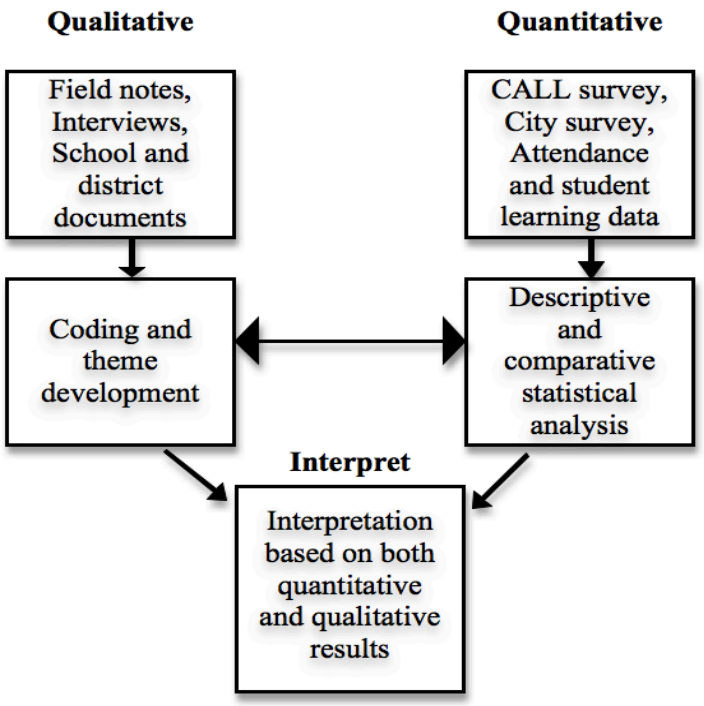


Figure 6. Research strategy for data collection and analysis

Qualitative data collection. There were two points of data collection, the spring of 2013, prior to the federal school improvement grant, and the spring of 2014, one year into the implementation of the federal school improvement grant. In the spring of 2013, the administrative team was attempting to turnaround the school in a less systematic fashion with minimal outside support, while in the spring of 2014, the administrative team was implementing an integrated, systematic improvement effort with substantial outside support.

The first set of observations and interviews were conducted over the course of a week in March of 2013. All observations and interviews were recorded using a LiveScribe Sky 2GB smart pen. Interviews were conducted in person and took place after

school or during the teacher's preparatory period. The participants for the first part of this study were selected to provide the most in depth knowledge about the leadership teams' practices. First the researcher conducted an hour-long interview with the principal, using a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix A). This interview took place on the first day of observations and included questions regarding the process of understanding, shaping, and changing the school culture as well as the internal and external factors that hinder or facilitate the improvement effort. The assistant principal was not available for an interview at this time.

Additionally, the researcher conducted forty-five to seventy-five minute interviews with three teacher leaders, selected from the staff for their role on the school leadership team, both before and after a change in leadership, as well as the dean of school culture and discipline, who also represented the leadership in the school (see protocol in Appendix B). Each teacher had additional roles in order to help the assistant principal with his responsibilities, including programming student schedules, facilitating credit recovery, managing data, administering supplies, covering classes, and organizing school events. They were invested in the school and the success of the administrative team as well as the students. These interviews totaled seven hours of time. These key informants helped to establish the leadership practices and organizational factors to be explored in this study.

The observations focused on the principal, Ms. Oliver, and the assistant principal, Mr. Reynolds, in order to document their lived experiences. The researcher observed the principal and assistant principal each day for a minimum of two hours noting the demands on their time as well as the environmental supports and obstacles they

encountered. These observations occurred in the morning and in the afternoon in order to account for variation in activities at different points in the day. In addition, the researcher attended a school-based professional development, a Team Leaders' meeting, Planning Partners' meetings, several planning meetings, and a pre and post-observation debriefing for a total of 25 hours of observations.

The second round of data collection took place over two weeks in May of 2014. For the second part of this study, the researcher invited all teachers who had been at the school for at least one year prior to the 2012-13 school year to participate in an interview. In addition, email invitations were sent to specific teachers to ensure a representative group, including teachers who had been there 2-5 years and 5 years or more, as well as teachers from multiple grade levels and various subjects. In addition, participants from the Spring of 2013 were explicitly asked to take part in the second part of the study to ensure that everyone who was interviewed for the first part of the study participated in the second set of interviews. Also, the researcher invited a representative from the two major partnerships to participate in a semi-structured interview (see protocol in Appendix F).

The final set of interviews included conversations with: (a) ten teachers (see protocol in Appendix C); including the teacher leaders (b) five support staff, including the two deans (see protocol in Appendix D) (c) all three administrators, including the newly hired assistant principal (see protocol in Appendix E); and (d) two employees of the partner organizations, both of whom were in supervisory positions (see protocol in Appendix F). Four of the staff members had been at the school between 2-5 years and the remaining teachers and support staff had been at the school for over five years. Seven of

the teachers taught science or math, two taught special education, and one was a humanities teacher. This sample included 18 school-based employees, representing more than half (62%) of the 29 eligible participants.

These interviews used an updated protocol including the same questions from the previous spring, plus new grant specific questions. The interview protocols are included in the appendix (Appendices A, B, C, D, E, and F). The interviews with the school leaders focused on setting and managing direction for the school, developing people, redesigning the organization, improving instruction, the grant, and contextual factors (see protocol in Appendix E). The interviews with the teachers included questions on his/her role in the school, their understanding of the improvement effort, and the partnerships and new staff positions. The teacher interview also included questions about the school leaders, specifically regarding how they managed and set direction for the school, managed staff relationships, and supported instruction (Appendix C). A reduced version of this protocol was adapted for the deans and additional support staff, focusing on the socio-emotional supports provided by the grant (Appendix D), as well as for the partners, focusing on the services they provided (Appendix E). For more information on the development of the interview protocols, see Appendix G, which provides a rationale for the alignment of the interview protocols with the research questions.

The second set of observations focused again on the principal and the assistant principal in order to assure that the experience was similar to the previous spring semester. The second assistant principal, who was hired with grant funds, was not engaged in the improvement process so the researcher conducted an interview with him but did not observe him. There were 40 hours of observations in total. These observations

included: (a) two Leadership Cabinet meetings; (b) one Team Leaders' meeting; (c) one Recruitment Cabinet Meeting; (d) two meetings with the grant-provided leadership coach; (e) three informal observations of teachers conducted by the principal; (f) one School Climate Grant Coordinator Meeting; (g) one emergency suspension rate meeting in response to an article in the newspaper; (h) one meeting with the head of safety for that region of the city; and (h) several 15-60 minute observations of both the principal and assistant principal engaging in daily tasks.

Prior to both visits, the researcher reviewed several documents available to the public, including the district restructuring documents, the school survey and report card, and the budget. Furthermore, planning documents, as well as professional development resources used by the school, were collected and analyzed. These documents included state issued school report cards and quality reviews for the years 2008-2013, administrator goals (SCEP PLAN 2012-2013 and 2013-2014; TAP 2012-2013 and 2013-2014; Principal Performance Review Goals 2012-2013 and 2013-2014), observation protocols and evaluation tools, planning and teacher handbook documents, professional development scope and sequence, and pictures of bulletin boards and other evidence of culture development. Also, the researcher collected the SIG application and accompanying documents as well as the Grant Continuation application, which was completed in May of 2014.

Researcher as instrument statement. It is relevant to mention that I was a teacher at this school for five consecutive school years, leaving at the end of the 2010-2011 school year in order to pursue doctoral studies. When I began teaching at the school, I had taught for several years in Virginia and was a licensed teacher who had gone through

a traditional route to teaching in an adult degree program. In my time at the school, I was a high school teacher, a dean of discipline, a team leader, and the school events coordinator. My level of involvement in the school was high and I was invested as a teacher leader.

My concern about this school and its declining achievement motivated me to go back to graduate school and to complete this study. This relationship with the school provides me access to the information and people involved with the school, as well as extensive background knowledge. I do not believe my prior experience poses a problem with subjectivity, because I believe that reality cannot be separated from the person and that it is contextual (Erikson, 1986). Furthermore, the assertions included in this paper are based on evidence from the interviews and observation and not only from my prior experience. Through ongoing self-assessment in a methodological journal, I assure that the focus is on the participants' perspectives, while also recognizing how my subjectivity can add an important perspective to the study.

Quantitative data collection. In addition to the qualitative data presented in this chapter, this study also explores multiple sources of survey data to help to substantiate the results of the interviews, observations, and document analysis.

CALL survey instrument. In order to measure leadership practices and identify the existence of the school level essential supports, the researcher used the Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning (CALL) survey, a validated tool, to measure the leadership tasks that support the school improvement effort (Kelley & Halverson, 2012). The CALL is an on-line, 360° formative assessment and feedback system for middle and high schools, which was designed to measure school-wide

leadership for learning practices from the perspective of school leaders and staff. There are two versions of the survey, one for the leadership team and one for the teachers. Sample questions are included in Appendix H.

The CALL was designed to measure the presence of formal and informal leadership practices distributed throughout the school that promote student learning and advance learning equity (Kelley & Halverson, 2012). The CALL tool, which was administered to teachers and administrators in the spring of 2014, provided information on leadership tasks as well as evidence that the school leaders were enacting practices to support learning in the school and classrooms. This instrument assumed a distributed leadership, such as the one used at RHS. This tool captured the practices of both formal and informal leaders. Additionally, the focus on shared leadership meant that the items of the survey were not measuring the actions of individuals but instead the presence of certain school wide organizational and classroom practices.

There were four domains in the CALL survey given to the staff at RHS, each with four to five accompanying subdomains. They included: (a) Focus on Learning, (b) Monitoring Teaching and Learning, (c) Building Nested Learning Communities, and (d) Maintaining a Safe and Effective Learning Environment. A fifth domain was excluded to shorten the length of time necessary to complete the CALL. The domains in the tool correspond with the essential supports suggested by Bryk et al. (2010) and, in turn, with the theory of action laid out in the grant (See overview in Appendix I). Data for each subdomain is presented for the whole school, the teachers, the administrators, the support staff, and teacher leaders.

There were eight CALL subdomains that aligned with instructional guidance. Four of them were from the domain "Focus on Learning" including (a) maintaining a school-wide Focus on Learning; (b) collaborative school-wide focus on problems of teaching and learning; (c) formal leaders are recognized as instructional leaders; and (d) collaborative design of integrated learning plan. In addition the rest of the survey responses about instructional guidance were from the domain "Monitoring teaching and learning" with four subdomains: (e) formative evaluation of student learning; (f) summative evaluation of student learning; (g) formative evaluation of teaching; and (h) summative evaluation of teaching. Three subdomains that were part of the domain entitled "Building Nested Learning Communities" measured professional capacity. The CALL survey domain "Maintaining a Safe and Effective Learning Environment," consisted of four subdomains. Three of those subdomains aligned with the definition of a student-centered learning climate: (a) clear, consistent and enforced expectations for student behavior; (b) clean and safe learning environment; and (c) student support services provide safe haven for students who traditionally struggle. In addition this section includes the subdomain "Providing appropriate services for student who traditionally struggle." More information on the subdomains is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

CALL Subdomains Measuring Essential Supports

CALL Subdomain	#	The questions asked about:
		Instructional Guidance
Maintaining a school-wide focus on learning	7	- how the school leaders provided time to discuss student data - support services, common language, and technology - engaging staff members in collaborative conversations to build a shared vision for student learning

(continued)

Table 1

CALL Subdomains Measuring Essential Supports

CALL Subdomain	#	The questions asked about:
Collaborative school-wide focus on problems of teaching and learning	4	- providing time to discuss strategies for instruction regularly and about whether the school had a school improvement plan - how well professional development reflected the instructional goals and how teachers created plans to improve instruction
Formal leaders are recognized as instructional leaders	6	- whether formal leaders cared about certain tasks, such as setting a clear vision for teaching and learning, holding teachers and others accountable for achieving high levels of teaching and learning, and working individually with teachers to improve teaching and learning in the classroom - whether the principal attended and participated in activities - the frequency of school leaders conducting classroom visits and learning walks
Collaborative design of integrated learning plan	4	- whether designing an integrated learning plan for improving instruction had been developed - how often teachers created plans to improve instruction - how often school leaders scheduled time for teachers to discuss strategies for instruction - how aligned school goals were with professional development
Formative evaluation of student learning	9	- data the school collected and used to set goals and evaluate progress towards student learning - how often do teachers assess student understanding in their classrooms in order to adapt and form strategies for instruction - how the results from school-wide formative assessments predicted and improved student performance on state standardized tests - how often school leaders schedule time to discuss formative assessments of student with teachers - how well students in the class could describe their daily work in a given class
Summative evaluation of student learning	6	- information gathered to set goals and evaluate progress, including student scores on state tests and student scores on district tests - how important it was to school leaders to carefully analyze data to identify needs for school improvement - whether the school had a common standards-based approach to student grading as part of a formal plan - how and where students were prepared for state exams
Formative evaluation of teaching	14	- how formative feedback was delivered - about how much specific formative feedback practices enhanced teaching for the typical teacher - how the same set of practices enhanced their own teaching
Summative evaluation of teaching	14	- the frequency of different kinds of instructional visits - results from teacher evaluations and observations of teaching were used to set goals and evaluate progress - how the formal evaluation process improved teaching,

(continued)

Table 1

CALL Subdomains Measuring Essential Supports

CALL Subdomain	#	The questions asked about:
		Professional Capacity
Professional learning	5	- how formal plans were developed and used to improve student learning - how much of an impact professional learning had on teaching practices - how the school leaders assessed the effectiveness of school-wide professional development activities
Coaching and mentoring	14	- how formal processes were developed and used to improve student learning - how instructional coaching was implemented
Socially distributed leadership	8	- how the school's Leadership Team members participated in decision-making - how important it was to the leaders to develop the instructional leadership of department chairs, grade level or instructional team leaders, and others - how important it was to the leaders to hire or train specialists that provide guidance on instruction - how much school leaders encourage teachers and staff to share new practices with other staff members - how the teachers and staff responded in general when school leaders introduced significant changes that affected instruction
		Student-centered Learning Climate
Clear, consistent and enforced expectations for student behavior	21	- differences in handing student discipline for different subgroups of students - school-wide expectations - how effective the discipline policies were in achieving a set of goals - school leaders scheduling time for teachers to discuss student behavior on a regular basis and enforcing policies to ensure a safe learning environment
Clean and safe learning environment	18	- whether there was a clean and safe learning environment - how to the learning environment - how often school wide announcements interrupted teaching - whether the school used surveys on school climate to set goals and evaluate practice
Student support services provide safe haven for students who traditionally struggle	16	- whether particular groups of student with learning challenges were over-identified as needing support services, under-identified as needing support services, or neither - how the school supported the transition at graduation from middle and high school - the impact of services for ELL students, special education students, and students in danger of dropping out - teacher and student relationships
(d) Providing appropriate services for student who traditionally struggle	16	- the manner in which specific subgroups were educated

Validation. The instrument was validated in a multi-step process. First, the survey was created based on an extensive literature review regarding effective leadership practices as well as the themes captured by the domains (Kelley & Halverson, 2012). In order to establish item selection and construct validation, the researchers held practitioner focus groups, which met seven times over four months. These groups discussed the questions under each domain in order to explore the clarity of the language, the choice of language, the importance of the questions, and the relevance of the questions (Kelley & Halverson, 2012). As the next step, the researchers administered the survey to 78 school leaders and then discussed the survey in focus groups, focusing on rating "the clarity of CALL survey items, and provided feedback on the utility of CALL data for application to school-level decision making" (Kelley & Halverson, 2013, p. 12).

During the second year, the creators began pilot testing with 1784 educators, while continuing to make revisions. They conducted an initial reliability analysis with Cronbach's Alpha reliability scores of .7 or above for 11 of the 16 sub-domain scales. If the reliability scores were below .7, they revised that item and remeasured the reliability (Kelley & Halverson, 2013). In addition, they conducted a Rasch analysis, which uses item response theory (IRT) to compare individual responses to the common group response. This reliability test resulted in similar statistics to the Cronbach's Alpha and items with low scores were revised. The researchers make the argument that due to the limited number of subdomains under each domain, reliability scores were low. Other analyses included a variance decomposition to assess within-school versus across-school variance of survey items, indicating more variance within schools than across schools; and they looked at frequency distributions. Finally, the researchers worked with experts

at the University of Wisconsin Survey Center for further revisions of the instrument and assistance in developing a Web-based platform for administration of the survey.

Study sampling. The survey was administered to all RHS classroom teachers and administrators in May of 2014. The staff has 33 full time teachers, support staff, and administrators, who were all invited to respond to the survey. The survey takes around thirty minutes to complete, since it is rather extensive, which may result in less than optimal response rates, limiting the sample size even further.

Scoring. Each question on the CALL survey is scored on a scale from "1," the lowest rating on the scale to "5," the highest rating on the scale. Averages can be determined for each item, each subdomain, and each domain. Scores were reported for all survey participants but could also be filtered by role (i.e. administrator, support staff, teacher leader, teacher) and department.

Response rate. Data were available for the whole school, the teachers, the administrators, the support staff, and teacher leaders. The response rate for this survey was 88% with 29 of the 33 eligible staff members reporting. There were several teachers out on leave at the time that the survey was given but the decision was made not to administer the survey to the long-term substitutes in those positions.

The survey was given during a staff professional development and several teacher leaders were pulled to have a meeting. Those staff members were responsible for taking the survey on their own time, which may account for the missing teachers and introduce some bias. On the other hand, the purpose of administering the survey at this time was to support or question the qualitative findings. The aforementioned teacher leaders all participated in the interviews, providing detailed responses to the areas of inquiry. Also,

the survey takes over a half hour to complete. Judging from the number of responses to individual question, people skipped questions or did not complete the survey. A number of the questions have closer to 21 respondents.

City surveys instrument. Each year since the spring of 2007, the city administered a survey to parents, teachers, and students with questions about the school and the school leaders. Until the spring of 2014, each survey was divided into four sections; (a) academic expectations; (b) communication; (c) student engagement; and (d) safety and respect. In the spring of 2014, many of the questions were the same but the sections were renamed to include: (a) instructional core; (b) systems for improvement; and (c) school culture.

Prior to the 2013-2014 school year, the survey scores had been one of the primary sources, along with student attendance for determining the school environment grade on the city progress report. The city did not give report card grades for the 2013-2014 school year. The responses from the survey resulted in a D for the middle school in the spring of 2012 and 2013 and an F for the high school in the spring of 2012 and a C in the spring of 2013. These report card scores indicate that overall the responses found on the survey were at or below the city's average and are not suggestive of high levels of school success. It is worth noting that overall the scores improved for the high school in the spring of 2013, indicating some improvement. The city changed their system for reporting progress during the 2013-2014, no longer giving grades.

Sampling. Using publically available survey data from the city, this study compared responses for the questions across all three years (2012, 2013, 2014) and identified all of the questions that were asked to each group of respondents (parents,

students, and teachers) each of the years. If the question was not included across all three years, the question was not included in the analysis, except for some questions that were asked specifically about professional development and new city policies during the spring of 2014.

There were slight differences in the wording for some questions. See Appendix J for more detail. In most cases, the questions remained the same. For instance, in 2012 the question would be "I feel safe at my school" while in the subsequent years the questions was "At my school, I feel safe." There were some questions where the word "teacher" was replaced with the word "adult." No questions in which the meaning of the questions changed were included in this study. The data from these questions were used to support the qualitative findings about the structure and content of professional development at the school.

Scoring. The questions fit into four main categories: (a) How much do you agree with the following statements. . (b) How satisfied are you with the following . . . (c) To what extent, do you feel . . . ; and (d) At my school, this happens . . . .For each question, the data was reported as a scale score between 1 and 10 and a percentage. Percentages were rounded to the second decimal place, meaning that in some cases the total for all four responses exceeded 100%.

Response rate. When using survey data, is important to report the survey response rate to help indicate if there was sampling bias, meaning some members of the population were over or under represented in the sample. Especially when dealing with small sample sizes, it is important to have high response rates. The response rates for the survey are indicated are in Table 2.

Table 2

City Survey Response Rates for Each Subgroup

	2011-2012 RHS	2011-2012 City	2012-2013 RHS	2012-2013 City	2013-2014 RHS	2013-2014 City
Parents	48% (181)	53%	61% (200)	54%	65% (197)	53%
Students	82% (322)	82%	93% (324)	83%	86% (269)	83%
Teachers	85% (29)	81%	100% (34)	83%	100% (35)	83%

For each group, across the three school years, the response rates for RHS were above the average for the city. The response rates were very high for the teachers, reaching 100% of the teaching staff in the spring of 2013 and 2014. For the spring of 2012, the response rate was 85%, still indicating very little sampling bias. The students had lower response rates than the teachers but for all three years they were above 80%, with a high of 93% reporting in the spring of 2013. Finally, the response rates for the parents are lower than the ideal rate but still high enough to include.

While there may be some sampling bias introduced as a result of the lower response rates, especially in the spring of 2012, it is also worth noting that change over the three years could also be the result of the growing sample size influencing the responses. Also interestingly, in the spring of 2011, the response rates for the students and teachers were consistent with later rates, but the parent response rate was only 25%. This increased parent participation suggests an effort on the part of the administration to increase their parent engagement by encouraging their feedback, something that was observed in a team leaders' meeting in the spring of 2013.

Student learning data. The last set of data came from publically available data provided by the city, including graphs used in the end of the year school quality reports for each school (www.city.org). These data helped to put the school's results in the

context of the city's expectations. All of the graphs provided values for the year prior to the improvement effort (2011-2012), the first year of the improvement effort before the SIG (2012-2013), and the first year of the improvement effort after the SIG (2013-2014).

The graphs presented in Appendix L compare the school to peer schools and all city schools. Peer schools were defined for middle school based on the following characteristics: (a) 4th grade ELA and Math state exam average proficiency, (b) percent of students overage upon entry into 6th grade, and (c) percent of student with disabilities. For the high schools, peer schools are determined using (a) 8th grade ELA and Math state exam average proficiency, (b) percent of overage students, (c) percent of special education students, and (d) percent of special education students with self-contained placements.

Qualitative data analysis methods. The qualitative analysis used a mix of approaches (Patton, 1990). While the literature base was used to develop a conceptual model that translated into sensitizing concepts to begin the analysis (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Patton, 1990), the specific findings within those deductively-derived themes were developed more fully through inductive reasoning, identifying patterned regularities in the data (Wolcott, 1994) and patterns and themes across the cases (Patton, 1990) through line-by-line coding. Detailed memo writing about each major theme (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) supported the thematic analysis.

All survey, interview, and observation data were written-up, coded, and analyzed for evidentiary assertions. Observations were recorded using detailed field notes with thick, rich descriptions of the actions of the administrators and the context of the school.

Within twenty-four hours of the observation, the researcher produced write-ups with detailed notes about the observations and beginning analysis. Accordingly, both the researcher and a contracted transcription company transcribed the interviews. Finally, the researcher collected documents that elucidated the findings and supported the emerging themes. These multiple sources of information allowed for triangulation.

Coding. All of the qualitative data, including the collected documents, were coded using the NVivo 10.0 qualitative data analysis program. The unit of analysis for coding was sentence by sentence. If several sentences fit together as a complete thought, that entire section was coded with the same code. In some cases, a sentence included data for more than one code, and the sentence was broken down accordingly. The researcher coded every line of the interviews, excluding the questions, unless the question was relevant for understanding the response. In addition, the observations were coded in chunks based on a shift of activity or dialogue.

First the researcher went through and did a mixture of coding including invivo, thematic, and versus coding for the set of interviews that took place with the same people in the spring of 2013 and 2014 (Saldana, 2013). Then those codes were synthesized and saved in an NVivo file. The researcher reduced the data to the following major themes (building learning communities, building relationships, challenges, developing the organization to support desired practices, district-level contextual factors, grant implementation, history of school, instructional leadership, managing people, monitoring improvement, parent involvement, partnerships, professional learning communities, school-level contextual factors, setting direction, shared leadership, student learning climate, student-level factors, time, and trust). Each of those themes had subcategories.

From there, the researcher coded the remaining interviews using the same mix of coding techniques, as well as the sentence by sentence unit of analysis, that were applied to the first group, while also coding the major themes. Lastly, the researcher coded the observation data as well as the documents from the spring of 2013, followed by the spring of 2014, coding these data by theme.

After all of the qualitative data were coded, the data were condensed within each theme, reducing the number of subthemes. Each theme was then explored using analytic memos where the data was grouped into units of understanding and interpreted for meaning. The researcher continued in an iterative process to reduce and make sense of the data, creating concept maps and tables to help condense the ideas (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Quantitative survey analysis. The CALL data were available as a summary report, with item totals for the domains and subdomains and with identified areas of strength and areas most in need of improvement. The summary report also allowed the researcher to look at the total responses and results for individual questions.

For the city surveys, the researcher extrapolated the data from the survey reports. Those percentages were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet for each question included in the set. The corresponding number of respondents was calculated for each response. These responses were then used to create stacked bar graphs that describe the change in the responses for each question over time. Trends were determined for each question. For those questions asked to more than one group, those responses are also compared. The questions were organized by theme according to the conceptual framework. Summary

analysis reports were created to correspond to each graph, highlighting trends and changes across time. The graphs and summary reports can be found in Appendix J.

Chi Square. In addition to a comparative analysis, all questions from the city surveys that were related directly to any aspect of the improvement plan were explored for statistical significance, using the Chi Square method. The Chi square test can be used when the independent and dependent variables are both categorical to compare the observed data with the expected data to determine the "goodness of fit" (Field, 2009). The values used for calculations are counts of categorical responses, not percentages. In order to ensure the accuracy of the test, the count for each categorical response must be more than five.

This test determines if the deviation of the observed data from the expected data is a matter of chance or if it is the result of the improvement effort. The formula for the Chi square test statistic is: $X^{2=} \Sigma (o-e)^2/e$, o=observed, e=expected. The Chi-square (X^2) is the sum of the deviation between the observed and expected squared, divided by the expected value for each category. In order to determine the expected value, the researcher totals up the row and columns for the total observed cases, using the row totals to determine the expected values.

The chi square statistic was calculated, adding the number of categories and subtracting one to determine the degrees of freedom. Using the Chi square distribution table, the researcher determined the alpha significance level, which is commonly agreed to be $p < .05$, and using the degrees of freedom, located the probability value. If that probability value was less than the significance level, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis. For this study, the null hypothesis was that the improvement effort did

nothing to change responses to the individual questions; while the alternative hypothesis is that the improvement effort did something to change responses to the individual questions.

Chi-square tests were conducted for both variables directly related to the improvement effort and variables that should not have been influenced by the SIG plan. These values were calculated in order to show that there were not significant differences between the dependent variables before and after the grant for those areas not specifically meant to change throughout the improvement effort. Those results of the only two significant variables are included in Appendix K.

Integrated analysis. In accordance with analytic induction, several assertions were formed and reformed based on the qualitative and quantitative evidence (Erickson, 1085). The data analysis resulted in empirical assertions using quotes from field notes, and quotes from interviews that provide particular description and general description as well as commentary. Erickson (1985) defined the work of an interpretive researcher as combining the close analysis of fine details of behavior and the meaning in everyday social action with analysis of the wider societal context. Through a back and forth flow of deductive and inductive reasoning, this study systematically investigated the phenomena of everyday interaction, the subjective meaning, and the wider social context to help explain the experience of the leadership team in a low performing school undergoing an improvement effort.

These assertions were intended to provide a statement of fact that included all data, including outlier data, and summarize the findings for each research question (Erikson, 1985). For each research question, there are three to five sub-assertions and one

major assertion. The sub-assertions help to build the evidence for the summary statement of the findings presented in the main assertions. These assertions were reached using a mixed-methods triangulation design (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson 2003). All qualitative data were triangulated using the quantitative data, with simultaneous data collection and analysis (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson 2003). Only assertions supported by the qualitative data and quantitative data were included in the final analysis. Discrepant results were sought within the entire data set in order to alter the assertions based on both the confirming and disconfirming evidence (Erickson, 1985). When evidence seemed to refute the original assertion, the assertion was modified to reflect the multiple perspectives.

Criteria for validity employed. Establishing validity in qualitative research requires the researcher to establish trustworthiness and credibility. To help assure validity, the researcher looked for both confirming and disconfirming evidence. Glaser and Strauss (1967) called this process negative case analysis, in which the researcher looks for results that don't fit the analysis. Additionally by triangulating the data between observations, interviews, documents, and survey credibility was established (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By including four types of data and the perspectives of a number of stakeholders, the conclusions are more reliable. Lastly, the researcher kept a reflexive journal, exploring the reasons for and intentions of conclusions drawn as well as the themes explored.

Limitations

As with all research, particularly in the social sciences, limitations arise that must be acknowledged. The research design was created to best answer the questions put forth

by the researcher. In order to have an in depth analysis of one site, the sample size was reduced to the school level. Due to the small sample size, the findings can't be generalized, meaning that the themes that emerge at RHS can't necessarily be applied to another setting; however, the trends identified at this school will add to the knowledge base about school improvement. Context is important, and there may be similar contexts that can benefit from this research.

Another concern is that the researcher's previous relationship with several of the interviewees could have biased the responses. In particular, having had a similar lived experience, there may have been the tendency to focus on the negative aspects of the school as opposed to the more positive changes. As an insider, the researcher is more able to commiserate about obstacles and challenges they face.

Finally, the student learning data reflect an aggregate of all the students in the school. Despite repeated attempts, the researcher was unable to procure individual level data that would allow the comparison of those students who attended the school both before and after the improvement effort, which would provide a more accurate assessment of the learning gains achieved or not achieved as a result of the improvement effort. These limitations should be considered when utilizing the data.

CHAPTER 4: SITE AND CONTEXT

The unit of analysis for this study was the organization or school. Patton (1990) explained that the purpose of case study research was to explain the chosen unit of analysis holistically, with great detail and with context. In order to effectively describe the school improvement effort at the RHS, it is germane to provide details about the school's academic and social environment prior to and during the efforts taken by the leadership and staff to turnaround RHS.

Organizational History

Looking at the historical context of the school helps to provide insight on the current school improvement effort. Since RHS was reconstituted in 2004, it was possible to provide a complete organizational history. RHS provided an interesting case because the school was relatively young and had shown significant periods of improvement and decline based on the school progress, with the first period of decline occurring within a few years of the school's opening. For the purpose of this study, this brief organizational history focuses on the turnover of the leadership, the structure of the school, and the pattern of decline**.**

Turnover of Leadership

The school had a founding principal who led the school from 2004-05 until the spring of 2008, at which point, the assistant principal, who had begun working in that position at the school in 2006-07, became the principal. She left in the spring of 2011, along with her assistant principal, a former teacher at the school, who became assistant principal the same year that the 2nd principal took over. In 2011-12, the new leadership

team that is the focus of this study became the leaders; both of whom had been teaching at the school for at least three years and had teaching experience in other schools. Ms. Oliver became the principal and Mr. Reynolds became the assistant principal. Each of the administrators, from the founding principal to the current leadership, was a first time principal or assistant principal, newly out of preparation programs, when they took the position. Aside from the original principal and assistant principal, they were all recruited from within the school.

Structure of the School

The school began in 2004-05 with just a sixth and ninth grade, adding 7th and 10th the next year, and 8th and 11th the year after that. In 2007-08, the school reached the full 6th-12th enrollment with 117 students in the middle school and 290 students in the high school, for a total enrollment of 467 students. Enrollment declined after that with the school facing the largest reduction of students between the 2010-11 school year (406 students) and the 2011-12 school year (353 students).

Pattern of Decline

In the spring of 2008, the city began using progress reports to assess the success of their schools. These reports looked at three primary areas of the school: (a) student progress, (b) student performance, and (c) school environment. More information on these accountability measures and the current structure of the school is provided below. The summative results of these progress reports are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

School Progress Report Grades for the Middle and High schools, Years 2007-07 to 2013-14

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Middle school	C	B	C	D	B	B	D
High school	A	B	C	D	C	B	B

There was a great deal of fluctuation in the school's success as evidenced by the scores in Table 3. The school received the lowest overall scores for both the middle and the high school at the end of the 2010-11 school year, the same time that the former principal and assistant decided to leave and the new administrative team that is the focus of this study took over the school. At this point, the school was placed on the School In Need of Improvement (SINI) list making it eligible for a federally funded turnaround.

Letters were sent to all the parents informing them of RHS's low progress report scores in the spring of 2011, offering them an opportunity to choose a different school for their son or daughter. In fact, many parents decided to transfer their child. Additionally since the city used a matching system to assign students to schools, these scores influenced parents making the initial decision as to where to send their son or daughter for middle or high school, leading to decreasing numbers of students in the incoming classes. Enrollment was down from previous years despite the capacity for a larger student body, which also reduced the school's budget.

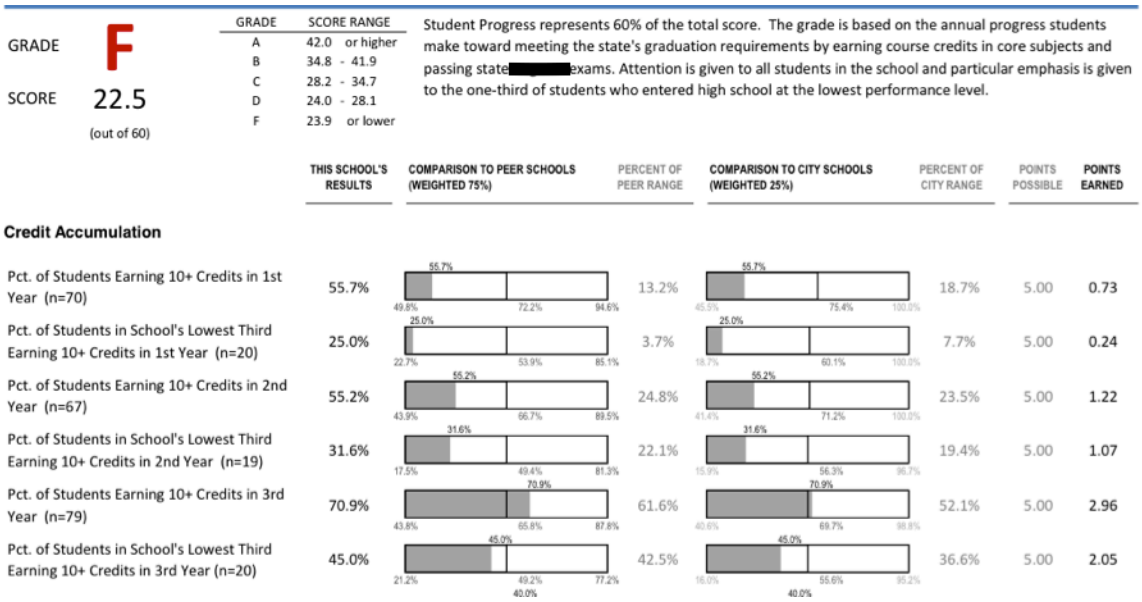
SINI status. The primary reason that the school was placed on the School In Need of Improvement (SINI) list was that student performance was lagging behind both the city average and the goals laid out in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

(ESEA). There were three main aspects of the school considered to establish placement on the SINI list: student progress, student performance, and student environment. The city considered student scores on state exams as the primary measure of school success.

Student progress and performance. Student progress at the high school level was measured by both course credit accumulation and pass rates on required state exams, which included five exams: math, English, science, United States History, and World History. At the middle school level, progress was determined by the change in student scores, as compared to the previous year, for the two state exams in math and English. To measure student performance at the high school level, the city used the school's graduation rates, which incorporated both, class grades and achievement scores, since both are used to determine graduation. At the middle school level, the city evaluated the test scores on the state exams.

To establish the academic progress and performance at RHS, this section reports data from the 2010-11 school year at the high school level. In Figure 7, as well as the following graphics, the school's report card results are represented using horizontal bars indicating how the school compares to peer schools as well as all schools citywide. The horizontal bars represent the range of scores with the center bar representing the city wide mean. The grayed-in area indicates the school's data and allows the reader to compare the target school to the mean. The set of graphs on the left hand side indicates the schools that are considered "peer schools," which are schools with similar demographics and geographic locations. The graphs on the right indicate the school's achievement data as compared to all schools in the city.

These data were used to determine the school's status as a focus school and their eligibility for the SIG grant. These student progress and performance data as well as the school environment data were used to determine the school's grade for the city report card. Student progress made up 60% of the overall score.



GRADE F

SCORE 22.5 (out of 60)

GRADE	SCORE RANGE
A	42.0 or higher
B	34.8 - 41.9
C	28.2 - 34.7
D	24.0 - 28.1
F	23.9 or lower

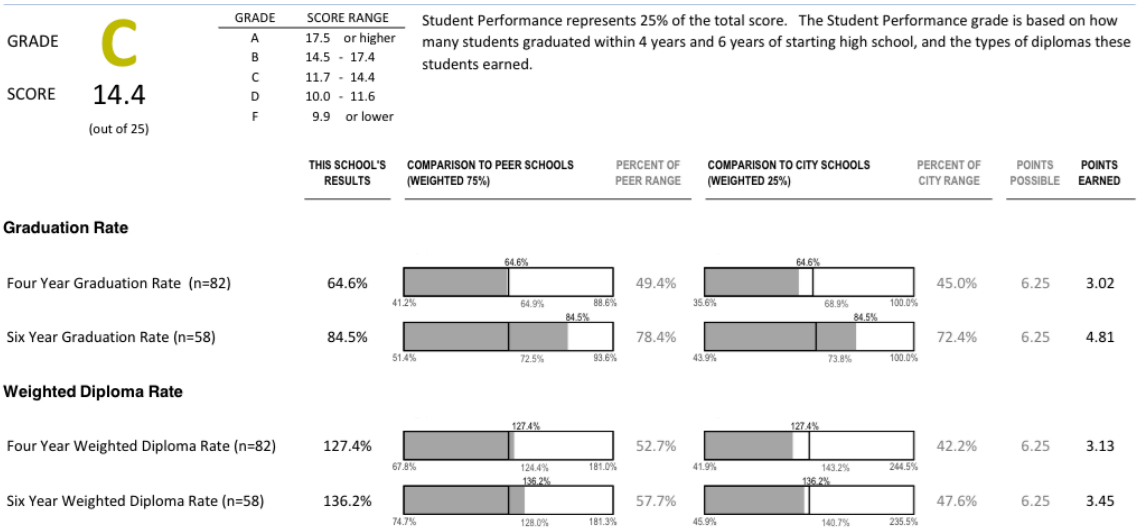
Student Progress represents 60% of the total score. The grade is based on the annual progress students make toward meeting the state's graduation requirements by earning course credits in core subjects and passing state [redacted] exams. Attention is given to all students in the school and particular emphasis is given to the one-third of students who entered high school at the lowest performance level.

	THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	COMPARISON TO CITY SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 25%)	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
Credit Accumulation							
Pct. of Students Earning 10+ Credits in 1st Year (n=70)	55.7%	55.7% (49.8% – 72.2% – 94.6%)	13.2%	55.7% (45.5% – 75.4% – 100.0%)	18.7%	5.00	0.73
Pct. of Students in School's Lowest Third Earning 10+ Credits in 1st Year (n=20)	25.0%	25.0% (22.7% – 53.9% – 85.1%)	3.7%	25.0% (18.7% – 60.1% – 100.0%)	7.7%	5.00	0.24
Pct. of Students Earning 10+ Credits in 2nd Year (n=67)	55.2%	55.2% (43.9% – 66.7% – 89.5%)	24.8%	55.2% (41.4% – 71.2% – 100.0%)	23.5%	5.00	1.22
Pct. of Students in School's Lowest Third Earning 10+ Credits in 2nd Year (n=19)	31.6%	31.6% (17.5% – 49.4% – 81.3%)	22.1%	31.6% (15.9% – 56.3% – 96.7%)	19.4%	5.00	1.07
Pct. of Students Earning 10+ Credits in 3rd Year (n=79)	70.9%	70.9% (43.8% – 65.8% – 87.8%)	61.6%	70.9% (40.6% – 69.7% – 98.8%)	52.1%	5.00	2.96
Pct. of Students in School's Lowest Third Earning 10+ Credits in 3rd Year (n=20)	45.0%	45.0% (21.2% – 49.2% – 77.2% 40.0%)	42.5%	45.0% (16.0% – 55.6% – 95.2% 40.0%)	36.6%	5.00	2.05

Figure 7. Student progress data 2011-2012 for RHS. Retrieved from DOE website.

The course credit accumulation for all groups in their first and second year was behind the peer and citywide range, making up only 13.2% and 18% of the range respectively; however, RHS students had above average credit accumulation for the third year. Aside from English, the pass rates for state exams were behind the peer and city average for all other subjects.

Another measure of student learning was the graduation rate or the "student performance score" on the state report card, which makes up 25% of the overall grade for the school. These results are displayed in Figure 8.



GRADE C

SCORE 14.4 (out of 25)

GRADE	SCORE RANGE
A	17.5 or higher
B	14.5 - 17.4
C	11.7 - 14.4
D	10.0 - 11.6
F	9.9 or lower

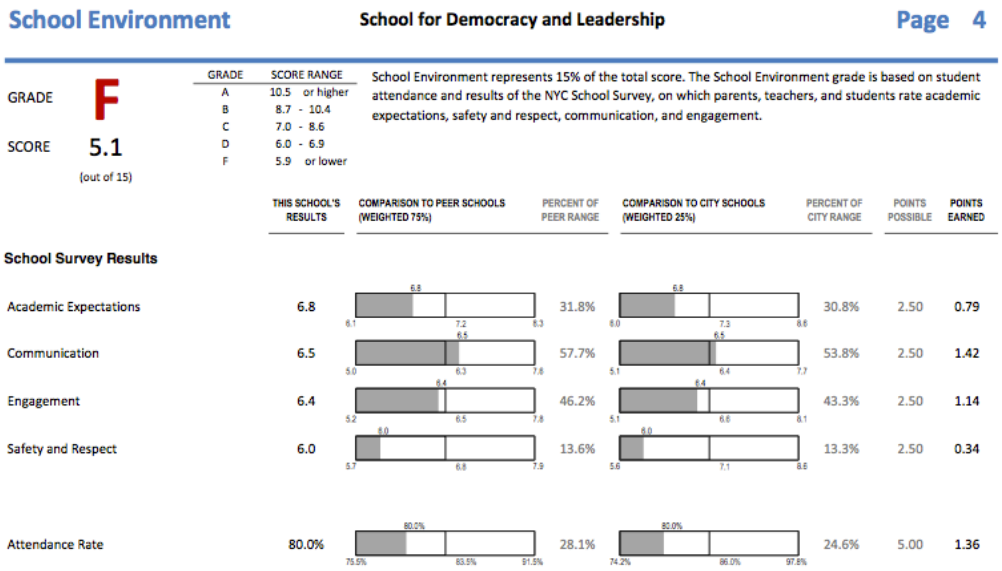
Student Performance represents 25% of the total score. The Student Performance grade is based on how many students graduated within 4 years and 6 years of starting high school, and the types of diplomas these students earned.

	THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	COMPARISON TO CITY SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 25%)	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
Graduation Rate							
Four Year Graduation Rate (n=82)	64.6%	41.2% 64.9% 88.6%	49.4%	35.6% 68.9% 100.0%	45.0%	6.25	3.02
Six Year Graduation Rate (n=58)	84.5%	51.4% 72.5% 93.6%	78.4%	43.9% 73.8% 100.0%	72.4%	6.25	4.81
Weighted Diploma Rate							
Four Year Weighted Diploma Rate (n=82)	127.4%	67.8% 124.4% 181.0%	52.7%	41.9% 143.2% 244.5%	42.2%	6.25	3.13
Six Year Weighted Diploma Rate (n=58)	136.2%	74.7% 128.0% 181.3%	57.7%	45.9% 140.7% 235.5%	47.6%	6.25	3.45

Figure 8. Graduation rates 2011-2012 for RHS. Retrieved from DOE website.

Using a similar graphical representation, indicating the range and mean of graduation rates, the school hovers right under the average for a four-year graduation rate but above the average for the six-year rate. The weighted average factored in the type of diploma and the results were similar. The school was more successful at getting students to graduate in six years than in four, indicating some success with student learning when given additional time to prepare them for state exams.

School environment. The city also assessed the school's successes using a school environment score, defined by the following four areas: academic expectations, safety and respect, communication, and engagement. School environment makes up 15% of the overall progress report score and included results from the school survey, as well as aggregated attendance data. Figure 9 outlines the environment data from the 2011-2012 school year, using the same measures as Figures 7 and 8.



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GRADE F

SCORE 5.1 (out of 15)

GRADE	SCORE RANGE
A	10.5 or higher
B	8.7 - 10.4
C	7.0 - 8.6
D	6.0 - 6.9
F	5.9 or lower

School Environment represents 15% of the total score. The School Environment grade is based on student attendance and results of the NYC School Survey, on which parents, teachers, and students rate academic expectations, safety and respect, communication, and engagement.

School Survey Results	THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	COMPARISON TO CITY SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 25%)	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
Academic Expectations	6.8	6.8 (6.1 – 7.2 – 8.3)	31.8%	6.8 (6.0 – 7.3 – 8.8)	30.8%	2.50	0.79
Communication	6.5	6.5 (5.0 – 6.3 – 7.8)	57.7%	6.5 (5.1 – 6.4 – 7.7)	53.8%	2.50	1.42
Engagement	6.4	6.4 (5.2 – 6.5 – 7.8)	46.2%	6.4 (5.1 – 6.8 – 8.1)	43.3%	2.50	1.14
Safety and Respect	6.0	6.0 (5.7 – 6.8 – 7.9)	13.6%	6.0 (5.6 – 7.1 – 8.6)	13.3%	2.50	0.34
Attendance Rate	80.0%	80.0% (75.5% – 83.5% – 91.5%)	28.1%	80.0% (74.2% – 86.0% – 97.8%)	24.6%	5.00	1.36

Figure 9. School environment data from 2011-2012 at RHS. Retrieved from DOE website.

RHS received an F for the school environment grade. Aside from communication, the school falls behind the average for both peer groups and all city schools in the areas of academic expectations and engagement. In the area of safety and respect, the scores are around 13% of the peer schools and city schools range, which indicates very low scores. Additionally, the school falls behind the mean for attendance rates in comparison to both groups, hovering around 80% with the city average being 86% with a high of 98%. Attendance rates affect student learning and are often indicators of student engagement with the school and in their learning. Using this data, it is clear that improving discipline and attendance should be two key outcomes and goals to be met by an improvement effort.

Present Organizational Data

While the information already discussed provides background on the school and the academic and social context when the improvement effort began, the next section includes relevant contextual data for the years studied. These data include student population characteristics, existing organizational structures, current leadership structure, and an outline of the SIG grant.

Student Population Characteristics

The student population characteristics table below includes information on students learning needs, student economic status, student race, and student proficiency upon beginning 6th and 9th grades. Table 4 indicates slight shifts in the student population over the range of three years.

Table 4

Student Population Characteristics

Student Population Characteristics	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
% English Language Learners (MS)	6%	5%	8%
% English Language Learners (HS)	3%	4%	4%
% Students with IEPs (MS)	19%	21%	30%
% Students with IEPs (HS)	17%	27%	24%
% IEP students, self-contained (MS)	9%	8%	13%
% IEP students, self-contained (HS)	11%	11%	8%
% Overage (MS)	__	5%	10%
% Overage, Under-credited (HS)	14%	18%	20%
MS Average Incoming ELA Proficiency	___	2.57	2.17

(Continued)

Table 4

Student Population Characteristics

Student Population Characteristics	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
HS Average Incoming Math Proficiency	___	2.79	2.19
HS Average Incoming ELA Proficiency	___	2.51	2.28
HS Average Incoming Math Proficiency	___	2.60	2.15
% Free Lunch Eligible (MS)	66%	79%	79%
% Free Lunch Eligible (HS)	66%	79%	79%
% Black (MS)	87%	85%	84%
% Black (HS)	90%	89%	86%
% Hispanic (MS)	10%	11%	13%
% Hispanic (HS)	8%	9%	10%
% White/Asian/ Other (MS)	3%	4%	3%
% White/Asian/ Other (HS)	2%	1%	3%

The first set of data in this table has to do with student learning needs, particularly for groups of students found to struggle with academic success or who need additional resources. The number of students in the middle school and high school who were identified as English Language Learners (ELL) increased by a few percentage points between 2012 and 2014. In a larger school this change would not be as significant, but RHS did not have an infrastructure in place for supporting ELL students. ELL students were only supported during the elective period and through differentiation in regular classes.

The percentage of students with IEPs increased from 19% to 30% in the middle school and from 17% to 24% in the high school. Of the middle school students with IEPs that required that they spend most of their time in a self-contained classroom, the middle school population increased from 9% to 12%. The percentage of high school students who were self-contained reduced by 3 percentage points, which may be because some of those IEP's were rewritten, a common practice for high school students at the school, since there was no self-contained high school class. The middle school did have a self-contained class.

The next student characteristic that shifted in these three years was an increase in over-aged students in the middle and high school. There were twice as many over-aged students in the middle school in 2014 as 2013, with no percent reported for 2012. The percent of over-aged, under-credited high school students rose from 14% in 2012 to 20% in 2014, meaning 1/5th of the student population was over-aged and under-credited.

The student skill levels of incoming students shifted slightly downwards between 2013 and 2014. Incoming 6th graders went from an average ELA state exam score of 2.57 to 2.17 and an average math exam score from 2.79 to 2.19. The incoming ninth graders had even more severe struggles with literacy, moving from an average score of 2.51 to 2.28. In addition, the average math scores of new 9th graders were reduced from 2.60 to 2.15. For an exam that ranges in scores from 1 to 4, this shift in scores represented a meaningful shift in skill level.

Finally, the demographic information suggested that the racial composition was fairly consistent, but there was a decrease of black students in the middle (90% to 84%) and high school (90% to 86%) and an increase is Hispanic students, from 10 to 13

percent in the middle school and from 8 to 10 percent in the high school. Also, the percent of students who were eligible for free or reduced lunch went from 66% in 2012 to 79% in 2014, suggesting that this already high-poverty school was seeing an increase in low-income families.

RHS had always served a population of students that entered middle or high school behind their peers at other schools within the city and nationally. In addition, the students were racially and economically segregated. The trends found in this student population data seem to support the notion that the student body was shifting towards an even higher proportion of students who traditionally struggle.

Organizational Structure

There were several structures in place at RHS either since 2004 or as the result of the work of the previous two administrations. These structures remained in place with some changes. The grades six through twelve, secondary school structure was in place since the beginning of the school. The original intention was that the middle school would be a feeder school for the high school and students would become immersed in the school community, staying for middle and high school. This phenomenon never occurred, and after the original group, most students chose a different high school, usually only remaining if their other options did not work out.

The school operated using a team model, including one English, mathematics, social studies, and science teacher on each team, as well as a specialty teacher or a special education teacher. The team met regularly to plan for activities and to work out any school wide logistical challenges. Also, this time was used to discuss students using a protocol meant to ensure that the teachers were meeting collectively about all of the kids

throughout the course of the year, with an emphasis on students who were struggling. The students were organized in three cohorts with whom they traveled through all of the courses for the day. The one exception was the senior class, which has individualized schedules, and in some cases late starts or early dismissals.

Advisory, a common class in most small high schools, was also part of the original proposal for the school. This structure had long been a struggle for the school to organize and implement effectively. In the two years of the improvement effort both before and after the SIG, the school leaders scaled back advisory and used it largely for teachers to monitor student data. The partners included in the SIG felt that advisory needed to play a more important role. The school leaders were working closely with them to plan a new advisory model for the 2nd year, which included advisory circles that would begin each school day.

Lastly when the school was restructured and reopened as a small school, the city required a partnership with an outside organization. The school chose to work with a local community group called RAMBO, which provides services that connect people with integrated services and programs (RAMBO, 2008). RAMBO supported the school in three primary ways: an adolescent literacy program that works with 6th graders, an Access to Careers (ATC) program for 9th graders, and a Leading to College (LTC) program for tenth through twelfth graders. With the implementation of the grant, the decision was made to continue all three of these successful programs.

Current Leadership

The leadership team included the head principal, Ms. Oliver, who began her term as principal during the 2011-2012 school year as the interim acting principal; Mr.

Reynolds, the assistant principal of operations, who also began his role in that position in the 2011-2012 school year, and Mr. Surf, assistant principal of special education and instruction, who began working at the school at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year as part of the SIG plan. All three administrators had no prior experience as school leaders, but the principal and assistant principal, who have been working together for three school years, both had at least three years of teaching experience in the school prior to assuming their current positions. The newly hired assistant principal had ten years of experience as a classroom teacher prior to accepting the position as assistant principal.

The school was committed to a shared leadership model. This shared leadership model included team leaders and a leadership cabinet. While the team structure, including team leaders, had been part of the school through previous administrations, the leadership cabinet was a new structure established by the current leadership team during the 2011-2012 school year but really taking hold in the 2012-2013 school year. Access to both groups was determined using an application system.

A team leader's primary role was to communicate the expectations and vision of the school to their team. Team leaders were an essential part of the small school model because they supported the administration by helping to guarantee that the day-to-day logistical tasks were completed. These teacher leaders also assumed a lot of the responsibility for developing a positive school culture within their grade team, designing team-wide classroom management systems and planning enrichment activities for students. In contrast, the leadership cabinet helped to make big strategic decisions in the school. The goal of the shared leadership model was to both find a way to incorporate

more voices into setting a direction for the school and to simply relieve the administration of additional tasks related to improving the school.

The SIG Grant

The school in this study applied for and received a federal SIG at the end of the 2012-2013 school year. The city had several accountability designations including Schools in Need of Improvement (SINI), priority schools, and focus schools. After spending two years on the SINI list, the school became a focus school, which is the next step after being identified as a priority school. These designations were created as part of the state's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) waivers. A school was placed on the priority list based on student state test results in the bottom five percent of the state, as well as four-year graduation rates below 60% (State Education Department, 2013). Based on the progress they made while on the priority list, schools move to the focus list, the last designation before school closure.

Due to the status as a focus school, the district directed the school's administration to complete an application for a federally funded school improvement grant provided to the state as part of the Race to the Top funds. The administration was notified of their eligibility for the grant at the beginning of May 2013, slightly more than two weeks prior to the due date. The grant application asked for a school improvement plan, broken into subsections including: partnerships with outside organizations; a plan for school leadership and instructional staff; an organizational plan; an educational plan; training, support, and professional development; a detailed budget; and a timeline for implementation.

After gathering input from members of the staff and meeting with teacher leaders, the administrative team invited the researcher to participate in the development of the grant in a consultant role. The grant team used data from the state's quality review for the past three consecutive school years, an External School Curriculum Audit from the spring of 2011, and two years of Targeted Action Plans (2011-2013), developed in conjunction with the district and strategic school partners as the result of school walkthroughs. Every school in the city has a quality review every year, resulting in a designation of underdeveloped, developed, proficient, and well-developed across ten indicators in the categories of instructional core, school cultures, and improvement structures (Department of Education, 2013). The External School Curriculum Audit and the Targeted Action Plans were both required of schools on the priority list and involved outside evaluations of instruction and organizational structures. All three of the evaluation reports included specific suggestions for school improvement.

Together with support from one district liaison, the school team completed the grant within the two-week time frame and was informed in mid-August, 2013, that the school's grant met the selection criteria and was selected to receive funding. The school was offered the opportunity to apply for up to $3 million dollars of state funds and received the full amount to be allocated over three years.

The theory of action. Figure 10 illustrates the theory of action adopted for the School Improvement Grant proposal, which addressed driver of change, the vision, the goals, and the outcomes. Each component is described in greater detail later in this section.

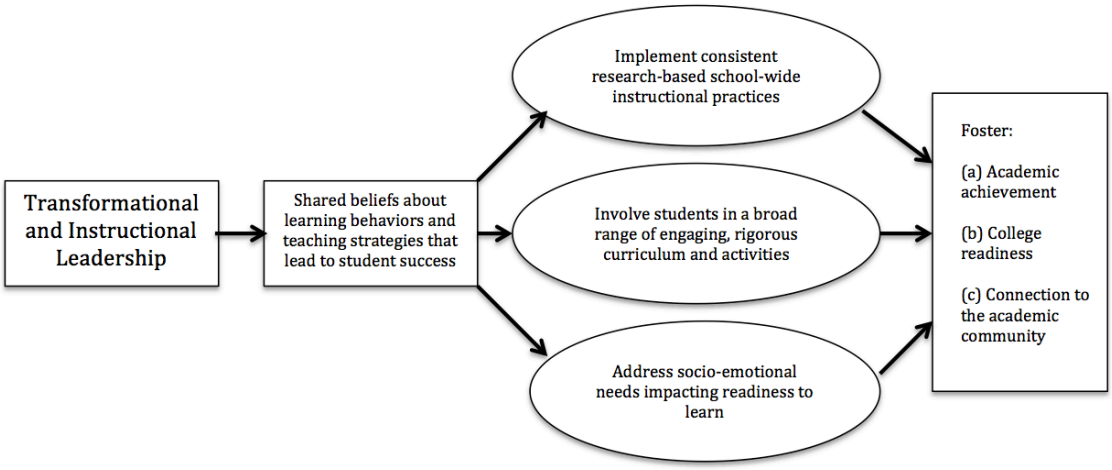

Figure 10. 2013 Federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) theory of change

Driving the improvement effort was the belief that the school needed to be guided by integrated transformational and instructional leadership practices, two concepts explained in the literature review (Marks & Printy, 2003). Through this leadership, the school would then develop a shared set of beliefs about student learning and teaching strategies that would improve student success.

With the two major assumptions that leaders would drive the change and that there would be a shared vision guiding the change process, there were three primary goals of the grant: (a) implementing consistent, research-based, school wide, instructional practices; (b) addressing socio-emotional needs impacting readiness to learn; and (c) involving students in a broad range of engaging, rigorous curriculum and activities. By focusing on leadership practices and shared beliefs, the intention was that the necessary organizational supports would be in place to achieve these three goals. The anticipated outcomes were to foster academic achievement, college readiness, and a connection to the academic community.

Goals. There are three distinct goals for the school improvement grant: (a) research-based instructional practices, (b) engaging curriculum, and (c) socio-emotional supports for students.

The first of the three goals outlined in the grant was to implement consistent, research-based, school wide, instructional practices. In order to achieve that goal, the grant set aside money to continue working with the common core literacy coach and to develop a new partnership with CoachesR'US, which would provide weekly, individual, content area coaching for teachers. The decision was made to continue working with the common core literacy coach, who had already developed an ongoing but limited relationship with the school, and to have her work on developing a differentiated, two-year research course that students would take in the tenth and eleventh grade to help improve their skills with reading expository text, analyzing themes, and synthesizing the text into an argument.

With this extensive coaching partnership in place, there also needed to be a focus on instructional leadership, which was dealt with in two ways. First, the leadership team decided to hire an Assistant Principal of Instruction to help support the principal as the instructional leader and to assist him in completing formal and informal observations in order to provide formative and summative feedback. This assistant principal would also concentrate on supporting the growing special education population by ensuring compliance with federal and state law as well as supporting special education teachers in their development of skills and strategies to support the students.

Secondly, CoachesR'Us would provide leadership coaching with a focus on instructional leadership to both the principal and the assistant principal on an ongoing

basis. In addition to advising the leaders, the leadership coach would also help to ensure an alignment of understanding about high quality instruction among both the coaches and the teachers. With these supports in place to improve the quality of instruction, the school would be more likely to meet individual student needs, including those of the special education population, at-risk students, and over age/under credited students; increase student engagement; increase teacher retention; develop higher student self-efficacy; and encourage teachers and students to develop higher expectations for themselves.

The second major goal was to involve students in a broad range of engaging, rigorous curriculum and activities. This goal combined two areas of concern: (a) having course offerings that more closely reflect the interests and needs of the students and (b) expanding non-classroom learning to include a broader range of activities. To address the first part of that goal, there was a greater emphasis on elective opportunities and college readiness.

In addition to developing a research course, the common core literacy coach would work with teachers in developing engaging, rigorous electives. Historically, electives have varied in their academic quality, as well as their interest level, instead of supporting students in gaining much needed literacy and math skills. In terms of college readiness, in addition to aforementioned programming offered by RAMBO, CoachesR'Us offered a college access and readiness program that would be infused into elective programming across the high school.

In order to address the nonacademic needs of the students and to provide activities that would help students to feel more positively about the school, the leadership team hired a School Culture and Activities Teacher (SCAT) to develop enrichment activities

and school wide culture building programming. Through the expansion of course offerings and creation of more student activities, the school hoped to create higher motivation and engagement; to help to develop positive student-to-student, student-to-staff, and school-to-community relationships; and to ensure that students, teachers and families will be more satisfied with the school, leading to a greater sense of school pride and increased enrollment.

It is worth noting that the school also was chosen by the city to receive supports through an additional School Climate grant. That grant was intended to provide additional funds for after- school programming that provides academic and non-academic enrichment for schools that have high numbers of high poverty, low performing students.

For the last goal, the school hoped to address the socio-emotional needs of students that were impacting readiness to learn. The school had a long history of struggling with discipline issues that held back student learning. There were two primary strategies in place to meet this goal, a partnership with CounselorsR'Us and additional staff to support students' emotional and behavioral needs. CounselorsR'Us were expected to provide individual, group and family counseling, which would be available to all students. Furthermore, they would work with the leaders and staff to align behavioral expectations across the school and to provide new strategies for teachers who struggle with classroom management and student relationships.

Along with these services, the decision was made to hire an additional dean, resulting in a total of two for the school, and to hire an additional guidance counselor, also resulting in a total of two positions. It was expected that with this partnership and those internal positions, students and families would trust the school more, parent

involvement would increase, students would be more focused on academics, and students' decision-making abilities would improve.

Outcomes. The overall desired outcomes of the improvement effort were to foster academic achievement, college readiness, and a connection to the academic community. These outcomes could be measured in several ways, including better student achievement as measured by state testing as well as grades, which in turn leads to a higher graduation rate/reduced dropout rate and fewer holdovers. Outcomes could also be measured by an increase in school wide attendance, as well as attendance for students who traditionally missed more than 10 days of school a semester. Finally, the connection to academic community would lead to a reduction in discipline issues across all grades, which can be measured through a reduction in infractions leading to suspensions.

Summary

The new administration had a huge challenge ahead of them. As one teacher pointed out:

> Now, [Ms. Oliver and Mr. Reynolds] have seven years' worth of somebody else's way of doing things that they're now responsible for. Yeah, they're making improvements, but I think there's just so many different areas that need fixing or that might have been neglected that it's hard to see that improvement as quickly or as obviously as we'd like to see it. (Interview, Spring 2013)

Teachers had received little or no professional learning or instructional guidance under the prior leadership. This lack of supervision meant that the student-learning climate lacked rigor. Student behavior had been dealt with so inconsistently and insufficiently that negative forces overwhelmed the school culture. The school did not offer regular enrichment activities. The school was fraught with problems, and the new, inexperienced administration needed to restructure the school and create new norms.

These problems that the school faced were not new. The school was reconstituted in order to provide a solution for a previously failing school, serving the same students in the same neighborhood. There were periods of improvement and decline over the eight years prior to the beginning of this study, but many of the academic and behavioral challenges were persistent. One of the partners asked the same question worrying the school's leaders and teachers: Did the school actually have the capacity for the kind of improvements necessary to turn the school around? He said:

> There are moments where it feels like we've come here a little late, where I think that some of these conversations have been going on for a number of years . . . It seems like a lot of people, where this is still very important to them, are a little tired of having the same conversation over and over . . . At times I wonder if the school is really set up for success . . . I think that there are a lot of people in this school that work very hard and are well-intentioned, but I think that effort and those intentions are obfuscated by these . . . gaps of not really having a clear vision, people inheriting long-standing challenges and trying to find where to resolve them and not necessarily having the capacity to do so. . . this school doesn't really feel like it has the luxury of giving anything the time and space to allow those answers to sort of reveal themselves in an organic way, sometimes things get little forced because there's a great sense of urgency for the school to succeed, to turn itself around, to get better numbers. (Interview, Spring 2014)

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

This study was designed to provide descriptive and exploratory responses to three primary research questions. In order to obtain this information, interviews were conducted in the spring of 2013 and the spring of 2014 with members of the staff and the leadership team as well as external partners. To triangulate the findings in these interviews, the analysis also included three weeks of observations and document analysis, as well as responses from two surveys: (a) the CALL survey, administered by the researcher in the spring of 2014 and (b) the set of City Surveys, administered by the city to parents, students, and teachers each year. The data reported in this section consists of the findings from these data sources. Data are presented from the 2012-13 school year, the year prior to the SIG, when the school leaders were beginning to make steps towards improvement, and from the 2013-14 school year, when the leaders were implementing the school improvement plan set forth in the SIG application.

These findings are organized into three main sections, each expected to answer the key research questions. Within each section, the data is organized into assertions, with one major assertion and multiple accompanying sub-assertions, which are used to build the argument for the major assertion. This interpretivist analysis involved an iterative process, wherein ideas were developed and reframed to account for all evidence that confirms or disconfirms the summary statements (Erikson, 1985).

The first section will address research question one and discuss how the leadership team thought about and developed a plan for improvement at the school during the two focal school years, including how they set and managed the direction, developed the organization and built relationships. The next section will answer the second research question describing the changes that occurred in each of the organizational structures as a result of the implementation of the school improvement grant: instructional guidance; professional capacity; student-centered learning climate; and family, school, and community ties. Lastly, the final findings section will explore the organizational and contextual factors that hindered the leaders progress in driving improvement.

Research Question 1: Leadership Practices

The answer to the first question about how the leadership team understood and shaped the organizational supports looked specifically at the leadership practices. In the conceptual model for this study described in the introduction, Leithwood's (2010) definition of leadership practices is used to describe how the leaders understand and shape organizational supports. The leaders in this study are defined as a principal and assistant principal, who as a leadership team set direction for the school. The leaders then shape the school by managing that direction, by developing the organizational structures necessary for desired practices, and by building relationships in the school.

Setting and Managing Direction

The school leadership team understood and shaped the school by setting and managing direction in the school. Setting and managing direction at RHS included a set of practices: (a) defining the vision and goals for the school, (b) ensuring that all

stakeholders are working towards the same vision and goals; (c) communicating the vision and goals, and (d) monitoring the vision and goals (Leithwood, 2013). The direction that they set for the school needed to result in an increase in student learning and engagement. The student scores on state tests were lower than the city average, the graduation rate was slipping, and the student suspension rates were higher than the city average increasing the need to set a direction towards improvement for the school.

Sub-assertion one. **In the spring of 2013 the school leadership team set direction based on the school's initial mission but without a clear integrated plan for school improvement. In the spring of 2014, the leadership team presented a clearer direction for the school through the development of the theory of action for the school improvement grant.**

Table 5 provides an overview of the leadership actions for setting and managing direction for the whole school and to guide improvement in each of the organizational structures.

Table 5

Setting and Managing Direction to Drive School Improvement, 2012-13 and 2013-14

	Leadership Actions	
	2012-2013	2013-2014
	Whole school	
Set Direction	• Stayed with and reiterated initial vision and mission of the school • Established a vision around instruction	• Defined direction through theory of action for SIG • Focused on instructional over socio-emotional efforts
Managed Direction	• Communicated goals to the staff • Monitored instructional goals	• Communicated instructional goals to the staff

(Continued)

Table 5

Setting and Managing Direction to Drive School Improvement, 2012-13 and 2013-14

	Leadership Actions	
	2012-2013	2013-2014
	Instructional Guidance	
Defined an instructional focus	• Defined focus that integrated the common core standards into their unit planning using the strategies of Understanding by Design® (UbD)	• Defined focus as use of evidence in argument, answers, and discussion, which was very specific and that was applicable through all the content
Used data to develop goals	• Used data from informal walkthroughs, quality reviews, and anecdotal evidence to define instructional focus and goals • Encouraged use of data in the classroom, especially formative assessments for state exam in the middle school	• Developed SIG plan using evidence from observations, staff input, school quality reviews, and other available data sources • Asked for staff input for focus of professional development in the spring
Increased rigor	• Developed whole group professional development around increasing rigor and expectations	• Expected higher order question and required it for every class • Expected students would be doing inquiry-based work
Communicated instructional goals	• Used whole group professional development to communicate instructional goals	• Continued to communicate goals through whole group professional development, memos, pre and post observation meetings, the staff handbook, and signs hanging in classrooms and the hallway
Increased monitoring of instruction	• Conducted formal observations and worked with struggling teachers and middle school literacy teacher • Required teachers to report planning partners agenda • Required advisors to monitor student progress and trained them to do transcript reviews	• Met the expectations for formal observations
	Professional Capacity	
Supported professional learning	• Focused on unit planning and UbD® framework, aligned with city expectations • Analyzed data in professional development	• Developed the SIG theory of action to include a partnership focused on instruction
Supported learning communities	• Started planning partners in place of departments	• Decided to continue with planning partners

(Continued)

Table 5

Setting and Managing Direction to Drive School Improvement, 2012-13 and 2013-14

	Leadership Actions	
	2012-2013	2013-2014
	Student-centered Learning Climate	
Maintained order and safety	• Defined four pillars of scholarship, respect, professionalism, and compassion • Hung them up in each classroom and the front office • Assigned a full time staff in charge of in-school suspension • Dedicated a cabinet of the leadership team to coming up with ideas to build positive school culture • Decided to respond to low-level infractions quickly and punitively	• Designed theory of action with specific emphasis on increasing socio-emotional supports and increasing student engagement
Set student socio-emotional norms and managed support	• Integrated competitive activities "Battle of the Classes" throughout the school year to increase engagement • Kept team leaders who facilitated talking and action planning around student socio-emotional needs • Kept team model to ensure a group of teachers knew students well	• Designed theory of action with specific emphasis on increasing socio-emotional supports and increasing student engagement • Supported a shift towards restorative justice • Kept team leaders who facilitated talking and action planning around student socio-emotional needs • Kept team model to ensure a group of teachers knew students well
Set student academic norms and managed support	• Believed that by providing more rigorous and effective instruction they could reduce the behavioral problems • Encouraged teachers to provide opportunities for students to make up work and to get additional support • Focused advisory on monitoring student progress • Used team leaders to facilitate talking and action planning around students in your classes and handled parent teacher conferences	• Dedicated one cabinet on leadership team to post secondary readiness • Kept advisory in order to monitor student progress • Required electives to be more rigorous, requiring lesson plans and evidence of alignment with standards • Used team leaders to facilitate talking and action planning around students in your classes, conferences and handled parent teacher conferences

(Continued)

Table 5

Setting and Managing Direction to Drive School Improvement, 2012-13 and 2013-14

	Leadership Actions	
	2012-2013	2013-2014
Developed student activities and opportunities	• Dedicated group from leadership cabinet to plan activities increase engagement • Encouraged teachers to start clubs and plan events • Used team leaders to facilitate talking and action planning around student activities	• Designed theory of action with specific emphasis on increasing student engagement by hiring a SCAT • Decided to offer dance, chorus, and SAT prep using school climate grant • Bolstered their after school program using school climate and SIG grant money • Used team leaders to facilitate talking and action planning around student activities
	Family, School, and Community Ties	
Planned for parent engagement and outreach	• Began using a data management system parent could access and required teachers to use it and advisors to inform parents about it • Devoted time at team leaders to discussing how to increase parent involvement	• Used school climate grant money to provide support for the PTA

The vision identified by the teachers and leaders as the overarching purpose of the school was: (a) all students could learn and that the school was open to and inclusive of all students, regardless of their prior academic and behavioral success and (b) the students needed a high-quality and rigorous curriculum that would guarantee that they would be college and career ready. This vision was embedded in the original mission for the school and continued to guide the improvement effort in 2012-13.

The leadership team went into the 2012-2013 school year with a greater sense of certainty in their roles as administrators and with more time to plan for improvement prior to the start of the school. Ms. Oliver and Mr. Reynolds also had a clear appreciation of the decisions made and structures developed by the previous administrations. They set

direction for the school, focused on instructional improvement but change was largely initiated in a reactionary manner, meaning they saw a problem and sought to fix it without designing a systematic plan for improvement. By basing their decision-making on data, the leadership team was able to be much more deliberate about how they redesigned the organization, creating new courses to meet the literacy needs of students.

One of the biggest areas of concern was the lack of supervision from the previous administration. As Mr. Oliver said, "The past administration had stopped their supervision duties so that bad teaching went unfettered and many teachers didn't even know it" (Interview, Spring 2013). Because of this failure to monitor student and teacher progress, the leaders had to make monitoring instruction the priority.

By the spring 2014, the theory of action that was designed as the framework for the grant served as a more integrated and systematic direction for the school. All but one respondent to the CALL survey in the spring of 2014 suggested that a clear vision was somewhat, very, or extremely important to the leaders. Mr. Oliver explained the theory of action:

> If we can improve teacher instruction so that it's meeting a wider range of student needs, engaging students in a rigorous college and career program, and our teachers are better able to do that, coupled with addressing . . . the community's socio-emotional needs . . . if we can address those needs so that they are ready to achieve academically and then just simply engage students in more positive experiences of learning and community, all of those, together with distributive leadership will lead to academic success. That's what we believe. (Interview, Spring 2014)

The direction set for the school was to improve the classroom and school experience for all students, with a focus on cultivating the schooling experience for students who were struggling to succeed at RHS. This theory of action determined the allocation of grant money to support the goals and provided the structure for the leadership cabinet.

The school now had a unified set of beliefs about how to improve student learning. The priority of the leadership for the 2013-2014 school year was developing the instructional focus of the school. Of the 16 stakeholders that were asked about the school's vision, 14 of those interviewees mentioned that there was a clear instructional focus that teachers were aware of and could articulate. In addition, both members of the leadership team felt that there was a clear instructional direction. Ms. Oliver clearly maintained that instruction was the number one priority saying, "I do think, personally, that instruction trumps, but that's not shared by all of my leadership. I do try to be as balanced as possible, but I will not sacrifice work in improvement on instruction for anything else" (Interview, Spring 2014).

On the other hand, even though the SIG plan had clear goals and structures in place intended to create a more positive school environment that supported socio-emotional needs and increased student engagement; only 6 of the interviewees indicated that there was a clear socio-emotional and school environment vision. The school had to make decisions about how to prioritize the goals so as to not overwhelm themselves during the first year of the SIG. A long time teacher at the school summed up this tension between focusing on instruction and focusing on socio-emotional needs nicely:

> I understand the social and emotional needs of the children. I understand their efforts to fix them and help them, but we're a school. We are not a day camp. We're not a hospital. This isn't a psych ward. We're a school. I know it's really hard to teach a student when they're in crisis in other places in their life, but . . . that's what we need to do." (Interview, Spring 2014)

Developing People and the Organization

The school leadership team shaped the school by developing people and the organization to support desired practices. In order to accomplish the goal for

improvement, the leaders needed to establish policies, routines, and structures to support the vision (Leithwood, 2013).

Sub-assertion two: During the 2012-13 school year the school leadership team developed the organization by dividing the focus between instruction and school climate and beginning to put some structures into place that supported that focus, while in 2013-14 the school leadership team aligned the organizational structures with the theory of action and the accompanying goals.

Table 6 provides an overview of the practices and structures the leadership team developed in during the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years.

Table 6

Developing People and the Organization to Support School Improvement, 2012-13 and 2013-14

	Leadership Actions	
	2012-2013	2013-2014
	Whole School	
Developed the Organization	• Addressed areas of need as they emerged • Divided leadership tasks between instruction and operations	• Designed a school improvement plan and developed the organization around the theory of action
	Instructional Guidance	
Developed instructional focus and increased rigor	• Divided leadership tasks with the principal assuming the primary responsibility for providing instructional leadership to the school	• Worked closely with the instructional leadership coach: o To resolve issues related to the new teacher evaluation system and observations o To develop higher quality, aligned professional development

(Continued)

Table 6

Developing People and the Organization to Support School Improvement, 2012-13 and 2013-14

	Leadership Actions	
	2012-2013	2013-2014
Provided resources and tools to support instructional focus and increased rigor	• Provided all teachers with a UbD workbook	• Provided one-on-one content area coaching for all core subject teachers • Hired a second AP to support instructional leadership by sharing the responsibly for observations and evaluations of staff • Designed professional development around instructional focus (using evidence in the fall and higher order questioning in the spring)
Aligned curriculum to student needs	• Created a new schedule to allow students to earn more credits • Designed a research class to support students' informational writing at the high school level • Required mastery tasks at the end of every unit	• Continued to develop the research class to make it a core class at the school
	Professional Capacity	
Developed professional learning	• Conducted whole group professional development twice a month • Hired a common core literacy coach who worked with select teachers	• Hired partner that provided one-on-one content area coaches for all core content teachers • Continued working with common core literacy coach to integrate common core standards and on assisting in the shift towards more rigorous electives • Hired a second AP to support the instructional leadership • Sent more people out of the building for professional development
Developed professional learning community	• Paired up planning partners if they were in the same discipline (mentor/mentee) or taught the same course, such as special education teachers and regular education teachers,	• Expanded planning partners and paired up teachers who were at same level of experience • Had teachers share successful tactics at whole group professional development

(Continued)

Table 6

Developing People and the Organization to Support School Improvement, 2012-13 and 2013-14

	Leadership Actions	
	2012-2013	2013-2014
	Student-centered Learning Climate	
Developed student socio-emotional support	• Maintained order and safety • Used dean as conflict manager to reduce interruptions to learning	• Used SIG funds to hire a second dean • Used SIG funds to hire a guidance counselor • Hired a partner that provided two additional full time crisis counselors, and was supposed to provide small group counseling and to work with teachers struggling with classroom management • Began late in the year to work with an outside organization on planning for restorative justice
Developed student academic support	• Designed course extension system to allow for credit recovery • Had a team structure where teachers met and discussed students	• Pushed teachers to be student-focused • Had a team structure where teachers met and discussed students • Hired Assistant Principal to improve services for special education
Developed student activities and opportunities	• Planned more 'typical' high school activities to increase school pride (i.e. dance, talent shows, family pot lucks) • Allowed individual teacher to plan clubs • Offered student enrichment classes during fall semester	• Hired a SCAT to plan student activities and provide a more positive school culture • Offered dance, chorus, and SAT prep during the school using school climate grant • Offered multiple after school activities ranging from tutoring to dance after school
	Family, School, and Community Ties	
Developed parent engagement and outreach	• Started to use a data management system that parents could access	• Hired outside organization helped PTA to plan events • Hired SCAT to plan family events for orientation and throughout the year

The key change to the school structure during the 2012-13 school year was that the administrative team divided their workload into instruction and operations. The principal became the primary, and only, instructional leader, working with teachers to

develop their curriculum and instruction and assuming evaluation tasks such as formal and informal observations. The assistant principal helped develop a positive school culture and worked closely with the discipline team. In addition, he handled the daily logistical tasks with some help from teacher leaders. An area of strength identified in the CALL survey was that the formal leaders were recognized as instructional leaders.

There were several other important changes to the structure that supported their goals. The leaders created a new schedule that allowed for students to take more classes and therefore receive more credits during the school day. This adjustment to the schedule also allowed more time for elective courses during the day. In addition the school moved from mastery projects to mastery tasks, designed as a formative assessment for every unit and aligned with the Common Core Standards. An important addition to the curriculum developed by the leadership team was a research class to support students' informational writing at the high school level. This additional class was designed as the product of an analysis of the data on student instructional needs.

While these newly organized structures were necessary to define the school academic culture as more rigorous and responsive to student needs and ultimately to improve instruction and student learning, they were not enacted in a systematic way. The leaders were identifying problems and creating solutions without integrating them into a larger school improvement plan. During the interview and observations in the spring of 2013, the teachers and leaders recognized that they were responding to needs as they arose, limiting the opportunity to plan for whole school change. RHS had a multitude of needs and the administrators were attempting to respond to what they deemed to be the larger priorities.

After the SIG grant, the school leadership team developed the organization to align with the grant's theory of action, while building from successful structures put in place the previous year. Mr. Oliver explained:

> Really, what we have tried to do from the beginning is to keep everything that we need to do in line with those three major goals. That's how we picked the partners that we did. It's how, when we have made decisions about where to put resources, grant and outside the grant, if they're not falling within those three areas, then they're not really working towards what we think is the improvement plan. When you drill down more into the improvement plan . . . about helping the staff, in particular, shift their thinking so that whatever they're going, that there's an outcome for students that is going to lead to them performing better academically. (Interview, Spring 2014)

The grant, which was a more systematic plan for improvement, included additional positions and two partnerships largely meant to remove some of the burden from the school leaders and the teacher leaders who assisted them. The partnerships and new positions were intended to provide instructional support and socio-emotional support. The support staff and teachers all agreed that the four new staff members and two partnerships were welcome and helpful additions to the school. These specific organizational structures that the leaders put in place will be discussed in the sections of instructional guidance; professional capacity; student-centered learning climate; and family, school, and community ties –the essential structures to facilitate school improvement.

Building Relationships

The leaders were responsible for the relationships within the building. These relationships were the result of purposeful actions to develop people's connections and also the result of leaders' decisions and implementation of those decisions. The school leadership team shaped the school by building relationships**.**

Sub-assertion three. While the school showed signs of high relational trust across both school years with leaders working closely with other members of the school community, sharing leadership tasks, and designing strategies for improvement collaboratively, there was slightly less trust in the principal after the implementation of the grant, with staff feeling less supported by her, while remaining trusting of and supported by the assistant principal. There were no changes to student/teacher relational trust.

A summary of the findings related to how the school leaders built relationships can be found in Table 7.

Table 7

Building Relationships to Support School Improvement, 2012-13 and 2013-14

	Leadership Actions	
	2012-2013	2013-2014
	Whole school	
Built Relationships	• Kept shared leadership model with team leaders and leadership cabinet • Worked closely with teacher leaders and other staff to discuss decisions	• Did not focus on building relationships within and among staff • Continued to develop the leadership cabinet to align to SIG goals and to include parents, students, and partners • Made many decisions with less of the input of staff members
	Instructional Guidance	
Built relationships for instructional guidance	• Worked closely with teacher leaders and other staff to discuss decisions	• Made many decisions with less of the input of staff members • Participated in their own growth by working with leadership coach •
	Professional Capacity	
Built relationships for professional learning	• Worked collaboratively with struggling teachers • Led professional development for the school	• Identified and worked with struggling teachers and considered the necessary steps for removal • Worked collaboratively with struggling teachers

(continued)

Table 7

Building Relationships to Support School Improvement, 2012-13 and 2013-14

	Leadership Actions	
	2012-2013	2013-2014
Built relationships for school-based learning communities	• Provided planning partners as an opportunity to work together instructionally	• Continued to provide planning partners as an opportunity to work together instructionally
	Student-centered Learning Climate	
Built relationships for student-centered learning	• Committed to planning more events and designing course to engage students in school	• Worked with socio-emotional partnership to bring support staff together to regularly discuss their practice

The school leaders put very few new structures in place meant to directly support building relationships with and among the staff. In 2013, the teachers felt more supported by the principal than they did in 2014. Both years the teachers and support staff generally felt that most of their support on a day-to-day basis came from the assistant principal, Mr. Reynolds. The principal was most visible when she led whole group professional development and when she visited classrooms. In 2013, the teachers felt that they could communicate better with her than they did in 2014.

Shared leadership. The school had always functioned with a shared leadership model and at times, under previous administrations, teachers had full autonomy, something mentioned by multiple people during the interviews. Teacher leaders provided input for making decisions and assisted leaders with implementing those decisions; however, as was suggested by the team leaders interviewed in the spring of 2013 and 2014, the school leadership team made the final decisions. While there continued to be a shared leadership model during the 2013-14 school year, there was a growing sense that

the more of the decisions were being made by the school leaders without the input or knowledge of the staff. The principal felt that a lack of clear decision-making by the school leaders had led to the school's problems.

Trust. Of the fourteen teachers and support staff that were asked about trust in the spring of 2014, all but one suggested that they trusted Mr. Reynolds; whereas, only ten staff members indicated they fully trusted Ms. Oliver. Of the remaining four teachers, two of the other staff members indicated that they were moderately trusting of Ms. Oliver; and two staff members said they did not trust her. Of the 13 staff members who trusted one or both of the administrators, five of them mentioned knowing teachers first hand who did not trust the leaders. According to the city survey data, when asked if the principal was an effective manager, the most support for the statement was in the spring of 2013, with 81% agreeing or strongly agreeing. There was a 16% decrease in support in the spring of 2014, corresponding with an 18% increase in teachers who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Additionally during the spring of 2014, there was an increase in the percent of teachers who did not feel like they could communicate openly, doubling from the year before (24%) (City Survey).

One possible explanation for the shift in trust was that the principal was becoming more responsive to teachers who were not meeting the leaders' expectations. In the spring on 2013, all the staff members who were interviewed mentioned instances when teachers were asked to do something, failed to do it, and were not reproved. In an informal conversation with Ms. Oliver during observations, she indicated she was aware of the problem. In the team leaders' meeting, similar concerns emerged when discussing the requirements for preparing for parent-teacher conferences. In response to a teacher

leader's inquiry about what happens if teachers didn't comply, Mr. Reynolds responded by saying, "We can't keep doing the cycle where we show people, we tell people and no one does it" (Field Notes, Spring 2013). Mr. Reynolds added, "We are not going to get anywhere ever like that. If we're not there that's on me and I take responsibility for that. I want us to get there" (Field Notes, Spring 2013).

In the spring of 2014, teachers noted two new patterns of behavior regarding administrative oversight. Observations and walkthroughs were happening more frequently, creating a greater awareness on the part of the administration as to what was happening in individual classrooms. The teachers were held accountable using a new extremely comprehensive teacher evaluation system with sanctions for those who did not perform well. One concern raised by two of the staff members was that the school was beginning to operate more top down with the principal making decisions that were not open to the discussion of the staff. One teacher suggested, "That's a big shift, to go from being able to just speak openly to now, you can't, so for people that's a little jarring I guess, and it's causing a lot of shut down" (Interview, Spring 2014). One teacher leader, who had been at the school for over 5 years, indicated that he had concern over the shifts in the dynamics between staff and administrators. Although only one person explicitly mentioned this concern, the researcher sensed that he was not alone in this view and that people's hurt feelings might have something to do with why some people didn't agree to an interview. This tendency for the principal to make decisions and stand firmly behind them was something Ms. Oliver indicated was done on purpose. Interestingly, at the same time that this theme emerged, the prevalent idea from the earlier spring disappeared- that the leaders didn't have expertise or authority to run the school.

The administration, particularly the principal, was working to remove some teachers from the school. She was working closely with teachers that did not have high student expectations, both academically and behaviorally. If those teachers were not changing their practice based on the feedback of the instructional leaders and/or the coaches, the principal was taking the necessary measure to no longer employ that teacher. She mentioned, as did ten other staff and the leadership coach, that the quality of some of the teachers was a hindrance to continued improvement. While some teachers were making real progress in their classrooms, others were creating chaotic classroom environments where very little learning was happening. There is no way of knowing whether some of these teachers were the ones who reported low trust levels with the leaders.

Five staff members did mention that there was concern about consistency, which contributes to perceptions of trust. There was a sense that the principal was not always consistent in both her expectations and responses to staff and students. One staff member mentioned that students sometimes felt that the administration did not model the behavior that was asked of them. Four of the staff members went on to give examples of times when the felt that the principal was not consistent in their expectations. Even though during the interviews, all but one staff member indicated that they trusted the administration overall, there were definitely examples given and stories told of times when staff members felt disrespected, belittled, or offended. These stories did not seem to reflect the general trend, but there was some indication that when the principal was under pressure, she could act in ways that were not conducive to continuing the trusting relationships she had been developing.

For the teachers who agreed to be interviewed, there was an overall sense that they trusted their colleagues, bought into the shared vision, and remained positive. The school was almost equally split between high, medium, and low morale, with all but one interviewee indicating that they had medium or high buy-in to the leaders' vision for improvement. Everyone indicated there was someone on staff whom they trusted and the majority of respondents (over 90%) to the city survey indicated that the teachers at the school trusted each other. See Appendix J for more details. One of the teachers summed it up:

> I think there is a collective view that most of the people here, the majority of the people here, really do work for the benefit of our kids, and they recognize that the staff is working for the benefit of the kids. I think that overall that it the situation. You're never going to get 100 percent of people to believe that. (Interview, Spring 2014)

Student/staff relationships. The relationships between staff and students were also not a focus of the improvement effort. The development of student/teacher relationships was an ongoing struggle for the school. The idea that there was a community at the school and that teachers were available to kids was one of the biggest paradoxes at the school. Students and teachers often developed strong bonds that were kept after the students graduated from the school. At the same time, there was sense the teacher-student relationships needed to be better developed at the school.

Most of the students felt that the adults at the school cared about them, with a slight decline in agreement with this view in 2013. At a school with substantial self-reported struggles with building a positive school culture, it seems promising that around three-quarters of the students felt adults cared about them. Most students also felt there was someone they could trust with a problem. This question was posed to the parents and

the results are reported in Appendix J. According to their parents, the vast majority of students have an adult in the building they can trust with 89% of parents in agreement in 2014, up from 86% in 2013 and 85% in 2012.

While the administrators and teacher leaders also indicated that they felt most students had an adult in the building that they trusted and relied on for support, there tended to be certain teachers who built strong relationships with the kids and a number of teachers who struggled with building student relationships., A higher number of low level incidents took place in those classrooms. The dean had both fortunately and unfortunately developed close relationships with most students. She added:

> I can also see what the teacher might need to change and how sometimes, the teacher's actions can make a situation worse . . . If you are kicking this kid out for every little thing, or if I need to be the one to address this kid about every little thing they do, that kid comes to see me as the one who disciplines them, so the moment that teacher tries to step into the discipline role, now there's a confrontation, 'You don't ever talk to me anyway, so call (the dean). (Interview, Spring 2013)

For some teachers the decision to rely on the dean to assist students who were disruptive in the classroom environment was adding to the strains in their student relationships.

During the interviews in the spring of 2014, four staff members suggested that student and teacher relationships were considered a strong point at the school. Similar to the feedback the previous spring, there was a sense that any student who needed additional support from a staff member could find someone to connect with. In the city survey, students were asked if the adults in the building knew the student's name and who they were. Responses indicated that the students, for the most part, felt that adults knew them. While the percentage in agreement was similar across all three school years, the number of students who strongly agreed increased steadily from 38% to 46% to 50%.

Overall, these were positive responses, although the purpose of having a 6th through 12th grade structure was to ensure all students felt part of a community. This question indicates that a notable portion of the students still do not feel like they are a known member of that community. The SCAT mentioned:

> On a positive note, I do think, this being a small school, any student who wants to have a relationship with an adult that they feel they need to go talk to, need to be supported- any student who wants that in the school has it- some of them with more than one adult. That's one thing I really like. This school really does have a community. (Interview, Spring 2014)

Many teachers were open to getting to know the kids, which sometimes meant that they established a personal relationship. It was not uncommon for teachers to add ex-students as Facebook friends, allow students to text them questions, or help students with issues they were having outside of school. The concern was raised by two of the staff interviewed that the teacher-student relationship might not have been as professional as in other schools. One staff member talks about how:

> One of our strongest assets is that the teachers have really good relationships with the kids" but she goes on to talk about the nature of those relationships by saying "I guess there's a more porous boundary between teacher-student relationships than in other schools, and I think that's really beneficial in terms of building community, but I wonder if it can sometimes lead kids to not respect the teachers. (Interview, Spring 2014)

At a small school with a lot of young teachers, the lines might have been blurred in terms of the tiered power systems that exist between students and teachers. While this looser boundary between students and teachers could be a positive thing in a school where the students were almost all black and the teachers were about 60% white, it could also create some of the issues around respect due to the informal mature of the relationship.

The teachers felt that they respected the students but the students did not agree. According to the student data, 33% disagreed with the statement in 2012 versus 24% of

the teachers. The number of students who disagreed rose to 40% in spring of 2013 and decreased to 6% for the teachers with no one strongly disagreeing. Finally in the spring of 2014, 37% of students were still in disagreement, while only 9% of teachers disagreed, with no one strongly disagreeing. There was improvement in the responses of the adults over time.

A very small percentage of teachers and students, over the three years, strongly agreed with the statement that 'Most students in my school treat adults with respect' with no teachers strongly agreeing in 2013 or 2014. More teachers agreed that students treated them with respect than students did across all three years. Both groups had an increase in agreement with teachers' responses increasing much more dramatically from 28% to 38% to 63% agreeing that students treated adults with respect. On the other hand most students disagreed or strongly disagreed, with 66% in 2012, 70% in 2013, and 71% in 2014. There was more similarity across teachers and students for those who strongly disagreed in 2012, with 24% of teachers and 34% of students strongly disagreeing. While these data do not necessarily tell a clear story, the takeaway seems to be that students did not respect adults as consistently as needed for a school to operate with a positive school culture, and even more importantly, that the students were aware of that fact.

Major Assertion One

The school leadership team exhibited signs of all the leadership practices necessary for effective leadership; however, they exhibited more successful practices and spent more time in setting direction and developing the organization than they did in building relationships. Managing the direction of the organization was their

weakest area, largely due to struggles with organizing time, a consistent theme across both years.

When exploring the leadership actions intended to improve instructional guidance, a clear instructional focus and an increase in monitoring indicated that the leaders were able to set direction for the school and to successfully develop structures that would allow for instructional leadership. The areas of concern were that the leaders didn't build consensus around shared goals or effectively communicate those goals to all shareholders. While the leaders had a better understanding of how they wanted to direct the school after the grant, the staff at the school seemed to feel less sure about the direction the school was headed. By all accounts, they had not yet effectively communicated the purpose of the improvement effort with parents or students.

The leaders set direction and built the organization to support professional capacity by deciding to commit one-third of the grant funds to an instructional partnership, putting school-wide coaching in place- a key change from the previous year. The leaders were also taking steps to remove teachers that failed to effectively educate students. Finally, they hired an assistant principal and a SCAT, both grant funded positions, which needed to be replaced during or after the first year of the grant.

In order to create a more positive school academic and social environment, the leadership team chose to commit a third of grant funds to a socio-emotional partnership and four staff positions to support student social, emotional, and academic growth. The CALL survey indicated that the school had clear expectations for student behavior; however, the leaders were struggling with getting both students and teachers to follow through with those expectations. They also failed to develop teacher's skills to build

relationships with the students. Respect was still a big issue for teachers and students. They also set expectations for the goals of the partnership but haven't managed it well, specifically many of the intended services were not happening.

Since parents indicated that they were largely happy with the school, the leadership team put very few structures in place to increase involvement and didn't make this a priority in the theory of action. The leaders needed to work better at communicating the goals of the grant to parents and needed to better manage the parent coordinator, the staff member who was supposed to assume responsibility for parent engagement but did not.

The biggest obstacle to managing the direction of the organization was time. In the spring of 2013, while the administration was very deliberate about establishing a purpose centered on instruction, everyone interviewed mentioned that the administration was too busy to meet all of the intended goals. The instructional core suffered from demands on Ms. Olivier's time to other areas. Since Mr. Reynolds was handling all operational tasks in order to protect Ms. Oliver's time to be an instructional leader, he had an overwhelming schedule as well.

During the spring of 2014, the discussion around managing the goals of the school centered on the need to formalize and tighten systems and to continue getting people on board. The leadership team needed a strategic way to delegate their responsibilities to ensure the goals of the improvement effort were met. While they had been working on developing a shared leadership structure that would be meaningful and aligned with the goals, more thought needed to be placed on how to formalize that system. Observation data revealed little evidence of systems for distributing leadership and tasks. Tasks were

often not passed on to more appropriate staff members, such as school aides, or the allocation of tasks was done unsystematically, causing an overreliance on some staff members.

Another problem in terms of managing the direction of the school still had to do with the sheer time and energy required of a small staff in order to turn around the school. Mr. Reynolds expressed concern:

> There's a gap between people's theoretical vision and the work it takes to make the vision happen. I think for a lot of people it [the vision] reflects what they want to see happening, but it doesn't necessarily reflect what they're willing to do in order for that to be a reality. (Interview, Spring 2014)

Some of the staff that had been the school for more than five years already had taken on an extra workload; some of the staff had taken on work during prior years and no longer wanted to. Newer staff was accepting additional duties but not enough to fulfill all of the school's needs. Even though there was ample money available for staff to teach afterschool or on Saturdays or to stay and plan events for the students and their families, much of that money was going unused, because staff members weren't interested in taking on additional responsibilities. Meeting the goals of the school improvement effort required a large commitment of manpower and of time.

The existence of the grant goals and structures, intended to support the psychological needs of students and provide more engaging courses and activities, indicated that both areas were of importance; however, only 6 of the interviewees indicated that there was a socio-emotional and school environment vision. Even though the theory of action provided a clearer set of goals for school improvement that included both instructional and socio-emotional goals, the leaders still struggled with how to manage both areas of improvement at the same time.

Although the leaders had a better understanding of how they wanted to direct the school after the grant, the leadership team was overburdened and had an enormous number of responsibilities that to some degree hindered their ability to manage the direction of the school. According to the city survey, the teachers indicated that they thought the school ran more smoothly the year prior to the SIG with a 16% decrease in staff that agreed that the principal was an effective manager (www.city.org). Going into the second year of implementation, the school had added a strategic leadership coach to work with the school leaders on these remaining issues around planning and managing the school's improvement effort.

Research Question 2: Organizational Supports

In this section, the data from interviews, observations, surveys and document analysis were used to describe and explore each essential organizational structure, after the implementation of the first year of a three year grant designed to support the leaders in turning around the school, avoiding further restructuring or closure. Bryk et al. (2010) defined the organizational structures that must be enhanced in order to improve a school through longitudinal research around organizing elementary schools for improvement in Chicago. The researchers found that four organizational supports were necessary for change in student learning and other outcomes: (a) instructional guidance, (b) professional capacity, (c) student-centered learning climate, and (d) parent and community ties. These four areas all need to be developed in order for improvement to happen, so in order to understand the work of this leadership team and the progress towards lasting change in the school, all four areas must be explored. Weakness in any one area can prohibit increases in student learning (Bryk et al., 2010).

Instructional Guidance

Instructional guidance, as defined for this study, assures that the organization has a way to: (a) define the nature of academic demand; (b) provide tools for meeting the academic demand; and (c) align the curriculum to that focus (Bryk et al., 2010).

Sub-assertion four. <u>There were moderate to large gains in instructional guidance during the first year of the leader-directed school improvement effort</u>. The improvement effort made great strides in cultivating the learning environment. In order to do this the leaders sought to increase oversight of instruction, ensure the school had an instructional focus, and adjust the curriculum to support the academic goals.

***Increased observations*.** At the end of the first year of the improvement effort, with an additional instructional leader as well as a clear focus on instruction as central to school improvement, teachers were receiving consistent attention in their classrooms for the first time ever in the school's history. Despite the efforts to increase observations the year before, the 2013-2014 school year was the first time that every teacher was being observed for extended periods of time, multiple times a year. There were no longer any teachers strongly disagreeing that they received regular feedback on the city survey.

Out of the fifteen teachers interviewed about instruction, 13 of them mentioned that there was an increase in formal and informal observations. As one teacher who began to work at the school the previous year mentioned, "I have actually been observed this year, so that's been a big part of it. It's all been very similar, sort of the same message, so that's been a pretty big change" (Interview, Spring 2014). Teachers were being observed and knew what the instructional leaders were looking for in their lessons.

Teachers were also receiving regular, instructional guidance from their coaches in a more low stakes manner. Ms. Oliver worked hard to make sure that the coaches were giving the same message about instruction as the school's leaders. The teachers indicated that while most of the support in instruction came from coaching, the feedback from their formal observation was substantiated by what the coach was doing. In the spring of 2014, the principal was able to better guide instruction to ensure high expectations for the students.

Concerns about instructional guidance. Unfortunately, the person hired to support Ms. Oliver in providing that instructional guidance, Mr. Surf, was not the right person for the job. All eight of the teachers who had worked with Mr. Surf spoke negatively about his instructional guidance. Six teachers all had similar stories to tell in which they were observed, received a low score in a certain area, asked for advice on how to improve in that area, and were not at any point given any strategies or specific feedback. In all of the cases, they did not simply ask for support during the post-observation but followed up with the assistant principal on a regular basis asking for help. Respondents claimed he could not and did not provide them with support.

While almost every teacher indicated that observations had increased, teachers still wanted a more of a consistent presence in the classrooms. One teacher mentioned:

> Right when you feel like you are making progress in November or January, there's that much of a gap between meetings with the person who's evaluating you, you stifle that progress that you made in January because you don't continue to develop. If you're not getting that support, you sort of backtrack a little bit. (Interview, Spring 2014)

Keeping up with observation schedule proved to be difficult and the leaders were still not able to spend time doing informal observations. The CALL report for the school found

that an area of strength was the summative evaluation of teachers but that the formative evaluation of teachers was an area of need, providing further evidence that the guidance had increased through more observations meant for evaluation but that there was not consistent feedback on an ongoing basis.

The last concern around instructional guidance, similar to the year before, was that there still wasn't support for teachers struggling with classroom management. Classroom management was part of the rubric used for evaluation and many would argue needs to be part of the instructional guidance, since learning and behavior are so closely linked. The leadership team still had not figured out how to offer that support and guidance in a consistent manner.

Professional Capacity

Since the school had very little instructional guidance in the past, the teachers and support staff also felt that there was very little development of their professional capacity. Another top priority of the leadership team had to be acting more strategically about the development of teachers both individually and as a community.

Sub-assertion five. <u>There were moderate to large gains in professional capacity during the first year of the leader-directed school improvement effort</u>. The school always conducted whole group professional development but as the result of the two years of improvement, it was now aligned with the instructional focus and concentrated on increasing rigor. RHS also had a more developed professional community designed to encourage collaboration and focused on professional growth through the use of planning partners. Most importantly, the teachers reported that their instruction was improving.

Developed better professional development that aligned with instructional focus. Along with a clear focus on shared instructional goals around using evidence to support an argument, professional development was planned to model teaching practices that were student-centered and inquiry-based. The leadership coach helped support the development of a professional development sequence that would support the teachers and align with the goal, while also working with the principal and AP on implementing the new teacher evaluation system. The leadership team was on the way to making instructional guidance a regular part of RHS. City survey data on professional development found that all respondents who answered the question felt that the professional development reflected the instructional focus. The two Chi square calculations based on the city survey data that showed significant gains from the 2011-2012 school year indicated significant change in professional development. Results indicated that professional development was more sustained and coherent (X^2=4.27, p<. 05) and that professional development provided content area support ($\mathbf{X}^2$= 6.49, p<. 05), both important aspects of professional learning opportunities. (See Appendix K for tables).

In 15 of the 15 interviews in which we discussed the CoachesR'Us partnership, the teachers and staff spoke positively about coaching, with some minor concerns. The coaches also supported the school leaders by helping to keep the instructional focus at the forefront of planning. Even with some variation in quality, the school has been happy with the partnership and one teacher said, “I trust the coaches. I think they have solid ones that all are pushing what the school wants” (Interview, Spring 2014).

The teachers found that the coaches were both knowledgeable about the subject matter and had good ideas about how to deliver the information to the students. Additionally, the coaches worked with teachers to identify how they could be most helpful and to determine what the areas of strengths and weaknesses were for the individual teachers.

Support from the coaches took many forms. Some teachers identified that the coach provided them emotional support by listening to their problems. Teachers also mentioned more direct instructional support such as the coach helping them rewrite their labs, arranging intervisitations with mentor teachers at other schools, providing specific feedback on lessons, providing resources and materials, and assisting with planning curriculum. Coaches were also available to the teachers outside of their scheduled time, responding to emails and sending along resources to support the upcoming lessons.

Developed more professional community. Teachers felt that they had more time set aside to work collaboratively with their colleagues as compared to what was allocated prior to the improvement effort. Most of this change occurred prior to the grant, with the introduction of planning partners in the fall of 2012; however, through adjustments to the structure and the shared coaches, this professional community really took root during the 2012-13 school year. One of the highest rated questions (4.5/5) in the CALL survey indicated that time was provided to discuss strategies for instruction with colleagues.

Improved instruction for most teachers. When asked about the impact of the combination of better professional development, one-on-one content area coaching, and year two of planning partners, the teachers indicated that there had been a positive impact on their professional growth. Seven of the ten teachers were able to give clear examples

of strategies or ideas that they had used in their classrooms as a result of the work of the school to develop their processional capacity. Most often the ideas had come out of both regular meetings and sustained communication with their coaches. Finally, 77% of the teachers felt that PD to some or a great extent focused on shifting classroom instruction (City Survey data).

Student-centered Learning Climate

While the student population faced many challenges, schools that served similar demographics, even some of the schools in the same building, had developed the school climate to be student centered. A student centered climate, as defined for this study, included: (a) physical and emotional safety (b) student academic and emotional support and (c) student activities and opportunities. While the school was improving the school climate over the improvement process, the school leaders were still struggling with handling discipline and supporting the socio-emotional needs of students.

Sub-assertion six. <u>There were small gains in the student-centered learning climate during the first year of the leader-directed school improvement effort</u>. Teachers and administrators wanted to change the school environment, making it more positive. Even with the best intentions, the school struggled to develop this structure, making small changes along the way. There was still a need to work more closely with the whole staff to ensure that there would be a shared vision of what the school environment would look like and how the school would deal with students whose behavior was outside of the agreed upon norms of the community.

Struggle with student discipline. The school had long-standing behavioral problems. These problems were displayed in the high volume of low-level infractions

that regularly interrupted student learning. One of the lowest scores (1.67/5) on the CALL was in response to the question about how often serious violations of the conduct code interrupt student learning, with the majority of teachers answering weekly followed by daily. The survey also asked how often students break rules in the conduct code (1.71/5), with all but two staff members indicating that it happened very often or extremely often. Another similar question asked how often students' rule breaking disrupted the learning environment (2.05/5), with no one answering rarely or never. The school reported less serious infractions, such as group violence or gang activity but continued to have many instances of insubordination, which was most often punished through suspension. Even though the school had a clear obstacle to overcome in the area of student discipline, the school was relatively safe.

Interestingly, the CALL found that the school was strong in having clear, consistent, and enforced expectations, somewhat contradictory to the feedback in interviews and in the city survey. There was agreement that the school leaders scheduled time for teachers to discuss student behavior on a regular basis (4.33/5) and that it was important to school leaders that they enforced policies to ensure a safe learning environment (3.68/5). There was a sense that order had increased in the school from previous years. The researcher observed that students were largely out of the hallways during classes, which had previously been a serious problem. Teachers mentioned that the lunchroom was safer, with no large fights, as had happened the previous years. While 80% of teachers and 83% of the parents agreed or strongly agreed that the school was safe in the spring of 2012, those numbers rose to 91% and 83% respectively in 2013, and

94% and 89% respectively in 2014. By 2014, no teacher strongly disagreed that they were safe at school (City Survey data).

Since a policy requiring student uniforms had been implemented at the school, there had been issues with compliance. Teachers and students saw uniforms as a marker of success in creating order. Many teachers felt that the message sent to the students was that the school couldn't even enforce the uniform policy, so how would they be able to enforce more important rules. During the interviews in the spring of 2014 when asked about how the school was different from a year ago, 13 people mentioned that uniform compliance was much better, often as the first thing they mentioned. This increased compliance was observable to the researcher.

Struggled with a core group of students making poor choices. A large percentage of the student behavioral issues belonged to a small number of students. As one teacher mentioned, "There is still kind of a vocal minority of students who are pushing back against the changes that we're trying to make in terms of – in terms of just being a safe and healthy and thriving school" (Interview, Spring 2014). Unfortunately, this small group of students could easily take up the time and energy of up to ten adults at any given time. This situation created a conundrum for the school leaders, who knew they were possibly the last chance that student had to avoid a life in prison.

The deans and leadership team had started using restorative practices to deal with the students who struggled consistently to comply to school rules and frequently were in the dean's office for any manner of offenses, from cursing out a teacher, to refusing to take off a hat, to visiting other floors in the building, to rough horseplay, to interrupting a lesson. The deans had both expressed in their interviews that the students who repeatedly

received suspensions were not responding to that method of behavioral management. Instead, the multiple suspensions were causing them to miss even more instruction, leaving them further behind and even more likely to disrupt other people's school day, due to the fact that they were confused about the lesson and uncertain about school in general.

Increased instructional rigor and support. The increased focus on rigor began during the first year of the improvement effort and continued to expand during the first year after the grant, but many students were struggling with the increased academic press. The school was still trying to reconcile between having high expectations of the students and having structures in place to ensure large numbers of students didn't fail. The school had a few supports in place, such as mastery work and course extension, meant to provide safety nets for students who had not met the teacher expectations to have an opportunity to show what they'd learned.

Increased support to meet socio-emotional needs. Prior to the improvement effort, student academic and emotional support existed but was often inconsistent. During the 2012-2013 school year, the school did not have enough support staff to meet the needs of students who required counseling, much less students exhibiting the need for support through behavioral choices. This situation meant that the dean, with assistance from Mr. Reynolds, took on much of the school wide responsibility for nurturing the socio-emotional needs of the students.

Through the grant, the school added two internal positions and a counseling partnership to help improve the supports available to students in crisis. There were more supports in place to help struggling students and the school was making advancements

towards a restorative approach to student discipline. In the city surveys, more students suggested that there were adults that that cared about them and could help them with their problems.

Everyone interviewed agreed that the counseling partnership resulted in more direct support for students but was not helping to support any larger cultural shift. The new counselors had developed good relationships with the students, including the students who they had never met with before. They maintained a friendly and open demeanor, and the students felt comfortable talking to them. While they were more clearly fulfilling their role as counselors, the partner's impact on the teacher's daily experience was limited.

Impact of the grant on non-instructional staff. Of the four non-instructional staff interviewed, they all indicated they were improving in their roles as a result of the SIG. The deans both said they had learned strategies to help them better do their jobs from the counselors. One dean said, "I also feel like, as a professional, I've improved a lot in terms of how I deal with students" (Interview, Spring 2014). The deans found that the counselors were able to support them in their daily work, both mentioning that CounselorsR'Us provided them necessary support to begin using restorative justice practices. The other major contribution of the counseling staff was that they helped to ensure that the support staff, including deans, guidance counselors, and social workers met together on a regular basis. In addition the new counselors, who specialized in post-traumatic stress disorder, provided the support staff with strategies for students in crisis.

The work with the partner influenced the school leaders as well, who planned to enter year two with an expansion of restorative practices bolstered by training for the

staff. In addition, they understood the need to have a more defined vision of the school environment in year two to ensure they made the most of the SIG resources.

Provision of more engaging activities. By the spring of 2013, there were more regular structures, such as enrichment and afterschool, which ensured some opportunities for students. Many of the supports were intended to help prepare students for college. The school climate grant that went into effect during the 2013-2014 school year and the addition of a SCAT to the staff meant an expansion of this effort to provide both academic and socially enriching activities for students. Mr. Reynolds and eight other staff members all mentioned that there was a clear increase in the number of activities saying, "You can't walk down the hallway and not know that there's things happening, when they are, and that you can be involved if you want" (Interview, Spring 2014). During the observations, the pervasiveness of signs and announcements was apparent on the school walls. Parents and students also indicated that there were a variety of student opportunities for engaging in school.

Student disengagement. Student engagement at the school was still a challenge. Significant portions of the students were still not involving themselves with school in a way that would ensure their success. One teacher summed it up:

> A vast majority of our students, unfortunately, I don't think they have ownership enough in their education and in the school to have a shared vision of this- there is a general apathy. That's something that we- I think we can actively work against. I don't wanna say that in a negative way towards the students, but it's just a thing. That's how it is. (Interview, Spring 2014)

To some degree, the students did not feel that school was important or that it could add positively to their life experience. There was a sense that the students were unfamiliar

with the ways in which education could improve their lives. This disenchantment was often amplified for students who didn't excel in school.

For a large number of the kids, there had been little success in school; possibly making the opportunities an education could afford something they did not feel were available to them. A teacher suggested, "The kids don't know what they know. We need someone to find a way to get them in touch with their knowledge, and with their confidence, with themselves" (Interview, Spring 2014). The school still needed to figure out how to convince students that they could be successful in school. Also, responses from the CALL found that an area in need of improvement by the school was that they did not provide enough 'student support services that could provide a safe haven for those who traditionally struggle' (Subdomain 5.3). This lack of help could be perpetuating a lack of excitement for and motivation to learn.

Family, School, and Community Ties

Efforts by school leaders to increase strong family, school, and community ties would translate to high levels of parent involvement in their child's academic experience as well as increased efforts of the school to provide outreach and support to families and the community.

Sub-assertion seven. <u>There were very small gains in the family, school, and community ties during the first year of the leader-directed school improvement effort</u>. None of the structures that the leaders put into place as part of the improvement effort before or after the grant made any substantial changes to address the ties between the school, the families, and the community. The school had limited parent involvement before and after the leadership team began their school improvement effort. Across all of

the school years, even after the SIG grant, PTA meetings usually had fewer than five parents attend when there were upwards of 400 students in the school. The PTA grew slightly during the 2013-2014 school year largely as the result of external support provided by the school climate grant that helped the PTA organize their own activities for parents to engage in the school.

During the 2012-2013 school year, there was a push to make sure that all parents and students were aware of the requirements for graduation and knew how to track progress towards accumulating credits and passing state exams. This effort was meant to ensure that parents both understood the graduation requirements and the school's expectations for student's academic success and that they took an active role in keeping their son or daughter on track to graduate, with 94% of parents indicating that the school communicated with them about their son's or daughter's academic progress (www.city.org).

While many parents had a positive relationship with the school, parents were not engaged in the school. The school did not have a contentious relationship with the families, as the majority of the parents indicated that they were happy with and felt welcome at the school in the end of the year survey. These results had been consistent over the years, even during school failure.

Student Outcomes

Given that the goal of the SIG is to improve student outcomes, the next section explores whether there was any measurable improvement to student learning and academic achievement that could possibly be linked to the improvement effort after the first year of the SIG.

Sub-assertion eight. <u>The improvement effort did not increase student learning or engagement in the high school after the first year of the SIG improvement plan</u>. In order to determine if there were academic gains for students at the school, this study used publically available data to track growth in student learning at the high school and middle school level. High school learning gains were based on credit accumulation in the 9th, 10th, and 11th grades and state exam scores in English, mathematics, science, and history. Middle school learning gains were based on class pass rates, state exam scores, and growth scores. The results for the high school are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

High School Learning Growth 2012-2013 and 2012-2014, as Compared to 2011-2012

	On track credits 9th grade		On track credits 10th grade		On track credits 11th grade		English and World History state exam		Science, Math, and United States History state exam	
	Y1	Y2	Y1	Y2	Y1	Y2	Y1	Y2	Y1	Y2
Improved	X				X	X				
Stayed the same		X	X						X	X
Declined				X			X	X		

Note. Y1= 2012-2013 school year; Y2= 2013-2014 school year. Determined using publically available data found on the city's Department of Education website. See Appendix I for more detail.

When comparing high school student learning indicators from the 2012-2013 schools year (Y1) and the 2013-2014 school year (Y2), there is no indication that the school improvement effort led to gains in student learning. Using the publically available data displayed in Appendix I, the aggregated values for both credits earned and state

exam scores were compared to the 2011-12 scores. During the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years the percentage of students receiving 10+ credits in the school year in grade 11 improved from the 2011-2012 school year, indicating some potential growth. Also prior to the grant, there was an increase in 9th graders obtaining 10+ credits. The trend found in state exam scores was that fewer students passed the English and world history exam each year with the student scores remaining the same in the other three areas tested.

The results for the middle school are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9

Middle School Learning Growth 2012-2013 and 2012-2014, as Compared to 2011-2012

	ELA pass rates		ELA exam		ELA growth score		Math pass rate		Math exam		Math growth score		SS pass rate		Science pass rate	
	Y1	Y2	Y1	Y2	Y1	Y2	Y1	Y2	Y1	Y2	Y1	Y2	Y1	Y2	Y1	Y2
Improved	X			X		X		X				X	X			X
No change							X		X	X						
Declined		X	X		X						X			X	X	

Note. Y1= 2012-2013 school Year; Y2= 2013-2014 school year; Common core testing was implemented in 2012-2013, leading to citywide decline as well as improvement in 2013-2014. Determined using publically available data found on the city's Department of Education website. See Appendix I for more detail.

Due to a lack of consistency in the state exams and the subjectivity of pass rates (Baker et al., 2010), the greatest potential indicator of improvement was the mean adjusted growth percentile score, comparing the student's growth, as based on their 4th grade state exams, with the students from the year before whose exam scores were the same. There was growth in middle school ELA and math during the 2013-2014 school year. While the math score had been high in the spring of 2012, the ELA score was on the incline, meeting the target growth for the city. The teacher for this group of ELA students

was new to the school and came in half way through the year, making it difficult to attribute that growth to the improvement effort.

Student engagement. Student attendance has been linked to student engagement. All three years, RHS's attendance was well below the average for the city. Collectively, these attendance data show a regression towards the mean for similar schools during the first year of the improvement effort (2012-2013). Overall, however, the school has not had any significant improvement in attendance for the school population before and after the achievement effort. See Appendix I for more concrete analysis of the data.

Major Assertion Two

The major assertion developed from the findings for this chapter is: **The school did not make progress in all four of organizational supports, as driven by changes in the leadership practices, possibly limiting improvements in student learning.**

While there was progress in instructional guidance and professional capacity during year one of the grant, there was less progress in student-centered learning climate, and almost no progress in family and school ties. This is depicted in Figure 11

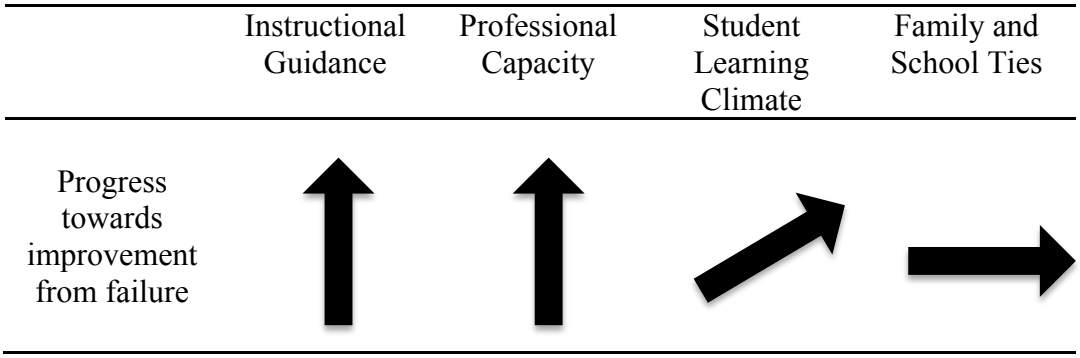

Figure 11. Progress towards improvement in the four essential organizational structures

The Bryk et al. (2010) research indicated that the school must make advances in all of the essential supports, including leadership, in order to improve. RHS's improvement effort made significant gains in the two areas most closely tied to

instruction, which was the primary focus of the improvement effort; however, there were not large gains in the two areas that dealt with the socio-emotional factors. For the school to successfully turn around and to see improvement in student learning, the next two years of the SIG implementation must continue the growth in instructional guidance and professional capacity, while also making major developments in the school's ability to both engage and support students and their families.

Mr. Oliver said:

> I didn't expect year one to really give us huge gains. I thought it was- it was like a year of breaking through, building relationships between coaches and staff, figuring out ways to monitor teacher growth from our perspective, and figuring out ways to do our job better, so everyone was learning the ropes in year one. That's what I really thought it was gonna be, and I think this is what happened. (Interview, Spring 2014)

All of the leaders, support staff, and all but one teacher indicated that they felt like the school was improving.

Research Question 3

The last set of findings relates to the last research question by addressing the contextual factors that influence the ability of the leadership teams to make progress in the areas of curriculum and instruction, school culture and student climate, and parent and community ties. In order to better understand the improvement effort at the school, data were collected on the school-level, district-level, and community level factors that support or hinder the school improvement effort, as displayed in See Figure 12.

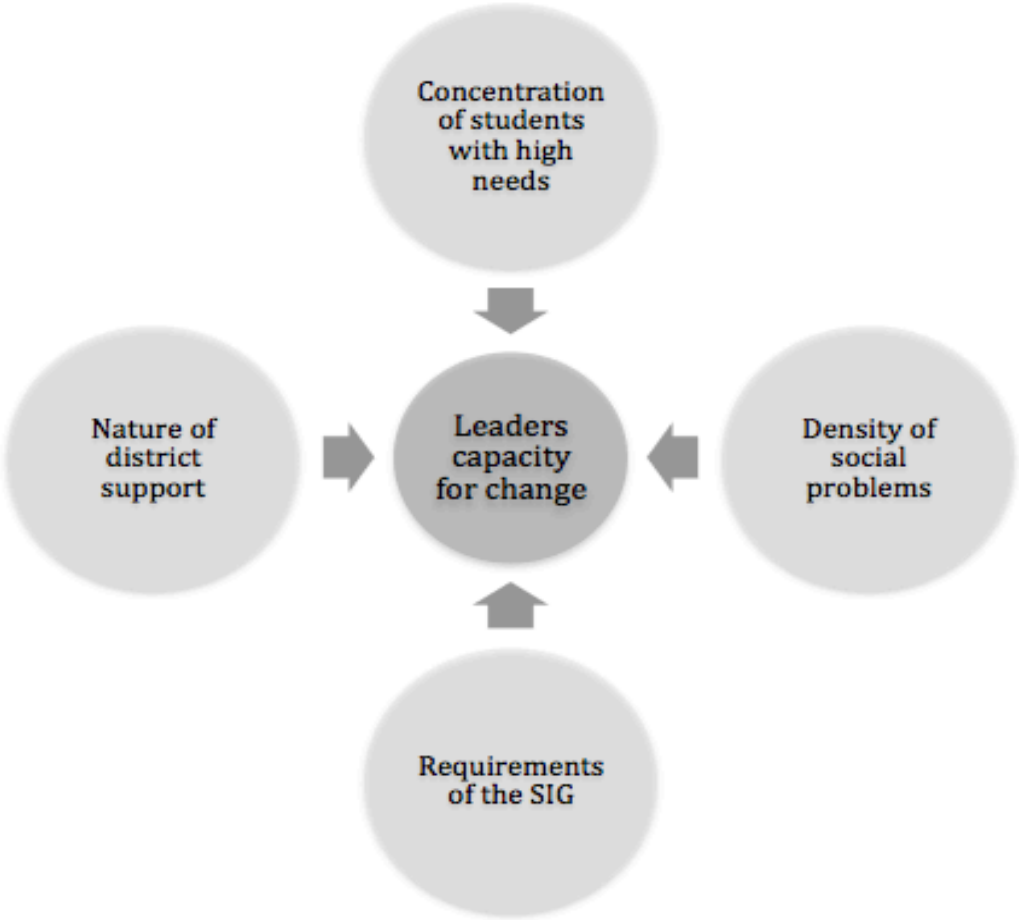

Figure 12. Relationship between school contextual factors and the leaders' capacity for change

In this case study, RHS has its own school level contextual factors that make that school a unique educational experience. The school does not operate in a vacuum, and it has been well established that there are structural, institutional, and societal factors that operate concurrently to influence effective leadership and school improvement. Bryk et al. (2010) suggested in their framework that the school's context would either result in a strong foundation for school improvement or undermine effective leadership.

Concentration of Students with High Needs

The data from the interviews as well as the publically available data on student characteristics confirmed that the school had a significant portion of students with academic and socio-emotional needs that required support services.

Sub-assertion nine. The high concentration of students with academic and socio-emotional issues made it difficult to provide them with a high quality education with such limited resources. The use of these resources was complicated by district policies around school size, enrollment and budgeting.

When asked about challenges the school faced towards continued improvement, 12 of the 18 staff members interviewed in the spring of 2014 mentioned that the students' academic skills were a challenge. The reality was that a substantial proportion of students were entering the school with a dearth of skills that should have been taught in previous grades. One teacher said, "Being able to meet our students where they're at and bringing them up to a level where they need to be, I think is our greatest challenge" (Interview, Spring 2014). Students were coming in without the knowledge base needed to learn the new content and skills. There was also an increase of students entering the school with lower skills based on their incoming state exam scores. This trend can be seen in Table 4 in Chapter 4. The teachers had to not only catch them up but also teach the curriculum they were responsible for. The quality of the education these students had received was fully behind the national average, as was the case for many schools in the city.

Thirteen staff mentioned that students' socio-emotional states were a challenge. There was a sense that the student needs were so extreme that the school couldn't provide the level of support the students would need without major changes to the school's

structure. Mr. Reynolds explained, “When you have so many kids who need so much support all in one place, it can be really hard to serve them” (Interview, Spring 2014).

School size. The school was small in size, meaning that they operated on a small budget with a small staff. Many of the same demands need to be met in a small school as a large comprehensive high school, but the additional resources were not made available to small schools in this city. Mr. Reynolds mentioned, “I’m really curious how other schools with our budgets and our population and size and whatever are doing it. I really think it’s a key difference between success levels” (Field notes, Spring 2013). The school did not have the resources, even with the grant support, to meet the needs of the students, particularly those students who had more extreme situations. The small staff and limited budget made it very difficult for the school to devote the necessary resources to students who struggled to read or were newly emigrated from a non-English speaking country, making it difficult to meet the diversity of needs of the student body. While funds were allotted for specific partnerships and programs, the grant was not able to supplement the budget to meet all of the student needs.

Enrollment. Because the school had done so poorly on the city’s report card, which was public to parents deciding where to send their child as well as those who had children currently enrolled, enrollment went down considerably after the 2010-2011 school year. The school struggled to enroll enough students to support the infrastructure of teachers and support staff. At the same time, in order to fill the seats, the enrollment office sent students to the school that were either unsuccessful at other schools or had trouble finding a good fit. This system meant that the school, which was already failing and trying to improve, now had a higher percentage of students with more acute needs

both socially and academically. These students were using a large number of human and fiscal resources, causing additional stress on the school.

The school leaders were very clear that they believed in the mission to educate all students to the best of their ability. Accordingly, the leadership team, support staff, partners, and key teachers put a lot of time and energy into working with these new students to support them in their transition to the school. Unfortunately in many circumstances, these students had gained minimal credits and were often not on track to graduate before aging out of the system. These same students also were not coming to school to learn but instead to avoid further criminal sanctions or to socialize. The school leaders recognized that the student needs were severe and counterproductive to the broader goals of the improvement effort.

Density of Social Problems

The school was located in a city with great disparities in wealth and opportunity the neighborhoods feeding into the school were economically depressed.

Sub-assertion ten. The school was located in a depressed urban area plagued by many of the social issues of the neighborhood. While the school leaders and staff understood the responsibility of providing an education in that setting, they struggled to push back against the outside factors that influenced the students' lives, often facing social realities that negatively impacted the learning environment.

Another contextual factor that emerged was the reality that the students were members of a community that regularly dealt with crime, poverty, and racial segregation (See Chapter 4). The students were bringing into the school building many of the problems that they faced in their community. Many of these students had additional

stressors in their lives that were above and beyond the average teenage experience. There was violence in and around their neighborhoods, which especially for the males was hard to avoid. Gangs were a very real presence for many students from the time that they were young.

Students frequently came into school talking about a friend or loved on who had been shot or the violence that had occurred outside their homes the night before. Many students had a sibling or close family member in jail. In fact over the last five years, six former students have been murdered on the streets, all by the age of 21. None of the homicides have been solved. One teacher expressed the following sentiment:

> Our job is one of the hardest in the world. We deal with one of the most difficult populations to educate. You're talking about the children of impoverished and uneducated parents . . . They fear for their lives when they walk home. Some of them have to go pick up their little brother after school, so they can't stay for help. They're exhausted in the morning cause they were up all night with their little brother cause mom works a double. That's who we educate. (Interview, Spring 2013)

In addition, the families struggled economically, meaning that parents were working stressful schedules and often relying on their teenage children to help provide child-care to their siblings or cousins. The students have life experiences outside of school known to affect the academic and socio-emotional state of students.

In the spring of 2013, the dean told the story of a student that seemed to illustrate the struggles that the students had resisting the outside factors influencing them. She talked about a student who she knew from 6th grade through his current 11th grade year who had been caught up in the gang life. She regretfully, while on the verge of tears shared this story:

> I've watched it happen. [The student], he breaks my heart . . . one of my first kids that I taught and to see him now. . . I just remember how bright he used to be . . .

> he really breaks my heart because I know his family. He barely comes to school and that wasn't how he started. He used to be excited about math. He used to be excited about school and excited about things. There were so many things that happened in his life, and we just didn't have the resources to help him. Now, he's repeating the ninth grade, and he'll probably be repeating the ninth grade again, and he's a smart kid. You know what I mean? It has nothing to do with his ability or potential. It has everything to do with outside factors that he can't seem to beat, and I can't even begin to help him with. That has to be the worst feeling in the world cause they're kids. Every kid deserves a chance, and that makes me sad. (Interview, Spring 2013)

Unfortunately life circumstances had created a situation where the student was no longer engaged with school and for that matter- the world. The streets were his world, and he had to do what was needed to be successful there. This story was not unique.

Nature of District Support

The district role in assisting the school was oversight instead of providing guidance or other forms of support.

Sub-assertion eleven. Administrators were novices in a struggling school and the district did not provide them additional school support. After the grant, the district increased the oversight of the school without being mindful of the demands on the administration or providing meaningful feedback.

One interesting theme that developed in the spring of 2013 was that the staff and leaders were looking for someone to help fix the problems of the school. Whether that was the district or some other outside provider, the message was clear: The staff was more than willing to work on improving the school but didn't know how to improve the school. As Mr. Reynolds poignantly remarked the year prior to the grant:

> The thing that was most confusing as we took over is that everyone thinks you are failing and this school is a disaster, and they were like, 'Here you go, it yours now, you got to fix it . . . Where is our turnaround specialist? Why not give us that? I really think if somebody- I mean we are clearly willing to work hard, and we have a staff that is clearly willing to work hard and if someone who really

> knew what they were doing came in and said, 'Here's what you need to do,' we would do it.

Very central to the work around school improvement was this idea that the school was deemed failing but not given any additional fiscal or human capital to help turn it around, much less guidance on how to improve the school is. The assumption seemed to be that the school had the internal capacity to do better and wasn't. The school was failing by all measures, including credit accumulation, state exam pass rates, graduation rates, and high suspension rates; yet, the district was not providing additional support in any significant manner.

Of course this external support shifted when the school received the SIG support; however, that support was not from the district but instead came from the federal and state governments. The SIG led to additional district oversight and no district support. Ms. Oliver claimed, "There are so many compliance issues that I could spend my whole day worrying about being in compliance. I don't know how to do that and still get into classrooms" (Interview, Spring 2014). The district and state had every reason to monitor the school and ensure that there was progress being made; however those efforts to keep track on RHS added to the already overburdened workload.

Members of the staff and the principal talked about the "the dog and pony show" that the district required of them since they were receiving additional funding (Interview, Spring 2014). There was an increased presence of people visiting the school building from the central office, including the superintendent, which had never happened before. Unfortunately, the intention of these visits was oversight instead of providing meaningful support to the school. The teachers often felt that the efforts of the principal to increase instructional oversight was the result of these visits and not part of a genuine effort to

improve, whereas the principal felt that the preparation needed for these visits took away from time set aside for authentic instructional support and feedback.

Requirements of the SIG

The SIG had certain requirements including the expectation that the school would work with external partners. In addition, the SIG required regular reporting of progress.

Sub-assertion twelve. The partnerships, while providing the school with much needed services, also added considerably to the leadership teams workload and ability to manage the direction of the school, an area of concern for the school.

The federal government required the use of partnerships in order to apply for SIG funding. These partnerships, while helpful, also required a commitment of the leader's already precious time. When asked if they considered replacing either partner, the leadership indicated that the coordination effort had been too extensive to risk losing time to make another change. Mr. Reynolds said:

> We didn't consider replacing them because it took so much damn work to integrate them that to try and start over with another organization and risk being in the same place we are in now with a whole new group, just didn't seem worthwhile. (Interview, Spring 2014)

During this first year of implementation both figuring out the role of the partners, individually and collectively, and introducing the partners to the school added significantly to the administrative teams' workload, particularly that of Mr. Reynolds.

Coordination of the partners proved to be the biggest challenge to using the grant to develop the organization by supporting instruction and meeting student socio-emotional needs. Mr. Reynolds was tasked with 25 additional people to manage on a weekly basis in addition to the staff at RHS. He shared his concerns in this quote:

> Especially when things started, it was overwhelming in ways that we had not anticipated, which redirected our attention from things we had planned. A lot of the coordination efforts felt unnecessary in a lot of ways but had to happen… the coordination effort is hugely time consuming, then people want to meet all the time, and that's usually time consuming. The first half of the year was really frustrating because when they wanted to meet, they wanted information because they didn't know anything, and I became the person that they would go to find out information, and I kept connecting them with other people and they kept coming to me. So I would sit in these meetings that in theory were supposed to be about something else, and instead they would be me explaining what everything was so the first half of the year was really nuts . . . A lot of my time is spent on the coordination suck, so it's meant that in my third year as an administrator I have probably worked two more hours a day than I was working my first two years, and I was working a lot during my first two years, but it should get more manageable. I work at least on day every weekend, at least, not necessarily in the building but quite frequently in the building and that is primarily to do my actual job, you know like my non-grant job . . . It's also meant that a lot of the stuff I was really on top of last year, I'm just not, you know? We've done like one data deep dive; our credits are not where they were last year because I am not on it like I was. I mean the second dean has reduced the amount of time that I spend dealing with discipline, so that's been kind of a trade off. But instead of being able to use that time to do the work that I might be charged with, I spend that time managing the grant. . . I mean I was always missing the time to do my actual job and now I've gotten some of that back, and it's been filled with the grant. (Interview, Spring 2014)

The assistant principal has always had a strong work ethic and devoted well beyond his contracted hours to the school. The grant resources were intended to relieve the person in this position of managerial tasks in order to focus on transformational tasks, particularly to address the school culture and climate goals. The implementation of the grant was instead repurposing the time for managing and coordinating the grant. Paperwork, particularly for the school climate grant, took several staff members to manage and took the majority of the one staff member's time to coordinate. The grant required attendance records for each course and regularly surveying of the student body. These time commitments may improve in the subsequent years.

Ensuring the partnership expectations. Due to the extremely fast turnaround necessary to complete the grant application, the partners were selected without very much time to vet them. The city provided an approved vendors list of organizations that could be included in the grant applications as partners and could be paid with the funds. This list provided almost no detail on the services of the vendors or their quality of services. The grant writing team was able to determine, with the help of the district, which organizations had worked with other SIG schools. From there, the grant team placed phone calls to the schools who had worked with those organizations and perused the websites for examples of the type of support the partners could offer.

Since time was needed to communicate with the partners, have them present an offer of proposed services and costs, and then have them complete a portion of the grant application, the decisions on which partners to work with had to be made very soon after the theory of change for the grant was developed. Ms. Oliver mentioned:

> That's how we picked the partners that we did. It's how we made decisions about where to put resources, grant and outside the grant, if they're not following within those three areas, then they're not really working towards what we think is the improvement plan. (Interview, Spring 2014)

While the grant team chose partners based on the three main goals of the grant, the specific services being offered were unclear.

Because of this accelerated process, the leadership team was not clear on the exact services being offered by either partner. Several of the services that the socio-emotional partnership offered, it turned out were tailored specifically to the needs of another school. The partner sought to do the same at RHS but did not feel that all of the programming could be directly applied. The instructional partnership had a large fee included in their

services that appeared to suggest that they would help provide guidance for whole school reform but was quickly determined to be operational costs.

Aligning the partnerships. Another challenge associated with the partnerships was achieving alignment between competing priorities and ensuring alignment of differing services. Ms. Oliver suggested, "I think everything that is happening is good for the most part, but if it's not aligned, and I worry that without really monitoring that alignment, it's a squandered opportunity" (Interview, Spring 2014). At the beginning of the year, when representatives from the two partnerships and the leadership team came to the table in the Spring of 2013 to plan for the year, there was an immediate sense that the two partners had differing priorities and points of view about how to serve the whole child. In fact one of the partners didn't even think it was necessary to meet as a group and resisted, while the other partner felt that it was absolutely essential to the process. Ms. Oliver noted:

> That became clear at a certain point: that I had to state my objectives very firmly, and the school has to state what it is that we are looking for and hold them accountable for that because if we don't, then the partners- for whatever reason, and I don't think it's a malicious reason- will push forward their own agenda. (Interview, Spring 2014)

Both school leaders indicated that this struggle continued throughout the year. In an interview with one of the partners, he indicated that there needed to be better communication between the partners moving forward.

Major Assertion 3

There were four factors outside of the school leaders' control that indirectly and directly hindered the ability of the leaders to effectively direct the school improvement effort both before and during the implementation of the SIG grant.

These included the (a) concentration of students with high needs, (b) density of social problems, (c) nature of district support, and (d) requirements of the SIG.

The leaders were having the most difficulty making progress in the realm of student engagement and discipline. Also, despite formidable changes in the instructional supports, student learning wasn't shifting. The high concentration of students with extreme academic needs, coupled with a high proportion of students struggling with the social realities of their community, hindered change. Furthermore the nature of the district support and the requirements of the SIG, limited the leaders' ability to effectively lead.

Summary

The findings discussed in this chapter include three major assertions, and 11 sub-assertions. These assertions each represent the synthesis of all of the data, including interviews, observations, documents, and surveys collected during 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 before and after the implementation of a school improvement grant. To summarize, the findings are:

Research Question 1: How did the leadership team understand and shape the organizational supports?

Major assertion 1. The leadership team exhibited signs of all the leadership practices necessary for effective leadership; however, they exhibited more successful practices and spent more time in setting direction and developing the organization than they did in building relationships. Managing the direction of the organization was their weakest area, largely due to struggles with organizing time, a consistent theme across both years.

Sub-assertion one. *In the spring of 2013 the leadership team set direction based on the school's initial mission but without a clear integrated plan for school improvement. In the spring of 2014, the leadership team presented a clearer direction for the school through the development of the theory of action for the school improvement grant.*

Sub-assertion two. *During the 2012-13 school year the school leadership team developed the organization by dividing the focus between instruction and school climate and beginning to put some structures into place that supported that focus, while in 2013-14 the school leadership team aligned the organizational structures with the theory of action and the accompanying goals.*

Sub-assertion three. *While the school showed signs of high relational trust across both school years with leaders working closely with other members of the school community, sharing leadership tasks, and designing strategies for improvement collaboratively, there was slightly less trust in the principal after the implementation of the grant, with staff feeling less supported by her, while remaining trusting of and supported by the assistant principal. There were no changes to student/teacher relational trust.*

Research question 2: In what ways, if any, did the leadership practices contribute to change in the essential organizational supports?

Major assertion 2. The school did not make progress in all four of organizational supports, as driven by changes in the leadership practices, possibly limiting improvements in student learning.

Sub-assertion four. *There were moderate to large gains in instructional guidance during the first year of the leader-directed school improvement effort.*

Sub-assertion five. *There were moderate to large gains in professional capacity during the first year of the leader-directed school improvement effort.*

Sub-assertion six. *There were small gains in the student-centered learning climate during the first year of the leader-directed school improvement effort.*

Sub-assertion seven. *There were very small gains in the family, school, and community ties during the first year of the leader-directed school improvement effort.*

Sub-assertion eight. *The improvement effort did not increase student learning or engagement in the high school after the first year of the SIG improvement plan.*

Research Question 3: What are the organizational and contextual factors that hinder or facilitate effective leadership?

Major assertion 3. There were four factors outside of the school leaders' control that indirectly and directly hindered the ability of the leaders to effectively direct the school improvement effort both before and during the implementation of the SIG grant. These included the (a) concentration of students with high needs, (b) density of social problems, (c) nature of district support, and (d) requirements of the SIG.

Sub-assertion nine. *The high concentration of students with academic and socio-emotional issues made it difficult to provide them with a high quality education with such limited resources. The use of these resources was complicated by district policies around school size, enrollment and budgeting.*

Sub-assertion ten. *The school was located in a depressed urban area plagued by many of the social issues of the neighborhood. While the school leaders and staff*

understood the responsibility of providing an education in that setting, they struggled to push back against the outside factors that influenced the students' lives, often facing social realities that negatively impacted the learning environment.

Sub-assertion eleven. *Administrators were novices in a struggling school and the district did not provide them additional school support. After the grant, the district increased the oversight of the school without being mindful of the demands on the administration or providing meaningful feedback.*

Sub-assertion twelve. *The partnerships, while providing the school with much needed services, also added considerably to the leadership teams' workload and ability to manage the direction of the school, an area of concern for the school.*

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This study intended to add to the current research base on turning around low performing schools and the role that federal competitive funding played in that process. Specifically this study examined how leadership practices were enacted in one school undergoing a turnaround and found that the leaders had more ability to determine a plan for improvement and put grant-funded structures in place than they did to manage those structures while also developing a trusting environment. During the efforts to plan for improvement, the leaders prioritized efforts in designing an instructional program and preparing teachers to use strategies that support designing and teaching aligned, rigorous curriculum and instruction.

The school leaders had minimal ability to make the crucial changes to the school's academic and social environment during the first year of the improvement effort. The school had a high percentage of students with low-skills and substantial socio-emotional issues, often the result of prolonged time spent in a high-needs urban area plagued by poverty, violence, and racism, which influenced the success of specific programs and hindered healthy relationships with students and their families. In addition, the district and state failed to provide the school with additional guidance or strategic support to accompany the influx of resources, which needed to be managed, further intensifying the leaders struggles with both managing time and managing people.

The school effectiveness and school improvement literature highlights the importance of the school leader in successfully running a school (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003) and suggests that leadership is even more important when the school is trying to move from a low-performing to high-performing school (Duke, 2007; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). In this study, the school leadership team was clearly at the center of the SIG implementation. This team included the principal and assistant principal, who were also supported in their operational tasks by teacher leaders.

Overall the improvement effort at the school aligned with the framework for school improvement. This study builds on existing research about school improvement that suggests that there must be certain structures in place, of which the most important is effective leadership, in order to advance student learning (Bryk et al., 2010; Leithwood, 2013; Louis, Leithwood, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2010). Consistent with this body of research, this study found that the leaders guided the school's reform effort. Additionally, this study found that although the SIG encouraged the leaders to develop a closely aligned theory of action, this did not ensure that the leaders had the capacity to enact that theory of action.

This study also supported much of the current research base on schools receiving SIG support. The federal government has hired a team of researchers to evaluate the use of School Improvement Grants to turn around failing schools in a series of studies set up to explore the change process in and success of SIG schools (Floch et al., 2014). As was mentioned in the introduction, schools throughout the United States in the bottom 5% of

achievement have been given the opportunity to apply for these competitive grants. In particular, Floch et al. (2014) recently published a report of the results of a 25 case studies on schools that received funding in 2010. The sample included various state, district, and school levels, most of which selected the transformations model, much like the school in this case study. The findings in the current study aligned very closely with those reported by Floch et al. (2014). In addition, Yatsko, Lake, Nelson, and Bowen (2012) conducted a study for the Center for Reinventing Public Education (CPRE) in which they interviewed state and district officials and visited nine SIG schools in one state. Finally, McMurrer (2012a, 2012b) also explored the first year of SIG implementation at six schools in three states and surveyed officials in 46 states as part of research from the Center of Education Policy. These four studies relate closely to the purpose of this current study, providing context for this work within the larger research base.

The discussion will illuminate the findings of this current study by looking at similarities and difference of the results as compared to the aforementioned SIG studies. First, the discussion will explore the practices of the leadership team at RHS, followed by a discussion of the findings on the progress and hindrances of the organizational supports. Then, the implications and recommendations for future research, practice, and policy will be addressed, followed by the conclusions drawn from this comparative case study.

Leadership Practices

The schools in the Floch et al. (2014) study that had the greatest success at the end of the first year of the SIG implementation had leaders who practiced what the researchers referred to as strategic leadership, which was measured by their ability to

articulate a theory of action, with problems, strategies, intended outcomes, and an explanation of the underlying assumptions, something the leadership at RHS showed they were able to do. Only two principals in the Floch et al. (2014) sample placed high in strategic leadership. Similar to RHS, the principals in their study exhibited a mix of leadership qualities, but the most common practice exhibited among the SIG schools was to create a strong organizational vision (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986a, 1986b, 1987; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger).

This study found that RHS went from a mission statement that was written but not lived, to a more concrete set of goals around instruction and an actual theory of action that aligned goals with school structures and programs, including two key partnerships. Interestingly, however, some staff felt like there was a clearer direction for the school the year prior to the grant, indicating that the leaders were struggling to communicate the theory of action. Unless the school leaders ensure that the vision is shared with, communicated to, and adopted by the staff (Duke, 2009; Hallinger, 2005; Louis, Leithwood, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2010; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008), there could be a continuing struggle to get everyone on board with the improvement effort, which would be necessary for a change of this scale. In order to address this problem, the SIG continuation plan included a strategic leadership coach to work closely with the assistant principal on how to manage the direction and the structures put into place as part of the improvement effort.

The research on building relationships emphasized the importance of trust in the leaders as well as the needs for an environment of trust between colleagues and between

the school and its clients (i.e. students and parents (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard, Salloum, & Berbetisky, 2009; Tshcannen-Moran, 2004). The leaders in this study, especially the principal, lost some of the trust they had built within the school during the initial implementation of the SIG. This shift could be the result of so much change (Fullan, 2007). The administration was trying to remove unsuccessful staff from the school, which has been found to be necessary for improving the professional capacity of the school (Billman, 2004; Bryk et al., 2010, Hallinger, 1996; Stein & Spillane, 2005). This necessary leadership function, coupled with a new teacher evaluation system meant to tie teacher job security to student test scores, most likely explains the shift in trust. In addition, with the new theory of action, the principal felt the need to operate in a more decisive manner in accordance with the grant, which some researchers suggest is necessary to manage an improvement effort (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Overall, the school seemed to have relatively well-developed relational trust which was waning as change increased; therefore, the school leaders needed to be aware of being both transparent and consistent in their practices (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hoy, 2012; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Price, 2011; Tshcannen-Moran, 2004).

Organizational Supports

RHS aligned the use of the funds closely with the plan for improvement and the plan for improvement was closely tied to the research base. In contrast, the CPRE study found that there was a weak connection between the turnaround strategy and the use of SIG funds (McMerrer, 2012a). Many years of school effectiveness research point towards the importance of both instructional guidance (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986a, 1986b; Marks & Printy, 2003; Purkey & Smith, 1983) and

professional capacity (Leithwood et al., 2008; Portin et al., 2003; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008) in school success. The principal of RHS also believed that these were important elements of the SIG implementation. Since this area was the most well developed during the improvement process the year prior to the grant, it was the easiest area on which to build. The school leaders continued to work on developing an awareness of teacher quality and what was happening in classrooms (Leithwood et al., 2008; Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach, 2003). In addition, they designed the professional development to align with a school wide instructional focus (Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001)) and created sustained, coherent, content-based professional development (Billman, 2004; Hallinger, 1996; Garet et al., 2009; King & Newman, 2001; Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007; Stein & Spillane, 2005).

The school built from successful structures that had been in place such as the team model; successful programs, such as planning partners and afterschool offerings; and successful courses, such as the research class, which were mostly started the year prior to the SIG. Those areas that were already part of the improvement plan had larger gains due to the efforts already put in place to make changes in those areas. On the other hand, the same areas where the school traditionally struggled, such as student engagement and discipline, continued to be a problem. Similarly in a majority of the schools in the Floch et al. (2014) sample, the SIG was a step in an improvement process that had begun prior to the implementation of the grant services.

One of the biggest conflicting messages in the research base is whether or not a school turnaround should begin with improving the delivery and alignment of instruction (Duke, 2009; Hallinger, 2011) or whether the school leaders must first focus on the

school's academic and social climate (McMurrer, 2012a; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). RHS struggled with this tension. This study found that the school leaders decided to focus on the technical core of schooling first with the hopes that improved instruction would result in shifts in student engagement and behavior. Since there were no discernible gains in student learning at the end of year one, this may have been due to a lack of gains in the student-learning climate. Improving instruction was not enough.

The school learning climate was captured in two of the key goals for the theory of action; yet, the focus for the year was not on student engagement and behavior. Although the structures were in place and aligned with the theory of action to help improve the student-centered learning climate, the leaders did not have the time or resources to make significant changes in year one. Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) and the work of McMurrer (2012a; 2012b) suggested that the school would not make gains in student learning until the ongoing problems with student engagement are solved. McMurrer (2012a) found that SIG schools frequently began with shifting to a more positive school climate before focusing on curriculum and instruction. RHS took a different strategy, prioritizing instruction over student discipline and academic engagement, although they did put structures in place to support those areas as well.

Whereas the school made advancements in providing resources for struggling students, particularly for those students who needed counseling, and in tightening up some of the discipline structures, particularly in making sure staff other than the school leaders were available to assist teachers with discipline problems that interrupted learning, they still did not resolve the bigger issues: low levels of student engagement and the lack of respect in student/teacher relationships. Research indicates that until these

areas of student climate are addressed, the positive benefits of improved instruction will not be felt at the classroom level (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Ripski & Gregory, 2009).

Another important aspect of a student-centered climate is the academic press or emphasis at the school and classroom level. The school was increasing rigor in the classrooms and asking more of the students and teachers. They did not plan for extended learning time or additional opportunities for small group support. While a number of students need additional learning support services, RHS did not put any structures in place to increase learning time, as the teachers were already struggling to manage the time they were already engaged in instruction. If the school hopes to make gains, there will need to more support put in place for struggling readers (Duke, 2009). Much of the work around engagement at the school included expanding extracurricular activities but did not necessarily focus on increasing student buy-in at the classroom level. In a separate report, McMurrer (2012b) found that all of the schools in the sample that used a transformation model, like RHS, extended learning time, and the leaders felt that was the key to success in improving achievement.

Contextual Factors

While SIG funds were helpful for initiating new changes, these resources did not necessarily do anything to overcome the schools initial financial concerns. This study and the Floch et al. (2014) study found that although there was a large flood of money, the school still struggled with resources. The schools that made the least progress in the larger sample were schools that had fewer resources before the grant was awarded. The struggles with budgeting and financial restraints that existed prior to the grant continued to impede progress towards improvement, even after the SIG. RHS was not able to

overcome the enrollment problem or the problems associated with meeting student needs with a small staff, similar to the schools in the large-scale SIG study that had a lower capacity and reported having fewer material resources.

Furthermore Floch et al. (2014) suggested that one of the two biggest hindrances for schools in their sample were those schools that had high levels of violence, crime, poverty, or "traumatic" contexts. RHS can be identified as a school with a high concentration of students who struggle with academic and socio-emotional issues as the result of growing up in a community with a high percentage of low-income families. Research has established a clear link between student economic status and their academic achievement, beginning even at a very young age, where household factors would have a greater influence than schooling factors (Duncan & Murnane, 2014). Whether through exposure to violence at a young age (Evans, 2004) or the social isolation of living in a segregated neighborhood (Cutler, Glaeser & Vigdor, 2012; Jargowsky, 1997; Reardon & Bischoff, 2011; Watson, 2009), the students at RHS face many of these problems that have been shown to impede progress at SIG schools.

This reality brings one to wonder if a school in a low-income, highly-racialized, high-needs community can improve within the current system. In order to initiate real change, schools may need more drastic improvement plans than can be enacted within the SIG requirements. While the SIG focuses on changing the teaching and learning at the school, it doesn't address the larger context of the school system and the community in which the school is situated.

While this study is unique, it can point to some of the contextual factors that led to performance problems in an urban school environment, serving students from families

with limited recourses and limited social capital (Payne, 2009). The Floch et al. (2014) SIG study was looking for trends that occurred across all of the schools, whereas this study intended to provide a detailed analysis of one site. A finding of the larger study was that each SIG school was unique. Even though all of the schools were struggling to successfully educate their students, the reasons and solutions varied. For that reason, it is important to help describe individual cases in great detail in order to help schools that have similar histories and similar problems learn from findings relevant to their individual context.

A final finding in this study that was also emphasized in the Floch et al. (2014) study is that evaluation at the end of one year of implementation does not suggest that there will or won't be long term, sustainable change. Whereas some SIG schools may have early gains and then stall in their progress, other schools may learn from the mistakes of the first year and adjust so that larger gains occur in years two and three. RHS seems to be making gains in two identified areas of need. According to Bryk et al. (2010), unless the school makes progress in the additional areas of school-learning climate and family and community ties, they will not see gains in student learning. If they go into the second year with more structures in place to develop those areas, that change could result in the improvement of student learning that was not present at the end of year one.

Duke (2009) makes the argument that school improvement must be done in phases. The school had so many needs and problems that the leadership team had to think about implementing improvement in phases. The SIG grant requires a complete plan for three years, meaning that certain resources may have been squandered during the first

year while the school focused on the biggest problems, which may have been the only possible strategy. On the other hand, the Floch et al. (2014) study and a study from the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CPRE) looked at whether the changes to SIG schools were incremental or if they resulted in a compete restructuring (Yatsko, Lake, Nelson, & Bowen, 2012). In both studies the researchers found that the majority of schools made incremental changes and that those changes were often detached from each other. On the other hand, RHS made incremental changes; but for the most part, the new structures and programs put in place complemented each other. In the Floch et al. (2013) sample, schools used an average of six of the 11 improvement strategies identified as necessary for improvement. RHS used six of the 11 as well (i.e. (a) increasing professional development, (b) using instructional coaches, (c) using student-level data, (d) providing student supports, (e) implementing new behaviors policies/programs, and (f) providing more parent activities), putting them on par with the schools in the sample.

Another concern that the school will need to address going into the next two years is how to ensure that the changes they are making can be sustained. The larger SIG study also addressed the sustainability of the progress made in the first year of implementation (Floch et al., 2014). The most developed area at the end of the first year for RHS was the development of professional capacity especially through the coaching relationships. While this focus on teacher quality is promising and has been closely tied to student learning (Heck, 2007), the use of an external partnership could mean that at the end of three years, unless external funding is still available, those gains could be reversed. The school has high turnover of teachers and a very small staff, so that it may be difficult to

establish a system in which the coaching model can continue within the school as a mentoring system.

In addition, during the first year, the principal had to replace one of the four new positions mid-year and had to negotiate staff changes in both partnerships. These three staffing changes meant that the role of that person was not fully realized until mid-year, $1/6^{th}$ of the way through the grant. In addition at the end of the first year, the leadership team chose to replace another of the staff positions, the second assistant principal, effectively losing a year of time that could have been focused on developing the special education structures and improving instruction through observations, as well as a year of leadership coaching for that individual. It is too early to tell whether these setbacks will continue to hinder growth in student achievement or if those adjustments in the first year will allow for ongoing progress.

Implications

This study supports current research on school effectiveness and reform in identifying how a school improvement effort, and the leadership processes guiding that effort, can be implemented in a specific school context. This analysis of one school drew many of the same conclusions as those of the large-scale studies. This study supports some of the earlier research (Farrington et al., 2013) that the nonacademic needs of students cannot be ignored in school improvement. Although the school was making changes to their internal structures and to the quality of instruction, students were still not engaged. Particularly when a school has a high concentration of students struggling with socio-emotional issues, this situation might require more drastic measures for change. Also, the problem facing middle and high schools that need to turn around is that the

students are behind academically, often as the result of early schooling and differential access to additional learning opportunities (Duncan & Murnane, 2014). Schools are asked to prepare students to have the same education as their peers, as should be the case, but there are not extra systems in place to help make up the skill deficit of students that is a reality in many low-performing urban schools.

Until we recognize the unique needs of students in low-income, segregated urban schools are different and require greater resources, we are not going to improve schooling for the students attending those schools. The federal and state government need to consider whether the most effective way to support schools in need of improvement is the allocation of large sums of money to schools without examining the root causes of the problems. The underlying assumption seems to be that the schools know how to improve and have the capacity with additional funds to make lasting changes. The reality seems to be that hard-working, well-intentioned educators in high needs schools struggle to fulfill the responsibilities of the job and manage large-scale change at the same time.

Recommendations

These findings indicated that the school struggled with prioritizing school climate or instructional quality. Ideally, a school would be able to make changes in both areas simultaneously but this study and others like it seem to indicate that schools do not always have the capacity to make changes in all areas at the same time. More research looking at the relationship between professional capacity and student engagement in schools could help leaders understand how to plan for whole school reform.

Another theme that emerged is that school reform might even have to be considered a classroom-level issue. Obviously the whole school has to put structures into

place that lead to organizational level changes in teachers' skills and their relationships with the students but the research base could benefit from a greater understanding of what reform looks like at the classroom level and how the teachers and students perceive and engage in the changes. When looking at student level achievement data, particularly for a school that one teacher may be preparing all of the students for a single state exam, the trend emerged that pockets of success aligned with teachers who adopted more of the suggested instructional practices, including student inquiry and high-order questioning, but also engaged the students. More research needs to be conducted to understand what a high quality teacher looks like in a setting in which a large group of the students are behind grade level.

The last recommendation for future research is to explore how size and limited resources impact the ability for large-scale change. As researchers such as Bryk et al. (2010) have suggested size can impact school improvement effort. This study and the federal SIG study (Floch et al., 2014) seem to indicate that there is a possibility that smaller schools do not have the internal capacity to successfully put the necessary structures into place.

At the school level, the primary recommendation for practice that comes out of this study is that improvement plans need not only to be developed to align goals and strategies, based on an interrogation of student data to determine the areas of needs, but also need to have a plan in place for how those goals and structures are going to be managed. Time must be spent strategically planning systems of implementation to ensure that resources are not squandered. School leaders must plan for what the implementation of a SIG will look like over the three years, who will be responsible for each new

structure or program, and how they will track progress towards those goals.

At the preparation level, school leaders must be taught how to manage people and resources effectively with an emphasis on strategic planning practices. The reality of the school leader's job is that time is very hard to manage and in limited supply. A principal can quickly become overburdened if they create detailed plans for the future direction of the school.

This study added to the literature base by describing the school improvement effort in real time, as the leaders were struggling to make sense of the changes and to integrate resources. The leaders in this study were overwhelmed by the time and human resource commitments necessary to move forward their theory of action. Many of the teachers asked why there was no one out there who could tell them how to fix the school. Research on SIG implementation (Floch et al., 2014) seemed to suggest that the ability to lead strategically is the most important factor at the end of the first year of implementation. For these reasons, one recommendation for policy would be that the federal or state governments consider directing a portion of the funds to working with a turnaround specialist or some form of additional administrative support that focuses solely on strategically managing the school improvement plan. Turnaround specialists would work with principals to create improvement plans, determine strategies for improvement, and ensure sustainability through the use of data, goal setting, and strategic decision-making. States such as Louisiana (https://www.teachlouisiana.net) and districts in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Ohio, Missouri, and Texas (http://web3.darden.virginia.edu/ple/) already employ these types of positions to aid principals in school improvement.

Limitations

This study is a small case study meant to explore one school in depth. The findings from this study are not generalizable to all school settings. In addition, no causal claims can be made about the impact of the school improvement effort on student learning. One limitation was that the sample of teachers from the spring of 2013 was all teacher leaders who worked closely with the administration and may have presented a biased perspective of the school's improvement effort, since they were key players in the reform. For this reason, the survey data helped to triangulate the findings but did not provide the same rich, detail that the sample from the spring of 2014 provided. Additionally, another concern was that although all teachers meeting the aforementioned eligibility requirements were asked to participate in the study during the spring of 2014, there were a number of teachers, who despite repeated attempts, did not want to be interviewed. Those teachers may have insight into the improvement efforts that was not represented by the teachers who were willing to participate. The sample did include representatives from the middle and high school, from classroom teachers and support staff, and from school leaders and partners and the CALL survey was administered to the entire staff, which helped to limit that bias.

Another important limitation was that this study intended to test a model for school improvement that aligned with the framework for the study. While many interview questions were purposefully broad in order to capture unexpected findings, the questions asked about leadership practices (Leithwood, 2013) and organizational supports (Bryk et al., 2010), narrowed the focus of the responses, potentially missing relevant information.

Conclusion

This research-aligned school improvement effort supported the model for school improvement that was developed from the work of Bryk et al. (2010) in Chicago. The school, after a deep analysis of the problems that they faced, attempted to make changes in instructional guidance, professional capacity, and learning climate, and to a lesser degree family involvement. The school made progress in improving the quality of instruction, but due to complications with implementing two grants and several major partnerships as well as the day-to-day demands of school leaders' time, they were not able to make significant progress in all of the areas during year one, potentially resulting in no measurable learning gains for the students.

Support from the district as well as better understanding of how to strategically manage change may result in greater gains for schools implementing SIG grants. Urban schools contending with large proportions of students struggling with academic and nonacademic skills can make improvements to the technical core of schooling and make gains in students' confidence in their academic skills but may require more of a massive overhaul of the city school system in order to effectively educate a broader range of students. Schools in need of improvement, which have struggled for many years, may need to take drastic measures that require the government to integrate social support systems more effectively to lead to lasting change in the students' lives.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A
Interview with Principal (Spring 2013)

1) Make contact with the administrators ahead of time to schedule interview time.
2) Greet participants.
3) Explain the purpose: *Thanks for agreeing to speak with me in greater detail about school improvement efforts at this school. This exploratory case study of a leadership team considers whether the theoretical and empirical literature on school leadership is consistent with the every day reality of implementing improvement plans in a high-stress context. Specifically, it seeks to explore the following research questions in an effort to make sense of the contextual factors that influence school improvement:*
4) Answer questions.
5) Explain the interview process: *I have a series of questions that I want to ask you today. I will be recording your answers so that I can transcribe everything you've said; however, I will be deleting the audiotape and giving you an alias. I have sent you a consent form and a material release form that you have mailed back to me. If at any time, you wish to change your status or withdraw from this case study, please let me know. Do you have any questions about that process?*
6) Answer questions.
7) *Okay. Let's get started with the questions. I have emailed you a list of the questions, so you could think about your answers beforehand. Please give as detailed of an answer as you can.*

Interview:
Understand Culture (Setting Direction and Managing Direction)

1. *When you took the job, tell me about the state of the school.*
   - *What structures were working well and what were the challenges?*

2. *Tell me about your improvement plan. What was the process you went through to develop it?*
   - *Does the plan prioritize certain improvements over others?*
   - *What do you think has worked?*
   - *What kind of problematic conditions do you perceive your school to have?*

Shape Culture
Developing People
Tell me about your plan for developing teachers.

Improving the Instructional Program
What have you done to improve the instruction at you school?

What role do you play in instruction at the school Change Culture
Redesigning the organization

Organizational Factors that facilitate and hinder:

1. What do you see as your biggest obstacle/s to improving the school?
   Possible hindrances to discuss:
   - Discipline
   - Turnover
   - Relational trust
   - Overreliance on oversight
   - Short-term fix not long-term plans
   - Inadequate support to teachers
   - Inability to make staffing decisions
   - Demands on time
   - Lack of resources

2. How do you prioritize their time? What demands on your time do you think take away from the improvement process?

3. What have you done to protect your goals?

** Talk a little about the role of collaboration in the school.*

** Would you talk about the school-district dynamics?*

** Would you discuss network priorities vs. site priorities?*

** How could the district offer you the most support moving forward? If there were 1-3 policies they could change that would have the most direct influence on you, what would they be?*

Appendix B
Interview protocol for teacher leaders (Spring 2013)

Thanks for agreeing to speak with me in greater detail about school improvement efforts at this school. This exploratory case study of a leadership team considers whether the theoretical and empirical literature on school leadership is consistent with the everyday reality of implementing improvement plans in a high-stress context. Specifically, it seeks to explore the following research questions in an effort to make sense of the contextual factors that influence school improvement:

Questions:

1) Tell me about the leadership at the school while you have been teaching here.

2) What role do you play in the decision making around school improvement? How much do you feel like you know about the process?

3) What would you identify as the biggest challenges this leadership team faced when they took over?

4) What has been done to set direction (focus and coherence)?

5) Talk a little bit about the role of professional development in the school.

6) Would you describe the leadership teams instructional approach?

7) What do you think has worked?

8) In what ways can you describe them redesigning the organization?

9) What kind of problematic conditions do you perceive your school to have now?

10) How would you describe the relationship among the staff?
- Tell me about the trust between teachers.
- Tell me about how the teachers

11) Would you talk about the school-district dynamics?

Appendix C
Interview protocol for teachers (Spring 2014)

1) Make contact over email and set up an in person appointment for one hour

2) Find a place to conduct the interview where there will be no interruptions.

3) Greet the participant.

4) Explain the purpose: *Thanks for agreeing to speak with me in greater detail about the school improvement efforts at this school. The purpose of this study is to understand the process the school is undergoing implementing the federal school improvement grant. I sent you a consent form with more detailed information on the study.*

   Do you have any questions at this point?

5) Answer questions.
6) Explain the process: *I have a series of questions that I want to ask you today. I will be recording your answers so that it can help to transcribe everything you've said; however, I will be deleting the audiotape and giving you an alias. I have sent you a consent form and a material release form that you have mailed back to me. If at any time, you wish to change your status or withdraw from this case study, please let me know. Do you have any questions about that process?*
7) Answer questions.
8) *Okay. Let's get started with the questions. I have emailed you a list of the questions, so you could think about your answers beforehand. Please give as detailed of an answer as you can.*

- What role do you play in the decision making around school improvement? (Ask for clarifying details)
-In what capacities and how often do you interact with the school leadership team?
- How much do you feel like you know about the school improvement process being implemented here?

- I'm interested in whether the school has a shared vision. If you had to articulate what is was, how would you describe it?

- In what ways, if any, do school leaders communicate a shared vision for the school?

- How would you describe the staff's vision for the school?
- Does this reflect your own vision for the school? How or how not?
- Does this reflect the leaders' vision for the school? How or how not?

- Can you describe the leadership team's instructional approach?
- Describe an experience you have had where you have felt supported instructionally by a school leader.
- Describe an experience you have had where you did not feel supported instructionally by a school leader.

- Talk a little bit about the role of professional development in the school
- Tell me about your experience with your coach.
- In what ways, if any, do you collaborate with other teachers?
-Describe how (or if) these resources (pd, coach, other teachers) have impacted your teaching. If they haven't, impacted your teaching please explain why you think that is.

- Tell me about your partnership with ISA.
- In what ways have they helped the school, if at all?
- Have there been any challenges with the partnership?

- I'm interested in anything you will share about the partnership.

- Tell me about your partnership with CIS.
- In what ways have they helped the school, if at all?
- Have there been any challenges with the partnership?
- I'm interested in anything you will share about the partnership.

- Tell me about the new positions that were created with money from the grant.
- In what ways have the new staff members helped the school, if at all??
- Have there been any challenges with new staff members?

- In what ways is the grant helping to redesign the organization, if at all?

- Overall, what do you think has worked well with the SIG grant?

- How do you feel about it?
- How does it affect you? Other you're involved with?
- Give an example of how the grant has influenced you directly, either positively or negatively.

- In what ways is the school different today than it was a year ago, if at all?

- What do you see as your biggest obstacle/s to improving the school?

- How would you describe the relationships among the staff?
- What is the level of trust among teachers?
- What do you think contributes to this?
- What is the level of trust in the leadership?
- What do you think contributes to this?

- Is there anything else you would like you share with me today?

Appendix D
Interview Protocol for Deans and Support Staff (Spring 2014)

1) Make contact over email and set up an in person appointment for one hour

2) Find a place to conduct the interview where there will be no interruptions.

3) Greet the participant.

4) Explain the purpose: *Thanks for agreeing to speak with me in greater detail about the school improvement efforts at this school. The purpose of this study is to understand the process the school is undergoing implementing the federal school improvement grant. I sent you a consent form with more detailed information on the study.*

   Do you have any questions at this point?

5) Answer questions.
6) Explain the process: *I have a series of questions that I want to ask you today. I will be recording your answers so that it can help to transcribe everything you've said; however, I will be deleting the audiotape and giving you an alias. I have sent you a consent form and a material release form that you have mailed back to me. If at any time, you wish to change your status or withdraw from this case study, please let me know. Do you have any questions about that process?*
7) Answer questions.
8) *Okay. Let's get started with the questions. I have emailed you a list of the questions, so you could think about your answers beforehand. Please give as detailed of an answer as you can.*

- What role do you play in the decision making around school improvement? (Ask for clarifying details)
- How much do you feel like you know about the school improvement process being implemented here?
- How engaged are you in each of these roles?
-In what capacities and how often do you interact with the school leadership team?

- I'm interested in whether the school has a shared vision. If you had to articulate what is was, how would you describe it?

- In what ways, if any, do school leaders communicate a shared vision for the school?

- How would you describe the staff's vision for the school?
- Does this reflect your own vision for the school? How or how not?
- Does this reflect the leaders' vision for the school? How or how not?

- Tell me about how the school leaders set expectations for the staff.
- Tell me about your partnership with ISA.
- In what ways have they helped the school, if at all?
- Have there been any challenges with the partnership?
- I'm interested in anything you will share about the partnership.

- Tell me about the new positions that were created with money from the grant.
- In what ways have the new staff members helped the school, if at all??
- Have there been any challenges with new staff members?

- In what ways is the grant helping to redesign the organization, if at all?

- Overall, what do you think has worked well with the SIG grant?
- How do you feel about it?
- How does it affect you? Other you're involved with?
- Give an example of how the grant has influenced you directly, either positively or negatively.

- Overall, what do you think isn't working with the SIG grant?

- In what ways is the school different today than it was a year ago, if at all?

- What do you see as your biggest obstacle/s to improving the school?
Possible hindrances to discuss:
- Discipline
- Turnover
- Relational trust
- Overreliance on oversight
- Short-term fix not long-term plans
- Inadequate support to teachers
- Inability to make staffing decisions

- How would you describe the relationships among the staff?
- What is the level of trust among teachers?
- What do you think contributes to this?
- What is the level of trust in the leadership?
- What do you think contributes to this?

- Tell me about the school-community dynamics.

- Is there anything else you would like you share with me today?

Thanks again for participating.

Appendix E
Interview Protocol for School Leaders (Spring 2014)

1) Make contact over email and set up an in person appointment for one hour

2) Find a place to conduct the interview where there will be no interruptions.

3) Greet the participant.

4) Explain the purpose: *Thanks for agreeing to speak with me in greater detail about the school improvement efforts at this school. The purpose of this study is to understand the process the school is undergoing implementing the federal school improvement grant. I sent you a consent form with more detailed information on the study.*

   Do you have any questions at this point?

5) Answer questions.
6) Explain the process: *I have a series of questions that I want to ask you today. I will be recording your answers so that it can help to transcribe everything you've said; however, I will be deleting the audiotape and giving you an alias. I have sent you a consent form and a material release form that you have mailed back to me. If at any time, you wish to change your status or withdraw from this case study, please let me know. Do you have any questions about that process?*
7) Answer questions.
8) *Okay. Let's get started with the questions. I have emailed you a list of the questions, so you could think about your answers beforehand. Please give as detailed of an answer as you can.*

Setting Direction and Managing Direction

- *When you were offered the opportunity to apply for the SIG grant, what structures and practices were working well and what were the challenges?*

- *How would you compare that to the structures and practices that are in place today?*

- *How would you describe your vision for the school?*
  - *Does this reflect the staff's vision for the school? How or how not? If not, please share that vision as well.*
  - *Possible follow up:*
  - *How do you and your leadership team members communicate about a shared vision for the school?*

- *In what ways do you work towards a shared vision for the school currently?*

- *What are the biggest challenges that you face managing the direction/goals of the school?*

Developing People
- *Tell me what you were doing to develop teachers prior to the grant.*
- *Describe your plan for developing teachers since the implementation of the grant*
  - *What do you hope to do that is different than their current practice?*

- *Talk a little about the role of collaboration in the school.*

- *In what ways are teachers working with each other to help each other develop professionally.*

Redesigning the organization

- Tell me about your improvement plan.
- What changes have you put into place to redesign the organization?
- Does the plan prioritize certain improvements over others?

-What is your understanding of the purposes of the partnerships with the CIS and ISA?

- Tell me about your partnership with CIS.
- In what ways have they helped the school?
- Have there been any challenges with the partnership?

- Tell me about your partnership with ISA.
- In what ways have they helped the school?
- Have there been any challenges with the partnership?

-Would you comment on how well you feel the overarching purposes of these partnerships are being met?

- Tell me about the new staff positions you have filled with money provided from the grant.
-In what ways have these new staff members helped the school?
- Have there been any challenges with the new staff members?

Improving Instruction
- What role do you play in instruction at the school?
- How do you support instruction?
- Tell me about how you set expectations for your staff.

- I know that part of being an administrator is constantly striving to make improvements. What kinds of things did you do to help make improvements around instruction at your school prior to the SIG grant?

- Since instructional improvement is a part of the SIG grant, what are you doing to address instructional improvement now that we haven't mentioned?

The Grant
- What do you think has worked well with the grant implementation?

- What do you think isn't working well with the grant implementation?

- How does the school look different today than it did a year ago?

- What changes would you still like to make?

The Context
- What do you see as your biggest obstacle/s to improving the school?
Possible hindrances to discuss:
- Discipline
- Turnover
- Relational trust
- Overreliance on oversight
- Short-term fix not long-term plans
- Inadequate support to teachers
- Inability to make staffing decisions
- Demands on time
- Lack of resources

- *How do you prioritize your time?*
  - *What demands on your time do you think take away from the improvement process?*

- *What demands do you think contribute to the improvement process?*

- What have you done to protect your goals from competing priorities?

- Talk to me about the school-district dynamics?

- How could the district offer you the most support moving forward? If there were 1-3 policies they could change that would have the most direct influence on you, what would they be?

- Tell me about school and community dynamics.

- Is there anything else you would like to share with me today?

Appendix F
Interview Protocol for Partners (Spring 2014)

1) Explain the purpose: *Thanks for agreeing to speak with me in greater detail about the school improvement efforts at this school. The purpose of this study is to understand the process the school is undergoing implementing the federal school improvement grant. I sent you a consent form with more detailed information on the study.*

   Do you have any questions at this point?

2) Answer questions.
3) Explain the process: *I have a series of questions that I want to ask you today. I will be recording your answers so that it can help to transcribe everything you've said; however, I will be deleting the audiotape and giving you an alias. I have sent you a consent form and a material release form that you have mailed back to me. If at any time, you wish to change your status or withdraw from this case study, please let me know. Do you have any questions about that process?*
4) Answer questions.
5) *Okay. Let's get started with the questions. I have emailed you a list of the questions, so you could think about your answers beforehand. Please give as detailed of an answer as you can.*

-What is your understanding of the purposes of the partnership with the CIS?

- Tell me about the partnership with CIS.
  - In what ways have they helped the school?
  - Have there been any challenges with the partnership?

-Would you comment on how well you feel the overarching purposes of these partnerships are being met?

The Grant
- What do you think has worked well with the grant implementation?

- What do you think isn't working well with the grant implementation?

- How does the school look different today than it did a year ago?

- What changes would you still make?

The Context
- What do you see as the biggest obstacle/s to improving the school?

- Tell me about school and community dynamics.

- Is there anything else you would like to share with me today

Appendix G
Measuring Research Questions Using Interview Protocols, Spring 2014

Table G1

Alignment of Research Questions and Interview Protocols

Key elements from research questions	Questions from Interview Protocols	Other Data Sources
Leadership team understands (RQ1)	<u>Teachers</u> *- What role do you play in the decision making around school improvement? (Ask for clarifying details)* o *How engaged are you in each of these roles?* *- In what capacities and how often do you interact with the school leadership team?* *- How much do you feel like you know about the school improvement process being implemented here?* *- I'm interested in whether the school has a shared vision. If you had to articulate what is was, how would you describe it?* *- In what ways do school leaders communicate a shared vision for the school?* *- How would you describe the staff's vision for the school?* o *Does this reflect your own vision for the school? How or how not?* o *Does this reflect the leaders' vision for the school? How or how not?* *- Tell me about how the school leaders set expectations for the staff.* <u>Leaders</u> *- When you were offered the opportunity to apply for the SIG grant, what structures and practices were working well and what were the challenges?* *- How would you compare that to the structures and practices that are in place today?* *- How would you describe your vision for the school?* o *Does this reflect the staff's vision for the school? How or how not? If not, please share that vision as well.* o *Possible follow up:* o *How do you and your leadership team members communicate about a shared vision for the school?* - *In what ways do you work towards a shared vision for the school currently?* - *What are the biggest challenges that you face managing the direction/goals of the school?*	Observations CALL Survey City Survey Results Document Analysis- Grant planning documents

(Continued)

Table G1

Alignment of Research Questions and Interview Protocols

Key elements from research questions	Questions from Interview Protocols	Other Data Sources
Leadership team shapes (RQ1)	Teachers - *Can you describe the leadership team's instructional approach?* - *Describe an experience you have had where you have felt supported instructionally by a school leader.* - *Describe an experience you have had where you did not feel supported instructionally by a school leader.* - *Talk a little bit about the role of professional development in the school* - *Tell me about your experience with your coach.* - *In what ways, if any, do you collaborate with other teachers?* - *Describe how (or if) these resources (pd, coach, other teachers) have impacted your teaching. If they haven't, impacted your teaching please explain why you think that is.* - *Tell me about your partnership with CIS.* o *In what ways have they helped the school, if at all?* o *Have there been any challenges with the partnership?* o *I'm interested in anything you will share about the partnership.* - *Tell me about your partnership with ISA.* o *In what ways have they helped the school, if at all?* o *Have there been any challenges with the partnership?* o *I'm interested in anything you will share about the partnership.* - *Tell me about the new positions that were created with money from the grant.* o *In what ways have the new staff members helped the school, if at all??* o *Have there been any challenges with new staff members?* Leaders - *Tell me what you were doing to develop teachers prior to the grant.* - *Describe your plan for developing teachers since the implementation of the grant* o *What do you hope to do that is different than their current practice?* - *Tell me about how you set expectations for your staff.* - *Talk a little about the role of collaboration in the school.*	Observations CALL Survey City Survey Results Document Analysis- PD and observation documents

(Continued)

Table G1

Alignment of Research Questions and Interview Protocols

Key elements from research questions	Questions from Interview Protocols	Other Data Sources
	- In what ways are teachers working with each other to help each other develop professionally. *- Tell me about your improvement plan.* *- What changes have you put into place to redesign the organization?* *- Does the plan prioritize certain improvements over others?* *-What is your understanding of the purposes of the partnerships with the CIS and ISA?* *- Tell me about your partnership with CIS.* o *In what ways have they helped the school, if at all?* o *Have there been any challenges with the partnership?* o *I'm interested in anything you will share about the partnership.* *- Tell me about your partnership with ISA.* o *In what ways have they helped the school, if at all?* o *Have there been any challenges with the partnership?* o *I'm interested in anything you will share about the partnership.* *- Would you comment on how well you feel the overarching purposes of these partnerships are being met?* *- Tell me about the new staff positions you have filled with money provided from the grant.* o *In what ways have these new staff members helped the school?* o *Have there been any challenges with the new staff members?* *- What role do you play in instruction at the school?* *- How do you support instruction?* *- I know that part of being an administrator is constantly striving to make improvements. What kinds of things did you do to help make improvements around instruction at your school prior to the SIG grant?* *- Since instructional improvement is a part of the SIG grant, what are you doing to address instructional improvement now that we haven't mentioned?*	

(Continued)

Table G1

Alignment of Research Questions and Interview Protocols

Key elements from research questions	Questions from Interview Protocols	Other Data Sources
Factors that hinder school leadership	**Teachers** - *What do you see as your biggest obstacle/s to improving the school?* - *How would you describe the relationships among the staff?* - *What is the level of trust among teachers?* o *What do you think contributes to this?* - *What is the level of trust in the leadership?* o *What do you think contributes to this?* - *Talk to me about the school-district dynamics.* - *Tell me about the school-community dynamics.* **Leaders** - *What do you see as your biggest obstacle/s to improving the school?* - *How do you prioritize your time?* - *What have you done to protect your goals from competing priorities?* - *Talk to me about the school-district dynamics?* - *Tell me about school and community dynamics.*	Observations City Survey Results
Factors that facilitate school leadership	**Teachers** - *How would you describe the relationships among the staff?* - *What is the level of trust among teachers?* o *What do you think contributes to this?* - *What is the level of trust in the leadership?* o *What do you think contributes to this?* - *Talk to me about the school-district dynamics.* - *Tell me about the school-community dynamics.* **Leaders** - *How do you prioritize your time?* - *What have you done to protect your goals from competing priorities?* - *Talk to me about the school-district dynamics?* - *Tell me about school and community dynamics.*	Observations CALL Survey City Survey Results

(Continued)

Table G1

Alignment of Research Questions and Interview Protocols

Key elements from research questions	Questions from Interview Protocols	Other Data Sources
Change in leadership practices	**Teachers** - *Overall, what do you think has worked well with the SIG grant?* - *Overall, what do you think isn't working with the SIG grant?* - *In what ways is the school different today than it was a year ago, if at all?* **Leaders** - *What do you think has worked well with the grant implementation?* - *What do you think isn't working well with the grant implementation?* - *How does the school look different today than it did a year ago?* - *What changes would you still like to make?*	Observations CALL Survey City Survey Results School Quality Review Report
Changes in organizational structures	**Teachers** - *Overall, what do you think has worked well with the SIG grant?* - *Overall, what do you think isn't working with the SIG grant?* - *In what ways is the school different today than it was a year ago, if at all?* **Leaders** - *What do you think has worked well with the grant implementation?* - *What do you think isn't working well with the grant implementation?* - *How does the school look different today than it did a year ago?* - *What changes would you still like to make?*	Observations CALL Survey City Survey Results School Quality Review Report

Appendix H

Sample Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership (CALL) for Learning Survey Questions for the Online Survey

Construct: Instructional Program Coherence

The instructional programs and student services programs at our school:

- Appear to have been assembled at random without connecting to one another
- Fit together reasonably well
- Fit together reasonably well and contribute to improve student learning

Construct: Frequency of Practices

Leaders in my school…

	Never	Once per year	Once per semester	3 times per year	4 or More Times Per Year
engage staff in collaborative conversations to build a shared vision for student learning					
conduct classroom visits of probationary/non-tenured teachers for formal evaluation purposes					
conduct classroom visits of tenured teachers for formal evaluation purposes					

Construct: Application of Formative Assessments

In our school, teachers assess student understanding to inform instruction:

- Rarely
- at the beginning of a new unit
- periodically as the need arises
- at least weekly
- more than once a week as a regular feature of classroom instruction, to design teaching and re-teaching of course material

Construct: Use of Data to Inform School Improvement

Indicate the extent to which the school uses analysis of the following information for school improvement purposes

	Not Collected	Not used to set school improvement goals	Used to set school improvement goals	Used to determine how best to meet school improvement goals	Used to determine how best to meet school improvement goals
Student standardized state tests					

Student formative assessments					
Student grades					
Student course failure rates					
Student attendance					
Student behavior					
School climate surveys					
Teacher evaluation results					

Construct: Impact of Formal Teacher Evaluations

Based on my experience and understanding, the formal teacher evaluation process at my school promotes good teaching practices:

- not at all; it is irrelevant to good teaching practice.
- for probationary teachers in my school.
- for many teachers in my school.
- for all teachers in my school.

Construct: Focus of School-Wide Meetings

School-wide meetings primarily focus on:

- Announcements and event logistics
- Student behavioral and school management issues
- Team-building or culture-building activities
- Presentations of instructional information
- Opportunities for sustained conversation among teachers about instruction

Construct: Use of Formal Plans, Processes and Programs to Guide Practice (continued)

To what extent are the following types of formal processes used to guide practice and support student learning?

	To my knowledge, no such process currently exists	A process exists but is not used	A process is actively used	A process is actively used and has improved student learning
Opportunities to engage in team teaching and/or observe peer teaching				
Shared planning time for teachers and staff				

Coordinate participation in external professional conferences and organizations that bring new ideas into the school	○	○	○	○
Review how/whether our extra-curricular program provides adequate opportunities for all students to participate	○	○	○	○
Coordinate interactions with community organizations such as social work agencies, churches, law enforcement and out-of-school learning	○	○	○	○
Ongoing academic support for the successful transition of students from middle to high school	○	○	○	○
Counseling and career exploration for the success of students beyond high school	○	○	○	○

Construct: Recognized Value of Teacher Expertise

In my school, innovative teachers and staff generally:

○ are encouraged to use established teaching and service practices.

○ have the autonomy to innovate in hid or her own classrooms and service settings.

○ are recognized and encouraged by school leaders to share ideas on innovative practices with others.

○ are assigned responsibility and given resources that enable them to help shape others' practices.

Construct: Use of Professional Collaboration Time

Typically, when our school provides opportunities for teachers to meet and collaborate:

○ Teachers use the time for their own purposes

○ Teachers discuss topics that are not necessarily related to school learning goals

○ Teachers discuss issues related to school learning goals

○ Teachers discuss their efforts to develop and test strategies that address school learning goals

Construct: Communication With Parents and External Community

When our school organizes public meetings for parents and the community, we typically:

○ do not organize public meetings for parents and community

○ schedule the meetings and notify the public as required

○ work with family and community groups to determine the best occasions and places for public meetings

○ work with family and community groups to determine the best occasions and places for public meetings and provide transportation and childcare to promote family attendance

Construct: Enforcement of Discipline Policies and Impact on Learning

In your view, your school's discipline policies are enforced:

- Inconsistently
- consistently, but without improving the learning environment
- consistently, with a positive effect on the learning environment

Construct: Student Identification for Support Services

Indicate the accuracy of the process for identifying students for support services in your school:

	Over-identified	Under-identified	Accurately Identified
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)			
Learning Disability (LD)			
Emotional Behavior Disability (EBD)			
English Language Learner (ELL)			

Construct: Student Support Mobility

To your knowledge, what percentage of students progress out of special education support services into the regular education program?

- Less than 10%
- 10%-20%
- 20%-50%
- More than 50%

Construct: Working to Prevent to Student Failure

Typically, when a student is failing a class (select all that apply, describing the typical or routine approach):

- the teacher will notify parents via report cards after the grading term is over.
- the teacher will notify parents via regularly scheduled progress reports or parent-teacher conferences.
- the teacher will request to meet with students and parents as soon as problems arise to discuss changes the student can make to prevent failure.
- the teacher will regularly meet with colleagues to develop early and ongoing instructional interventions that anticipate individual student learning needs before students are in danger of failing.

Construct: Providing Appropriate Services for Students who Traditionally Struggle; Integration of Support Staff and Regular Teachers

How do students diagnosed with the following special needs typically receive services?

	I do not know	In pull-out programs	In regular classrooms, but not coordinated with the	In regular classrooms, integrated into the context of

			regular lesson	the regular classroom lesson
Learning Disability				
Emotional/Behavioral Disability (LD)				
Cognitive Disability				
English Language Learner				
Gifted and Talented				

Construct: Predictive Power of Formative Assessments

The formative assessment program in our school:

- does not exist. (We do not have a school-wide formative assessment program.)
- exists, but I don't know how well it predicts student performance on state tests.
- exists, but does not accurately predict student performance on state tests.
- exists and accurately predicts student performance on state tests.

Construct: Teacher Feedback Practices

Please indicate what feedback practices teachers generally experienced this year and to what extent they enhanced teaching practice:

	Did not experience	Experienced; but did not enhance teaching practice	Experienced; enhanced teaching practice
Collaborative analysis of the work of students (ADHD)			
Instructional rounds, peer observation, or walk-throughs of classroom/work site			
Peer coaching			

Construct: Focus of Teacher Collaboration Around Teaching and Learning

Based on your understanding, when teachers collaborate with colleagues, the discussion primarily focuses on:

- concerns about student behavior or non-instructional issues.
- planning curriculum or lessons.
- analysis of student learning data.
- improving practice informed by student learning data. /td>

Construct: Strategic Use of Student Scheduling

In your view, to what extent do the following factors influence student course assignments?

	Not at all	To a limited extent	Somewhat	To a moderate extent	A primary factor
Grouping students to create mixed ability classes					

Grouping students and teachers into "houses" or teams	○	○	○	○	○
Creating schedules that facilitate teacher collaboration					

Construct: Adult Relationships to Students

To your knowledge, approximately what percentage of students have a meaningful relationship with an adult (teacher, counselor, staff member) in the school?:

○ 0%-25%

○ 25%-50%

○ 50%-75%

○ 75%-95%

○ 95%-100%

Appendix I
CALL Results by Essential Structure

Table I1

Results for CALL subdomains related to instructional guidance

Subdomain	Results
Maintaining a School-wide Focus on Learning	• For all staff, the score for maintaining a school-wide focus on learning was 3.32, with a slightly lower score for just teachers, 3.2. Administrators had the highest score of 4, followed by the support staff, (3.82), and the teacher leaders (3.73). • The highest score, 4.21, was in response to a question about engaging staff members in collaborative conversations to build a shared vision for student learning • In response to a question whether the instructional program and student support services had competing or similar goals, one third of the respondents suggested that they had similar goals, but only improved learning for some students.
Collaborative school-wide focus on problems of teaching and learning	• For those questions pertaining to having a shared vision for learning, the formal school leaders gave the highest rating of 4.38/5, a full score higher than the score for the whole school sample, 3.39. The leadership team gave the lowest score of 3, with teachers reporting slightly lower than the group score (3.24) and support staff reporting slightly higher than the group average (3.89). • The highest rated question (4.5) indicated that the school leaders provide time to discuss strategies for instruction regularly. • Most of the teachers felt that the professional learning opportunities reflected the instructional goals, but were split on whether they also addressed needs for teacher learning. Fifteen of the 27 respondents felt that professional development activities were aligned with the instructional goal but did not meet needs for teacher learning
Formative evaluation of student learning	• The highest item score (3.76) was for the question, "In general, how often do teachers assess student understanding in their classrooms in order to adapt and form strategies for instruction?"
Summative evaluation of student learning	• Summative evaluation of student learning was identified as an area in need of improvement • The lowest item score (2.56) was in response to a question about the relationship between student grades and state exam scores, while the highest item score, 3.48, was in response to how important it was to school leaders to carefully analyze data to identify needs for school improvement
Formative evaluation of teaching	• Formative evaluation of teachers was identified as an area in need of improvement. • There was largely agreement between the teachers and administrators that feedback was specific and often included meaningful suggestions.

(Continued)

Table I1

Results for CALL subdomains related to instructional guidance

Subdomain	Results
Summative evaluation of teaching	• The summative evaluation of teachers was identified in the survey report as one of the school's area of strength • One set of questions were asked of all participants and dealt with the frequency of visits asking, "How often do leaders in your school typically: (a) conduct classroom visits of each novice or non tenured teacher for formal evaluation purposes (3.81) and (b) conduct classroom visits of each veteran teacher for formal evaluation purposes (3.71). The most common response to both questions was 1-2 times per quarter, with some veteran teachers on receiving a visit once per semester. • Slightly less than half of the teachers felt it improved teaching for a limited number of teachers at the school. A third of the survey takers suggested that it helped many or all teacher improve instruction.
Formal leaders are recognized as instructional leaders	• Formal leaders are recognized as instructional leaders was identified in the survey report as one of the school's area of strength. The item scores seemed to indicate that formal leaders were the instructional leaders (3.43) and at RHS that largely means the principal. • All but one respondent suggested that a clear vision was somewhat, very, or extremely important to the leaders and all but 4 people thought holding teachers accountable for high expectations was somewhat, very, or extremely important. • The lowest scores was given for a question about the frequency of school leaders conducting classroom visits and learning walks, with most people responding that it happened about once per month or rarely, if ever.
Collaborative design of integrated learning plan	• The results indicated that there was an integrated learning plan that was designed collaboratively (3.39). • The highest item score, 4.5, was in response to the question about time for discussing strategies for instruction.

Table I2

Results of CALL survey related to professional capacity

Subdomain	Results and Analysis
Professional learning	• The professional learning scores ranged from 4.13 (administrators/support staff) to 3.15 (teachers) with an overall average item score of 3.33. Ideally this score would be a bit higher, with all of the effort being put into professional learning at the school. • For a question about how much of an impact professional learning had on teaching practices, item scores were determined separately for teachers (3.63) and administrators/ support staff (4.0).
Coaching and mentoring	• The scores for coaching were very high, while the mentoring scores were very low, leading to 3.22 item score overall. • This subdomain was identified as an area of strength on the accompanying CALL report
Socially distributed leadership	• The score for this area was determined using eight questions ranging in item scores from 3.35 (Based on your experience, which of the following best describes how your school's Leadership Team members participate in decision making for discretionary budgeting.) to 4.01 (Based on your experience, which of the following best describes how your school's Leadership Team members participate in decision-making for the teacher scheduling?). The same question was asked about placement of students into specific classes (4) and priorities for extra-curricular (3.75). • There is general agreement that the school socially distributes leadership, with all respondents having an item score of 3.63, with subgroups ranging from 3.5 for the school leaders to 3.94 for the support staff.

Table I3

Results of CALL survey related to student-centered learning climate

Subdomain	Results and Analysis
Clear, consistent and enforced expectations for student behavior	• The score for all staff for setting expectations was 3.3, with administrators and support staff (3.79) giving the highest scores and teachers giving the lowest scores (3.4). • There was agreement that the school leaders scheduled time for teachers to discuss student behavior on a regular basis (4.33) and that it was important to school leaders that they enforced policies to ensure a safe learning environment (3.68). • The staff also indicated that the discipline policy could best be described by saying, "It punishes students who misbehave without explaining the consequences of negative behavior to students" but that a program that focused on clear, positive behavioral expectations was in the process of being developed (2.78). • Four of the questions asked how effective the discipline policies were in achieving the goals listed. Responses ranged from extremely to not at all. The goals included eliminating disruptive behavior (2.43), improving student learning (2.91), addressing behavioral concerns in a timely manner (3.05), and creating a safe school environment (3.09).
Clean and safe learning environment	• Teacher leaders felt the most positive about the clean and safe learning environment, with an item score of 3.56, well above the whole group score (2.89), which was the same score as just teachers. The support staff gave the lowest score in this area (2.83). These scores are all pretty consistent with the results of the interviews and observations, indicating that the school is trying to develop the discipline system but students and teachers were often not complying • The lowest score (1.67) in this whole section was in response to the question about how often serious violations of the conduct code interrupt student learning, with the majority of teachers answering weekly followed by daily. The survey also asked how often students break rules in the conduct code (1.71), with all but two staff members indicating that it happened very often or extremely often. Another similar question asked how often students' rule breaking disrupted the learning environment (2.05), with no one answering rarely or never. • Staff indicated that classrooms were somewhat or very safe (3.50) and hallways were somewhat or a little safe (2.90).
Student support services provide safe haven for students who traditionally struggle.	• For the question about support services, the administrators gave the highest score (3.22), which was still quite low. Teacher leaders gave a score of 1.94, the lowest by far, with support staff (2.34) as well as teachers (2.56) showing concern. Again these findings support the notion that the school does not have sufficient structures in place to support students who struggled behaviorally or academically.
Providing appropriate services for students who traditionally struggle	• The highest score in this section (4.13) was in response to whether or not the teacher typically communicates with the student and parents as soon as problems arise to notify then that their child is in danger of falling, with only five teachers indicating that they did not communicate. The score dropped considerably when asked if the teacher meet with students and parents to develop strategies with an item score of 2.74 and 13 teachers responding that they do not. • 20 respondents indicating that no one takes responsibility for ELL students.

Appendix J
Reponses to City Surveys

Setting and Managing Direction

Table J1

City survey responses for setting and managing direction, *2011-2012, 2012-13, and 2013-14*

Statement	Results and Analysis
The principal at my school communicates a clear vision.	The responses to this question indicate an obvious shift in the allocation of necessary resources to teachers between the spring of 2012 and 2013. In the spring of 2012, nearly half of the teachers that responded (48%) that they strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement, whereas in the spring of 2013 it was down to 27%, rising again in 2014 to 34%. While the percentage of teachers who supported this statement was lower in 2014 than 2013, there were still improvements overall.
The principal is an effective manager.	According to these data, the most support for this statement was in the spring of 2013, with 81% agreeing or strongly agreeing, with a 16% decrease in support in the spring of 2014, corresponding with an 18% increase in teachers who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Intriguingly, across all three years, the percentage of teachers who strongly agreed, remained nearly consistent, with only a 4% decrease from 2012 to 2014, suggesting that there may be a core group who did not fluctuate in their response to this questions over the principal's three year tenure. Also, it is worth mentioning that in the spring of 2011, only 50% of teachers felt this was true, with 15% of the teachers strongly agreeing with the statement, suggesting that this administration was deemed more effective than the previous one. After the implementation of the SIG, teachers were less inclined to suggest that the principal was an effective leader.

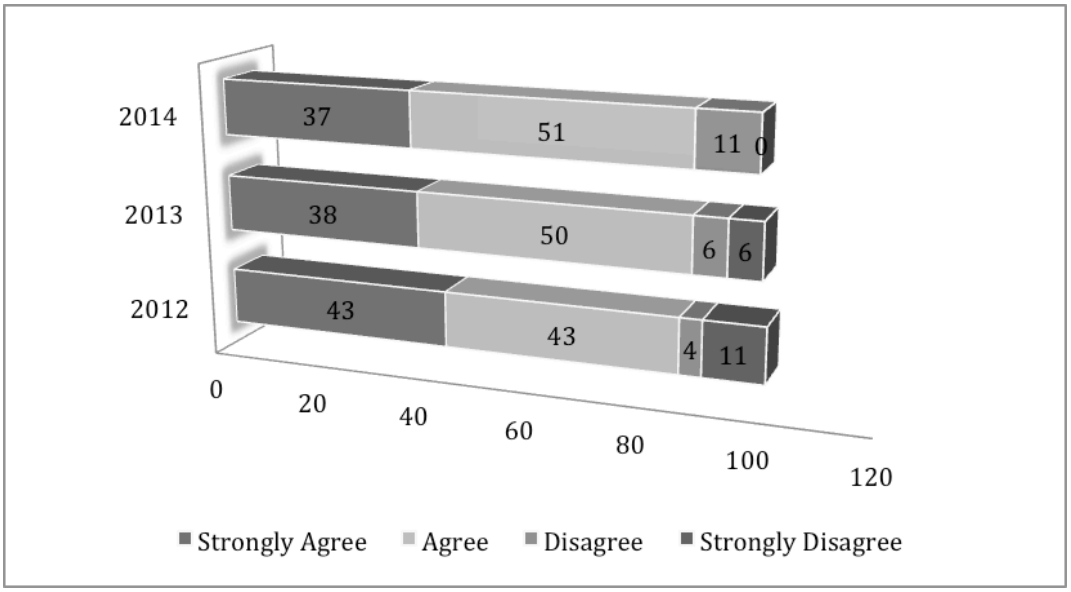


Figure J1. Created using teacher City Survey data in response the statement: The principal at my school communicates a clear vision for our school.

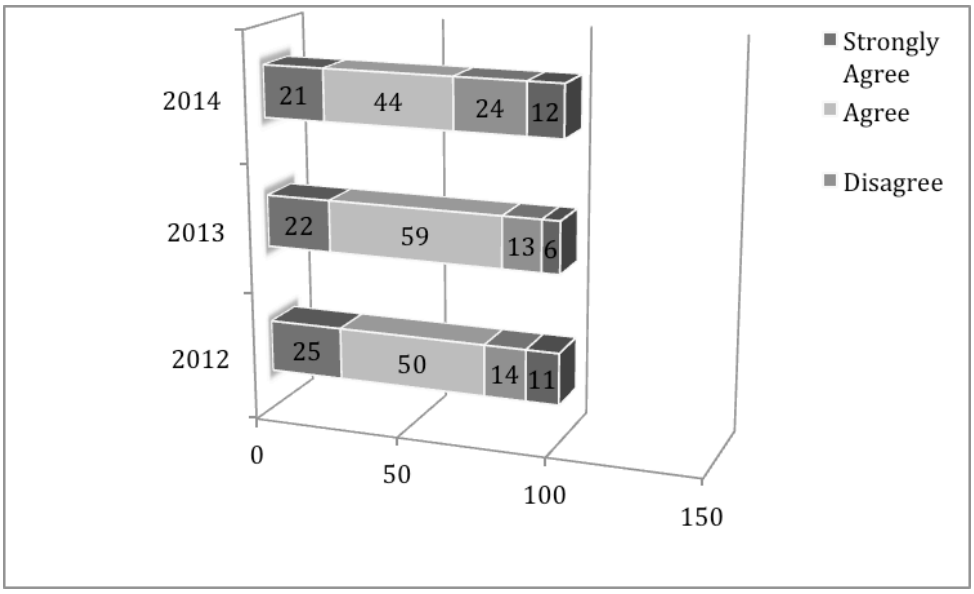


Figure J2. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: The principal at my school is an effective manager who makes the school run smoothly.

Developing the Organization

Table J2

City survey responses regarding developing the organization, 2011-2012, 2012-13, and 2013-14

Statement	Results and Analysis
I have sufficient materials, equipment, and assistive technology in good condition to teach my class(es)	The responses to this question indicate an obvious shift in the allocation of necessary resources to teachers between the spring of 2012 and 2013. In the spring of 2012, over half of the teachers that responded (48%) strongly disagreed or agreed with this statement, whereas in the spring of 2013 it was down to 27%, rising again in 2014 to 34%. While the percentage of teachers who supported this statement was lower in 2014 than 2013, there were still great improvements overall.

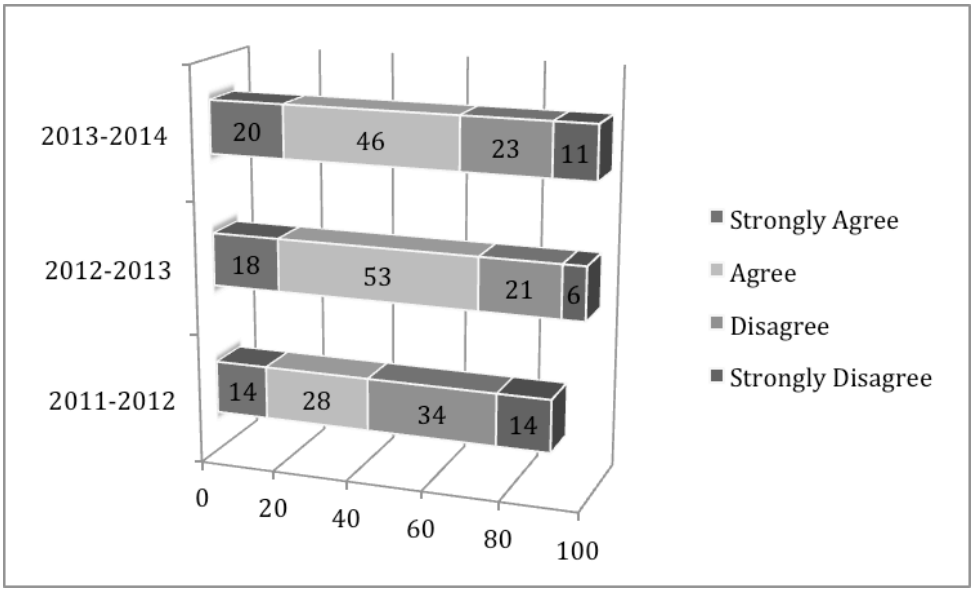


Figure J3. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: I have sufficient materials, equipment, and assistive technology in good condition to teach my class(es).

Building Relationships and Developing People

Table J3

City survey results regarding building relationship and developing people, 2011-2012, 2012-13, and 2013-14

Statement	Results and Analysis
The principal at my school encourages open communication on important school issues.	According to the responses, this statement had the most support in the spring of 2013, when only 12% of teachers agreed or strongly disagreed that they could communicate openly, with only a 2% increase in agreement from the year before. Also, slightly less than half of the teachers (47%) strongly agreed with the statement. During the spring of 2014, there was an increase in the percent of teachers who did not feel like they could communicate openly, doubling from the year before (24%). There was still a group of teachers, representing 42% of the sample, who still strongly agreed that they could communicate openly.
To what extent do you feel supported by your principal?	The spring of 2013 had the best results, with slightly less than half of the teachers (48%) suggesting they felt supported by the principal to a great extent and only 3% of the teachers suggesting that they were not supported at all. In the spring of 2012, 24% of teacher did not feel supported, which rose to 35% in the spring of 2014. The fewest number of teachers agreed they were supported by the principal to a great extent (40%) or to some extent (26%) in 2014.
To what extent do you feel supported by your Assistant Principal?	Across all three years, the assistant principal more consistently provided support to the staff, with 73% feeling supported to a great extent in 2013. While less teachers felt supported to a great extent after the SIG (66%), there were no longer any teachers who felt that they were not supported at all. In addition, the percent of teachers who felt supported to some extent or a great extent was the greatest at 97%. Each year there was a decrease in the number of respondents who did not feel supported by the AP, which was the opposite trend than the principal.
To what extent do you feel supported by other teachers?	Across the years, there were less people who felt other teachers supported them to a great extent as compared to the administration, but overall they felt supported by their peers, with an increase in support each year. In the spring of 2012, 83% of the teachers felt supported as compared to 81% and 85% in the spring of 2014. While there was a slight decline in 2013, there were also no staff members who indicated they did not feel supported at all.
Teachers in my school trust each other.	While a small and consistent group of teachers strongly agree with this statement (9-10%), there was greater variance over the years in the teachers who agreed. In the spring of 2012, the largest group of teachers agreed that teachers trusted each other at 76%, with a decrease to 61% in 2013. In 2014, more teachers agreed with the statement than the year before, but it was still less than in 2012. Similarly, a small but consistent group strongly disagreed (3%) each year. Overall all three years the majority of the respondents agreed with this statement.

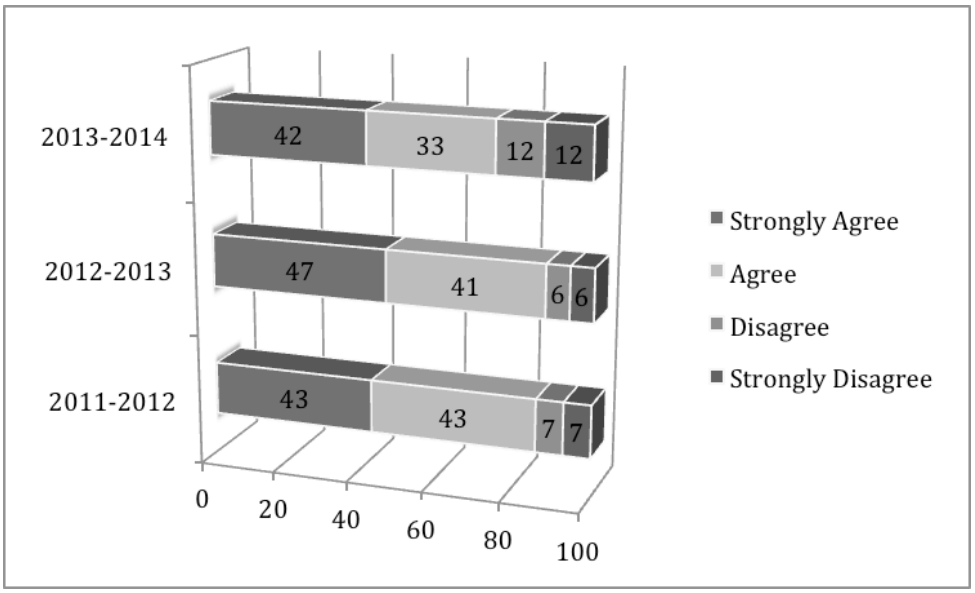


Figure J4. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: The principal at my school encourages open communication on important school issues.

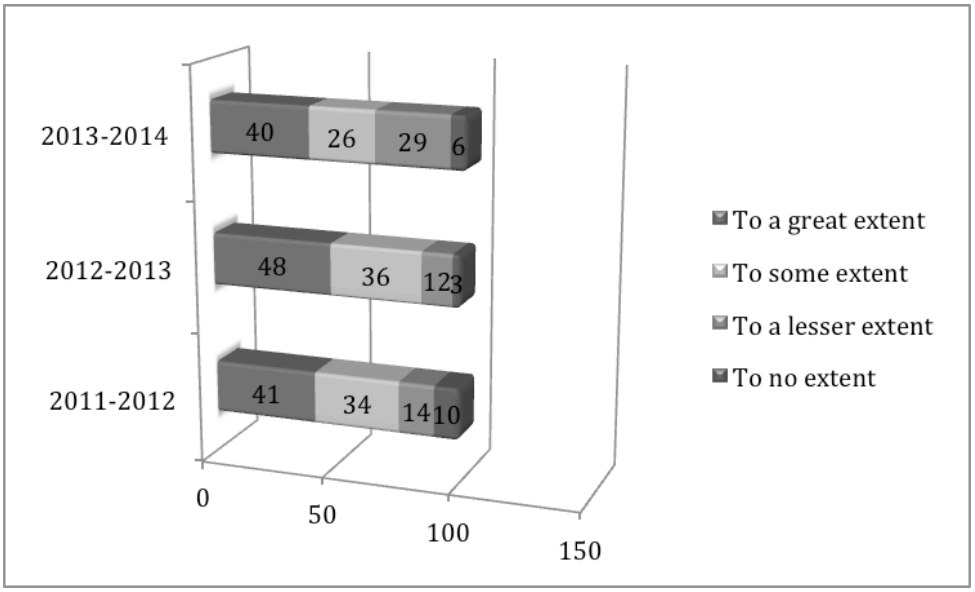


Figure J5. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: To what extent do you feel supported by your principal?

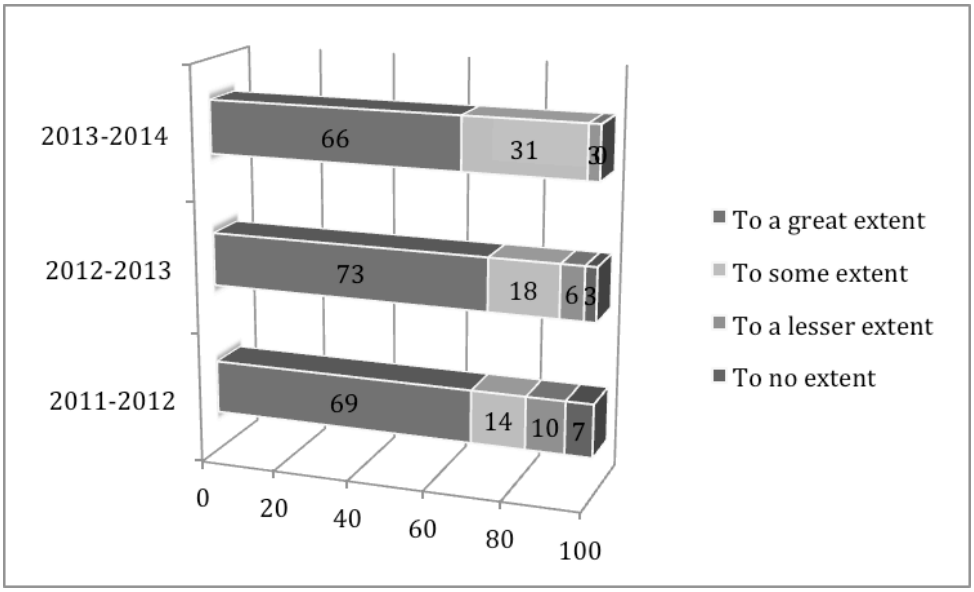


Figure J6. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: To what extent do you feel supported by your Assistant Principal?

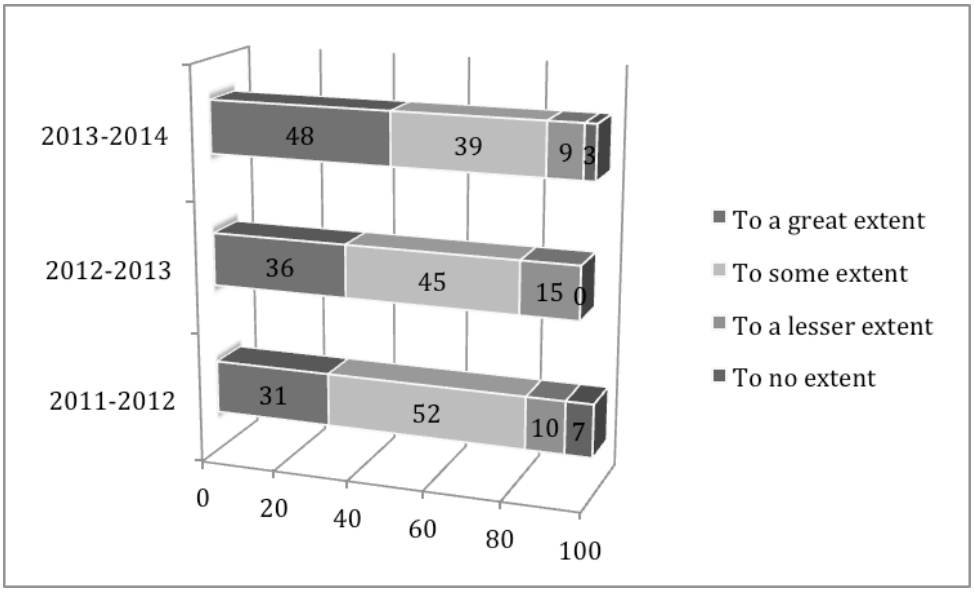


Figure J7. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: To what extent do you feel supported by other teachers?

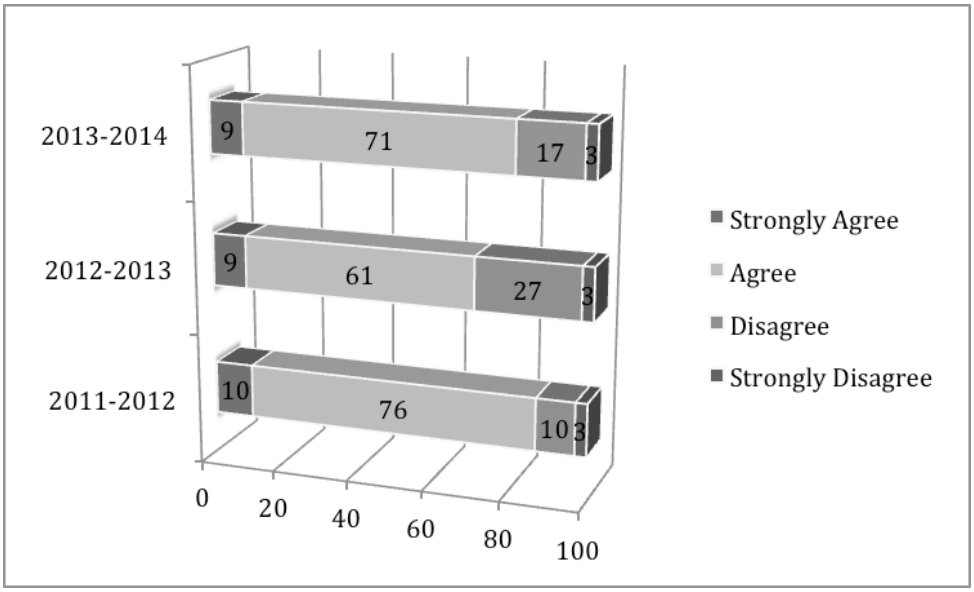


Figure J8. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: Teachers in my school trust each other.

Instructional Guidance

Table J4

City survey responses regarding instructional guidance, , 2011-2012, 2012-13, and 2013-14

Statement	Results and Analysis
The quality of teaching at the school was for a high priority for the school leaders.	For all three school years, at least 75% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the school leaders cared about instructional excellence. In the spring of 2013, the greatest percentage (91%) of teachers opined that teaching was a high priority for Ms. Oliver and Mr. Reynolds. That number was reduced to 80% in the spring of 2014, although the percent of teachers who strongly disagreed was consistent across the years. All of these years show an improvement from the previous administration, with only 53% of teachers indicating that the school leaders cared about teacher quality.
The principal understands student learning.	The distribution of responses across the four categories from strongly agree to strongly disagree was similar across all three years, with over 80% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. There was a very small increase in positive responses each year, with no one strongly disagreeing in the spring of 2014.
As a teacher, I received regular and helpful feedback.	In the spring of 2011, under different leadership, only 45% of teachers felt that they received regular and helpful feedback about their teaching, the same percent that indicated that school leaders visited their classroom to observe the quality of teaching. Under this new administration, there have been incremental improvements each year. Whereas only 45% of teachers felt that they were given helpful feedback the previous year, that percentage was up over 10% to 57% in the spring of 2012. The next year there was an 11% increase to 68%, rising to 69% in the spring of 2014. In addition to the slight increase in agreement in 2014, there were no longer any teachers strongly disagreeing that they received regular feedback.
The principal works with teachers on instructional planning	While less people strongly agreed with this statement in 2014 than 2013, there was fairly consistent agreement both years that the principal participated in instructional planning (84% and 82%, respectively). Also, in the spring of 2014, there were no longer any teachers who strongly disagreed with that the principal was involved in planning.
The principal know what's going on in classrooms?	The responses indicated that the principal was more present in classrooms in the spring of 2013, when she was completing all of the observations herself. Although there was a 1% increase in teachers that strongly agreed with the statement between the two years and there were no longer any teachers, who strongly disagreed in the spring of 2014, the agreement rate went down from 81% to 66%. This significant decrease could be because the assistant principal assumed half the teacher evaluation responsibilities.
The school leaders have high expectations for the kids?	Across the three years, the trends were similar with more parents than teachers strongly agreeing that the school had high expectations and more teachers than parents agreeing with the statement. There was a large decrease in parents who agreed with that statement from 2012 (40%) to 2013 (26%) with the highest percentage in 2014 (44%), with the parents who agreed being rather consistent (49%, 44%, and 49%.). Teachers largely agreed with the statement with the most agreement in 2012 (68%) with a steady decline to 59% in 2013 and 54% in 2013.

(Continued)

Table J4

City survey responses regarding instructional guidance, , 2011-2012, 2012-13, and 2013-14

Statement	Results and Analysis
	During that same time, there was an increase in teachers who strongly agreed from 4% in 2012 to 15% in 2013. When looking at all of the teachers who agreed or strongly agreed, there was a slight increase (72 to 74%) between 2012 and 2013 and a slight decrease to 68% in 2014. Overall, more teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed than parents, with the highest percentage of parents not agreeing in 2013 (11%) versus 9% in 2012 and only 7% in 2014. In 2014, the most teachers (31%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed, up from 27% in 2013 and 28% in 2012. These data show no clear trend.
The principal sets clear and communicate goals for instruction.	The results for this question show a clear increase in the percentage of teachers who either agree or strongly agree that the principal sets and communicates expectations, with a clear decrease in the number of those teachers who strongly agree. In 2012, 83% supported this statement with 50% of those teachers strongly agreeing; while in 2014, 94% support the statement but of those teachers only 35% strongly agree. By 2014, no teacher strongly disagreed with the statement.
The school uses achievement data used to make decisions about instruction?	While the teachers who agreed and strongly agreed with this statement made up the clear majority over all three years, coming in at right around 80%, the teachers who strongly agreed were reduced by over half between 2012 and 2014 (24% and 12%, respectively). Although more teachers strongly agreed in 2012, more teachers disagree or strongly disagreed that year (24%) than subsequent years (2013-21%, 2014-17%), with no teacher reporting that they strongly disagree in 2014. These data seem to suggest that there was some improvement in the 2013-2014 school year, after the SIG, in using data to make instructional decisions.
My school has clear measures of progress for student achievement throughout the year.	The response to this question shows some consistency over time, with a dip in agreement in the spring of 2014. In the spring of 2013, the most people supported this statement with almost a quarter of teachers (24%) strongly agreeing that there were clear measures for student progress.

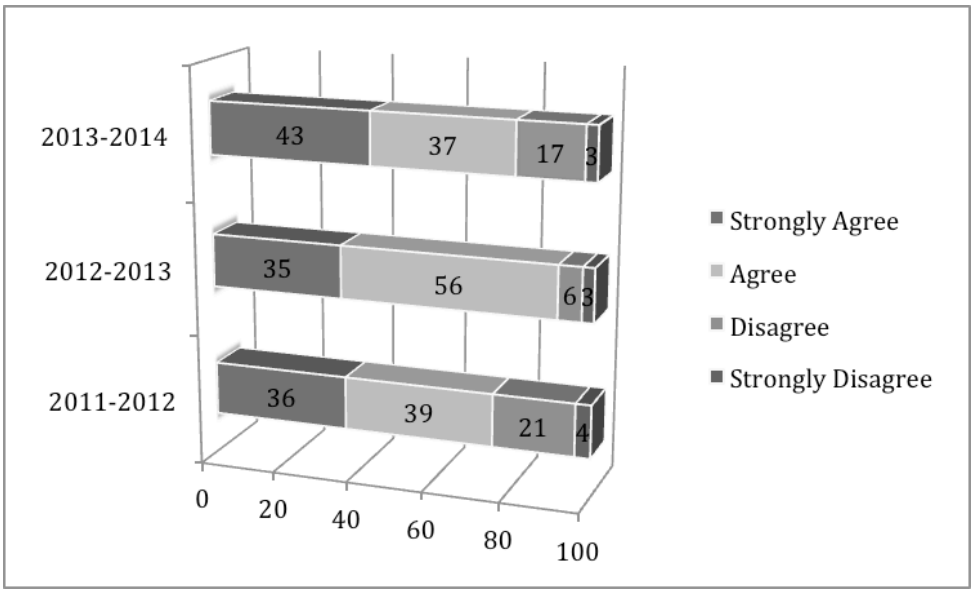


Figure J9. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: School leaders place a high priority on the quality of teaching at my school.

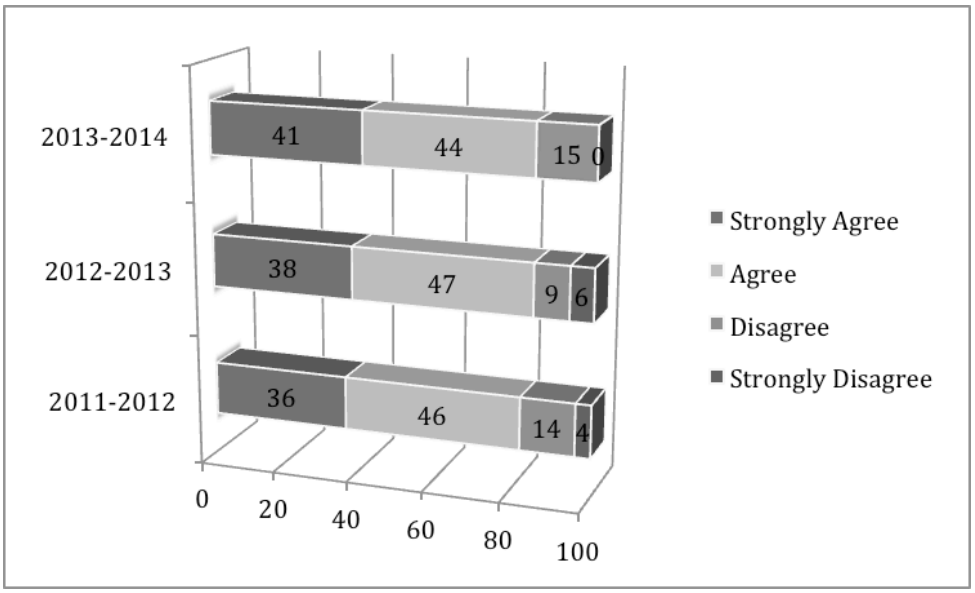


Figure J10. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: The principal at my school understands student learning.

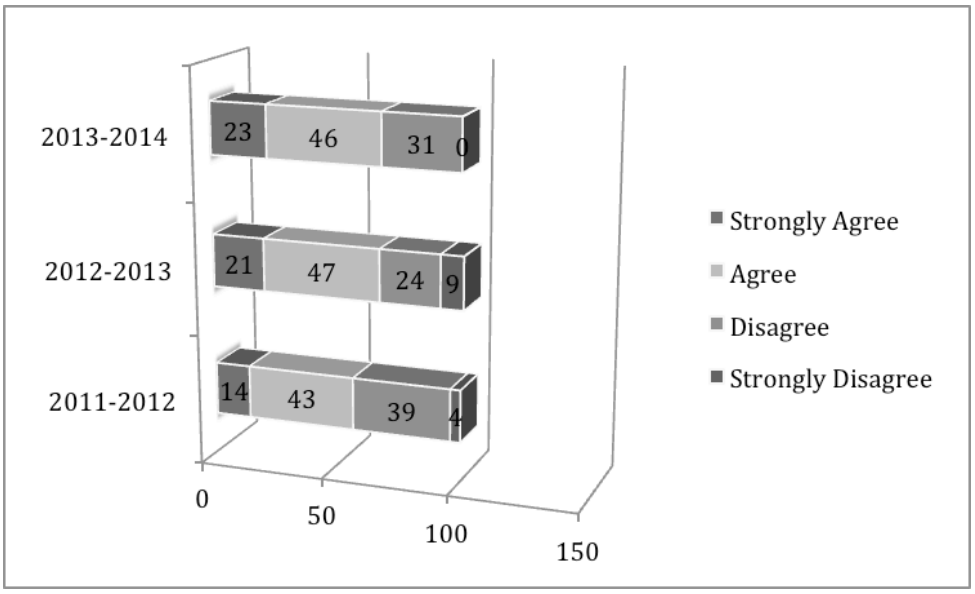


Figure J11. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: School leaders give me regular and helpful feedback about my teaching.

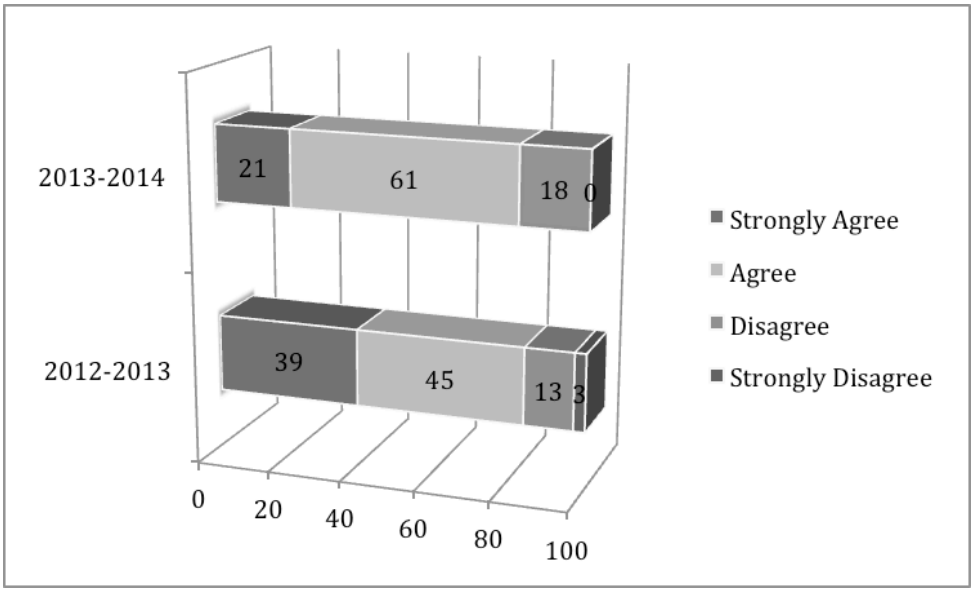


Figure J12. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: The principal at my school participates in instructional planning with teachers.

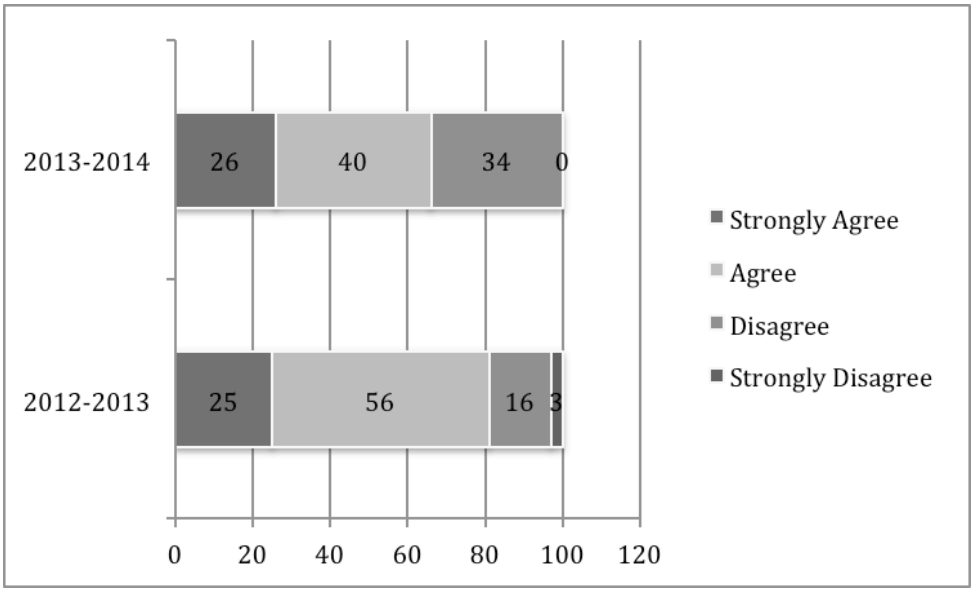
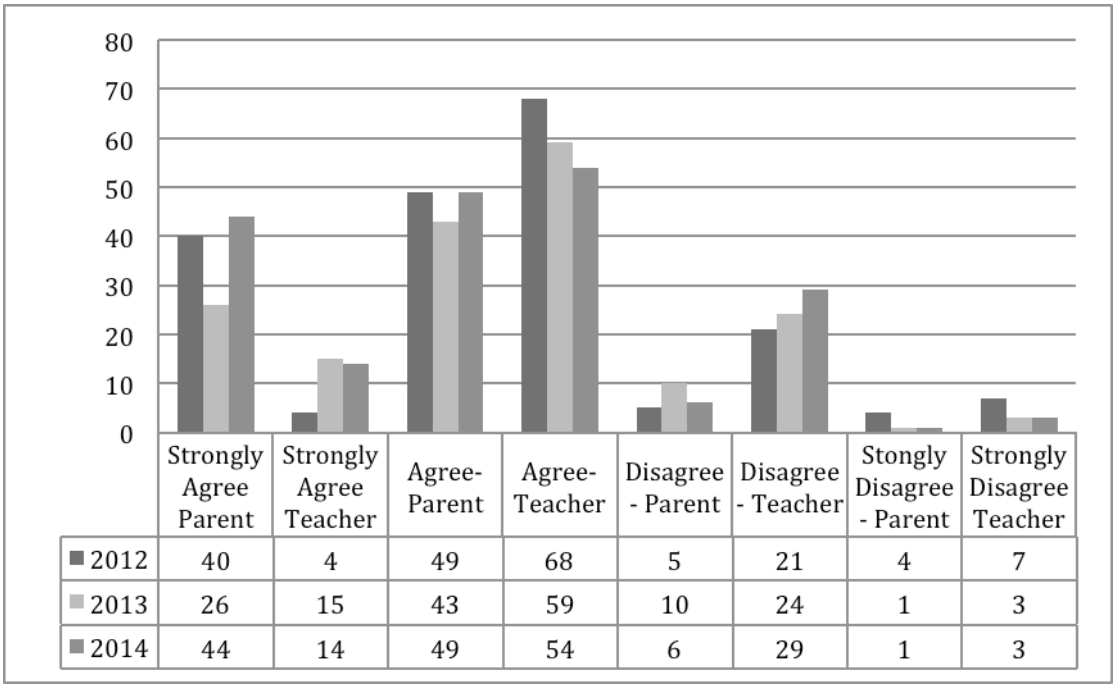


Figure J13. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: The principal at my school knows what's going on in my classroom.



	Strongly Agree Parent	Strongly Agree Teacher	Agree-Parent	Agree-Teacher	Disagree - Parent	Disagree - Teacher	Stongly Disagree - Parent	Strongly Disagree Teacher
2012	40	4	49	68	5	21	4	7
2013	26	15	43	59	10	24	1	3
2014	44	14	49	54	6	29	1	3

Figure J14. Created using teacher and parent City Survey Data in response the statement: The school has high expectations for my child/ the students.

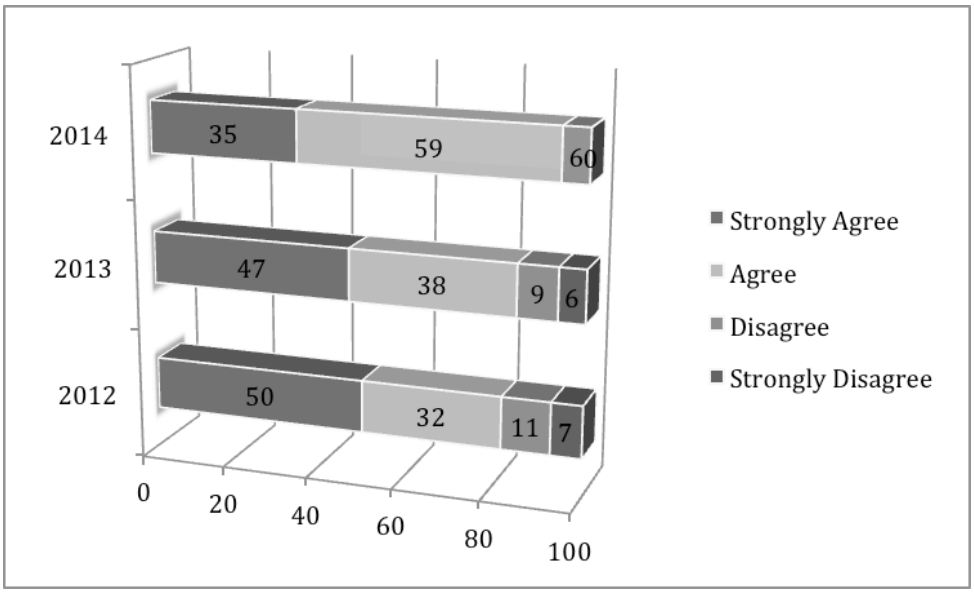


Figure J15. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: The principal at my school makes clear to the staff his or her expectations for meeting instructional goals.

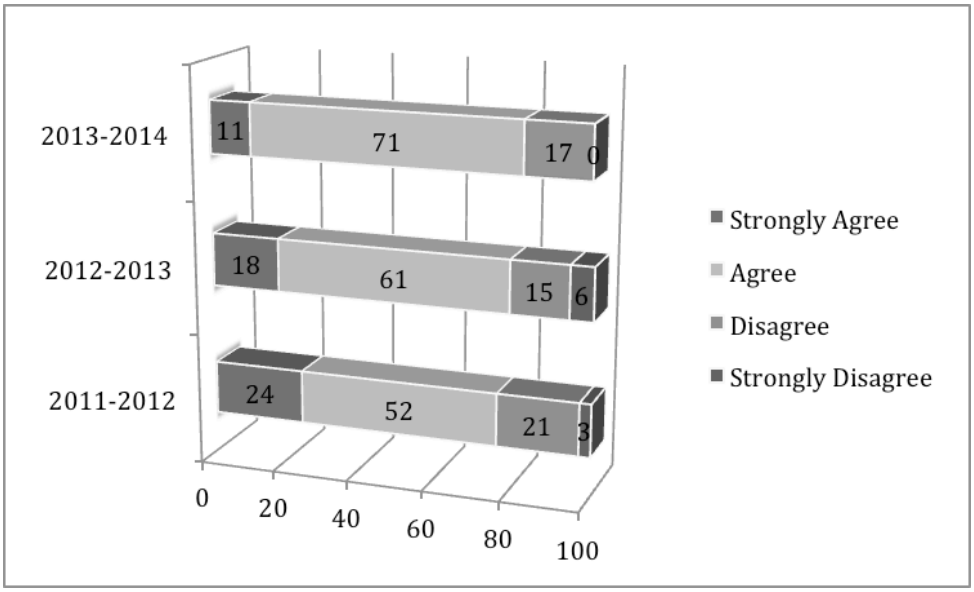


*Figure J16***.** Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: Teachers in my school use multiple forms of student achievement data to improve instructional decisions.

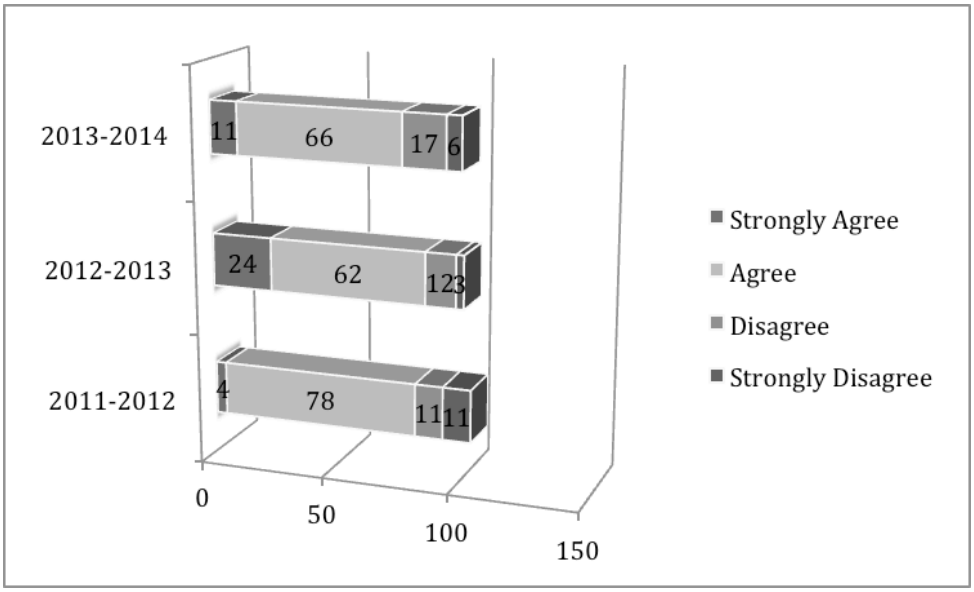


Figure J17. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: My school has clear measures of progress for student achievement throughout the year.

Professional Capacity

Table J5

City survey findings for professional development, 2011-2012, 2012-13, and 2013-14

Statement	Results and Analysis
Professional development experiences provided content area support.	This question had significant gains each year in terms of teacher agreement. While a very small percentage strongly agreed (4%) and only another quarter agreed with this statement at the end of the 2011-2012 school year, there was an 100% increase in both those who strongly agreed and agreed in 2013, making for 62% agreement. The next spring, the number of teachers who strongly agreed doubled again but the overall agreement stayed at 63%. Each year showed gains from the previous administration in which only 48% responded in agreement to this question in the spring of 2011. A Chi square analysis found a statistically significant difference between 2012, 2013, and 2014. See Appendix K for results.
Professional development experiences were sustained and coherent.	This question covered another area of improvement that was both purposeful and necessary- improving professional development. Even through there was a clearer instructional focus in the spring of 2014 and the professional development was better planned, the greatest agreement was in the spring of 2013, with 86% of teachers suggesting they agreed or strongly agreed. In 2014, this percentage was reduced to 82%, but no one strongly disagreed anymore. Both years had more positive responses than 2012, where only 55% of teachers agreed that PD wasn't short-term and unrelated. A Chi Square found statistically significant gains ($p<.01$) between 2012 and 2014 but not between 2013 and 2014. See Appendix K for results.
To what extent did professional development at your school focus on the following areas; (a) Common Core-aligned curriculum; (b) the teacher evaluation framework, (c) the school's instructional focus, and (d) shifts in classroom instruction	These results indicated that the all respondents who answered the question felt that the professional development reflected the instructional focus. All but nine percent of the teachers felt that the professional development focused on familiarizing and preparing the staff to understand the framework for teacher evaluation. Again everyone stated that the PD was to some or a great extent or to a lesser extent focused on developing common-core aligned curriculum. Finally, 77% of the teachers felt that PD to some or a great extent focused on shifting classroom instruction.
Professional development helped me align my teaching practice with the standards; I received feedback on my teaching practices that could help me integrate the standards into instruction.	While there was general agreement that both things were happening, more teachers (41% versus 18%) strongly agreed that they were learning about shifting practice. On the other hand, more teachers selected "agree" in response to whether they received feedback on their practice that helped them to integrate Common Core Learning Standards into their instruction (52% versus 29%). Overall, there was 70% agreement in both areas.

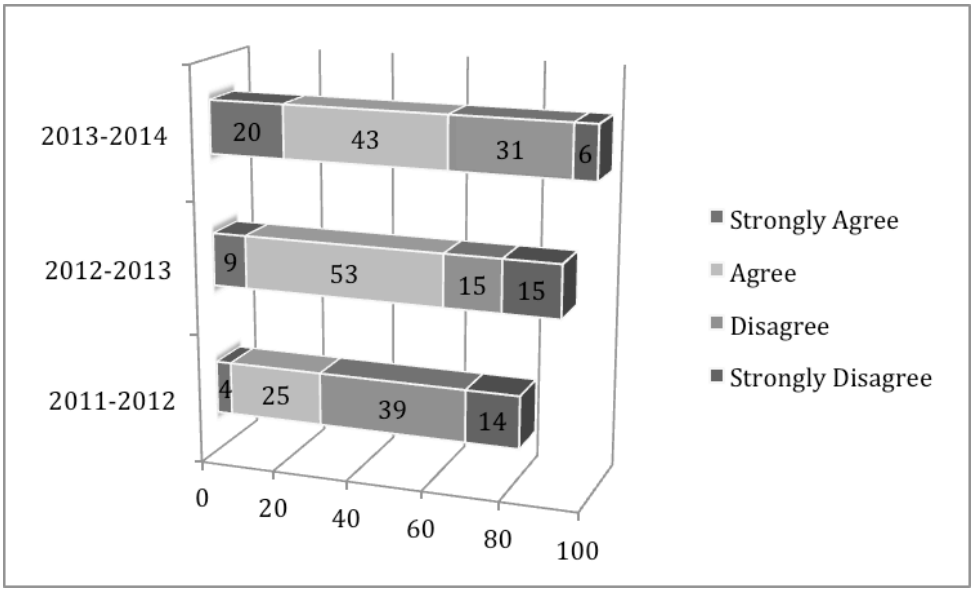


Figure J18. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: Overall, my professional development experiences this school year have provided me with content support in my subject area.

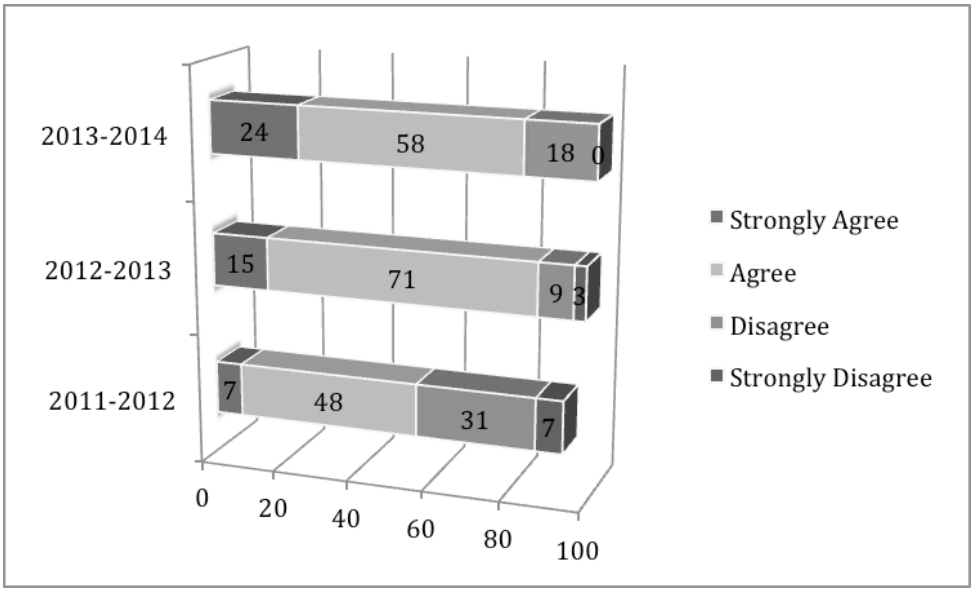
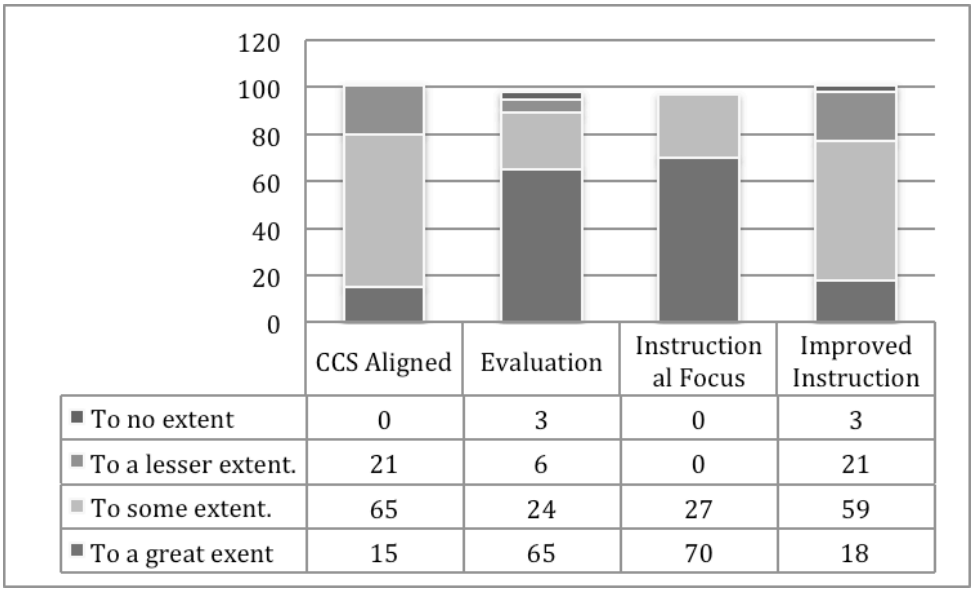


Figure J19. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: Overall, my professional development experiences this school year have been sustained and coherently focused, rather than short-term and unrelated.



	CCS Aligned	Evaluation	Instructional Focus	Improved Instruction
To no extent	0	3	0	3
To a lesser extent.	21	6	0	21
To some extent.	65	24	27	59
To a great exent	15	65	70	18

Figure J20. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response to a set of statements about professional development.

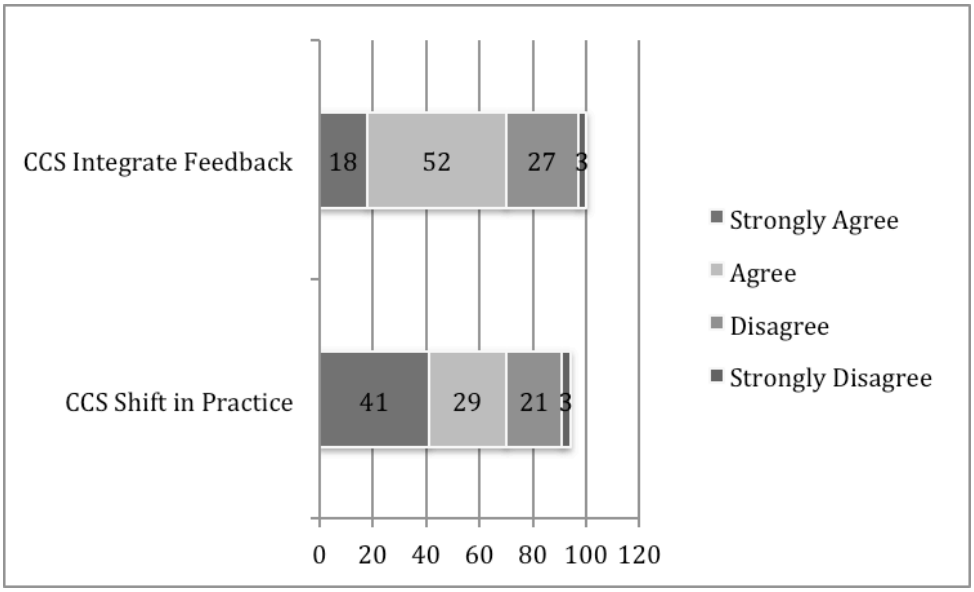
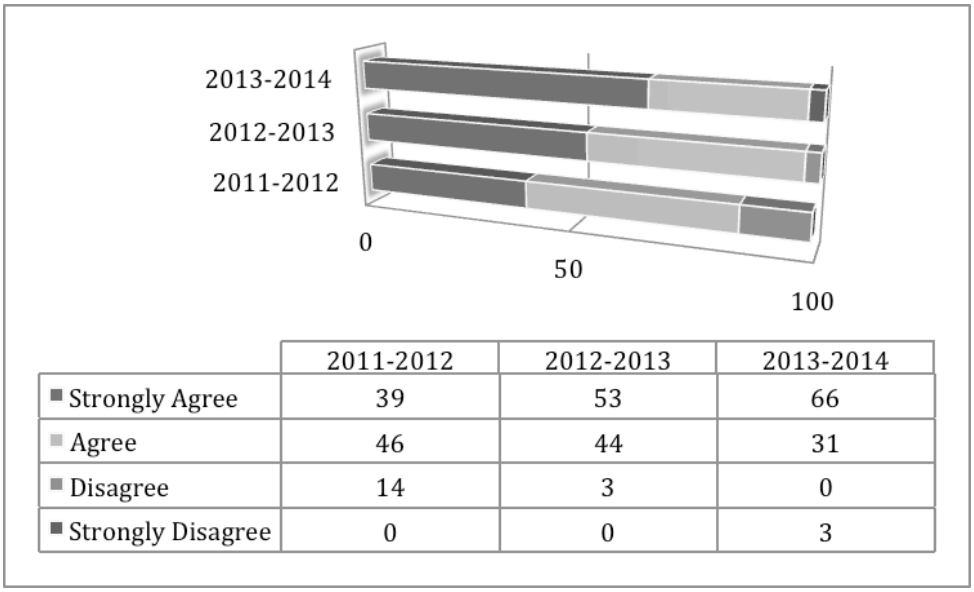


Figure J21. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response to two statements: (a) This school year, I have received feedback on my practice that helped me to integrate Common Core Learning Standards into my instruction and (b) This school year, I have received feedback on my practice that helped me to integrate Common Core Learning Standards into my instruction.

Table J6

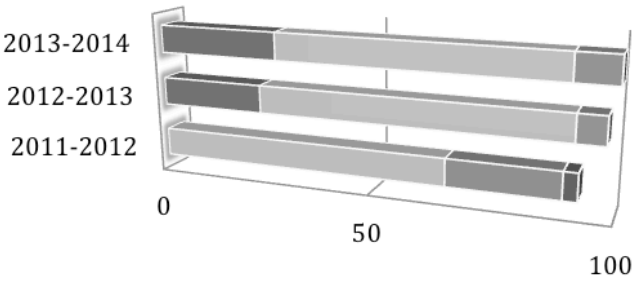
City Survey results for professional learning community

Statement	Results and Analysis
Time is set aside by school leaders to collaborate.	Based on this graph, there has been steady improvement over time in the efforts of the school to provide time to develop a professional learning community, with more teachers moving towards strongly agreeing by the spring of 2014 at 66%, up 13 percentage points from the year before and up 27 percentage points from 2012. No teachers strongly disagreed with this statement in the springs of 2012 and 2013, and then in the spring of 2014, 3% strongly disagree but no one disagreed, meaning there was an overall agreement of 97%.
Time is set aside to work productively with colleagues.	When asked at the end of 2012, if the teachers agreed, 66% did agree, however, no one strongly agreed. The following year, 2% more agreed and 24% strongly agreed, raising the agreement to 92% in the spring of 2013. Across all three years, a very small percentage (3%) strongly disagreed in the spring of 2012. In the spring of 2014, the agreement slipped by 1%, largely remaining stable.
The time spent in teams was used to improve instructional practice.	The trend here was toward improvement across the three years, with incremental improvement. While a fifth of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement in the spring of 2012, that number was reduced to 12% the two subsequent years with no one strongly disagreeing in 2014. Interestingly while there was greater agreement overall in 2013 and 2014, 7% more teachers strongly agreed in 2012.



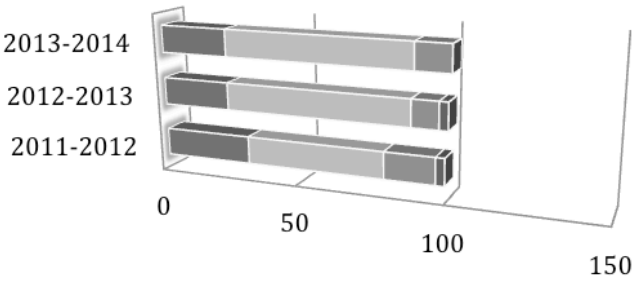
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Strongly Agree	39	53	66
Agree	46	44	31
Disagree	14	3	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	3

Figure J22. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: School leaders provide time for collaboration among teachers.



	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Strongly Agree	0	24	28
Agree	66	68	63
Disagree	24	6	9
Strongly Disagree	3	0	0

Figure J23. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: Overall, my professional development experiences this school year have included opportunities to work productively with colleagues in my school.



	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Strongly Agree	31	24	24
Agree	48	64	65
Disagree	17	9	12
Strongly Disagree	3	3	0

Figure J24. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: Teachers in my school work together on teams to improve their instructional practice

Student-centered Learning Climate

Table J7

City Survey results for student emotional and physical safety, , 2011-2012, 2012-13, and 2013-14

Statement	Results and Analysis
Order and discipline are maintained at the school.	These results indicate very little change during these years. As a starting point, according to survey data from the spring of 2011, 24% agreed and no one strongly agreed with this statement. The percent of people who agreed doubled to 48% in 2012, remaining the same through the 2013-2014 school year. There was slight increase in teachers who strongly agreed from 3% (2012) to 6% (2013) to 9% (2014). Although these responses were far better than with the previous school leaders, there were still a little less than half of the teachers who disagreed or strongly disagreed that order was maintained, despite the efforts put into the discipline system. When compared to the entire city, RHS was less orderly with 79% of teacher agreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement in 2012, 82% in 2013, and 80% in 2014 (www.schools.city.gov).
I feel safe at the school (Teachers); My son or daughter is safe at the school (Parents); I feel safe in my classes, in other school spaces, and outside on school property.	The teachers at the school largely indicated that they felt safe, while the parents also largely indicated that they thought their son or daughter was safe. Both groups of adults also saw improvement in this area over time. While 80% of teachers and 83% of the parents agreed or strongly agreed that the school was safe in the spring of 2012, those numbers rose to 91% and 83% respectively in 2013, and 94% and 89% respectively in 2014. By 2014, no teacher strongly disagreed that they were safe at school. he conclusion can be drawn that students feel safest in the classroom, followed by other places in the school building, and then outside areas. The students largely feel safe in their classrooms, although 19% disagreed or strongly disagreed with that fact in 2012, 29% in 2013, and 25% in 2014, which are somewhat concerning numbers. In the spring of 2013, the feelings of uncertainty about safety increased by 10%, falling by 4% in 2014. Even more kids feel unsafe in the hallways, cafeteria, gym, or locker room, with 36% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing in 2012 and 2013 and 40% in 2014. This percentage increased by 4% in 2014. When asked about school property outside of the building the results were even bleaker, with 59% suggesting that they didn't agree in 2012, 51% that they didn't agree in 2013, and 45% that they didn't agree in 2014. These responses seemed to be improving but were concerning nonetheless. The city wide reported averages for these three schools indicated that in 2012 90% of students felt safe in their classes and 82% felt safe elsewhere in the school. Similarly, in 2013 88% felt safe in class and 80% felt safe elsewhere and in 2014, 87% felt safe in class and 79% felt safe elsewhere in the school (www.schools.city.gov). The students felt less safe at RHS than the other students across the city.
Students are harassed or bullied at school.	Judging from the student responses, the 2012-2013 schools saw an increase in bullying and harassment with 40% of students suggesting that students threaten each other most or all of time. This frequency was over 10% lower in 2012 (28%) and 2014 (29%). Accordingly, the smallest percentage of students that never witnessed or experienced bullying was 16% in 2013, while the highest proportion was 22% in 2014. The remaining students, and the majority.

(Continued)

Table J7

City Survey results for student emotional and physical safety, , 2011-2012, 2012-13, and 2013-14

Statement	Results and Analysis
	The teachers were asked a similar question about whether or not they agreed that students were threatened or bullied. Interestingly, the results were split on this question with the most disagreement in 2012 (59%) and around 43% disagreement the other two years. The spring of 2014 was the only time that teachers strongly disagreed, with 6% reporting that students were not bullied. There were definitely more teachers who disagreed that harassment happened than there were students who said it never did, possibly indicating that much of the bullying happens without adults in the building hearing or knowing about it.
Student respect other students.	Students across all three years largely felt that students did not respect each other, with a slight increase in disagreement in 2013 that remained constant for 2014, with 3/4ths of the student body disagreeing with this statement over the two years of the improvement effort. Students at RHS had lower levels of agreement that students treated each other with respect than the city as a whole, which found that 60% of students were in agreement with this statement in 2013 and 2014, indicating that respect between students was a concern for all teenagers in the city. The bottom line was that respect between students at RHS was an issue. Despite this trend, students largely felt welcome at the school
There is a person at my school who can help me with conflict.	Both students and teachers generally agreed that there was support for resolving conflicts, as intended. These responses improved over time with the no teachers and only 14% of students indicating disagreement in the spring of 2014. In the springs of 2012 and 2013, only 6% of teachers disagree or strongly disagreed there was some to help with conflict, while 18% and 21% of students disagreed.
I can reach out to another adults to help me with a behavioral problem.	The response to this question improved over time, going from 28% disagreement, to 24%, to 14%. By the spring of 2014, most teachers felt like they could get support for a student struggling to make choices that would benefit the school environment.

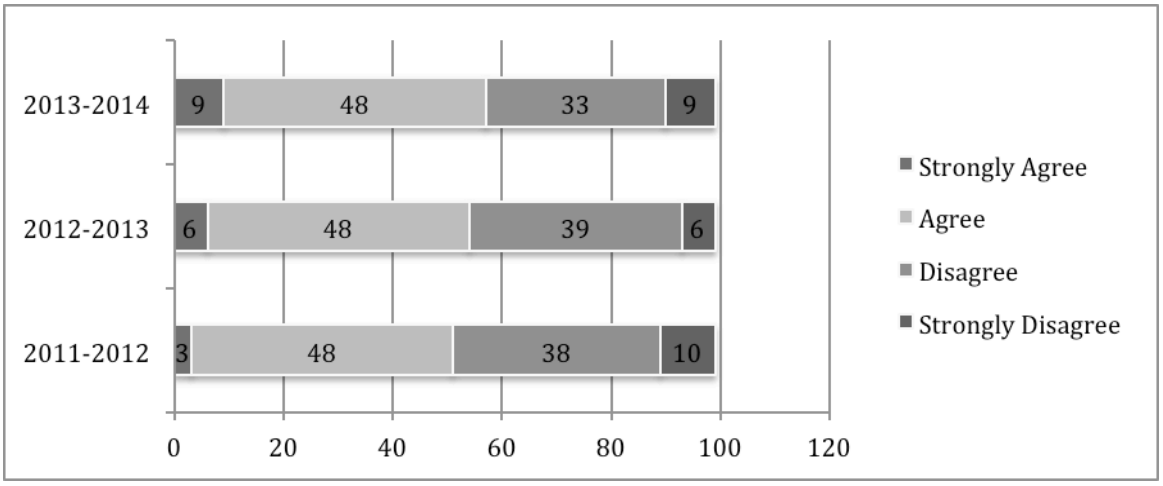


Figure J25. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: Order and discipline are maintained at my school.

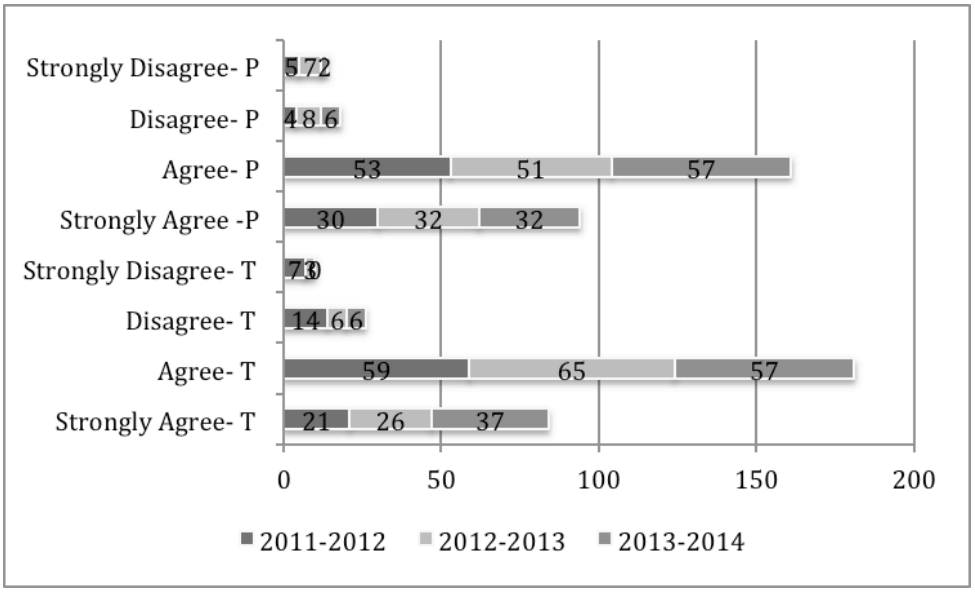


Figure J26. Created using teacher and parent City Survey Data in response the statement: I am safe at my school (Teachers); My child is safe at school. (Parent)

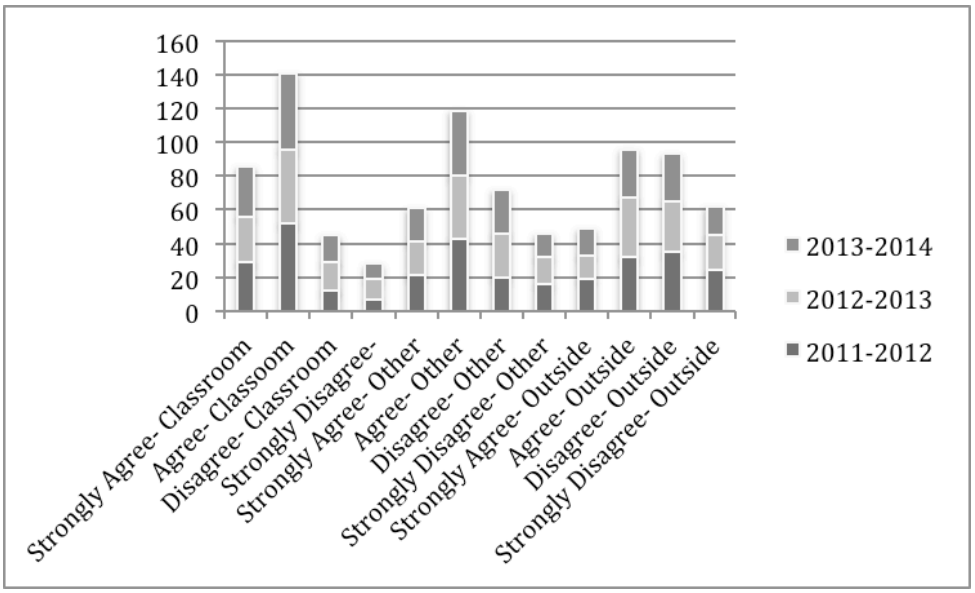


Figure J27. Created using student City Survey Data in response the statements: (a) I am safe in my classes, (b) I am safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker rooms, and cafeteria, and (c) I am safe on school property outside of the school building.

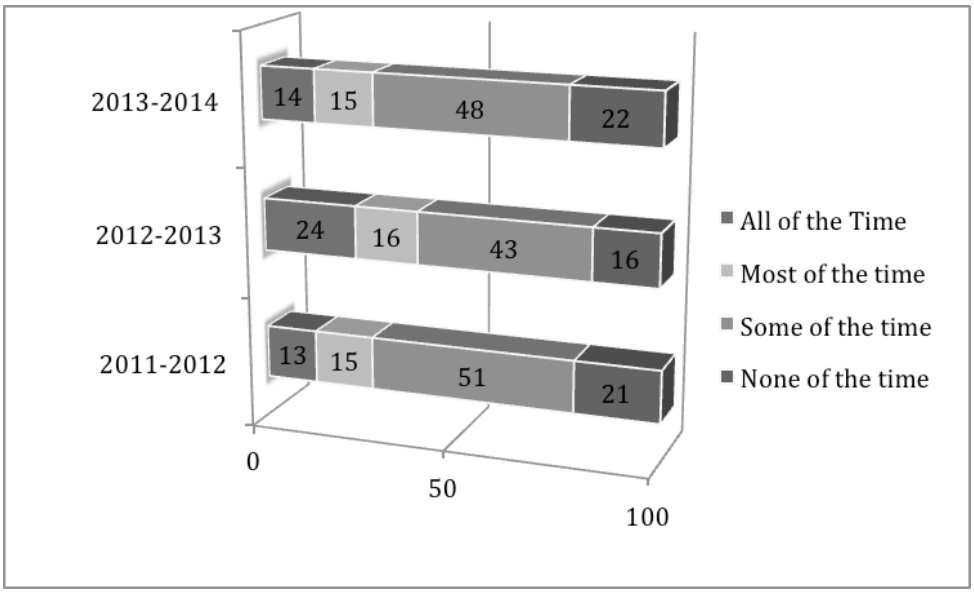


Figure J28. Created using student City Survey Data in response the statement: Students threaten or bully other students at school.

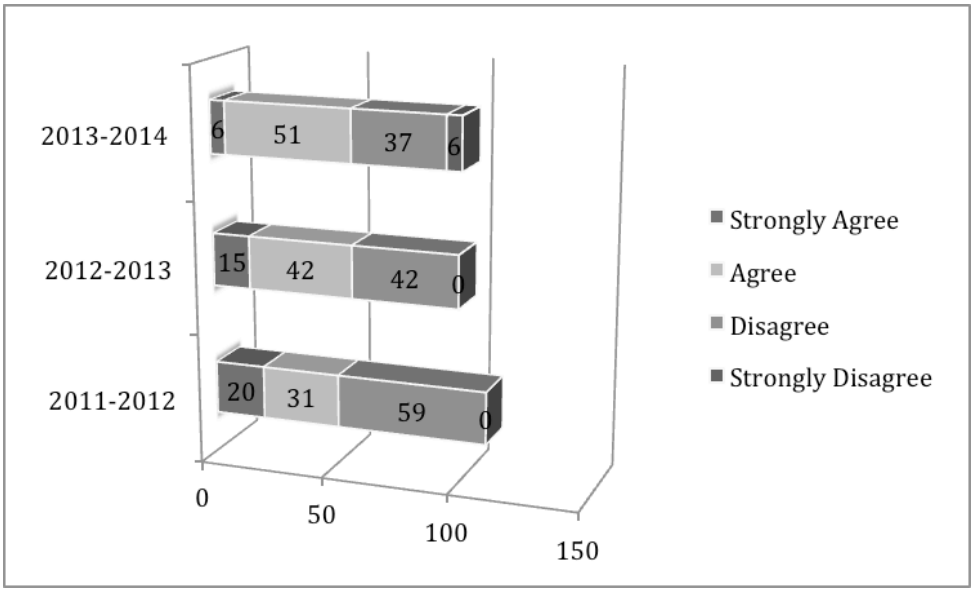


Figure J29. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: Students in my school are often threatened or bullied.

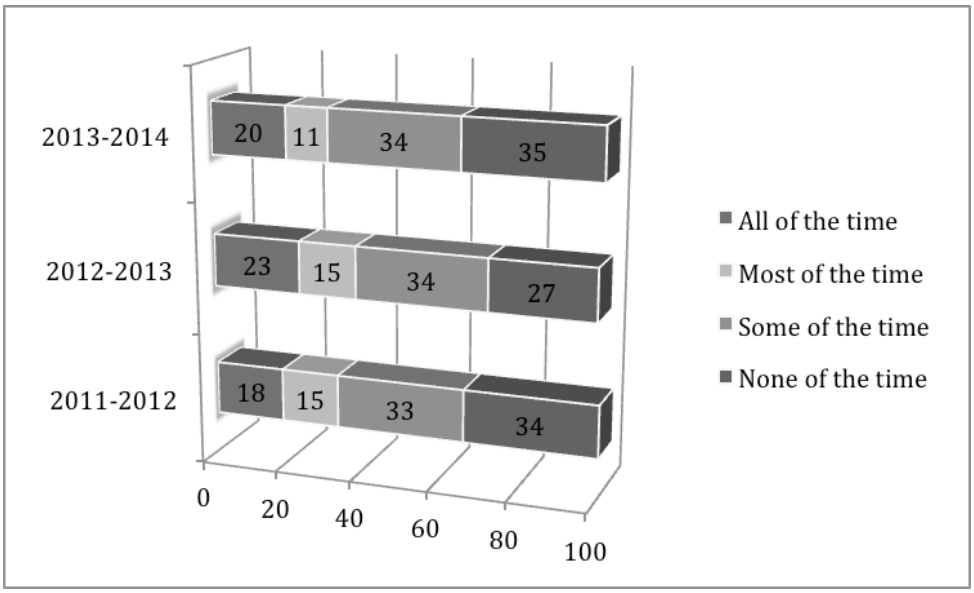


Figure J30. Created using student City Survey Data in response the statement: At my school, there is gang activity (Students)

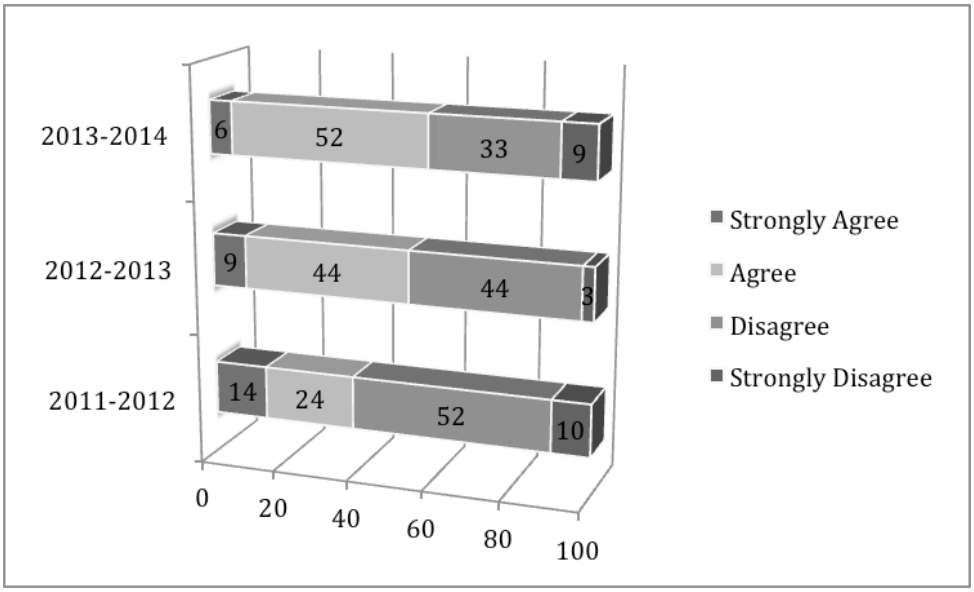


Figure J31. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: Gang activity is a problem at my school.

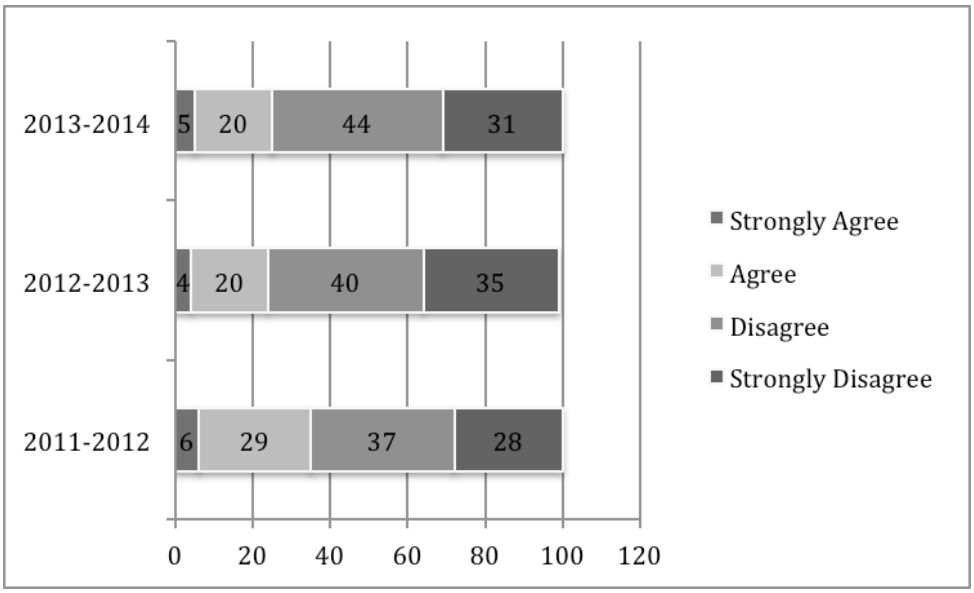


Figure J32. Created using student City Survey Data in response the statement: Most students in my school treat each other with respect.

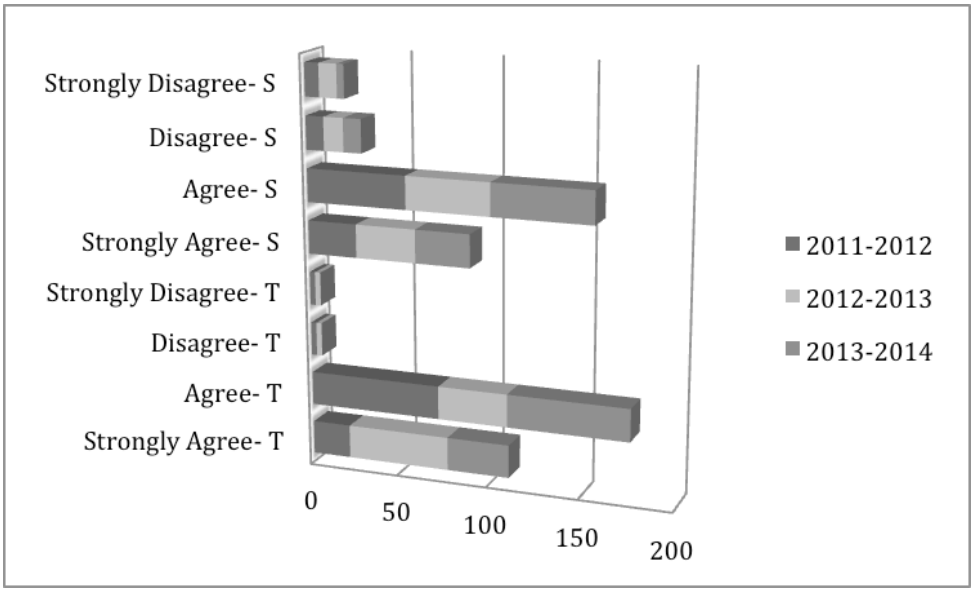


Figure J33. Created using teacher and student City Survey Data in response the statement: There is a person or a program in my school that helps students resolve conflicts.

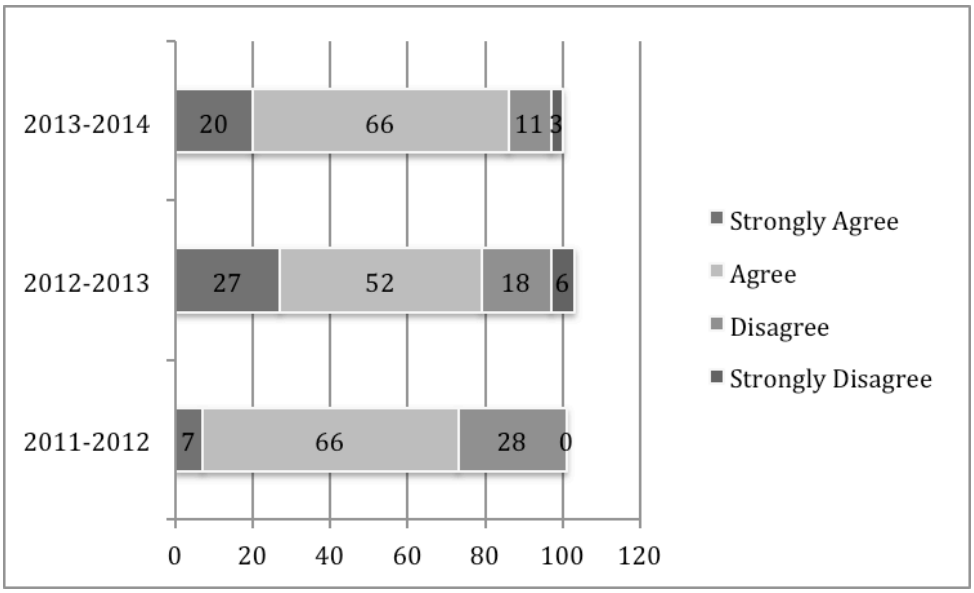


Figure J34. Created using parent City Survey Data in response the statement: I can get the help I need at my school to address student behavior issues.

Table J8

City Survey results for teacher's academic press and personal support norms, 2011-2012, 2012-13, and 2013-14.

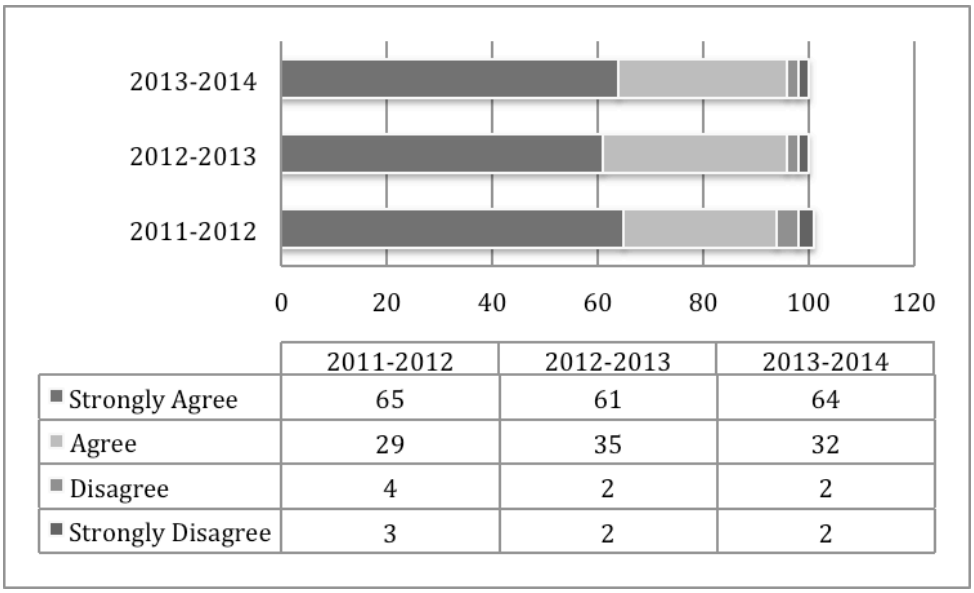
Statement	Results and Analysis
I need to work hard to get good grades.	Across all three years there was clear agreement from the students that they must work hard with over 94% of students reporting that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, similar to the citywide responses. Almost two-thirds of the students, who were in agreement, strongly agreed with the statement.
There are people or programs in my school that help students who are considering dropping out.	Based on these student responses, it would seem that the school had structures and people in place that students were aware of that could help a student stay on track. Also, while 28% of students who responded disagreed or strongly disagreed in 2012 and 2013, that number was reduced to 19% in 2014 with no student strongly disagreeing.
Adults know my know my name and who I am.	Responses indicated that the students, for the most part, felt that adults knew them. While the percent in agreement was similar across all three school years (85%, 86%, and 83% respectively), the number of students who strongly agreed increase steadily for 38% to 46% to 50%. Overall, these were positive responses, although the purpose of having a 6th through 12th grade structure was to ensure all students felt part of a community. This question indicates that a relevant portion of the students still do not feel like they are a known member of that community.
Adults in my school care about me.	The results indicated that most of the students felt that the adults at the school cared about them, with a slight decline in agreement in 2013, when 31% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed as compared to 25% and 24% the other years. At a school with lots of self-reported struggles with building a positive school culture, it seems promising that around three-quarters of the students felt adults cared about them.

(Continued)

Table J8

City Survey results for teacher's academic press and personal support norms, 2011-2012, 2012-13, and 2013-14.

Statement	Results and Analysis
There is an adult the building who can help me with my problems.	Again, these results are promising, with 89% of parents in agreement with this statement in 2014, up from 86% in 2013 and 85% in 2012. According to their parents, the vast majority of students have an adult in the building they can trust.
Adults respect students.	Based on these data, the teachers by in large felt that they respected the students but the students did not agree. According to the student data, 33% disagreed with the statement in 2012 versus 24% of the teachers. The number of students who disagreed rose to 40% in spring of 2013 and decreased to 6% for the teachers with no one strongly disagreeing. Finally in the spring of 2014, 37% of students were still in disagreement, while only 9% of teachers disagreed, with no one strongly disagreeing. There was improvement in the responses of the adults over time.
Students respect adults.	A very small percentage of teachers and students strongly agreed with this statement over the three years, with no teachers strongly agreeing in 2013 or 2014. More teachers agreed that students treated them with respect than students did across all three years. Both groups had an increase in agreement with teachers' responses increasing much more dramatically from 28% to 38% to 63% agreeing that students treated adults with respect. On the other hand most students disagreed or strongly disagreed, with 66% in 2012, 70% in 2013, and 71% in 2014. There was more similarity across teachers and students for those who strongly disagreed in 2012, with 24% of teachers and 34% of students strongly disagreeing. While these data do no necessarily tell a clear story, the takeaway seems to be that students did not respect adults as consistently as needed for a school to operate with a positive school culture, and even more importantly, that the students were aware of that fact.



	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Strongly Agree	65	61	64
Agree	29	35	32
Disagree	4	2	2
Strongly Disagree	3	2	2

Figure J35. Created using student City Survey Data in response the statement: At my school, I need to work hard to get good grades.

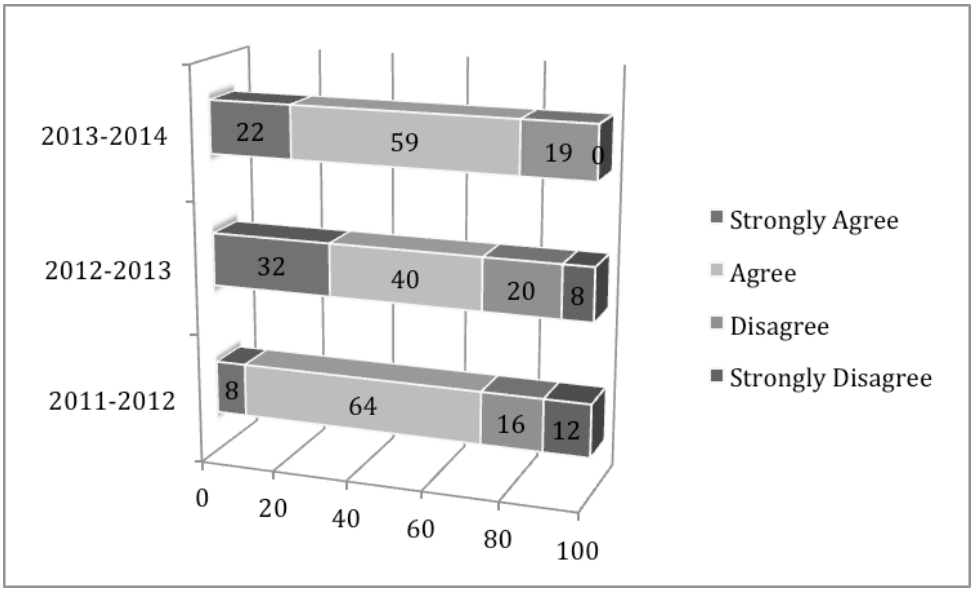


Figure J36. Created using student City Survey Data in response the statement: My school does a good job supporting students who are at risk for dropping out.

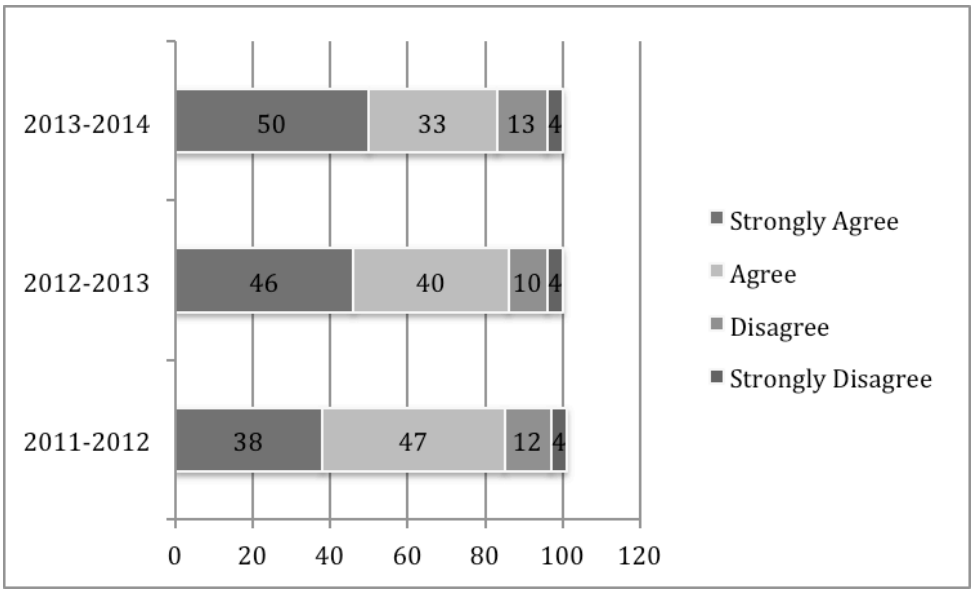


Figure J37. Created using student City Survey Data in response the statement: Most of the adults at my school that I see every day know my name or who I am.

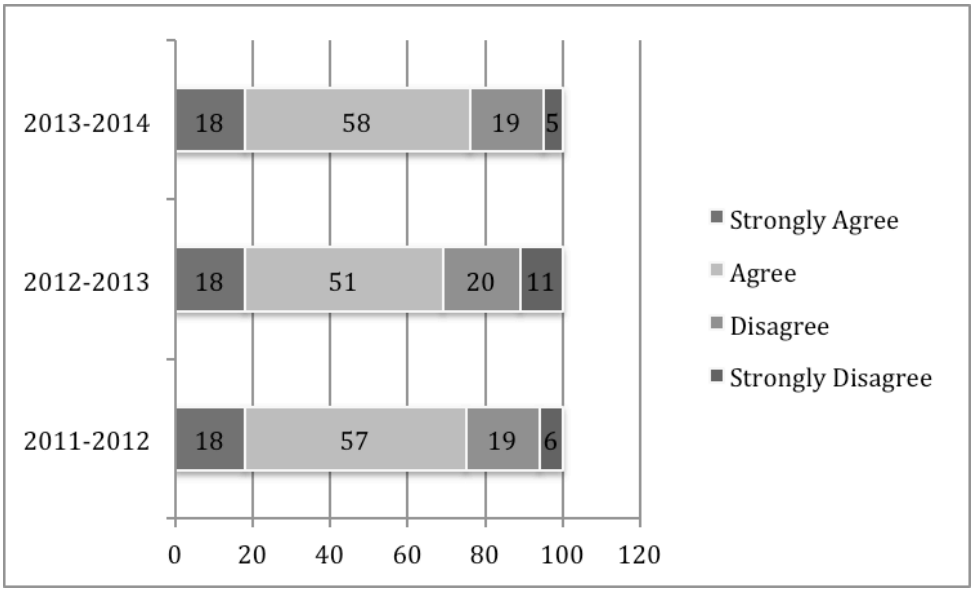


Figure J38. Created using student City Survey Data in response the statement: The adults at my school care about me.

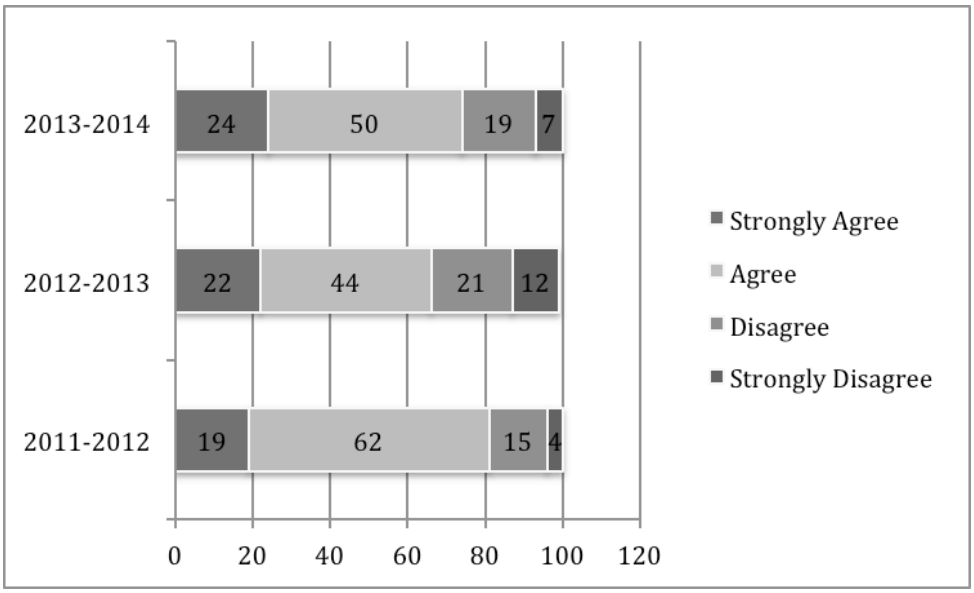


Figure J39. Created using student City Survey Data in response the statement: At my school, I feel welcome.

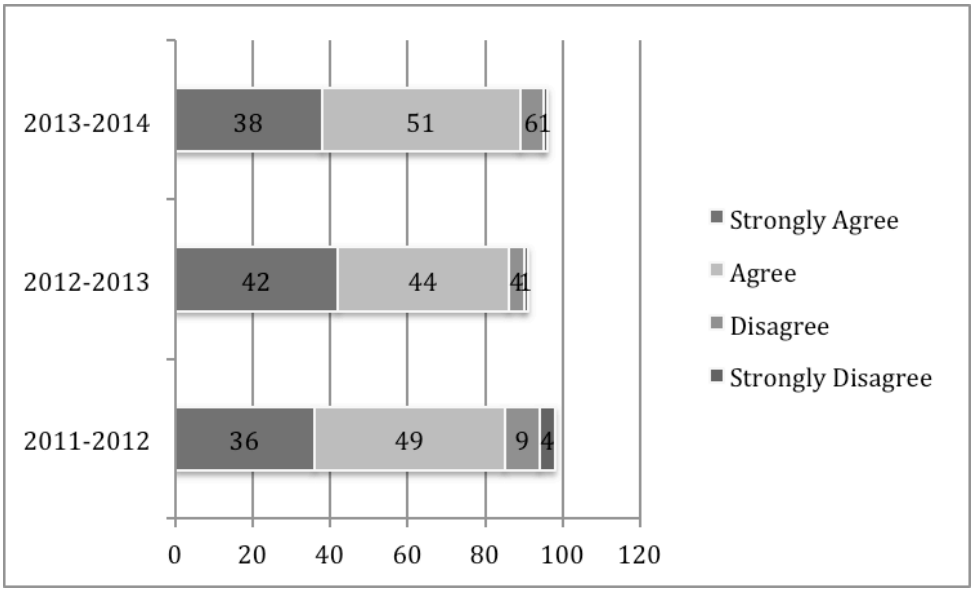
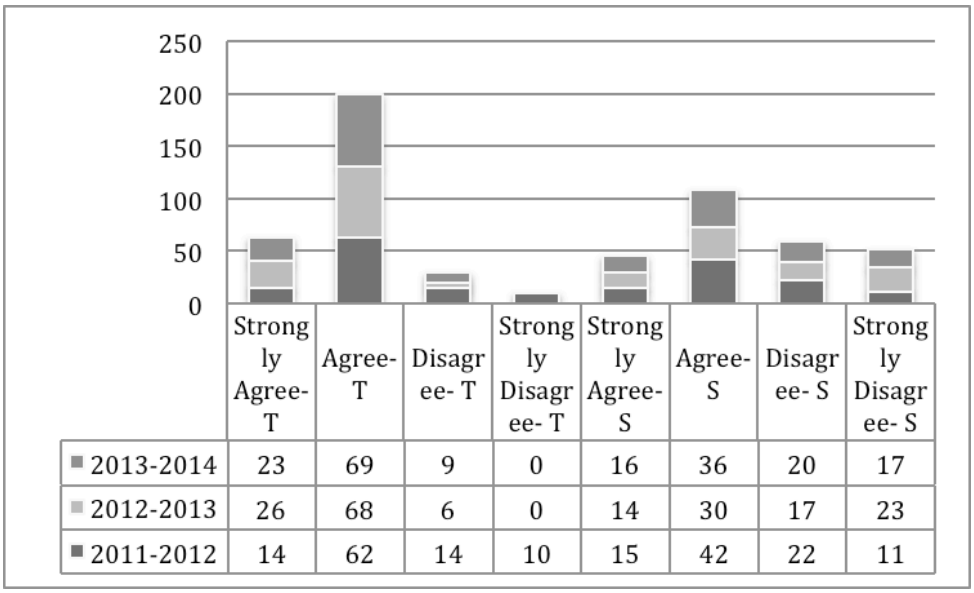
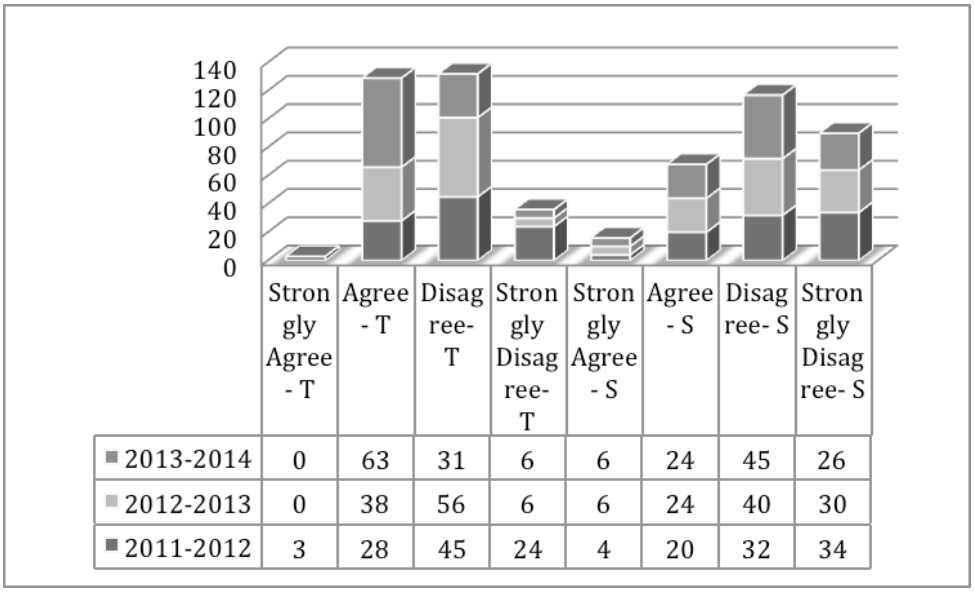


Figure J40. Created using parent City Survey Data in response the statement: There is an adult at the school whom my child trusts and can go to for help with a school problem.



	Strongly Agree-T	Agree-T	Disagree- T	Strongly Disagree- T	Strongly Agree-S	Agree-S	Disagree- S	Strongly Disagree- S
2013-2014	23	69	9	0	16	36	20	17
2012-2013	26	68	6	0	14	30	17	23
2011-2012	14	62	14	10	15	42	22	11

Figure J41. Created using teacher and student City Survey Data in response the statement: At my school, most adults treat all students with respect.



	Strongly Agree - T	Agree - T	Disagree- T	Strongly Disagree- T	Strongly Agree - S	Agree - S	Disagree- S	Strongly Disagree- S
2013-2014	0	63	31	6	6	24	45	26
2012-2013	0	38	56	6	6	24	40	30
2011-2012	3	28	45	24	4	20	32	34

Figure J42. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: Most students in my school treat adults with respect.

Table J9

City survey results for peer academic norms, 2011-2012, 2012-13, and 2013-14

Statement	Results and analysis
Students respect other students who get good grades.	For this question, there was near equal agreement and disagreement across the three years, with slightly more students in disagreement in 2012 (54%) and 2013 (51%) and slightly more in agreement in 2014 (53%). These responses were rather consistent with the spring of 2011, when 56% disagreed, showing a slight improvement each year, with a similar trend across all years.

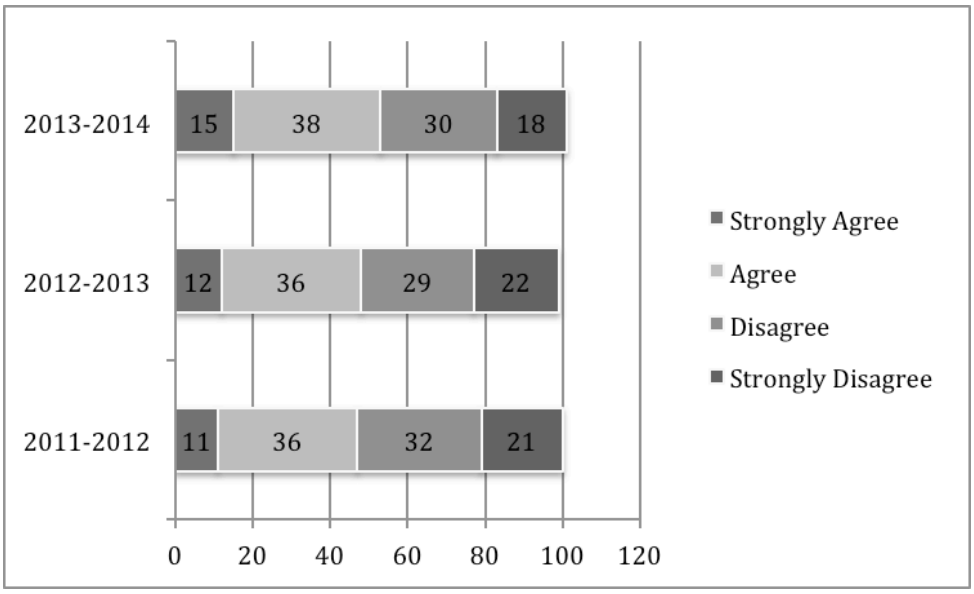


Figure J43. Created using student City Survey Data in response the statement: Most students at my school respect students who get good grades.

Table J10

City survey responses for student activities, 2011-2012, 2012-13, and 2013-14

Statement	Results and analysis
The school offers a variety of classes and activities to the students.	The students were far more evenly split on this question than the parents, with most parents agreeing that there was a variety of activities all three years (74%, 84%, 89%, respectively). There was an increase of 15% from the spring of 2012 to 2014. The number of students who did not feel like there were a variety of activities rose from 41% in 2012 to 44% in 2013 but then dropped to 26% in 2014, indicating that like the parents they felt that there were more student activities and course offerings in the spring of 2014.

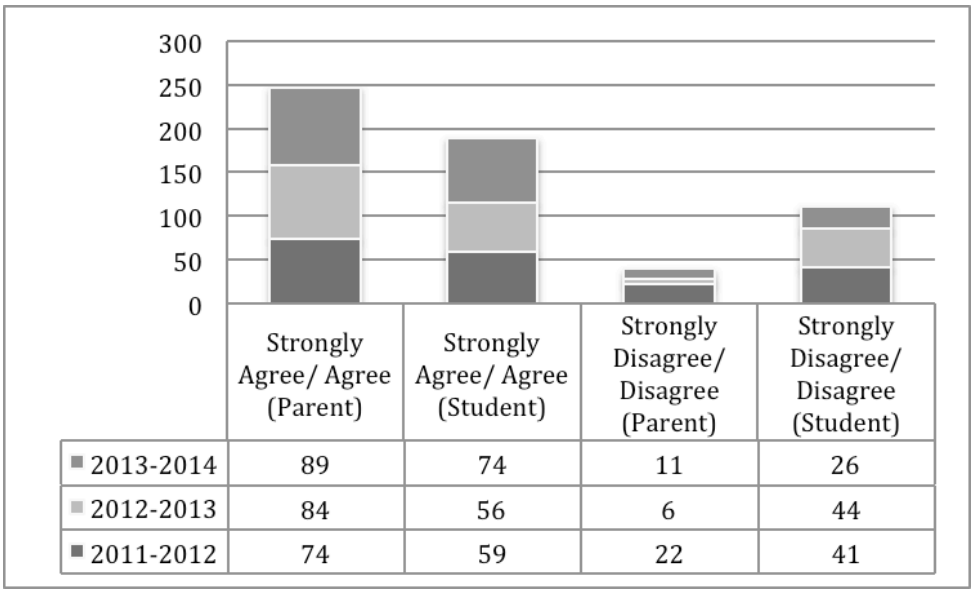


Figure J44. Created using parent and student City Survey Data in response the statement: My school offers a wide enough variety of classes and activities to keep me interested in school. (Student)/ My child's school offers a wide enough variety of courses and activities to keep my child interested in school. (Parent)

Family and Community Ties

Table J11

City survey responses for parent and school ties, 2011-2012, 2012-13, and 2013-14

Statement	Results and analysis
I am satisfied with my son or daughter educational experience.	Each year the school was improving according the parents. The school went from 31% of the parents being very satisfied in 2012 to 42% in 2014, with an overall satisfaction of 91%, up from 87% in 2012 and 84% in 2013.
The school keeps me informed about my son or daughter's academic progress.	These responses seemed to suggest that parents felt informed about how their son or daughter was progressing academically, a particular focus of the improvement effort during the 2013-2013 school year, resulting in 97% agreement in the spring of 2013, up from 88% the previous year. The scores slipped a little in 2014 with 94% of parents or guardians in agreement with the statement. Parents generally feel that the school kept them in the loop.
The school communicates with parents about student's behavioral choices.	Across all three years, there was agreement that the school communicates with parents going from 89% agreement in 2012 to 94% agreement in 2013 and 2014. This survey data seemed to suggest that the school communicated regularly with parents over all three years, with growth in the 2012-2013 school year.
The school makes sure to accommodate family schedules, language differences, or any other needs when holding a meeting for parents	The best results were in the spring of 2013 when 93% of parents indicated that the agreed with this statement, with 44% of those parents strongly agreeing. In 2012, only 85% agreed and in 2014, 91% agreed. This trend is promising.
I (parents) feel welcome at my child's school.	In the spring of 2013, half of the parents strongly agreed, slightly down in 2014. Generally, 6-7% of parents did not feel welcome at the school.

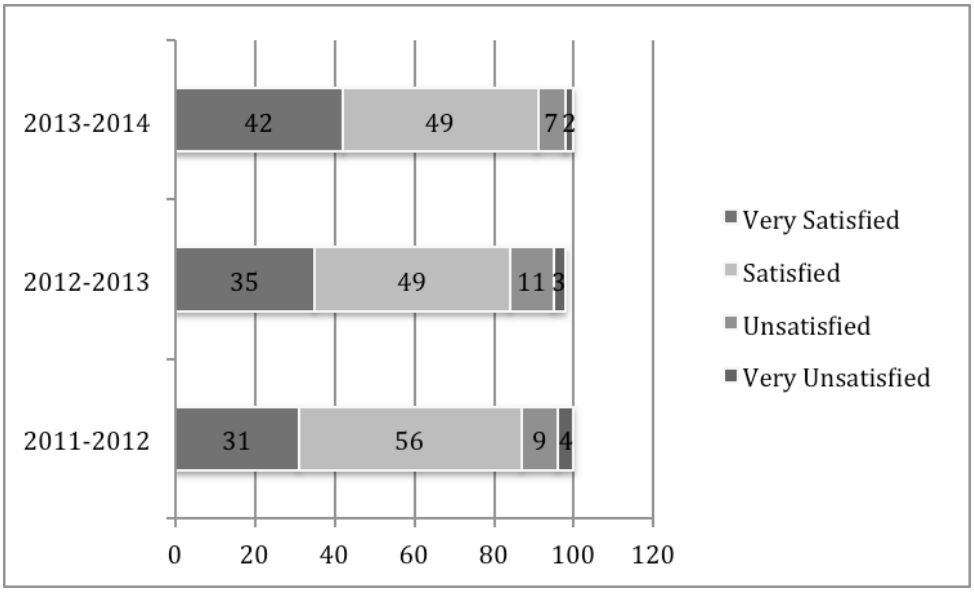
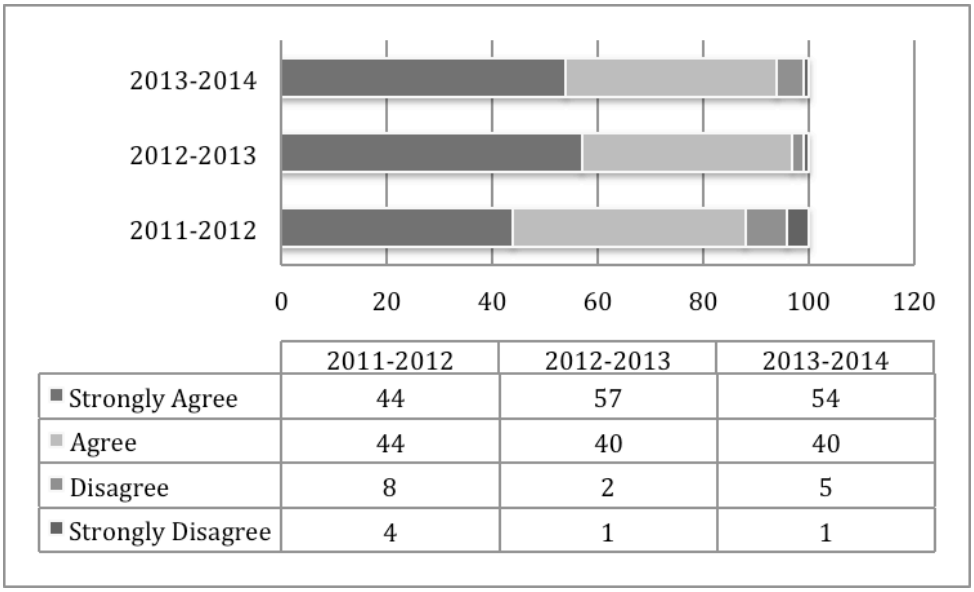
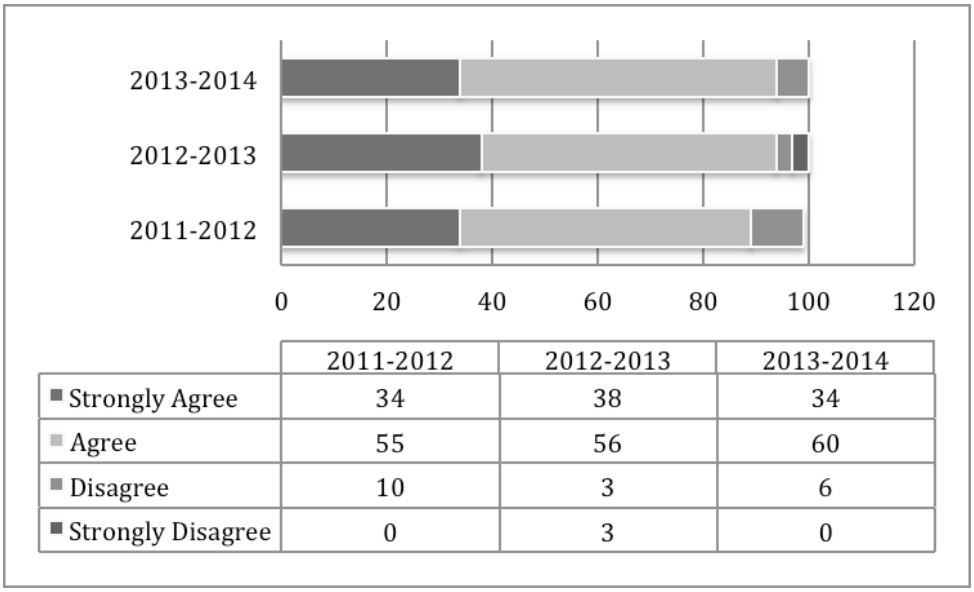


Figure J45. Created using parent City Survey Data in response the statement: How satisfied are you with the education your child has received this year. (2012, 2013, 2014)



	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Strongly Agree	44	57	54
Agree	44	40	40
Disagree	8	2	5
Strongly Disagree	4	1	1

Figure J46. Created using parent City Survey Data in response the statement: The school keeps me informed about my child's academic progress.



	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Strongly Agree	34	38	34
Agree	55	56	60
Disagree	10	3	6
Strongly Disagree	0	3	0

Figure J47. Created using teacher City Survey Data in response the statement: My school communicates effectively with parents regarding students' behavior.

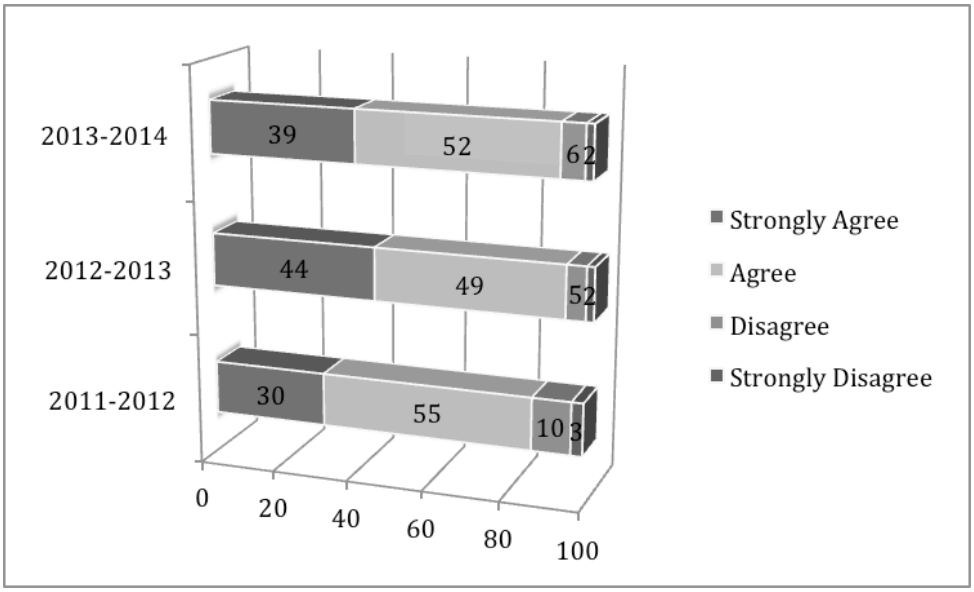
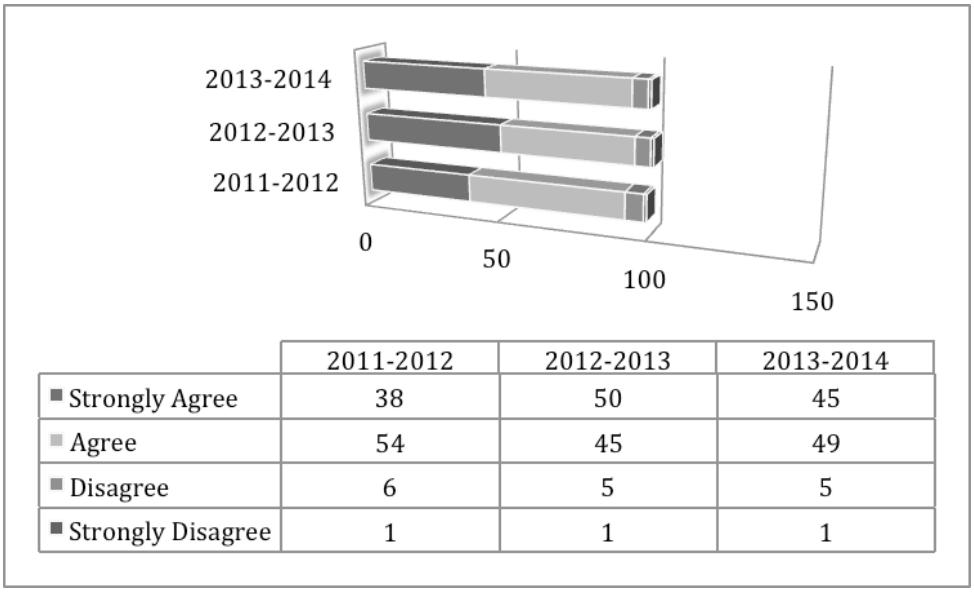


Figure J48. Created using parent City Survey Data in response the statement: The school makes it easy for parents to attend meetings by holding them at different times of day, providing an interpreter, or in other ways.



	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Strongly Agree	38	50	45
Agree	54	45	49
Disagree	6	5	5
Strongly Disagree	1	1	1

Figure J49. Created using parent City Survey Data in response the statement: I feel welcome in my child's school.

Appendix K
Chi Square Contingency Tables

Table K1

Reponses to "*Overall, my professional development experiences this school year have been sustained and coherently focused, rather than short-term and unrelated.*

		Before the Grant		After the grant	Row Total
Agreement	Observed	16	Observed	29	45
	Expected	19.6	Expected	25.4	
	$(O-E)^2/ E$	(0.66)		(0.51)	
Disagreement	Observed	11	Observed	6	17
	Expected	7.4	Expected	9.6	
	$(O-E)^2/ E$	(1.75)		(1.35)	
Column Total	Total	27	Total	35	62 (Grand total)

Note. The Chi-square statistic is 4.27. The p value is 0.04. The result is significant at $p< 0.05$.

Table K2

Reponses to "Overall, my professional development experiences this school year have provided me with content support in my subject area.

	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14		Row total
Agreement	Observed	8	Observed	21	Observed	22	51
	Expected	13.8	Expected	17.76	Expected	20.06	
	$(O-E)^2/ E$	(2.04)		(0.59)		(0.19)	
Disagreement	Observed	15	Observed	10	Observed	13	38
	Expected	9.82	Expected	13.24	Expected	14.84	
	$(O-E)^2/ E$	(2.73)		(0.79)		(0.25)	
Column Total	Total	23	Total	31	Total	35	89 (Grand total)

Note: The Chi-square statistic is 6.59. The p value is 0.04. The result is significant at $p< 0.05$

Appendix L
School-level Outcome Data

These data are available on the school's website as part of a report created by the city for each school, that summarizes the school's data, including some of the results of the school survey presented in this study and information from the school quality evaluation, as well as the school-level student learning data. Individual level data was not available but may be made available in the future, in order to explore whether there is any significant difference between the years. The hypothesis for this study is that all of the student outcome data would improve after the implementation of the SIG (2013-2014) and may also have improved the previous year due to the improvement efforts put in place by the leadership team during the 2012-2013 school year.

To help interpret this set of graphs, it is necessary to explain the elements of the graphs. There are two sets of graphs reported for each dependent variable: one set reports the metric for RHS as compared to the city and peer schools and the other set reports the percent of range and progression towards a target metric. The graphs on the left of each set of graphs look at RHS's average or rate as compared to the peer schools and the city. The vertical bar is the value reported for the school of the variable being explored. The number indicated on the bar is the school's numerical value in a percent or score. The light gray bars mark the range, with the lower bar indicating bottom of the range, or the lowest reported metric, and the top gray bar indicating the top of the range, or the highest reported metric. The dark bar shows the average for the comparison group, either peer schools or all city schools. This graph shows you how RHS is doing, while placing the scores in context of other school's in the city, by presenting the average and the range.

The graphs on the right hand side show the percent of the range. These graphs show where the school fails between the top and bottom of the range, calculated by subtracting the bottom of the range from the school's value and dividing that by the difference between the top and bottom of the range. This number is represented as a percent. The colored bar on the side shows whether these score correspond with the city defined categories of not meeting target (red), approaching target (orange), meeting target (bright green), and exceeding target (dark green).

Attendance

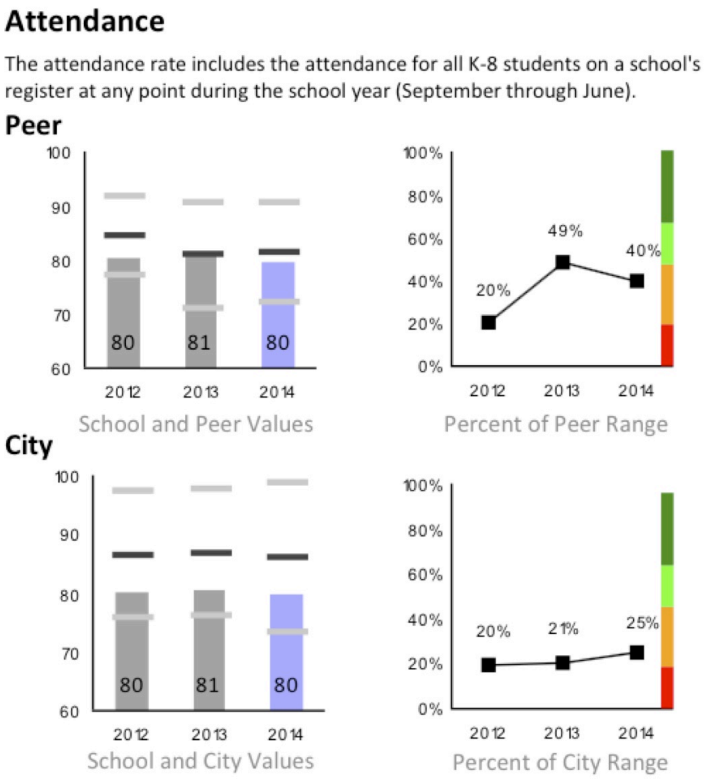


Figure L1. Middle and high school attendance, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014. Adapted from www.city.gov.

Student Learning Gains

On-track to graduate

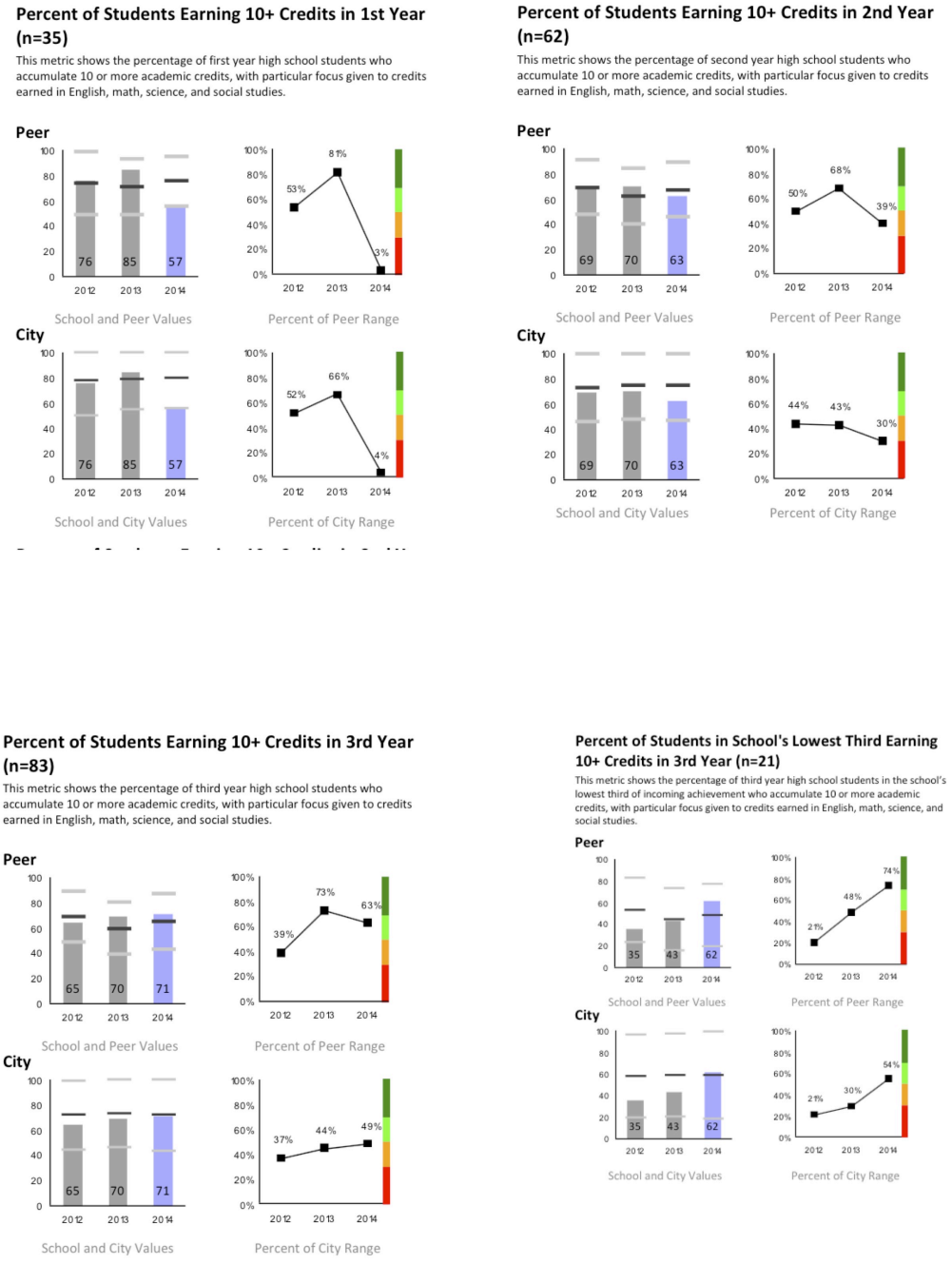


Figure L2. Percent of students earning 10+ credits per year, for the first, second, and third year of high school. Adapted from www.city.gov

Middle school pass rate

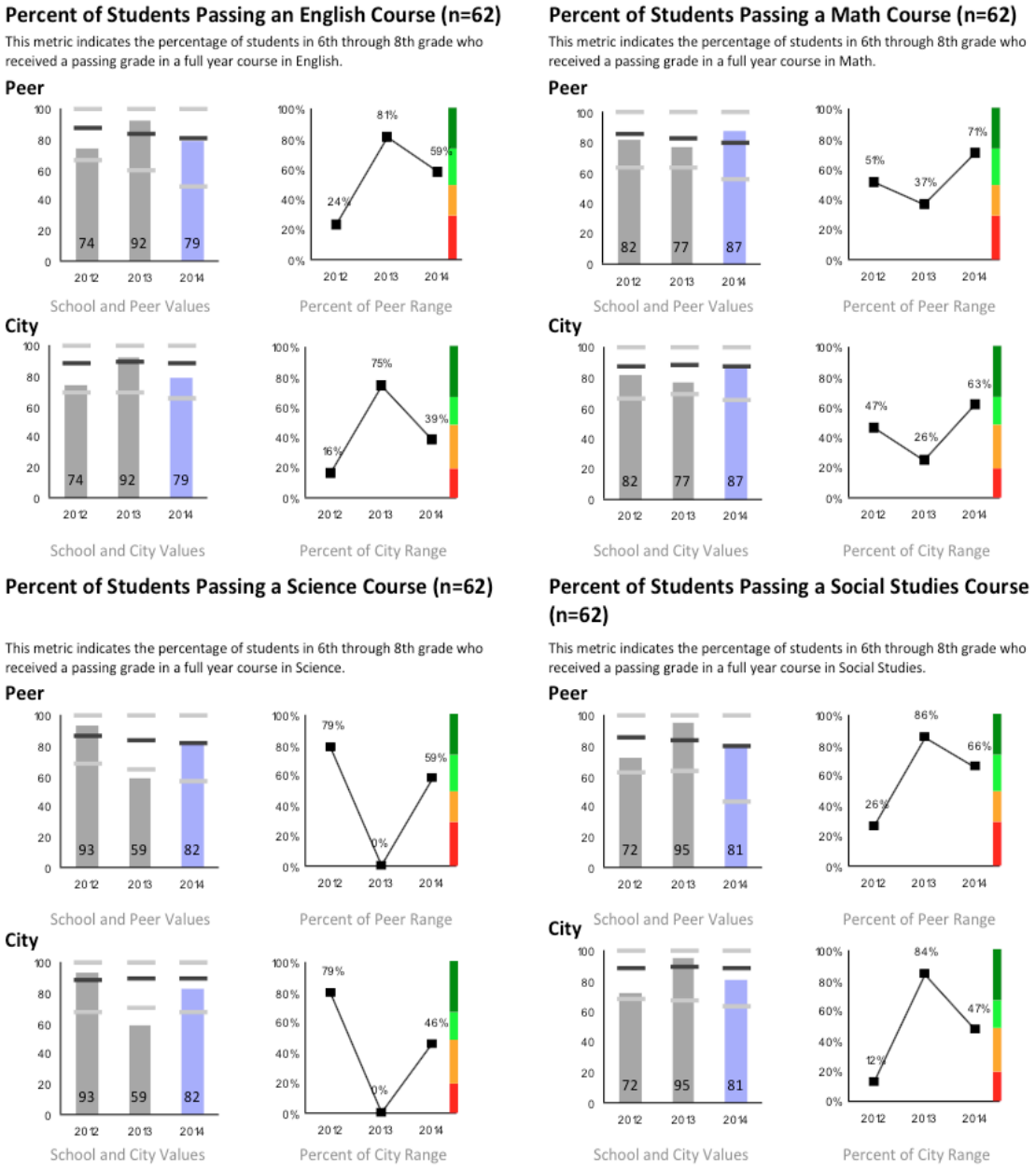


Figure L3. Middle school results with the percent of students passing English, math, science, and social studies.

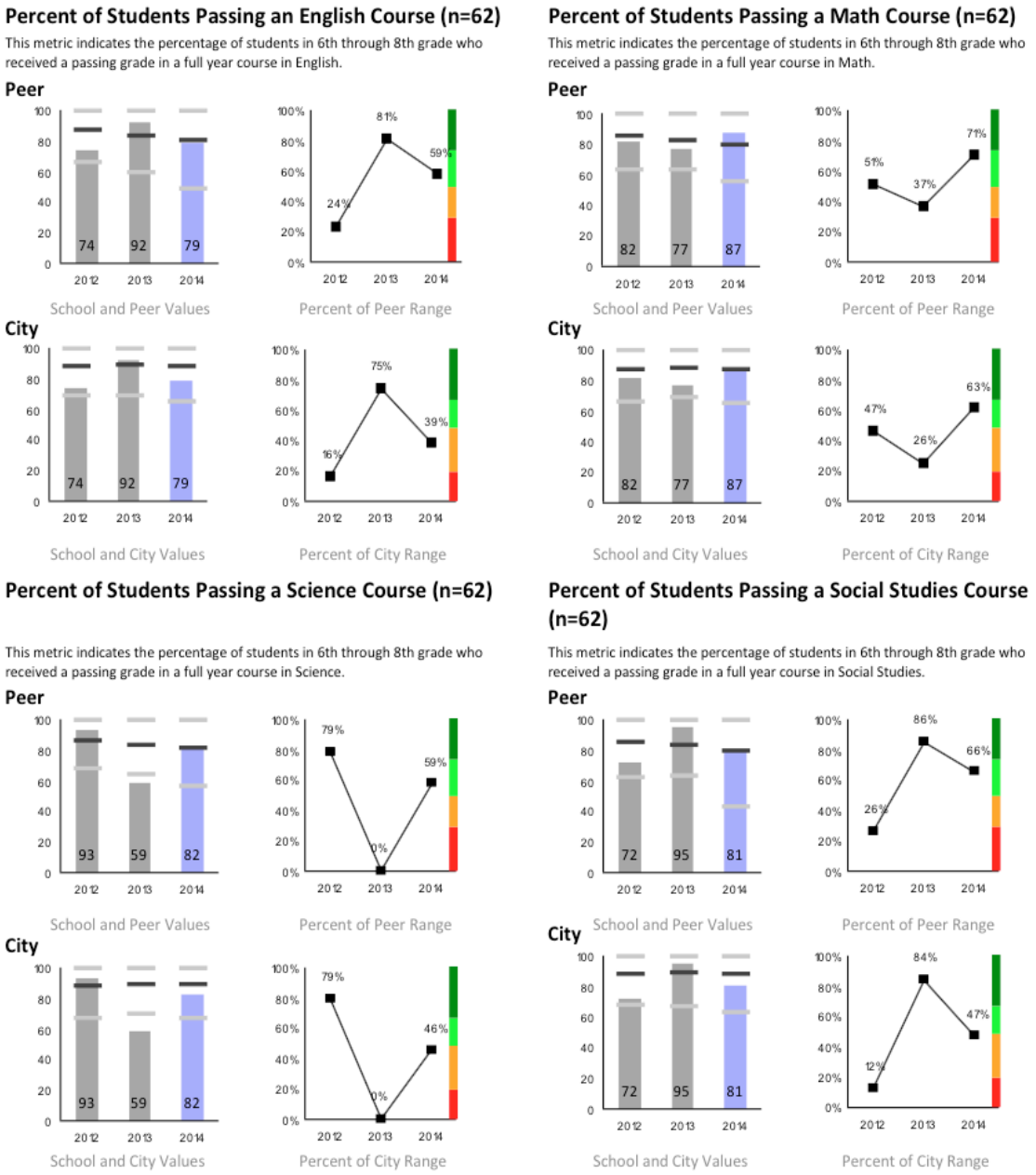


Figure L4. Middle school results with the percent of students passing English, math, science, and social studies.

High School State Exam Pass Rates

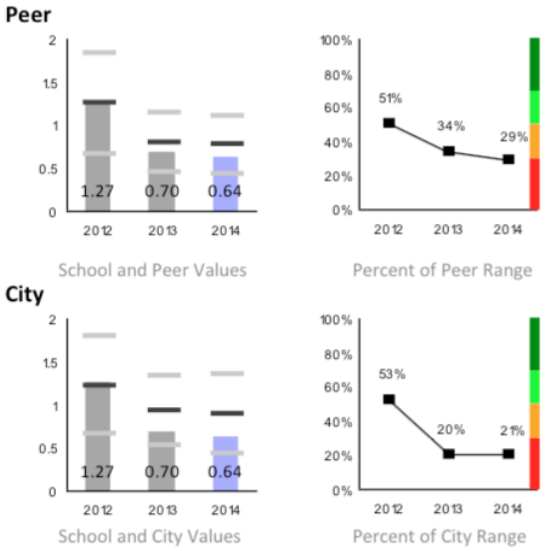


Figure L5. English High School State Exams (n=88),

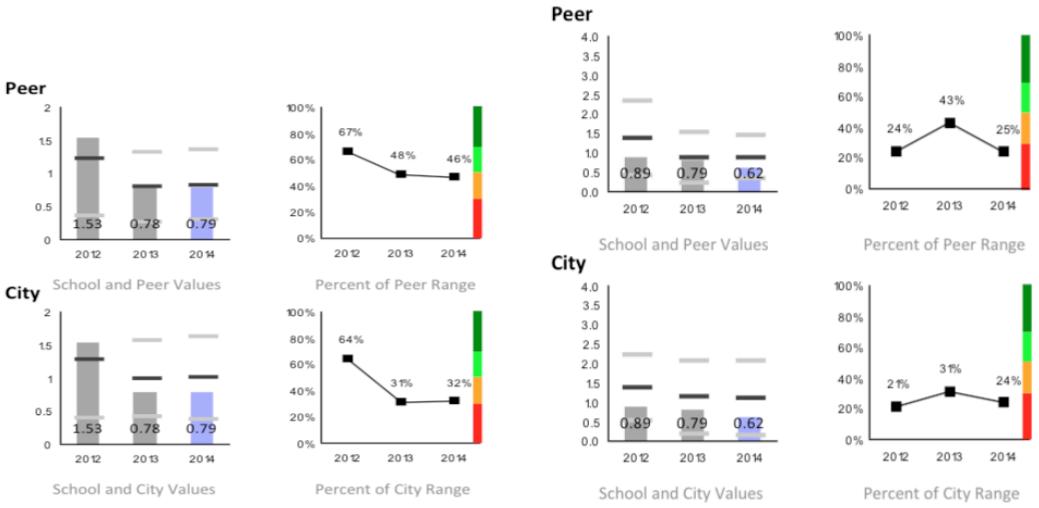


Figure L6. Math (n=110) and Science (n=106) High School State Exams

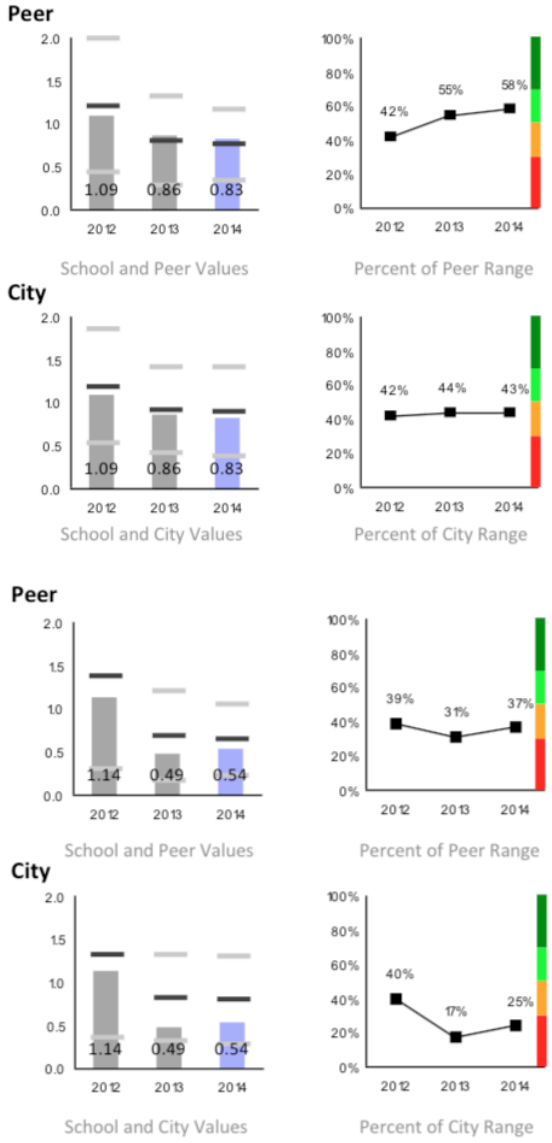


Figure L7. United States (n=88), and World History (n=104) High School State Exams

Middle School State Exam Pass Rates

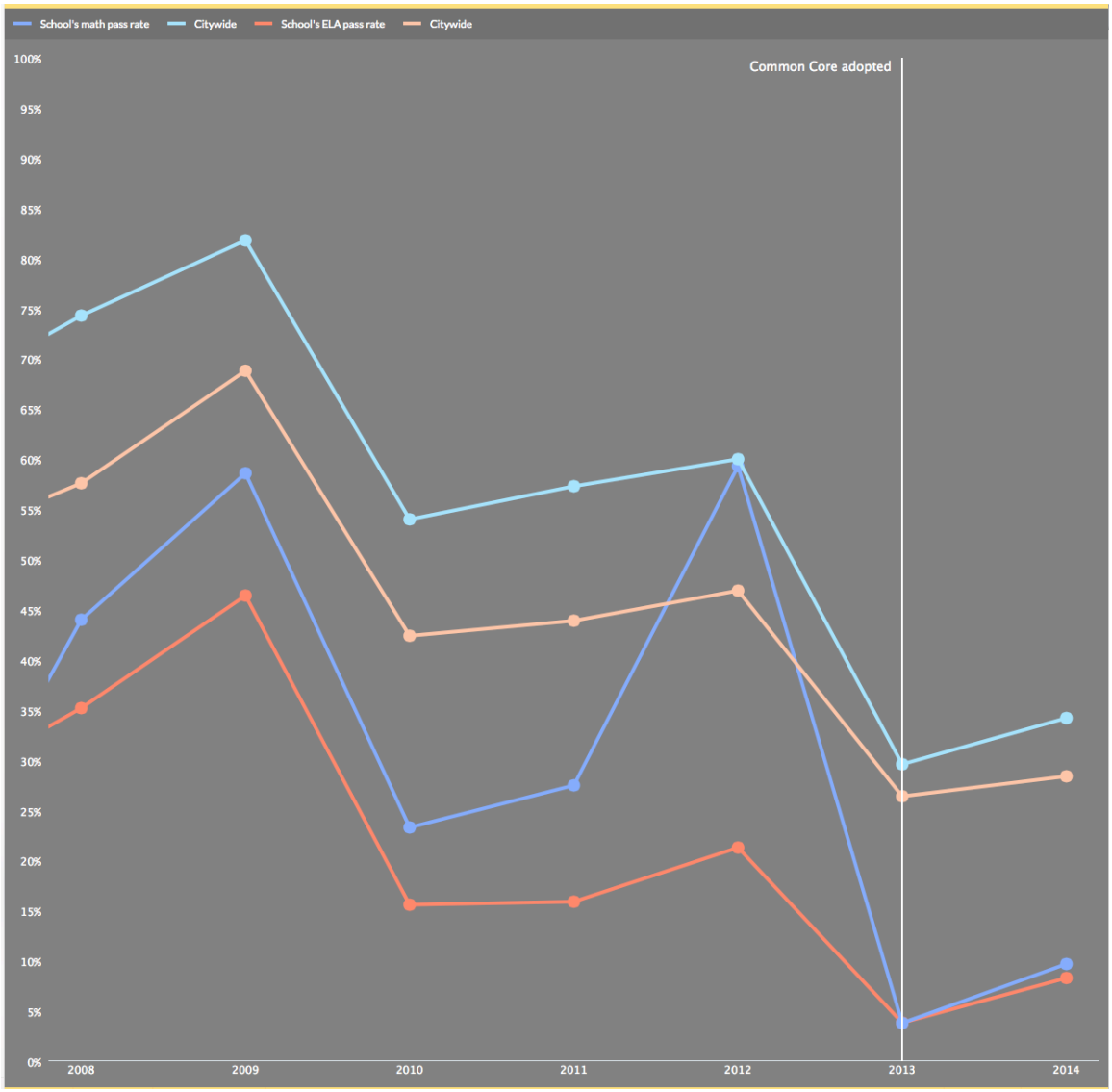


Figure L8. City wide pass rates before and after common core. Adapted from http://www.city.org/story/ using data from State Department of Education via City Department of Education.

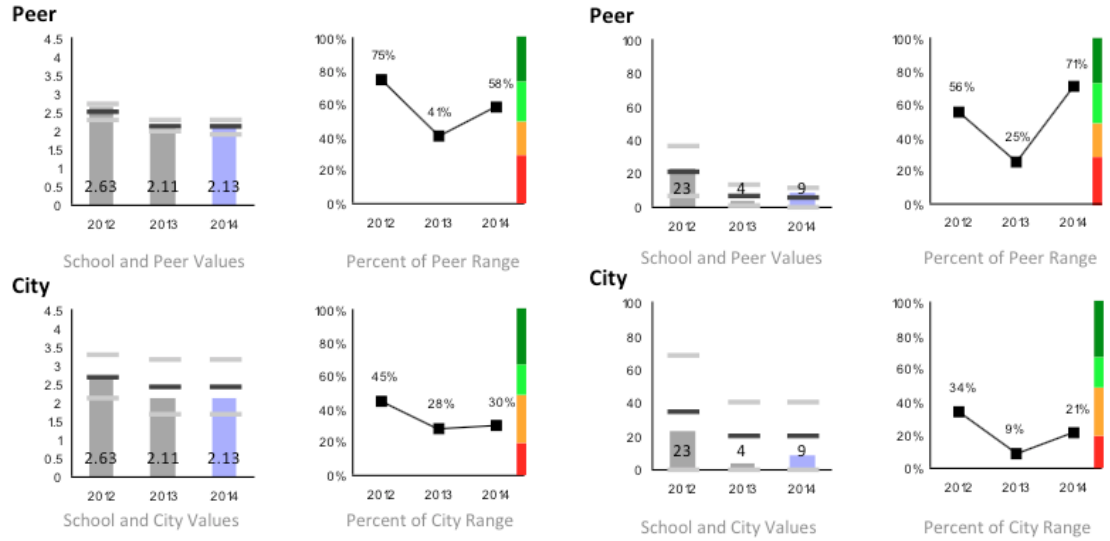


Figure L9. Middle school English language arts 8th grade state exam, Average student proficiency and percent of student at 3 or 4 (n=59)

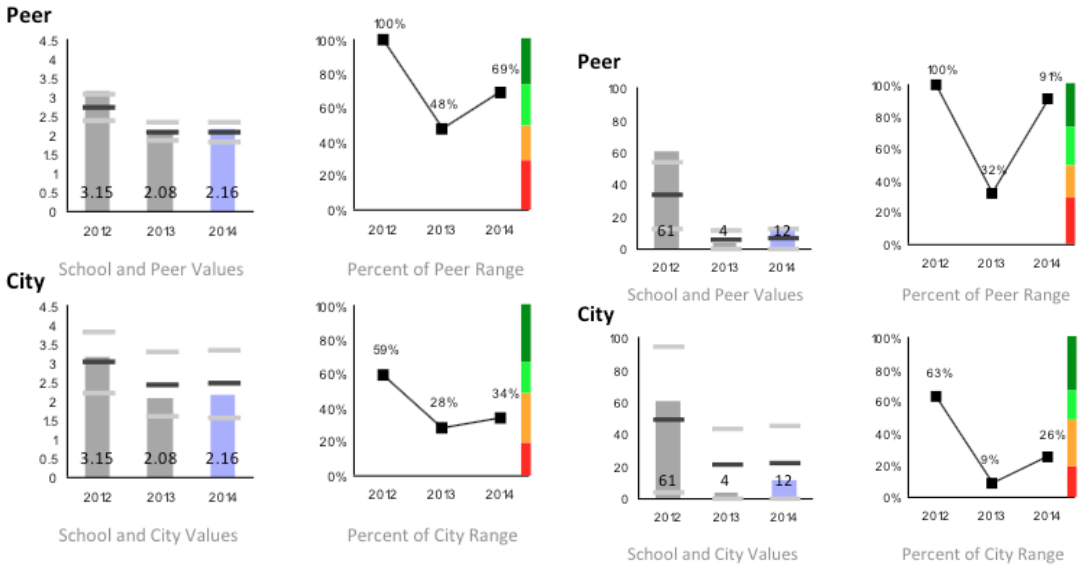


Figure L10. Middle school math 8th grade exam, Average student proficiency and percent of students at 3 or 4 (n=61)

Middle School Academic Growth

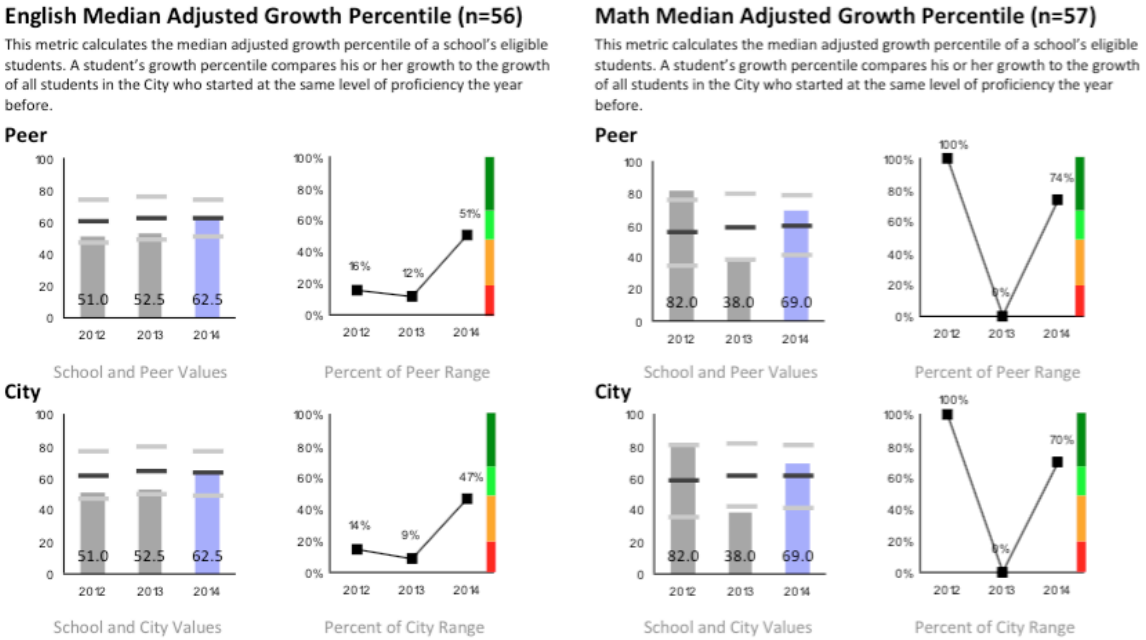


Figure L11. MS English Median Growth Percentile and MS Math Median Growth Percentile