

**Evaluating a Pyramid of Interventions
Whittier Union High School District
2007-08 Evaluation Report**

November 2008

Research conducted by:

**Michael Butler
Yadhira Cardenas-Frometa
Hoky Lin
Mikala Rahn, Ph.D.**

**Public Works, Inc.
90 N. Daisy Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91107
(626) 564-9890
(626) 564-0657 fax**

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I. Introduction and Study Methods

The Need for a Pyramid of Intervention

In an effort to continue to increase the high school graduation rate, increase the proportion of students eligible for transition to a public four-year college or university in California (i.e., A-G eligibility rate), and decrease the percentage of students receiving D and F letter grades, Whittier Union High School District (WUHSD) has continued to develop the Pyramid of Interventions for the third consecutive year. In 2007-08, WUHSD’s five comprehensive high schools expanded on pre-existing programs and courses such as Link Crew and Guided Study and implemented new preventative and intervening measures within the Pyramid that align with the district’s three key measurable outcomes.

These goals complement the district’s commitment to improved student achievement on the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), the chief accountability measure used to calculate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and the California Standards Tests (CSTs) which are used to calculate State accountability under the Academic Performance Index (API).¹ As shown in Table 1 below, the growth API has increased 51 points district-wide since 2005. African-American students and students with disabilities have experienced the most growth (83 and 65 points, respectively), compared to 25 points among Asian students and 39 points growth among English Learners.

Table 1: WUHSD Academic Performance Index Growth Score, 2005-2008

	2005 Growth	2006 Growth	2007 Growth	2008 Growth	Net Change
District-wide	677	684	703	728	51
African American	627	616	664	710	83
Asian	824	839	840	849	25
Hispanic or Latino	660	678	687	716	56
White	735	760	782	791	56
Socio-economically Disadvantaged	639	656	662	690	51
English Learners	N/A	639	646	678	39
Students with Disabilities	N/A	444	466	509	65

Source: California Department of Education

Although progress has occurred, the results of the California Standards Tests (CST) indicate an ongoing population of underperforming students in need of academic intervention. As shown in Tables 2 and 3 below, the proportion of 9th and 10th grade students scoring at the lowest proficiency levels (Far Below Basic and Below Basic) on the English/Language Arts (ELA) CST has declined since 2005. 6% fewer 9th graders scored below grade level; 5% fewer 10th graders scored below grade level.² Whittier High School

¹ The content weighting for the 2008 API in WUHSD was as follows: 27.1% English/Language Arts CST; 10.6% English Language Arts CAHSEE; 17.5% Mathematics CST; 10% Mathematics CAHSEE; 3.4% Science CST; 13.6 Social Science CST).

² Scores of Below Basic or Far Below Basic are used in this report to denote student performance below grade level. In other words, a score of Basic is seen as within the range of “grade level” performance.

was most successful in reducing the percentage of 9th graders scoring below grade level, and California High School has been most successful in reducing the number of 10th graders scoring below grade level. Nonetheless, on average, 20% of WUHSD 9th graders and 29% of 10th graders scored below grade level in 2008.

Table 2: California Standards Test in Grade 9 English/Language Arts (% Far Below Basic and Below Basic), 2005-2008

	2005	2006	2007	2008	Net Change
California HS	25%	26%	27%	17%	-8%
La Serna HS	19%	22%	20%	16%	-3%
Pioneer HS	35%	42%	30%	27%	-8%
Santa Fe HS	25%	27%	20%	19%	-6%
Whittier HS	31%	36%	30%	21%	-10%
WUHSD	26%	30%	25%	20%	-6%

Source: California Department of Education

Table 3: California Standards Test in Grade 10 English/Language Arts (% Far Below Basic and Below Basic), 2005-2008

	2005	2006	2007	2008	Net Change
California HS	36%	31%	33%	21%	-15%
La Serna HS	25%	30%	22%	21%	-4%
Pioneer HS	44%	47%	47%	37%	-7%
Santa Fe HS	31%	40%	30%	25%	-6%
Whittier HS	32%	40%	40%	38%	6%
WUHSD	34%	38%	35%	29%	-5%

Source: California Department of Education

Student scores in Mathematics show that many more students are in need of academic intervention. As shown in Tables 4 below, the proportion of 9th grade students scoring at the lowest proficiency levels (Far Below Basic and Below Basic) on the Algebra I CST has declined since 2005. On average, 8% fewer 9th grade students scored below grade level; 5%. Santa Fe High School was most successful in reducing the percentage of 9th graders scoring below grade level, followed by California High School. Nonetheless, on average, 44% of WUHSD 9th graders scored below grade level in Algebra I in 2008.

Table 4: California Standards Test in Grade 9 Algebra I (% Far Below Basic and Below Basic), 2005-2008

	2005	2006	2007	2008	Net Change
California HS	44%	51%	48%	31%	-13%
La Serna HS	45%	43%	47%	41%	-4%
Pioneer HS	52%	68%	62%	55%	3%
Santa Fe HS	72%	70%	62%	44%	-28%
Whittier HS	55%	54%	55%	51%	-4%
WUHSD	52%	56%	54%	44%	-8%

Source: California Department of Education

Tables 5 displays the proportion of 10th grade students scoring at the lowest proficiency levels (Far Below Basic and Below Basic) on the Geometry CST. This percentage has declined an average of 6% since 2005. Santa Fe High School was most successful in reducing the percentage of 10th graders scoring below grade level, followed by Whittier and California. Nonetheless, on average, 55% of WUHSD 10th graders scored below grade level in Geometry in 2008.

Table 5: California Standards Test in Grade 10 Geometry

(% Far Below Basic and Below Basic), 2005-2008

	2005	2006	2007	2008	Net Change
California HS	47%	33%	44%	40%	-7%
La Serna HS	48%	41%	49%	44%	-4%
Pioneer HS	67%	70%	68%	72%	5%
Santa Fe HS	86%	77%	81%	74%	-12%
Whittier HS	66%	68%	61%	58%	-8%
WUHSD	61%	53%	58%	55%	-6%

Source: California Department of Education

District Improvement Efforts

WUHSD’s “Pyramid of Interventions,” initiated in Fall 2005 as a response to District Program Improvement, is intended to help schools make progress on the three district measurable outcomes, and narrow the gap between special populations (notably English Learners and Students with Disabilities) and school-wide average performance. Drawing on the book *Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn* by Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, Gayle Karhanek, and Richard Dufour and working directly with trainer/consultant Gayle Karhanek, WUHSD is now focused on the book’s key question:

“What happens when, despite our best efforts in the classroom, a student does not learn?”

The Pyramid of Interventions assumes that some activities and services will be directed at all students (i.e., the base of the pyramid), with more specialized and targeted interventions extended to even smaller groups of students with referral to alternative high school and/or special education at the top of the pyramid. As such, WUHSD high schools have developed strategies and structures intended to simultaneously: a) address the need for academic interventions and, b) proactively minimize the number of students requiring intervention programs and services.

While the elements of the “Pyramid” differ slightly at each school, all schools have the following elements:

- **Freshman First Day:** The first day of school for Freshmen only (10th –12th graders begin the following day) where every incoming freshman is provided with an opportunity to receive a comprehensive orientation to their high school including meeting teachers and signing up for extracurricular clubs and activities.
- **Summer Bridge/Guided Study:** A summer program that enrolls incoming 9th graders identified as “at-risk” by their respective middle schools. Summer Bridge participants are then enrolled in a 9th grade Guided Study class focused on study skills and other supports for academic achievement.
- **Link Crew:** A peer mentoring/tutoring program that pairs seniors with incoming freshman. At some sites, Link Crew is split into two groups, each with a coordinator – academic and social.

- **English Standards Review:** A class targeting students who have not passed the English/Language Arts section of the CAHSEE.
- **Math Standards Review:** A class targeting students who have not passed the Mathematics section of the CAHSEE.
- **English Academic Skills:** Academic English Skills serves students who performed below basic/far below basic on English Language Arts CST.

Key Personnel within the Pyramid of Interventions

The “Pyramid of Interventions” is administered by a number of key staff members who are all trained to work with “at-risk” populations. Although the particular duties of each staff member vary from site to site, all have an Intervention Specialist, Link Crew Advisor, Assistant Principal of Curriculum, and Assistant Principal of Guidance.

Intervention Specialist (IS)

All five high schools designated an Intervention Specialist (IS) who oversees the “Pyramid of Interventions.” While the scope of responsibilities differs from school-to-school, common elements of the IS position include the following:

- Oversight of 9th grade transition programs
- Coordination of tutoring and/or study hall for targeted students
- Monitoring grades of students targeted for intervention

Link Crew Advisor (LCA)

As with the Intervention Specialist position, the role and duties of the Link Crew Advisor (LCA) vary from site-to-site. Primary responsibilities of the LCA center on recruiting, training, and coordinating the activities of student Link Crew leaders, upperclassmen that serve as peer mentors to 9th graders.

LCAs were also responsible for selectively choosing and interviewing potential leaders based on multiple categories including teacher recommendations. The LCAs used models from the handbook provided by the *Boomerang Project* to train the student leaders. Throughout the school year, advisors hold meetings with the leaders on a regular basis and supervise Link Crew events and activities.

Assistant Principal of Curriculum (APC)

Across all sites, the Assistant Principal of Curriculum (APC) is responsible for creating the Master Schedule for what teachers will teach including prevention and intervention courses such as Guided Study, SDAIE, ACE, Academic Enrichment, and Academic English Skills.

In general, the APC is responsible for oversight of programming for students targeted for intervention based on academic criteria (e.g., CAHSEE non-passers) and/or special programs (e.g., English Learners). Aside from the responsibility of master scheduling the

intervention courses, the APC must ensure that each course has appropriate curriculum and materials.

Assistant Principal of Guidance (APG)

The Assistant Principal of Guidance (APG) across all sites has tended to be responsible for coordinating support for the “at-risk” student population such as the credit deficient students, dropouts, CAHSEE non-passers, Summer Bridge students, and those with behavior issues. The APG also works with the Intervention Specialist in correctly placing students who lack credits, are receiving multiple Ds and/or Fs or have not passed the CAHSEE.

In addition, the APG is responsible for overseeing the counselors and the Dean of Students who runs the tardy sweeps, which takes place before school and in between periods. The APG coordinates counseling days throughout the year so all students meet with their counselors. Counselors also coordinate new programs such as New Beginnings for substance abuse, Inter-Community Child Guidance for students with emotional problems, and Spirit Family Services for gang prevention.

Counselors

Under the direction of the APG, counselors across all sites work with credit deficient students or other “at-risk” populations. The degree of the counselor-student interventions varies slightly from site to site. Students receiving D/F grades are closely monitored by the counselors and meet with them as often as 2-3 times a week. The counselors work with the students, parents and teachers if need be, to develop a plan to improve their academic performance. Options include adult school and/or nearby community colleges.

In addition to monitoring grades, counselors also coordinate new programs such as New Beginnings for substance abuse, Inter-Community Child Guidance for students with emotional problems, and Spirit Family Services for gang prevention.

Faculty Credentials and Experience

As shown in Table 6, the vast majority of WUHSD teachers are fully credentialed (94%). There are twenty-three university interns making up 4.5% of the teaching staff across the district and only eight (1.6%) emergency credentialed teachers. On average, WUHSD teachers have been teaching 11.2 years. Overall, WUHSD meets NCLB requirements for highly qualified staff. As such, teacher credentialing and experience do not appear to be a barrier to providing prevention and intervention services to underperforming students.

Table 6: 9th WUHSD Staffing Certification, 2007-08

School	# of Teachers	Full	University Intern	District Intern	Emergency	Avg. Yrs. Teaching	# First Yr Teachers
California	120	114 (95%)	7 (6%)	N/A	1 (0.8%)	10.7	8
La Serna	101	97 (96%)	6 (6%)	N/A	N/A	11.5	2
Pioneer	75	68 (91%)	3 (4%)	1 (1.3%)	3 (4%)	12	0
Santa Fe	110	102 (93%)	5 (4.5%)	1 (0.9%)	2 (1.8%)	10.9	7
Whittier	103	99 (96.1%)	2 (1.9%)	1 (1.0%)	2 (1.9%)	10.7	3
Total	509	480 (94%)	23 (4.5%)	3 (0.6%)	8 (1.6%)	11.2	20

Source: California Department of Education

Evaluation Methods

In 2005-06, Public Works, Inc. (PW) served as WUHSD’s external evaluator during a district-wide self-assessment and revision of the district’s Title I Program Improvement (PI) plan. PW conducted both a district and site-based analysis as required to identify areas in need of improvement using a variety of methods and instructions including the District Assistance Survey (DAS) and the Academic Program Survey (APS) developed by the California Department of Education.

In 2006-07 and 2007-08, PW assessed implementation of the Pyramid of Interventions, including analysis of quantitative data on targeted groups of students. In addition, PW jointly (with district staff) facilitated quarterly meetings with the IS and LCA personnel in order to provide evaluative feedback directly to schools during the evaluation process. In terms of quantitative measures in 2007-08, the evaluation focused on:

- Student placement into CAHSEE and other intervention courses such as English Standards Review and Math Standards Review
- Student CST and CAHSEE achievement in targeted intervention courses

Qualitatively, the 2007-08 evaluation focused on collecting data on the development of a “Pyramid of Intervention” at each comprehensive high school. Data collection activities included:

- March - May 2008 focus groups with students enrolled in Guided Study, English Standards Review, Math Standards Review, Link Crew participants, and students in other intervention classes.
- March – May 2008 focus groups with key intervention staff at each site.
- Survey of all 9th grade students conducted in June 2008. The surveys were delivered and collected by PW staff but were distributed to 9th grade teachers by the IS at each site who decided on a particular 9th grade course in which to administer the survey (i.e., English 1). As shown in Table 7 below, 80% of 9th graders across WUHSD completed the survey, although school response rates varied from 53% to 90% at the five high schools.

Table 7: 9th Grade Survey Response Rates, 2007-08

School	9 th grade Enrollment (CDE Count)	Survey Count	Response Rate
California	786	666	85%
La Serna	580	490	84%
Pioneer	455	243	53%
Santa Fe	777	612	79%
Whittier	702*	631	90%
Total	3,300	2,642	80%

Source: Public Works, Inc.

*WUHSD Count

See **Appendix A** for 9th grade survey frequencies for WUHSD.

Report Organization

This evaluation report is organized as follows:

- Section II presents data on the **preventative** actions undertaken by schools to proactively address student needs within a Pyramid of Interventions.
- Section III presents data on the range of **academic intervention** programs and services available to students within a Pyramid of Interventions.
- Section IV presents data from the **survey** of 9th grade students.
- Section V provides **conclusions** on WUHSD's efforts during 2007-08 along with **recommendations** for further improvement.

II. Prevention Services

Freshman First Day

Freshman First Day is the first day of school for freshmen (10th-12th graders begin the following day) dedicated to orienting 9th graders and easing freshmen transition into high school. This comprehensive orientation aims at familiarizing freshmen with the campus, teachers, the chance to sign up for clubs and extracurricular activities, as well as socialize with fellow classmates. Students are made aware of the various academic and support programs offered. This is also the day where 9th graders meet their assigned Link Crew leaders who give campus tours, assist them in finding classes, and encourage their participation in ice breaking activities. Although less of an overt focus, Freshman First Day also includes opportunities to inform freshmen about the requirements needed for high school graduation, familiarize them with the college requirements (A-G courses), and suggest ways to develop good organizational and study habits.

Link Crew

Link Crew is a peer mentoring/tutoring program that pairs upperclassmen with in-coming freshmen. Link Crew was designed to aid freshmen transition into high school and assist them in adjusting to their new environment. Link Crew provides incoming freshmen information on both the educational and social level of school culture. The upperclassmen have the title of Link Crew Leader (or Senator at Whittier High), while the freshmen are known as Link Crew mentees. Leaders serve as models of good students and mentors throughout the school year.

As shown in Table 8, over half (56% – up 7% from last year) of 9th grade survey respondents said that they had been assigned to a Link Crew Leader or Senator. Freshmen were most likely to be assigned to a Link Crew mentor at La Serna and California, with significantly lower percentages of 9th graders assigned to Link Crew at Pioneer and Santa Fe.³

Table 8: Self-Reported Freshman Assignment to Link Crew, 2007-08

California (N=666)	La Serna (N=490)	Pioneer (N=243)	Santa Fe (N=612)	Whittier (N=631)	Overall (N=2,642)
81%	74%	20%	28%	53%	56%

Source: Public Works, Inc.

It is important to note that Link Crew is built-in to the schedule for nearly all freshmen at La Serna; it occurs during the first 30 minutes of lunch Monday-Thursday in a classroom, called Advisory.

Selection of Leaders

Link Crew leaders were mostly 11th and 12th grade students recommended by teachers who believed they would demonstrate an ability to balance academic and social involvement. The application process at all five high schools differed slightly. However, they all require a

³ Note: La Serna was the one school in the second year of Link Crew during 2006-07.

written essay detailing why they are interested in joining Link Crew; an interview; a minimum GPA; and participation in mandatory summer training before the beginning of the school year. Interested students must show good academic standing as well as demonstrate involvement in the school community.

Training

Training took place over a course of two or three days during the summer given by either Link Crew coordinators or advisors. Both California and Whittier based their training on models from the handbook *Boomerang Project*. During this time, leaders exercise a mock Freshman First Day with a run-through of all planned activities and are also given the names of their mentees along with telephone numbers. Link Crew Leaders were assigned to a small group of 9th grade students, usually around 7-11 mentees.

Expectations

Leaders were expected to provide their mentees with academic and social support throughout the school year. Some important obligations included helping freshmen feel comfortable; keeping them on track by avoiding bad influences; encouraging them to participate in extra-curricular activities; and most importantly, motivating freshmen to perform well academically. Leaders are expected to meet with their freshman frequently throughout the school year (particularly quarters 1-3) to guide them academically, inform them of social events and encourage their attendance at such events. Leaders also planned social activities with their group throughout the year.

Mentees were expected to look to their leaders as role models and a source of educational information. Freshmen would contact their mentors for academic help, or were directed to the most suitable source. They were expected to also discuss their plans for graduation and goals beyond high school.

Prevention Programs

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) targets undermotivated and underperforming students who are unlikely to pursue postsecondary education. Three of the five WUHSD comprehensive high schools have implemented AVID at their sites; Pioneer, Santa Fe (recognized model program), and Whittier (see Table 9 below). Research has shown that well-behaved, C-average students from low-income families tend to receive the least attention from teachers and school counselors, and enroll in less demanding courses that do not prepare them to enter four-year colleges. AVID provides these students with a college preparatory program that relies on teacher professional development, a rigorous course of study, and the use of college students as tutors and role models. The program serves all students, regardless of their ethnicity or socioeconomic status, but it focuses on low-income students who are first in their families to have the opportunity to attend college. AVID is also strong in building personalization amongst staff members and students. Students participating in AVID tend to feel more connected to staff members and school at large.

Table 9: AVID Participation by School, 2007-08

School	AVID Enrollment Fall '07			AVID Enrollment Spring '08		
	9 th	10 th	11 th	9 th	10 th	11 th
California ⁴	0	0	0	0	0	0
La Serna	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pioneer	37	47	27	45	47	28
Santa Fe	77	70	65	78	65	66
Whittier	30	31	25	28	29	23
TOTAL	144	148	117	151	141	117

Source: WUHSD EADMS

Global Issues

La Serna and Pioneer High Schools have a 9th grade Global Issues course. While the course has been at La Serna for some years, 2007-08 was the first year of the course at Pioneer. At La Serna, students develop ELA skills, get an introduction to World Civilization, and cover Geography standards. Monday-Thursday students learn curriculum and Fridays are tutorials where students choose what they need the most help with. For low-performing students the Global Issues coordinator gathers information on their grades and assigns them a peer tutor if needed.

At Pioneer, Global Issues is a semester 9th grade course which incorporates Geography concepts used to prepare students for 10th grade World Civilization. Global Issues serves students who are not in Academic Community for Enrichment (ACE) or another intervention course and those who perform Basic on the CST. Global Issues has a peer-mentoring component and each class has about 3-5 mentors. Peer mentors serve as an academic and personal support system. They participate in class lessons/activities and help students learn and practice different material such as poetry. Along with assisting each student academically, peer mentors inform 9th graders about schools, colleges, and upcoming related events. They also monitor freshmen grades by doing a grade check every week. Global Issues students get progress reports on Mondays and their teachers sign and complete them throughout the week and turn them in on Friday. A structured course outline has not yet been defined and is currently being taught using AVID and other prevention/intervention strategies. A detailed course outline will be completed before the end of Summer 2008 to be implemented in Fall 2008.

⁴ Academic Enrichment Math and English at CHS are substituted for Guided Study. This total enrollment can be found in the CST ELA and Math Intervention Participation tables.

III. Academic Intervention Services

This section of the report provides a description and data related to intervention programs/services offered in WUHSD during 2007-08.

Academic Tutoring

Tutorial periods were available to students at all five district comprehensive high schools (see Table 10). The structure of tutorial varies from school site to school site, however, all serve to improve the achievement of struggling students and target students with poor grades.

Table 10: Description of Tutorial Services by School

Characteristic	School				
	*California	La Serna	Pioneer	Santa Fe	Whittier
Days offered	5 days/week	4 days/week	4 days/week	2 days/week	4 days/week
Number of minutes	27 minutes, before lunch	30 minutes, before lunch	20 minutes, at end of each period	55 minutes before school	20 minutes, at end of each period
Criteria used	Poor attendance, BB/FBB on CST, D/F grades	2 D’s, 1 F or < 2.6 GPA	D/F grade	1-3 F’s	Teacher Recommends
Tutorial size/ratio	Varies	10-12	Varies	Varies	10-12
Staffing	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher

*California High School has a daily intervention that serves as tutorial. Students with passing grades (A, B, or C) and good attendance qualify for an extended lunch and are exempt from the intervention period.

Summer Bridge

Summer Bridge is a program for incoming 9th graders, identified by their middle schools, which either did not graduate from middle school and/or are low-achieving (i.e., CST scores that were Far Below Basic and Below Basic). These students are enrolled into the Summer Bridge program after 8th grade at the high school they will be attending in the fall. The focus is primarily on addressing basic reading and math skills and providing student with study skills needed for the transition to the high school environment.

Slightly more than half (55%) of 9th graders self-reported attendance to Summer Bridge or Summer School in 2007 (see Table 11). Whittier High School 9th graders were more likely to attend Summer Bridge/School (58%) while students at La Serna (50%) were least likely to attend.

Table 11: Self-Reported Freshman Attendance to Summer Bridge/Summer School, 2007-08

California (N=666)	La Serna (N=490)	Pioneer (N=243)	Santa Fe (N=612)	Whittier (N=631)	Overall (N=2,642)
56%	50%	52%	55%	58%	55%

Source: Public Works, Inc.

Guided Study

Guided Study is a course targeting 9th (and some 10th graders) that provides a directed study-hall environment focused on skill building, with on-going monitoring of student progress in regular course work. Guided Study also involves students in more regular counseling interactions. As shown in Table 12, approximately 300 students at four of the five high schools in WUHSD were enrolled in Guided Study during 2007-08. Based on focus groups with the students enrolled in the Guided Study course, most students appreciated the extra attention and personalized academic assistance. Many students commented that they were more motivated to complete homework assignments and were better attuned to their academic progress and grades due to participation in Guided Study. Many Guided Study students also cited benefits in terms of organizational skills/time management due to access to peer mentors.

Table 12: Guided Study Participation, 2007-08

School	Guided Study Enrollment Fall '07			Guided Study Enrollment Spring '08		
	9 th	10 th	11 th	9 th	10 th	11 th
California	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
La Serna	34	19	N/A	46	N/A	N/A
Pioneer	23	N/A	N/A	21	N/A	N/A
Santa Fe	64	54	26	62	51	19
Whittier	99	N/A	N/A	104	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	220	73	26	233	51	19

Source: WUHSD EADMS *N/A = Not Applicable because not offered at the grade level or school.

As shown in Table 12a, 9th grade Guided Study participants were slightly more likely to show improvement in English/Language Arts (ELA) compared to Mathematics (32% scored better in ELA compared to 27% in Mathematic). Most (49%) Guided Study participants remained at the same proficiency level from 8th to 9th grade in ELA, compared to only 37% in Mathematics. Indeed, more than one-third (35%) of Guided Study participants declined in Mathematics performance between 8th and 9th grade. In particular, students who had previously scored Basic in Mathematics as 8th graders were most likely to experience a decline to Below Basic.

Table 12a: 9th Grade Guided Study Participants in 2007-08 (N=218)

CST Proficiency Level	2007 8 th Grade ELA CST	2008 9 th Grade ELA CST	Net Change	Summary of Change	
	Advanced	1%		4%	3%
Proficient	15%	17%	2%	Total % Scored Same	49%
Basic	45%	42%	-3%	Total % Scored Worse	19%
Below Basic	26%	27%	1%		
Far Below Basic	13%	10%	-3%		
CST Proficiency Level	2007 8 th Grade Math CST	2008 9 th Grade Math CST	Net Change	Summary of Change	
	Advanced	0%		0%	0%
Proficient	11%	9%	-2%	Total % Scored Same	37%
Basic	31%	26%	-5%	Total % Scored Worse	35%
Below Basic	39%	47%	8%		
Far Below Basic	19%	19%	0%		

Source: EADMS and California Department of Education

Academic Community for Enrichment (ACE)

In addition to Guided Study, California and Pioneer offered the Academic Community for Enrichment (ACE) program. The ACE program is intended to help 9th grade students transition successfully into high school as well as stay on-track for graduation. Students in ACE had been identified as "at risk" middle school students and most attended Summer Bridge programs prior to beginning as freshmen in WUHSD.

Pioneer High School (PHS) redesigned their ACE/Guided Study program for its second year and instituted a Global Issues course. Guided Study, Academic English Skills (formerly Reading), and English I/Algebra I core classes all fall under ACE, which is assigned a particular counselor. Student placement in ACE/Guided Study is based on Below Basic performance on the CST, poor 8th grade grades, non-graduation/promotion in 8th grade, and Summer Bridge Program attendance. Approximately 90% of Summer Bridge participants were enrolled in Guided Study this year. ACE is open to all students, however, those designated as English Learners and Special Education participate in other programs that tailor to their needs. Currently, there are forty 9th graders participating in ACE and next year, the current 9th graders with multiple Ds/Fs will be placed in a 10th grade Guided Study course, currently only offered to 9th graders.

ACE has been at California HS for two years and is very similar to the program at Pioneer except that CHS does not have Guided Study. There are about 40 students in the program who are blocked in English and Math classes and share the same teachers. At CHS, ACE students and teachers are closely connected and one student referred to his peers and teachers as a "family." ACE students were especially positive about the benefits of an assigned counselor, as well as the benefits of smaller classes where instruction could be personalized. The ACE students felt that teachers cared about them, tried to build good adult-student relationships, and were very committed. Students also enjoyed the interactive nature of classroom assignments and focus on homework assistance.

Unfortunately, the evaluation was unable to extract data on students enrolled in ACE because participation in ACE is not keyed to a specific course in the EADMS system.

Organized Academic Support in School (OASIS)

OASIS at La Serna High School, modeled after Sandi Millman's Mentor Program at Stevenson High School, focuses on engaging 10th graders who have not had much academic success. In 2007-08, there were 38 students (one course section) involved in the program based on previous academic performance and their potential to achieve in OASIS. Students have two OASIS classes daily, starting with an OASIS Skills class in the morning (either 1st or 2nd period) and receive instruction in study skills, accountability, time management, goal setting, note taking, character building, and self-esteem development. During the afternoon class (4th or 5th period), students get help from academic mentors, outstanding junior and senior students who have volunteered to help guide, mentor, and tutor them. There is a weekly schedule that specially outlines what students will do during each OASIS period everyday of the week.

In addition, students and mentors are divided into teams, which compete each month, accumulating points earned on OASIS students’ weekly progress reports. Each week, OASIS students have their teachers complete a progress report, rating them on attendance, tardiness, behavior, effort, and class work that has been turned in. For each “Outstanding” score students receive two points and for each “Satisfactory” score, students receive one point. Individual and team scores are tabulated each week and totaled at the end of each month. The teams from each of the two classes with the highest point totals are declared champions for that month and earn prizes, rewards for their hard work and outstanding performance. The results of each month are delineated at the end of the month in the monthly OASIS newsletter (*OASIS Breeze...It’s Not a Mirage*).

As shown in Table 13, participation in OASIS tended to produce more benefits in Mathematics among participating 10th graders. More than one-third (41%) experienced a positive change in CST proficiency level in Mathematics from 9th to 10th grade. Most typically, OASIS participants improved from Far Below Basic to Below Basic in Mathematics. By contrast, only 12% of OASIS participants showed improvement in ELA. Indeed, one-third (33%) declined in CST performance level from 9th to 10th grade.

Table 13: 10th Grade OASIS Participants in 2007-08 (N=38)

CST Proficiency Level	2007 9 th Grade ELA CST	2008 10 th Grade ELA CST	Net Change	Summary of Change	
Advanced	6%	6%	0%	Total % Scored Better	12%
Proficient	11%	6%	-5%	Total % Scored Same	55%
Basic	42%	34%	-8%	Total % Scored Worse	33%
Below Basic	31%	34%	3%		
Far Below Basic	11%	20%	9%		
CST Proficiency Level	2007 9 th Grade Math CST	2008 10 th Grade Math CST	Net Change	Summary of Change	
Advanced	0%	0%	0%	Total % Scored Better	41%
Proficient	6%	5%	-1%	Total % Scored Same	55%
Basic	11%	18%	7%	Total % Scored Worse	5%
Below Basic	36%	68%	32%		
Far Below Basic	47%	9%	-38%		

Source: EADMS and California Department of Education

English/Language Arts Intervention Courses

To address the specific ELA needs of underperforming students, four schools in WUHSD offer an Academic Enrichment course (primarily for 9th graders) and all five WUHSD schools offer a course entitled Academic English Skills (primarily for 9th graders but with a concentration of 10th graders at selected schools)(see Table 14).

Table 14: ELA Intervention Course Participation

	9 th Grade		10 th Grade		11 th Grade		Total	
	F '07	S '08	F '07	S '08	F '07	S '08	F '07	S '08
Enrolled in Academic Enrichment ELA (n=4 schools)	201	192	3	4	6	8	218	204
Enrolled in Academic English Skills (n=5 schools)	323	312	67	83	13	14	403	409

Source: WUHSD EADMS and California Department of Education

As shown in Tables 14a and 14b, 9th grade students enrolled in these ELA intervention courses showed similar improvements. From 8th to 9th grade, 39% of the Academic Enrichment participants increased a CST proficiency level compared to 38% of Academic English Skills participants. Gains were concentrated among students who had scored Far Below Basic or Below Basic as 8th graders (15% fewer students scored in these levels as 9th graders). Given the number of underperforming students in WUHSD in ELA, it is curious to not that nearly half of the students enrolled in these two courses had scored Basic or Proficient as 8th graders. Nonetheless, 8% more of these students scored Proficient as 9th graders compared to their performance in 8th grade.

Table 14a: 9th Grade Academic Enrichment Participants in 2007-08 (N=191)

CST Proficiency Level	2007 8 th Grade ELA CST	2008 9 th Grade ELA CST	Net Change	Summary of Change	
				Total % Scored Better	Total % Scored Worse
Advanced	0%	0%	0%	39%	
Proficient	3%	11%	8%	47%	
Basic	46%	53%	7%		13%
Below Basic	36%	26%	-10%		
Far Below Basic	15%	10%	-5%		

Source: EADMS and California Department of Education

Table 14b: 9th Grade Academic English Skills Participants in 2007-08 (N=308)

CST Proficiency Level	2007 8 th Grade ELA CST	2008 9 th Grade ELA CST	Net Change	Summary of Change	
				Total % Scored Better	Total % Scored Worse
Advanced	N/A	N/A	N/A	38%	
Proficient	3%	11%	8%	47%	
Basic	46%	53%	7%		15%
Below Basic	36%	26%	-10%		
Far Below Basic	15%	10%	-5%		

Source: EADMS and California Department of Education

Tables 14c displays 10th grade students enrolled in Academic English Skills. From 9th to 10th grade, 28% of participants increased a CST proficiency level. Gains were concentrated among students who had scored Below Basic as 9th graders (24% fewer students scored in these levels as 10th graders presumably most moving to Basic). However, 10% more of these students scored Far Below Basic as 10th graders. In addition, given the number of underperforming students in WUHSD in ELA, it is curious to not that 34% of the students enrolled in Academic English Skills as 10th graders had scored Basic or Proficient as 9th graders. The proportion scoring Proficient from 9th to 10th grade declined 2% among these participants.

Table 14c: 10th Grade Academic English Skills Participants in 2007-08 (N=82)

CST Proficiency Level	2007 9 th Grade ELA CST	2008 10 th Grade ELA CST	Net Change	Summary of Change	
				Total % Scored Better	Total % Scored Worse
Advanced	0%	0%	0%	28%	
Proficient	7%	5%	-2%	44%	
Basic	27%	43%	16%		28%
Below Basic	56%	32%	-24%		
Far Below Basic	10%	20%	10%		

Source: EADMS and California Department of Education

Mathematics Intervention Courses

To address the specific Mathematics needs of underperforming students, two schools in WUHSD offer specific intervention courses. Introduction to Algebra at Santa Fe High School is a course focused on 9th graders unlikely to succeed in a regular Algebra I course. Math Proficiency Clinic serves both 9th and 10th grade students at California High School (see Table 15).

Table 15: Math Intervention Participation

	9 th Grade		10 th Grade		11 th Grade		Total	
	F '07	S '08	F '07	S '08	F '07	S '08	F '07	S '08
Enrolled in Math Proficiency Clinic (n=1 school)	38	35	68	55	0	0	212	90
Enrolled in Intro to Algebra (n=1 school)	53	59	1	1	0	0	54	60

Source: WUHSD EADMS and California Department of Education

As shown in Tables 15a and 15b, the majority of Math Proficiency Clinic participants improved their Mathematics CST score between 8th and 9th grade (72% showed improvement), or between 9th and 10th grade (56% showed improvement). Improvements were most concentrated in students moving from Below Basic to Basic (9th graders) or from Far Below Basic to Below Basic (9th and 10th graders).

Table 15a: 9th Grade Math Proficiency Clinic Participants in 2007-08 (N=35)

CST Proficiency Level	2007 8 th Grade Math CST	2008 9 th Grade Math CST	Net Change	Summary of Change	
Advanced	0%	12%	12%	Total % Scored Better	72%
Proficient	6%	32%	26%	Total % Scored Same	25%
Basic	21%	32%	11%	Total % Scored Worse	3%
Below Basic	48%	21%	-27%		
Far Below Basic	24%	3%	-21%		

Source: EADMS and California Department of Education

Table 15b: 10th Grade Math Proficiency Clinic Participants in 2007-08 (N=54)

CST Proficiency Level	2007 9 th Grade Math CST	2008 10 th Grade Math CST	Net Change	Summary of Change	
Advanced	0%	0%	0%	Total % Scored Better	56%
Proficient	0%	10%	10%	Total % Scored Same	38%
Basic	30%	42%	12%	Total % Scored Worse	7%
Below Basic	46%	44%	-2%		
Far Below Basic	24%	4%	-20%		

Source: EADMS and California Department of Education

Table 15c shows similar data for Introduction to Algebra participants. In this course, 55% of students improved a CST proficiency level from 8th to 9th grade. Improvements were widespread occurring among Basic students (18% more Proficient), Below Basic students (17% more scoring Basic), and Far Below Basic (11% fewer) on the Algebra I CST.

Table 15c: 9th Grade Intro to Algebra Participants in 2007-08 (N=58)

CST Proficiency Level	2007 8 th Grade Math CST	2008 9 th Grade Math CST	Net Change	Summary of Change	
				Total % Scored Better	Total % Scored Worse
Advanced	0%	0%	0%	55%	
Proficient	0%	18%	18%	38%	
Basic	18%	35%	17%	6%	
Below Basic	63%	40%	-23%		
Far Below Basic	18%	7%	-11%		

Source: EADMS and California Department of Education

Algebra Intervention at Whittier HS

The Whittier HS Math Department is known in the district for its strategic intervention practices, particularly in Algebra I and Geometry, and students’ decreased failure rates in both subjects. Whittier HS currently has the lowest F rate in math in the district at 4.7%. Ninth grade students who are not passing Algebra I at the first quarter get assigned to new teachers in an exercise known as “the swap.”⁵ If students are still not passing at the semester even after being assigned a new teacher, they get placed in an “Algebra Small Class.” In the “small” class, students continue to learn the same content but with some modifications. The class size is 10-14 students and is much more personalized than the average 9th grade Algebra class. In the “small” class, the student grade is based mostly on assessments (70%) and on homework and quizzes including in-class work (30%).

Tenth and 11th grade Algebra I students also have similar intervention options. They get a new teacher at the first quarter if grades are poor and get placed in a “small” class at the semester. Teachers use 9th grade assessment data and CST data to determine what 10th grade students are struggling with the most and address those topics. Tenth grade “small” class students are expected to know at least 75% of the Algebra I material. Students are also enrolled in Geometry Concepts if they pass Algebra I in 9th grade with a C grade or lower; the course guidelines are modified to meet student needs. Geometry Concepts also focuses on the CAHSEE exam for six weeks prior to the test.

The “small” Algebra I class structure serves the low skilled students, creates hope and growth, and maintains learning throughout the year. The “small” class teachers are rotated every year so all teachers within the department have an opportunity to work with struggling students, in particular the more experienced teachers. Currently, the Algebra I small class teacher is highly qualified, certificated in math, has 10 years teaching experience, and is very committed to student success.

Unfortunately, the evaluation was unable to extract data on students participating in Whittier High School’s “Algebra Swap” because participation in this intervention is not keyed to a specific course in the EADMS system.

⁵ Note: all 9th graders assigned to this intervention scored Far Below Basic or Below Basic in Mathematics on the CST.

Intervention for CAHSEE Non-Passers

English/Language Arts

In fall 2007, there were 181 (Special Education not included) 11th and 12th grade students at WUHSD’s five comprehensive high schools who had not passed the ELA section of CAHSEE (see Table 12). Of these, all were enrolled in English Standards Review (ESR). In spring 2008, there were 125 (Special Education not included) 11th and 12th grade students at WUHSD’s five comprehensive high schools who had not passed CAHSEE ELA. Of these, all were enrolled in ESR.

Table 16: CAHSEE English/Language Arts Intervention Participation

	Fall '07	Spring '08
Not Passed CAHSEE ELA		
11th Grade	140	101
12th Grade	41	24
Total	181	125
Enrollment in ESR (n=5 schools)		
11th Grade	269	166
12th Grade	116	45
Total	385	211

Source: WUHSD (Special Education not included)

The academic work in ESR typically included daily writing exercises (i.e. essays, journaling, news article responses and free response write-ups), grammar exercises followed by tests, literature reading assignments individually and/or in groups, and practice tests. Students particularly liked the small class size and stated that it helped them focus on the class material. They also commented on the classes being staffed with enthusiastic and motivated teachers.

As shown in Table 16a, an average of 62% of ESR participants passed the ELA CAHSEE in 2007-08. ESR participants in grade 11 were slightly more likely to pass compared to seniors.

Table 16a: ELA CAHSEE Pass Rate, 2007-08

Grade	# Enrolled in ESR in Fall 2007	# Passed ELA CAHSEE in 2007-08	CAHSEE ELA Pass Rate
11 th Grade	269	171	64%
12 th Grade	116	65	56%
Total (Combined)	385	236	62%

Source: WUHSD EADMS

Mathematics

In fall 2007, there were 149 (Special Education not included) 11th and 12th grade students at WUHSD’s five comprehensive high schools who had not passed the Mathematics section of CAHSEE (see Table 17). Of these, all were enrolled in Math Standards Review (MSR). In spring 2008, there were 87 (Special Education not included) 11th and 12th grade students at WUHSD’s five comprehensive high schools who had not passed CAHSEE Math. Of these, all were enrolled in MSR.

Table 17: CAHSEE Mathematics Intervention Participation

	Fall '07	Spring '08
Not Passed CAHSEE Math		
11th Grade	129	78
12th Grade	20	9
Total	149	87
Enrollment in MSR (n=5 schools)		
11th Grade	313	165
12th Grade	85	24
Total	398	189

Source: WUHSD (Special Education not included)

The academic work in MSR typically included completion of math packets/worksheets, lectures on different math topics ranging from basic concepts to Algebra and Geometry, textbook work, and math quizzes. Students enrolled in these intervention courses felt that they were better able to grasp Mathematics content due to more personalized attention. The pace of this class is slower than the typical math class and students were very drawn to that.

As shown in Table 17a, an average of 64% of MSR participants passed the Math CAHSEE in 2007-08. MSR participants in grade 11 were more likely to pass compared to 12th graders.

Table 17a: Math CAHSEE Pass Rate, 2007-08

Grade	# Enrolled in MSR in Fall 2007	# Passed Math CAHSEE in 2007-08	CAHSEE Math Pass Rate
11 th Grade	313	211	67%
12 th Grade	85	44	52%
Total (Combined)	398	255	64%

Source: WUHSD EADMS

IV. 9th Grade Student Survey Results

This section of the report provides a description and data from the survey of 9th graders conducted in Spring 2008. Where appropriate, comparisons to 2007 survey results from the prior cohort of freshman are drawn.

Involvement in Freshman First Day

Based on responses to a survey administered to all 9th grade students (see Table 18), the majority of students were pleased with Freshman First Day and its outcomes. It eased the tension and first day jitters commonly felt by students entering high school (79%). It also served as an informational day regarding high school graduation requirements (82% - 4% increase from the previous year), extracurricular activities and clubs students can join (76%), as well as learning about the A-G requirements (70% – 7% increase from previous year). Students at La Serna were most positive (79%) about Freshman First Day and California High students were least positive (64%).

Table 18: Student Perceptions of Freshman First Day, 2007-08

Survey Item	% Agree					Overall (N=2,642)
	California (N=666)	La Serna (N=490)	Pioneer (N=243)	Santa Fe (N=612)	Whittier (N=631)	
Felt comfortable on first day of high school	71%	80%	83%	82%	83%	79%
Learned about clubs and extracurricular activities	70%	80%	78%	77%	80%	76%
Learned about high school graduation requirements	76%	88%	77%	86%	80%	82%
Learned about college requirements (A-G courses)	54%	81%	70%	76%	73%	70%
Learned about organizational and study habits	51%	68%	58%	58%	61%	59%
Overall Average	64%	79%	73%	76%	75%	73%

Source: Public Works, Inc.

Personalization

Students at the five WUHSD comprehensive high schools reported on the degree of personalization during their 9th grade year. As shown in Table 19 below, students at La Serna were most positive about the extent of personalization during their freshman year (75%) while students at California were the least positive (67%).

Based on responses to a survey administered to all 9th grade students (see Table 19), the majority (92% - remained the same from previous year) of students know what they need to do to be a successful student. Seventy-six percent responded that their respective school is very concerned with helping 9th graders adjust to high school. Additionally, almost three-fourths (73% - 1% increase from the previous year) of 9th graders claimed to feel safe when they are at school and 70% (remained the same from previous year) responded that they feel connected to one or more of their teachers. Students were least positive about participation in school activities and/or extracurricular events (57% - 8% decrease from previous year) and connections to a counselor or other adult (49% -1% decrease from previous year).

Table 19: 9th Grade Student Perceptions of Personalization, 2007-08

Survey Item	% Agree					Overall (N=2,642)
	California (N=666)	La Serna (N=490)	Pioneer (N=243)	Santa Fe (N=612)	Whittier (N=631)	
This school is very concerned with helping 9 th graders adjust to high school.	69%	85%	73%	77%	78%	76%
I know what I need to do to be a successful student.	91%	94%	90%	92%	93%	92%
I feel connected to one or more of my teachers.	72%	71%	70%	67%	72%	70%
I feel connected to my counselor or another adult at this school.	49%	53%	56%	45%	46%	49%
I participate in school activities and/or extracurricular events.	55%	66%	53%	53%	58%	57%
I feel safe when I am at school.	67%	81%	72%	74%	73%	73%
Overall Average	67%	75%	69%	68%	70%	70%

Source: Public Works, Inc.

Classroom Experiences

As shown with the data in Table 20, the majority of students were pleased with their overall classroom experiences (80%). Most students surveyed agreed that they know what they need to do to get good grades (95% - 1% increase from previous year). Eighty-three percent (1% increase from previous year) of students surveyed agreed that they usually learn something new each week and 82% (1% increase from previous year) stated that their teachers encourage them to do their best. Freshman were least satisfied with teacher feedback on their classroom performance with only 65% (2% decrease from previous year) stating that they regularly get information on how they are doing in their classes from their teachers.

Table 20: Student Perceptions of Classroom Experiences

Survey Item	% Agree	Overall
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Whittier Union High School District “Pyramid of Interventions” Evaluation Report, 2007-08

	California (N=666)	La Serna (N=490)	Pioneer (N=243)	Santa Fe (N=612)	Whittier (N=631)	(N=2,642)
Know what I need to do to get good grades	94%	95%	93%	96%	96%	95%
Teachers encourage me to do my best	81%	84%	81%	81%	84%	82%
Usually learn something new each week	83%	84%	77%	85%	83%	83%
Regularly get information on how I am doing in my classes from my teachers	62%	69%	76%	61%	66%	65%
Get help from my teachers if I’m having trouble	74%	78%	79%	76%	80%	77%
Teachers respect me and treat me fairly	77%	79%	78%	76%	79%	78%
Teachers have high expectations of me	77%	83%	76%	78%	82%	79%
Overall Average	78%	82%	80%	79%	81%	80%

Source: Public Works, Inc.

As shown in Table 21, a majority (82% - remained the same from previous year) of student survey respondents at all five high schools agreed that they are assigned homework 3-4 times a week and they typically complete their classroom assignments (81% - 2% increase from previous year). Nearly three-fourths of the students agreed that they come to class each day ready to learn with textbooks and materials. However, only 49% (1% increase from previous year) of students agreed that they devote at least 1-2 hours to homework or studying each weeknight.

Table 21: Student Perceptions of Student Responsibilities

Survey Item	% Agree					Overall (N=2,642)
	California (N=666)	La Serna (N=490)	Pioneer (N=243)	Santa Fe (N=612)	Whittier (N=631)	
Come to class each day ready to learn with my textbooks and materials	71%	81%	67%	75%	73%	74%
Typically complete my classroom assignments	76%	84%	83%	82%	83%	81%
Assigned homework 3-4 times a week	87%	91%	76%	82%	72%	82%
Devote 1-2 hours to homework or studying each weeknight	51%	60%	42%	47%	45%	49%
Overall Average	71%	79%	67%	72%	68%	72%

Source: Public Works, Inc.

Counseling and Guidance

As shown in Table 22, most 9th grade students were familiar with high school graduation requirements. Most (82% - 4% increase from previous year) had spoken to their teachers about the necessary requirements, and (77% - 3% increase from previous year) had gone over these with a counselor. Slightly fewer students reported speaking with either a teacher (75% - 5% increase from previous year) or counselor (72% - 5% increase from previous year) about college requirements (A-G courses). The majority (86% - 3% increase from previous

year) of respondents agreed the school was very focused on having all students graduate, and (75% - 3% increase from last year) agreed the school was focused on having all students enter four-year college or university immediately following high school. Most students (80% - 3% increase from last year) were positive about their school informing them about various careers and professions.

Respondents were less positive about being encouraged to take Advanced Placement and Honors classes (56% - 2% increase from previous year). Moreover, 9th grade students were least positive on having talked with a teacher regarding their goals/plans after graduating high school (43% - 2% decrease from previous year), and even less agreed in having discussed their future aspirations with a counselor (40% - 1% decrease from previous year).

Survey responses and student focus group findings correlated greatly. During the focus groups, students commented on being well aware of the high school graduation requirements and having discussed them with at least one teacher. They also felt that their school had many programs available to help students graduate from high school and go on to college. Students had mixed reactions about being encouraged to take AP and Honors classes. Those who were already participating in AP or Honors commented that the encouragement came mostly from home rather than the school.

Table 22: Student Perceptions of Counseling and Guidance Services (% Agree)

Survey Item	California (N=666)	La Serna (N=490)	Pioneer (N=243)	Santa Fe (N=612)	Whittier (N=631)	Overall (N=2,642)
Counselor spoken with me about HS graduation requirements	74%	83%	78%	71%	80%	77%
Counselor spoken with me about college requirements	60%	79%	77%	65%	83%	72%
Teacher spoken with me about HS graduation requirements	77%	84%	86%	79%	88%	82%
Teacher spoken with me about college requirements	66%	79%	82%	68%	84%	75%
School focused on making sure that I graduate from high school	81%	89%	85%	87%	90%	86%
School focused on making sure that I am able to go to a four-year college or university	68%	80%	77%	72%	82%	75%
Have opportunities to learn about careers and professions	83%	86%	79%	74%	78%	80%
Have talked with a counselor about my goals/plans after HS	46%	49%	45%	34%	30%	40%
Have talked with a teacher about my goals/plans after HS	42%	49%	53%	41%	40%	43%
I am encouraged to take AP and Honors classes	46%	58%	60%	58%	63%	56%
Have a four-year plan guiding my HS courses and schedule	57%	69%	62%	58%	69%	63%
Overall Average	64%	73%	71%	64%	72%	68%

Source: Public Works, Inc.

Academic Tutoring

As shown in Table 23, student survey respondents at all five high schools were the most positive with the tutoring availability (80%). The vast majority knew about intervention courses in English/Language Arts (80%) and Mathematics (80%). Santa Fe (for the second consecutive year) and La Serna students were the most positive about the academic help offered at their schools (82%).

Table 23: Freshman Perceptions of Academic Help

Survey Item	% Agree					Overall (N=2,642)
	California (N=666)	La Serna (N=490)	Pioneer (N=243)	Santa Fe (N=612)	Whittier (N=631)	
Additional classes offered for help in English/Language Arts	76%	83%	79%	81%	82%	80%
Additional classes offered for help in Mathematics	86%	81%	78%	80%	72%	80%
Organized tutoring is available for help with homework/class assignments	78%	83%	80%	86%	73%	80%
Overall Average	80%	82%	79%	82%	76%	80%

Source: Public Works, Inc.

In focus groups, students explained that participation in tutorial was used to complete homework and/or to complete classroom assignments or make-up exams in order to bring up course grades. Students were content that their school had allotted time during the day for them to make-up/catch-up on work and get a head start on homework assignments.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

During 2007-08, WUHSD was successful in continuing to develop and modifying pre-existing programs and services aimed at improving the transition of students into high school, as well as instituting a series of academic interventions for students struggling to meet rigorous academic standards in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. In addition, the menu of intervention programs and tutorial options became richer and more varied across the district. Significantly, the roles and responsibilities of personnel became clearer and better organized within the context of a “Pyramid of Interventions” during the 2007-08 school year. District coordination and networking of site-based Intervention Specialists and Link Crew Advisors was especially beneficial in sharing “best practices” and stimulating ongoing program improvement. The section below summarizes the accomplishments to date and offers recommendations for continued improvement within the context of implementing a systemic “Pyramid of Interventions.”

9th Grade Transitions

As part of the “Pyramid of Interventions,” WUHSD has focused increased attention on improving the transition of incoming 9th graders to high school. After two years, Freshman First Day has become an increasingly effective way of orienting incoming freshman. Link Crew has assisted students through ongoing mentoring. Survey responses from 9th graders indicate high levels of satisfaction with school efforts to integrate students into the life of high school, provide a personalized educational experience, and provide students with guidance and counseling. To improve services targeted to 9th graders, the evaluation makes the following recommendations:

- ***Counseling and Guidance:*** Encourage 9th graders to regularly meet with counselors and Link Crew leaders/senators throughout their freshman year. The focus of interactions should be on developing and following-up on a four-year plan that includes both high school graduation and postsecondary goals (i.e., monitoring of student progress in A-G requirements, encouraging AP).
- ***Link Crew mentoring:*** Continue to refine Link Crew with more formalized focus on academic mentoring, institute regular meetings for leaders/senators, and provide training for student mentors throughout the school year to strengthen mentor and mentee relationships.
- ***Personalization:*** Encourage teachers to provide monthly written feedback to 9th grade students on academic progress in addition to on-going quarterly reporting. Investigate ways to increase 9th grade student voice/participation in school decisions.

Intervention Courses

Of course, proactive teaching that delivers a rigorous, standards-based instructional program differentiated based on student learning needs is the optimal kind of “intervention” for students. That said, WUHSD has established a number of course-specific intervention targeting students in need of academic assistance in English/Language

Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. These courses aim to serve the needs of underperforming students (about one-third of WUHSD’s students scored Far Below Basic or Below Basic on the ELA CST; approximately 50% of students scored Far Below Basic or Below Basic on the Algebra I CST).

In terms of intervention targeting English/Language Arts (ELA), this study was able to collect data on participants enrolled in four specific intervention courses. Most of these courses focused on 9th graders. Table 24 below summarizes changes in ELA CST levels among students referred to these intervention courses. Based on CST data collected on these students, student achievement increased for approximately one-third of participating students. Students who scored Below Basic were most likely to move at least one proficiency level on the ELA CST, but Far Below Basic and Basic students also showed positive movement. Three of the four courses yielded similar results; OASIS participants were considerably less likely to experience improvements in ELA.

Table 24: Summary of Effectiveness – Change of ELA CST Results for Intervention Participants

Change in CST Proficiency Level	Academic Enrichment (8 th to 9 th)	Academic English Skills (8 th to 9 th)	Academic English Skills (9 th to 10 th)	Guided Study (8 th to 9 th)	Oasis (9 th to 10 th)
Increased at least one CST level	39%	38%	28%	32%	12%
Stayed at Same CST Level	47%	47%	44%	49%	55%
Declined at least one CST level	13%	15%	28%	19%	33%

Source: WUHSD EADMS

In terms of intervention targeting Mathematics, this study was able to collect data on participants enrolled in four specific intervention courses.⁶ These courses focused on 9th and 10th graders (i.e., Algebra I and, to a lesser degree, Geometry). Table 25 below summarizes changes in Mathematics CST levels among students referred to these intervention courses. Based on CST data collected on these students, student achievement increased for more than half of the students enrolled in Intro to Algebra and the Math Proficiency Clinic. On average, students who scored Below Basic in the prior year were most likely to show improvement following participation in these courses, with gains also occurring among Far Below Basic students.

More than one-third (41%) of the 10th grade OASIS participants also improved at least one CST level in Mathematics. Guided Study participants showed the lowest rate of improvement (27%) and the highest proportion (35%) of students with declining performance in Mathematics. Students in these two intervention courses were more likely to show improvement from Far Below Basic to Below Basic on the Mathematics CST.

⁶ We were unable to collect and analyze data for students participating in programs not tied to a specific course (e.g., ACE) or enrolled in a course which grouped students for intervention needs without changing the course title (e.g., Whittier High’s regrouping of Algebra students).

Table 21: Summary of Effectiveness – Change of Math CST Results for Intervention Participants

Change in CST Proficiency Level	Intro to Algebra (8 th to 9 th)	Math Proficiency Clinic (8 th to 9 th)	Math Proficiency Clinic (9 th to 10 th)	Guided Study (8 th to 9 th)	Oasis (9 th to 10 th)
Increased at least one CST level	56%	63%	56%	27%	41%
Stayed at Same CST Level	38%	32%	38%	37%	55%
Declined at least one CST level	6%	5%	7%	35%	5%

Source: WUHSD EADMS

For students unable to pass the CAHSEE as 10th graders, WUHSD provided an intervention course (English or Math Standards Review). On average, about 63% of students enrolled in these courses were successful in passing CAHSEE as 11th or 12th graders.

To improve the intervention component of WUHSD’s Pyramid of Interventions, the evaluation makes the following recommendations:

- ***Increase the supply of Intervention.*** Involve many more students in academic interventions. Presently the “supply” of student eligible for intervention far exceeds the supply of intervention course offerings during the regular school day. This is especially true for Mathematics. This will require inserting more intervention course sections into schools’ master schedules and revising staffing so that the 20%-29% of 9th and 10th grade students scoring Far Below Basic or Below Basic in ELA and the 44%-55% of 9th and 10th graders scoring in the two bottom proficiency levels in Mathematics receive access to additional instructional minutes of academic intervention.
- ***Re-examine placement of students into intervention courses.*** Data assembled as part of this evaluation indicate that 34%-49% of the students referred to ELA intervention had scored Basic or better on the prior year CST. Similarly, 18%-30% of the students referred to Mathematics intervention had scored Basic or better on the prior year CST. Lastly, 61% of Guided Study participants scored Basic or better in ELA and 42% scored Basic or better in Mathematics. These data suggest that many of the opportunities for academic intervention might be made available to students whose objective prior year CST performance warrants it. At a minimum, WUHSD ought to consider prioritizing students with scores of Far Below Basic and Below Basic for participation in all types of academic intervention courses.
- ***Define 10th Grade Intervention.*** Intervention options are better-defined and more plentiful for 9th graders. Options for 10th grade students are less systemic. WUHSD should explore how best to transition struggling 9th graders into a system of academic support in 10th grade. La Serna’s pilot of the OASIS program shows some promise, particularly in boosting Mathematics achievement, as does Whittier’s Algebra 1 “swap” strategy.
- ***Staffing of Intervention Courses.*** Teaching a homogeneous group of students who have a history of academic failure is not easy task. WUHSD must think carefully

about which teachers are best-equipped to staff academic intervention courses, ensuring that the most needy students receive experienced, credentialed teachers adept at classroom management and committed to providing alternative pedagogy and personalized instruction.

- *Establish goals for Intervention Courses.* WUHSD should consider using the data assembled for 2007-08 intervention courses as baseline for determining the effectiveness of intervention. This would require ongoing monitoring of intervention participants against “added value” measures including CST scores, grades, and credits earned. Similarly, WUHSD is now positioned to determine whether ESR/MSR courses serving students who need to pass the CAHSEE are sufficiently effective in doing so.

WUHS 9th Grade Student Survey

All students at Whittier Union High School District are participating in a confidential survey that will help your district better meet student needs. To protect your privacy, **please do not write your name on the survey.** When you are finished, please return the survey to your teacher who will place the surveys in an envelope. Your teacher has been instructed not to look at any surveys.

Using the scale where 1=Strongly Disagree and 4=Strongly Agree, please circle the response that best reflects your opinion about each statement.

Freshman First Day	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I felt comfortable on my first day of high school because of Freshman First Day.	7%	14%	55%	24%
2. At Freshman First Day, I learned about the different kinds of clubs and extracurricular activities available to students.	6%	18%	55%	22%
3. At Freshman First Day, I learned about good organizational and study habits.	9%	32%	47%	12%
4. At Freshman First Day, I learned about high school graduation requirements.	5%	13%	50%	32%
5. At Freshman First Day, I learned about college requirements (A-G courses).	8%	22%	43%	27%
My 9th Grade Year	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. This school is very concerned with helping 9 th graders adjust to high school.	6%	18%	55%	22%
7. I know what I need to do in order to be a successful student in high school.	2%	6%	50%	43%
8. I feel connected to one or more of my teachers.	9%	21%	45%	25%
9. I feel connected to my counselor or another adult at this school.	17%	35%	35%	13%
10. I participate in school activities and/or extracurricular events.	16%	27%	31%	26%
11. I feel safe when I am at school.	10%	17%	56%	17%
Classroom Experiences	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. I know what I need to do to get good grades.	2%	4%	51%	44%
13. My teachers encourage me to do my best.	3%	15%	51%	31%
14. I usually learn something new each week.	4%	13%	55%	28%
15. I regularly get information on how I am doing in my classes from my teachers.	7%	28%	49%	17%
16. I get help from my teachers if I'm having trouble.	5%	18%	56%	21%
17. My teachers respect me and treat me fairly.	6%	16%	54%	24%
18. My teachers have high expectations of me.	5%	16%	51%	29%
My Responsibility as a Student	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
19. I come to class each day ready to learn with my textbooks and materials.	6%	20%	52%	22%
20. I typically complete my classroom assignments.	4%	15%	56%	25%

21. I am assigned homework 3-4 times a week.	5%	13%	45%	37%
22. I devote at least 1-2 hours to homework or studying each weeknight.	18%	33%	34%	16%
Academic Help	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. This school has additional classes for students who need help in English/Language Arts.	5%	15%	59%	21%
24. This school has additional classes for students who need help in Mathematics.	4%	16%	58%	21%
25. This school has organized tutoring for students to get additional help with homework or class assignments.	6%	15%	53%	27%
Counseling & Guidance Services	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
26. A counselor has spoken with me about high school graduation requirements.	7%	16%	46%	31%
27. A counselor has spoken with me about college requirements (A-G courses).	8%	20%	42%	30%
28. A teacher has spoken with me about high school graduation requirements.	5%	13%	53%	30%
29. A teacher has spoken with me about college requirements (A-G courses).	6%	19%	47%	27%
30. This school is focused on making sure that I graduate from high school.	3%	10%	48%	38%
31. This school is focused on making sure that I am able to go to a four-year college or university immediately after high school.	6%	19%	47%	29%
32. This school provides opportunities for students to learn about different careers and professions.	5%	15%	52%	28%
33. I have talked with a counselor about my goals/plans after high school.	22%	38%	26%	14%
34. I have talked with a teacher about my goals/plans after high school.	19%	37%	28%	15%
35. I am encouraged to take AP and Honors classes.	16%	28%	33%	23%
36. I have a four-year plan guiding my high school courses and schedule.	12%	26%	37%	25%

Priorities for Improvement

37. What should your high school focus on? (check off your top 3 choices)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 33% School safety | 11% Student reading skills |
| 17% Student-teacher relationships | 18% Student math skills |
| 15% Student-counselor relationships | 11% Student writing skills |
| 8% Parent involvement | 36% Giving students a voice in school decisions |
| 42% Making sure that students are prepared for college | 54% Making sure that students graduate from high school |
| 40% Making sure that students are prepared for a career after high school | 33% More extracurricular activities |
| 11% Other: _____ | |

38. What did you like best about your first year in high school?

39. What would you like to see changed at your high school?

About You

In order to help us analyze the results of this survey, please tell us a little about yourself (information is confidential).

40. Are you: **48% Male** **52% Female**

41. What is your ethnicity? (mark one)

3% African American **1% American Indian or Alaskan Native** **75% Hispanic/Latino**
2% Asian American/Pacific Islander **10% White/Caucasian** **5% Other**

42. My grades are usually...

54% Good (As-Bs) **37% OK (mostly Cs)** **9% Not very good (Ds-Fs)**

43. My attendance is usually...

49% Excellent (absent less than once a month) **36% Good (absent once a month)** **16% Poor (2 or more times per month)**

44. My current math class is...

81% Algebra I **16% Geometry** **1% Algebra II** **1% Other _____**

45.¹ Are you enrolled in any of the following classes? (check all that apply)

Guided Study Algebra Restart Academic Community for Excellence (ACE)
 Academic English Math Proficiency Other intervention course _____

46. Did you attend Summer Bridge or Summer School? **55% Yes** **45% No**

47. Do you have a Link Crew Leader or Senator? **56% Yes** **44% No**

48. What types of activities did you do with your Link Crew Leader or Senator?

Thank you for taking the time to give us your opinions.

¹ Individual school results were reported by school to each school.