Center for the Advancement of Smaller Learning Environments 2009-10 Evaluation Report

San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools

Cohort VI Grant # S215L060074

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CASLE Executive Summary

Smaller Learning Communities Context

Since 2000, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) has provided Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) planning and implementation grants to high schools with 1,000 or more students in order to implement SLCs. The grants support a range of strategies including creating schools-within-schools with varying degrees of autonomy,[1] restructuring the school day to allow for cohort scheduling and more consistent student-adult interactions, and formal adult mentoring and advisory programs.[2] Implementation of these structural changes share the goals of a more personalized high school experience for students in smaller schools or more autonomous units within schools with improved student achievement and performance.

This report provides evaluation results for 2009-10 for the fourth year of a five-year evaluation of ten comprehensive high schools in San Bernardino County that received US Department of Education SLC Implementation Grants. SBCSS's CASLE hired Public *Works,* Inc., a non-profit headquartered in Pasadena, California, to conduct a third-party evaluation of the efforts in Cohort VI schools. The ten schools in 2009-10 Cohort VI include:

- Arroyo Valley and Cajon High School in San Bernardino City Unified School District
- Barstow High School in Barstow Unified School District
- Chaffey High School in Chaffey Joint Unified School District
- Don Antonio Lugo High School in Chino Valley Unified School District
- Bloomington High School in Colton Joint Unified School District
- A.B. Miller and Fontana High School in Fontana Unified School District
- Palm Springs High School in Palm Springs Unified School District (Located in Riverside County)
- Redlands High School in Redlands Unified School District

Smaller Learning Communities Grant Overview

As enrollment has grown in the ten high schools over the past decade, there has also been an increase in the number of minority students, students from low socioeconomic status households, and an influx of students whose native language is one other than English. To address the needs of a growing diverse student population, CASLE convened partner schools to develop a comprehensive Cohort plan with specific plans for each school, embedding and integrating its primary goals.

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[1] School-within-a-school refers to an autonomous school that, while it may be in its own building or in a building with another school, is organizationally, fiscally, and instructionally independent.

[2] Advisory systems place students under the guidance and care of a teacher or administrator for their entire school experience on a regular (daily or weekly) basis.

The CASLE goals are:

1) Improve academic achievement for all students
2) Improve quality of instruction & curriculum
3) Decentralization and personalization of schools and classrooms
4) Increase parent and community involvement
5) Connect students to college, career, and technical development

With a countywide partnership, efforts to build continuous support within the community, and professional development, partner schools have access to knowledge and experience to utilize in their implementation of SLC.

Public *Works,* Inc. Evaluation and Report

As required by USDE, districts receiving SLC implementation grants were required to hire a third-party evaluator. CASLE hired Public *Works,* Inc., a 501c(3) corporation headquartered in Pasadena, California with a wide range of experience conducting evaluations in the area of public education and school reform.

Additionally, the following comprehensive questions are used to gauge SLC implementation and effectiveness and improved student achievement:

1) How are schools meeting the intentions of downsizing activities that restructure large high schools and include strategies that make schools "feel" smaller?
2) How are schools meeting local goals and objectives?
3) What are effective practices schools are implementing in SLCs?
4) How are SLC students performing as compared to Non-SLC students?
5) To what extent has the implementation of SLCs improved student achievement?
6) To what extent has the implementation of SLCs increased student eligibility and preparation for postsecondary education and careers?

Research Methods

The evaluation of CASLE Cohort VI grant encompasses two dimensions: (1) a qualitative dimension measuring progress with regard to program implementation, and (2) a quantitative dimension measuring the impact of the grant on student achievement.

The evaluation is an annual process over the five-year grant cycle. This report presents information from the fourth-year of a five-year grant.

To collect data on the progress of the SLC grantee high schools in 2009-10, the evaluation includes data from multiple sources including: a review of relevant research literature, surveys of school staff, surveys of all 9th and 12th grade students, follow-up surveys with 12th grade graduates 3-4 months after graduation, and focus groups with various stakeholders, interviews, and observations during annual site visits to each grantee school.

In order to examine student achievement and school performance at the ten grantee high schools, statistical analyses were performed on multiple achievement indicators including: California Standards Test (CST), English Language Arts and Mathematics, California High

School Exit Examination (CAHSEE), English Language Arts and Mathematics, Pupil attendance, Dropout and Graduation rate data, and UC/CSU (A-G) course enrollment and completion rate disaggregated by demographics.

Key Accomplishments

Academic Intervention

Through the SLC initiative, the grantee schools have expanded intervention services and have tailored aspects of the SLC initiative to meet greater numbers of students needs academically and to support them in their transition to high school. Several schools offer double blocks of English Language Arts (ELA) interventions and double blocks Mathematics interventions. Schools have implemented intervention curriculum or programs such REACH/Read 180, CAHSEE Prep courses and an outside reading support program at a local post-secondary institution. The grantee schools have provided support specialized in assisting and preparing students for the CAHSEE, CSTs and CELDT assessments. In addition, credit recovery options were the most common intervention across the majority of schools (e.g. *Nova Net, A Plus, PLATO, APEX)*. Several SLCs reported specific strategies they had implemented to make sure that students are on track with their grades and academic progress.

Rigorous Curriculum

The academic performance across the ten schools ranges from the mid-600s to high 700. Despite this range, all ten schools hold their students to rigorous academic standards. On average, the cohort increased 73 points on the API from Baseline to Year 4 of grant. The average percentage of students scoring far below basic and below basic decreased significantly from 40% to 28% in ELA. This same indicator decreased only 2% in Algebra I and 6% in Geometry. A few schools have also reported a drop in the amount of ninth grade failing students.

Adult-Student Relationships

CASLE schools have focused on improving personalization with students through the creation of Houses and Academies/ Pathways, particularly with 9th and 10th graders. The House structures have delivered identity and personalization through adult-relationships. The schools have mentoring programs in place (e.g. Link Crew, Freshman Mentoring Programs, Intervention / Crisis Counselors). In addition, some students "loop" with their counselors over multiple years, which providing deeper connections between counselor and students.

Achievement Outcomes

Academic achievement increased in English/ language arts and Mathematics among students involved in SLC restructuring. Freshman SLC student percent proficient or advanced on CST ELA increased 11% and CST Algebra I increased 6% from Baseline to Year 4. Also, English Learners appear to benefit from participation in SLC restructuring with 23% of SLC EL 9th graders performing proficient or advanced on the CST Geometry.

- Demographics: Racial and ethnic composition of the grantee schools has maintained consistent throughout the grant. In 2009-10, student population was 69% Hispanic, 16% White, 9% African American and 1% Asian. On average, the English Learner population has also remained consistent (20%) while the number of economically disadvantaged has increased to 60%.

- SLC Participation: Roster analyses demonstrate great discrepancy between the percent of students participating in an SLC and the percent of students who fulfilled the initiative requirement of three common courses within the assigned SLC. Approximately one-third (35%) of students attending the ten grantee schools met the three common classes or more. Freshman students had the highest concentration of SLC enrollment with common three or more courses (55%), followed by 37% of sophomores. Both eleventh and twelfth grade showed lower percentages of students with three or more common classes (22% and 20%). In addition, there was variation in the number of students enrolled in an SLC among the ten grantee schools. Redlands (89%), Chaffey (75%), and Arroyo Valley (73%) are among the schools with the largest SLC participation rate, when reporting SC enrollment as one identified common course.

- Academic Performance Index: The number of schools meetings API targets has fluctuated over the last four years. In 2009-10, the Cohort API average was 700, increasing 43 points from the Baseline Year. The API net change from Baseline to Year 4 ranged from 1 to 67 points. Redlands (766), Palm Springs (750), Chaffey (715) are among the schools to obtain the highest 2010 API Growth. In addition, Bloomington (67 points), Arroyo Valley (66 points), A.B. Miller (50 points), and Barstow (50 points) were among the grantee schools with the highest attainment from 2006.

- Adequate Yearly Progress: None of the grantee schools met all AYP criteria for 2009-10. The two main reasons include: (1) the subgroups did not meet the performance level as required for the CST ELA and Mathematics, and/or (2) the subgroups did not meet the 95% participation rate. The Cohort on average has improved proficiency by 9% in Mathematics and 6% in ELA from Baseline Year. The grantee schools to show the highest % Proficient or Advanced include: Redlands with 69% in ELA and Mathematics in 62%, Palm Springs with 57% in ELA and 60% in Mathematics, and Don Lugo with 54% in ELA. Arroyo Valley (11%) and Don Lugo (10%) showed the highest attainment in ELA proficiency from Baseline year. Bloomington (19%), Fontana (15%) and Palm Springs (15%) also showed the greatest increase in Mathematics proficiency in comparison to 2005-06.

- Dropout/Graduation Rates: Comparing Year 3 of the grant with the previous year (Year 4 data not yet available), the adjusted one-year dropout rates increased at six grantee schools from the previous year, ranging from 0.8% to 4.9%, with a Cohort average of 3.7%. Seven of ten schools showed no change or a decrease in the adjusted four-year graduation rate from the prior year (ranging from 0% to a 7.8% decrease). Nonetheless, the Cohort Graduation average was 80.2% and six schools surpassed the statewide graduation rate (78.4%), which decreased 1.8% from the prior year.

- Adequate Credit Completion: Seniors were most likely (84%) to earn an adequate number of credits to be on-track for graduation (84%, increasing 4% from Year 1. However, this may occur because students who are very credit deficient at this point have dropped out. More than half of freshman (56%) and sophomore (55%) students obtained adequate credits, improving 8% from Year 1 of grant.

- California Standards Tests: Compared to Baseline Year, the percentage of Grade 9 students scoring Proficient or Advanced on ELA CSTs increased 11% since baseline to 46% in Year 4. Advanced or Proficient on CST Algebra improved 6%, from 9% in 2005-06 to 15% in 2009-10. Advanced or proficient performance in ELA was the highest at Redlands, Palm Springs and Cajon. Fontana and Chaffey showed the highest 9th grade percent advanced or proficient in Algebra I and Geometry.

- California High School Exit Exam: The CAHSEE ELA first time test taking pass rate from Baseline Year showed an increase in school-wide (5%), as well as among Economically Disadvantaged (7%), Special Education (5%) students, and English Learners (3%). Similarly, the CAHSEE Mathematics pass rate improved 6% school-wide, 8% among Economically Disadvantaged, 7% among English Learners and 5% among Special Education atudents. Redlands (92%), palm Springs (82% and Don Lugo (82%) obtained the highest first time test taking pass rate on CAHSEE ELA. Similarly, Redlands (87%), Palm Springs (83%) and Don Lugo (81%) obtained the highest first time test taking pass rate on CAHSEE Mathematics.

Key Issues and Challenges

Master Schedule

The key structural issue among the CASLE schools continues to be adapting the school master schedule in order to prioritize SLC enrollment and promote equity. At most schools, the master schedule has continued to follow the departmental organizational model, which does not necessarily promote the distribution of staff and assignment of students into coherent SLCs where at least half of the courses are shared or "cored" by SLC. Many teachers continue to resist changes associated with the master schedule because it will affect what and whom they teach and when they will teach it. Indeed, adapting the master schedule and resistance to change to SLCs were identified as the most significant barriers by staff survey respondents.

The lack of fundamental changes to the master schedule is most apparent in the on-going inequity regarding the federally defined SLCs participation, meeting three or more courses in an SLC. Although 56% of students across the cohort are in enrolled in at least one SLC course, a considerably lower 35% truly meets the federal requirement of enrollment in three or more SLC classes. In addition, there are more 9th (55%) students in SLCs meeting the requirement than 10th (37%), 11th (22%) and 12th (20%) graders. Schools continue to struggle to reorganize the master schedule to prioritize and address SLC requirements.

Staff Collaboration

The expansion of SLC structures spurred schools to implement structured common planning time. Eight school provided a common conference period to either all or some of their Houses/ teams. However, while structured common time was prioritized in the master schedule at nearly all the schools, schools indicated SLC meetings and collaboration did not occur as often and to some extent less than prior years. Thus collaborative teams who did in fact meet and planned, developed an academic identity for their SLC and to reach consensus on what a personalized high school experience will mean for the students enrolled in "their" SLC. Given limited coring of students into shared teams of three or more classes, it makes sense that team meetings decrease or were non-existent. In very few cases did teams coordinate cross-curricular projects or lesson plans. SLC teams' collaboration has generally decreased while schools have provided the structured time.

Survey results found seventy-four percent of staff agree or strongly agree that teachers are part of a professional community of practice that is collaborative and public. Slightly higher levels of agreement were found for survey questions about SLC-based regularly meeting for planning, curriculum and activities. collaboration and professional development (78%). However, 46% of staff felt there was suffiecient time for teachers to discuss and analyze student in team meetings.

The intention of common planning time is to develop interdisciplinary projects and common assessments, creation of intervention courses and mentoring programs for struggling students, solicitation of community partners, and organization of parent outreach, but this did not happen across all schools. Rather, schools who did have allotted meeting time stated during the site visits that they were not meeting regularly to discuss students they had in common (many did not have common students), rather, teachers were utilizing their prep period for other tasks and so forth. Even when they are in place, cohort schools do not always increase collaboration.

English Learner Intervention

While intervention services have expanded across the grantee sites, there is great need for specialized English Learner (EL) interventions, given that on average 20% of their student population are ELs. Only two schools coordinate a specialized EL CELDT boot camp. Two schools conduct a week-long EL professional development: during summer and DAIT provided, utilizing SDAIE strategies. Approximately 70 % of 9th and 74% of 12th grade students indicated on student survey that teachers are aware of students' academic strength and areas of improvement. Results indicate there is need to focus on approximately 30% of students who feel their specific academic needs are not well understood. In addition, site visits support the need for specific interventions based on the challenges of ELs.

SLC Data

Very few schools have local fields available through their database systems to identify students (and staff) by SLC placement. While four schools indicate using data via Data Director and OARS software to identify target students and assign intervention, data used to inform instruction is not present across the ten schools. Schools need to utilize existing

data in a purposeful manner to ensure balance and equity in terms of SLC student and staff assignments. For example, sites need to run data on student and staff characteristics prior to finalizing master schedules to ensure teaming of both teachers and students. Similarly, schools should move in the direction of analyzing and presenting data on student outcomes by SLC. For example, staff should receive information by SLC on the number of students meeting A-G requirements, attending school, earning D/F grades, and successfully graduating. Dissemination of these data will likely showcase SLC accomplishments to staff that might otherwise remain unaware, while also highlighting areas in need of further investigation and/or focus.

Recommendations to Schools

The primary focus of the SLC grant has been on school-level structural change and strategies intended to include all students in an SLC by the end of the grant period; the grant ends in 2011 for Cohort VI. In addition to the structural changes noted above, Public *Works*, Inc. continues to recommend that schools:

- Strengthen existing 9th grade house models to further develop academic intervention strategies and identify students in need of support.
- Build and strengthen existing 11th-12th grade models that are focused on student interest and school engagement.
- Continue to use what has been learned from SLCs to promote equity in school master schedules.
- Continue to make solid connections between SLC to standards-based instructional reforms and accountability mandates.
- Continue to connect the SLC initiative's emphasis on personalized instruction to a broader delivery of counseling and guidance.
- Regardless of SLC model implemented, core teachers and students must be in assigned to three or more courses together.

Recommendations to the Districts and County

At the District and County levels, the SLC initiative has required a commitment to on-going technical assistance, training, and support to strengthen SLCs at this level and support sustainability. In order to provide direction following the end of the grant, Public *Works*, Inc. makes the following recommendations to the eight districts and CASLE to implement through each district and the county with follow-up support and oversight to schools.

- Continue to assist schools in the alignment of school improvement plans and accountability mandates.
- Continue to assist schools in designing and allocating professional development time to support school improvement priorities.
- Use the lessons learned from SLC implementation to provide guidance on master schedules that meet challenges and promote equity, particularly in the 10th-12th grades.
- Assist schools in organizing information data systems to allow schools to extract and examine data by SLC.

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PART I—INTRODUCTION

Smaller Learning Communities Context

With the leadership of the Gates Foundation to create a national agenda to fund high school reform and research, public support through the federal Smaller Learning Community (SLC) grants, and consensus on the need to address the persistent problem of high school dropouts and lackluster student performance nationwide, school districts across the nation are transforming large comprehensive high schools into smaller, more manageable units of 200-500 students. Simultaneously, autonomous small high schools (typically new start-up schools or charters) have been developed to provide a more personalized high school experience.

SLC reforms combine with the push for accountability of the standards-based reforms of the 1990s and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Under the lens of the so-called "New 3R's," SLC reform strategies are intended to match academic achievement (*Rigor*) with curricular approaches that bring meaning and application to students (*Relevance*) along with enhanced personal connections to adults and other students (*Relationships*). As such, SLC reform involves changes that offer the possibility for curricular change, meaningful collaboration, and systemic student support.

This report provides the results of the four year of a five-year evaluation conducted in 2009-10 school year of ten comprehensive high schools in San Bernardino and Riverside County that received US Department of Education Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) Implementation Grants. San Bernardino Superintendent of Schools' (SBCSS) Center for the Advancement of Smaller Learning Environments (CASLE) hired Public *Works*, Inc., a non-profit headquartered in Pasadena, California, to conduct a third-party evaluation of the efforts in SLC Cohort VI schools.

- Barstow High School in the Barstow Unified School District
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- Palm Springs High School in the Palm Springs Unified School District (Located in Riverside County)
- Redlands High School in the Redlands Unified School District
- Arroyo Valley and Cajon High School in the San Bernardino City Unified School District

About the US Department of Education Grants

Since 2000, the U.S. Department of Education's SLC grant program has provided planning and implementation grants to high schools with 1,000 or more students in order to implement SLCs. The grants support a range of strategies including creating schools-

within-schools with varying degrees of autonomy,[3] restructuring the school day to allow for cohort scheduling and more consistent student-adult interactions, and formal adult mentoring and advisory programs.[4] Implementation of these structural changes share the goals of a more personalized high school experience for students in smaller schools or more autonomous units within schools with improved student achievement and performance. Continued under the Bush Administration's NCLB, the program now provides five-year (originally three-year) SLC implementation grants ranging from $250,000 to $550,000 per school.

The ten Cohort VI schools in SBCSS received a five-year implementation grant of $5,978,641 beginning in the 2006-07 school year. In total, the U.S. Department of Education has awarded over $1,096,749,720 through 2009 to schools across the nation, with funding for this program growing each year.

Background to the SLC Approach

The 21st Century Take on High School Reform

In 2005, following the National Education Summit on High Schools, the National Governors Association identified an *Action Agenda for Improving America's High Schools* that called on state leaders to: (1) make all students proficient and prepared, (2) redesign the American High School, (3) give high schools the excellent teachers and principals they need, (4) hold high schools and colleges accountable for student success, and (5) streamline and improve education governance.

Launched in 2000, the Gates Foundation five-year high school initiative provided over a billion dollars in funding on a range of fronts—at the individual school level to break up large schools or start new schools, for researchers and policymakers to learn more about effective practices, and most recently, to build capacity at the district level to sustain widespread change. While high school reform has been characterized by "dozens of actors and innumerable initiatives," reformers are "focusing primarily on five strategies—improving school climate, strengthening curriculum and instruction, raising graduation requirements, helping freshmen get up to speed academically, and preventing students from dropping out" (Toch, 2007, p. 434).

Lessons Learned About the Impact of School Size

Beyond improving academic achievement, research suggested that small schools built a more positive and productive educational environment conducive to student learning. A sense of community constructed through student self-selection, as well as increased staff interest in students, led to greater feelings of belonging and more investment in making the school a quality place to learn. Classroom discipline problems, disruptions, and assaults were found to be less common in small schools (Cotton, 2001). However, authors Lee, Ready, and Welner found, found that small schools often attempted to replicate the more

[3] School-within-a-school refers to an autonomous school that, while it may be in its own building or in a building with another school, is organizationally, fiscally, and instructionally independent.
[4] Advisory systems place students under the guidance and care of a teacher or administrator for their entire school experience on a regular (daily or weekly) basis.

comprehensive curriculum of larger high schools with faculty teaching out of their specialties and often had selective entrance criteria (Lee, 2002).

Common Approaches to Implementing SLCs

Under the US Department of Education's SLC grant program, implementation grants are provided to high schools with 1,000 or more students in order to implement and expand SLCs. The grants support a range of structures (e.g. reorganization of student placement and staff assignments) and strategies (e.g. techniques and measures to provide interdisciplinary, personalized instruction and guidance to students) including creating schools-within-schools, career academies, restructuring the school day, formal adult mentoring and advisory programs. Listed below are a few common SLC approaches:

- *Small Schools and Schools-within-Schools:* Small school or school-within-a-school refer to an autonomous school that, while it may be in its own building or in a building with another school, is organizationally, fiscally, and instructionally independent and may focus on a specific theme (Small Schools Project, 2001a).

- *Academies:* Academy schools organize the curricula and education program for a subset of 10^{th} –12^{th} grade students (usually ranging from 200-400 students) around one or more themes, typically career or occupationally related. Students are grouped with a team of teachers who provide interdisciplinary and personalized curriculum. In addition, career academies partner with postsecondary institutions and other community groups to provide internships, service learning and other extracurricular opportunities.

- *House:* A house contains classrooms for teachers of core subjects who function as a team to instruct a small group of students (ranging from 100-500) (Sammon, 2000). In some models, students can take additional subjects elsewhere in the school, though not always with the same students in their house. Some schools have used the house model to transition freshman into the larger high school. Often, houses can contain a sequence of career-related and/or academic courses that lead toward graduation (Cotton, 2001).

- *Other "Small" Strategies:* Comprehensive high schools are devising additional strategies aimed at forming significant attachments among adults and their peers. Some schools provide advanced courses for high-achieving students, newcomer schools for immigrant students new to a school system, and modifications to the high school schedule.

Complementary Reforms to Support Smaller Learning Communities

College Prep Curriculum for All

An increase in the rigor of high school courses and adopting a curriculum that supports students as they transition out of high school into college is no longer viewed as being at odds with a relevant and supportive environment that encourages students with the least preparation to stay in school. In fact, evaluations of SLC efforts have concluded that the freshmen year is a pivotal year that must address both the need for freshmen with poor academic skills to catch up and to offer them rigorous courses that support credit attainment and on time graduation (Toch, 2007).

Professional Learning Communities and Distributed Leadership

Another complementary reform to SLCs is to support professional collaboration and distributed leadership among professionals in the new, smaller sub-units. In schools that move beyond structure and discussions of "architecture" as put by Tom Vander Ark, former executive director of the Gates Foundation education initiatives, the development of professional learning communities offers a real opportunity for making instructional change the focus of reforms. According to Richard DuFour, a national expert on the implementation of this kind of reform, professional learning communities focus on three "big ideas": (1) shifting from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, (2) creating structures that promote a collaborative culture, and (3) an orientation to judging effectiveness based on results (DuFour, 2004).

9th Grade Support Systems

More school districts are focusing on 9th graders because students who fail to earn sufficient credits to matriculate to 10th grade are much more likely to dropout. The *Talent Development* high school model from Johns Hopkins, focused on providing 9th graders with accelerated "catch-up" courses in reading and Mathematics. *Talent Development* high schools offer a double dose of Mathematics and English for an entire year (90 minutes each), readiness for college-prep courses via study skills (semester one) and the use of supplemental materials developed by Johns Hopkins University (semester two) (Toch, 2007). Students taking this sequence outperformed their peers in comparison schools and even students who started with higher-than-average achievement benefited.

In its evaluation of *First Things First* (a 9th to 12th grade model of theme-based SLCs implemented in Kansas City, Kansas) and *Talent Development* high schools (that incorporate a 9th grade Success Academy with career academies in the 10th to 12th grades), MDRC found that both structures played a positive role in increasing attendance and reducing dropout rates (Quint, 2006). The evaluation cautioned that simply increasing the amount of time in English and Mathematics classes for freshmen did not necessarily result in higher student achievement.

Implementation Issues for Smaller Learning Communities

Conversions vs. Start-ups

Schools, especially in urban districts, have taken a variety of approaches to restructuring high schools including spinning off new schools from closed or reconstituted high schools, as charters run by other organizations, or conversions of larger schools into smaller subunits with varying degrees of autonomy over decision-making and fiscal responsibility. One of the largest infusions of support for these changes has been the Gates Foundation National School District and Network Grants Program, which also funded an evaluation by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and SRI International.

Early findings from the evaluation indicated that after the first year of operation, new small high schools had already made great strides in establishing deeper and more supportive student-teacher relationships both academically and personally. However, these environments required a large amount of work to put in place, more than the teachers had

first anticipated. Further, the work of establishing a new school was more complicated and time-consuming leading to significant shortfalls of the resources necessary to implement all of the components needed to meet the challenging student populations they had been successful in recruiting (AIR/SRI, April 2003).

Impact of SLCs on Student Achievement

Many SLC schools have made progress in a key reform area—improved school climate. However, there is less conclusive evidence of the impact on student achievement. For instance, the MDRC summary of its evaluations of Career Academies, *First Things First*, and the *Talent Development* model found improvements in eleventh-grade Mathematics and reading tests in *Talent Development* schools for students where the interventions had been in place the longest but no effect on achievement within the Career Academies they studied (Quint, 2006). The evaluations of Gates-funded new and converted high schools found some improvements in reading and language arts especially in high schools that had implemented the Foundation's Attributes of High-Performing Schools to a higher degree.[5] However, their study found poor rigor in Mathematics assignments at new and redesigned high schools (AIR/SRI, 2005). Despite these mixed results related to specific academic content areas and SLCs, the early MDRC study of Career Academies found reduced dropout rates, improved attendance, and increased likelihood of on-time graduation among Career Academy students, especially those most at risk off dropping out (Kemple, 2000).

Autonomy

The issue of autonomy in SLCs goes to the heart of the reform in the breakup of large impersonal and bureaucratic comprehensive high schools. SLC faculty may have autonomy over various aspects of organizing curriculum and instruction such as scheduling, staffing classes, and the like but little decision-making authority over core components of school organization such as budgeting and hiring decisions. Other aspects of autonomy include procedures for recruiting and selecting students, student conduct, and SLC safety. School-wide planning often takes three years or more delaying discussions by SLC teams or schools-within-schools about the central questions of instructional improvement and just what is meant by personalization. In addition, to avoid "community unrest," issues "revolving around ability-grouping, advanced-placement opportunities, band, school spirit, or athletics may take precedence over strong efforts to improve instruction and enhance personalization (Fink and Silverman, 2007)."

Size

While there is no consensus on the "perfect" size for a high school or an SLC, a large-scale quantitative study using nationally representative and longitudinal data explored the ideal size of a high school based on student learning. Using data from 10,000 students in 800 public and private schools in the US, achievement gains in Mathematics and reading over the course of high school were found in schools of between 600 and 900 students (a middle-sized high school). However, maintaining an even smaller school size was a more important factor for schools enrolling high proportions of disadvantaged students (Lee,

[5] Gates Foundation Attributes of High-Performing Schools include (1) Common Focus, (2) High Expectations, (3) Personalization, (4) Respect and Responsibility, (5) Time to Collaborate, (6) Performance-Based, and (7) Technology as a Tool (AIR/SRI, 2005b).

2002). For most of the SLCs in high school conversion schools a range of 200 to 400 students per SLC is feasible, particularly in urban settings.

Tracking

Tracking students by their perceived ability is a long-standing practice prevalent in American high schools that has been the subject of deep controversy especially related to the persistent achievement gap for low-income and minority students. In an article describing the "multiple pathways" approach embedded in many SLC reforms, authors Jeannie Oakes and Marisa Saunders describe how important it is to implement programs that consciously allow students to select programs based on their interests rather than being "selected or directed" based on past achievement, where they are assumed to be going after high school, or their perceptions of the level of difficulty of the courses in a given SLC (2007).

Managing the Master Schedule

Implementing a master schedule that works for all SLCs in a converted high school is one of the biggest challenges to success. Scheduling classes to insure "purity" of teachers and students within the same SLC has been a major challenge to school administrators especially for students in the upper grades who may want to take electives offered by other communities (Quint 2006). Some strategies for managing the master schedule in converted high schools include: more autonomy and identity for each SLC, reducing the number of student and teacher "cross-overs" between SLCs, and allowing for flexibility in the master schedule (e.g. not maintaining a common bell schedule). In addition, reducing the number of small, specialized programs may also contribute to SLC purity. Some research has found that block schedules may result in fewer discipline problems and failures and opportunity for students to earn more credits with the 4X4 block schedule. (Phi Delta Kappa International, Topics & Trends, November 2006, Volume 6, Issue 4).

Reform Context in San Bernardino County

San Bernardino County encompasses what is known as the Inland Empire in Southern California. Geographically, it is California's largest county and has experienced a 30% enrollment growth in its school system over the past 10 years. Enrollment growth correlates to the increasing population growth seen throughout the county.

The San Bernardino Superintendent of Schools (SBCSS) provides programs and services to 413 public schools and 44 high schools, serving approximately 130,000 students in grades 9 through 12, and is the Local Educational Agency (LEA) for the Smaller Learning Communities Implementation Grant. SBCSS's *Center for the Advancement of Smaller Learning Environments* (CASLE) was established as the umbrella organization that is central to the leadership, support, and oversight of grant implementation to the ten Cohort VI[6] grantee high schools, and any other high school in the county engaged in SLC reform.

[6] Barstow High School was also funded under Cohort III.

The ten Cohort VI grantee schools in this study are from seven of San Bernardino County's 36 school districts: San Bernardino City Unified, Barstow Unified, Chaffey Joint Unified, Chino Valley Unified, Colton Joint Unified, Fontana Unified, Palm Springs Unified (Located in Riverside County), and Redlands Unified. San Bernardino City Unified serving approximately 54,000 students grades K-12, Barstow Unified serving about 6,500 K-12 students, Chaffey Joint Unified serving about 25,000 9-12th students, Chino Valley Unified serving about 32,000 K-12 students, Colton Joint Unified serving about 23,500 K-12 students, Fontana Unified serving approximately 41,000 K-12 students, Palm Springs Unified serving about 24,000 K-12 students and Redlands Unified serving about 22,000 K-12 students in grades Kthrough 12 respectively:

- Barstow Unified School District consists of eight elementary schools, one junior high school, two high schools, and one intermediate school. The SLC participating school, Barstow High School, was originally a Cohort III school and was refunded in Cohort VI, and enrolls about 1,700 students a year.

- Chaffey Joint Unified School District is a 9-12 District that enrolls more than 25,000 students. The District currently operates eight comprehensive high schools, two continuation high schools, and one community day school. The participating SLC school, Chaffey High School, enrolls about 3,600 students.

- Chino Valley Unified School District operates twenty-four elementary schools, six junior high schools, four comprehensive high schools, and two alternative high schools. The participating SLC school, Don Lugo High School, enrolls about 2,300 students.

- Colton Joint Unified School District operates eighteen elementary schools, four middle schools, three comprehensive high schools, and one alternative high school. The participating SLC school, Bloomington High School, enrolls about 3,000 students.

- Fontana Unified School District consists of twenty-nine elementary schools, seven middle schools, four comprehensive high schools, and two continuation schools. Of the SLC participating schools, A.B. Miller High School enrolls about 2,900 students, and Fontana High School enrolls about 3,800 students.

- Palm Springs Unified School District consists of fifteen elementary schools, four middle schools, three comprehensive high schools, and six alternative schools. The participating SLC school, Palm Springs High School, enrolls about 2,200 students.

- Redlands Unified School District consists of fifteen elementary schools, four middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, and three alternative schools. The participating SLC school, Redlands High School, enrolls about 3,100 students.

- San Bernardino City Unified School District is located in the heart of the Inland Empire and is currently the 7th largest school district in California. The district consists of 41 elementary, 8 middle, and 7 high schools. Of the SLC schools participating in Cohort VI, Arroyo Valley High School enrolls about 3,000 students, and Cajon High School enrolls about 2,900 students.

Based on their experience with previous cohorts, CASLE focused on an incremental approach to implementation beginning with the 9th grade house structure. Based on literature related to dropouts and underperforming students, 9th grade is the crucial grade-level to implement smaller learning communities in order to attain a sense of personalization in engagement in this important first year of high school. CASLE has focused schools on the implementation of heterogeneous 9th grade Houses that transition to 10th grade Houses or other SLC structures (e.g. pathways).

In accordance with No Child Left Behind (NCLB), SBCSS established and offered to all county school districts the Vision, Innovation, and Power (VIP) Schools Initiative, where most CASLE schools are voluntary participants. Through this initiative, the schools receive additional support for SLC reform while remaining in compliance to NCLB requirements. CASLE's instrumental role has also led to a collaboration among programs such as *Alliance for Education*, the *PASS P-16 Council*, *Family Support*, and *AVID* to align goals and activities that support SLC philosophies. Specifically, the *Alliance for Education's* Steering Committee has committed to working closely with CASLE high schools and developed a three-year action plan that will extend beyond the conclusion of the SLC implementation grant. With a countywide partnership, efforts to build continuous support within the community, and professional development alongside Cohort VI high schools have access to knowledge and experience to utilize in their implementation of SLC. The CASLE goals include:

1) Improve academic achievement for all students.
2) Improve quality of instruction & curriculum.
3) Decentralization and personalization of schools and classrooms.
4) Increase parent and community involvement.
5) Connect students to college, career, and technical development.

Public *Works*, Inc. Evaluation and Report Organization

As required by the US Department of Education, districts receiving Cohort VI Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) Implementation Grants are required to hire a third-party evaluator. The evaluation conducted by Public *Works*, Inc. (PW) focuses on how the SLC initiative affects the following related research areas: academic achievement (*Rigor*) with curricular approaches that bring meaning and application to students (*Relevance*) along with enhanced personal connections to adults and other students (*Relationships*).

Following this introduction, Part II provides a more detailed methodology of the evaluation. Part III includes an analysis of the qualitative data regarding program implementation across the ten schools based on site visit and survey results, organized by the original project goals listed above. Part IV provides an analysis of quantitative student outcome data from Baseline Year through Year 4 of grant. Part V is a conclusion that includes recommendations for the districts/county and grantee schools. Appendices include a map of participating schools, bibliography, staff survey results, student survey results, the site implementation checklist used to summarize data collected for each school, a description of each school along with their SLC approaches, and detailed information on student achievement in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

PART II—EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Approach

The evaluation of the CASLE SLC Cohorts VI grants encompasses two dimensions: (1) a quantitative dimension measuring the impact of the grant on student achievement, and (2) a qualitative dimension measuring progress with regard to program implementation. Public *Works,* Inc. (PW) was hired by CASLE to conduct the five year evaluation of Cohort VI (Cohort 3 of CASLE grants).

CASLE high schools have developed a three-year action plan that will extend beyond the conclusion of the SLC implementation grant. With a countywide partnership, efforts to build continuous support within the community, and professional development alongside Cohort VI high schools have access to knowledge and experience to utilize in their implementation of SLC. The CASLE goals include:

1) Improve academic achievement for all students.
2) Improve quality of instruction & curriculum.
3) Decentralization and personalization of schools and classrooms.
4) Increase parent and community involvement.
5) Connect students to college, career, and technical development.

Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data collected for this report includes a staff surveys and three student surveys, which are collected annually. In addition, Public *Works*, Inc. staff met with students, staff and administration from all ten high schools during a day-long site visit in Spring 2010 to assess the status of SLC implementation in Fall 2009 through Spring 2010.

Surveys

Public *Works*, Inc. developed four surveys of key stakeholders for this evaluation, for school staff, freshmen, seniors, and a follow-up survey of seniors conducted during the fall after graduation. These surveys are administered annually as part of the evaluation. Each school is provided with the results of the surveys for their school, combined across the ten high schools, and their individual Cohort results. Combined Cohort survey frequencies are included in **Appendix C.**

Staff Survey

The staff survey was developed to solicit input from all school staff about their knowledge and involvement in the SLC initiative at their school. The survey is administered during a spring staff meeting and all members of the staff participating in the school's faculty meeting are invited to complete a survey. In order to calculate a response rate, Public *Works*, Inc. uses the California Department of Education (CDE) reported number of certificated staff to estimate the number of staff at each school. The following table displays the response rate for each school based on the number of completed surveys (Table 1). In total, Public *Works*, Inc. achieved an 82% response rate on this survey.

Table 1: Staff Survey Response Rates, 2009-10

High School	# of certificated staff*	# of completed surveys	Response rate
A.B. Miller	135	100	74%
Arroyo Valley	147	82	56%
Barstow	85	68	80%
Bloomington	146	140	96%
Cajon	134	111	83%
Chaffey	162	160	99%
Don Lugo	104	85	82%
Fontana	170	134	79%
Palm Springs	90	76	84%
Redlands	126	106	84%
Total	**1,299**	**1,062**	**82%**

***Source: California Department of Education**
Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

Student Surveys

In order to collect student opinions and information about their experiences in high school, students were surveyed with regard to their expectations for learning, classroom instruction, counseling and guidance, and personalization. Students are also asked to identify if they currently participate in a smaller learning community and their participation in activities such as after-school programs, college courses, internships and the like. The survey concludes with demographic questions including grade, sex, race-ethnicity, highest-level Mathematics class and plans after graduation in order to track student responses to smaller learning community implementation over time. To assess the impact of the initiative over time, Public *Works*, Inc. administers the surveys to 9th and 12th graders. Response rates for this survey are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Student Survey Response Rates, 2009-10

High School	9th grade enrollment*	# of surveys completed	Response Rate	12th grade enrollment*	# of surveys completed	Response Rate
A.B. Miller	822	728	89%	661	488	74%
Arroyo Valley	781	638	82%	571	382	67%
Barstow	509	311	61%	351	224	64%
Bloomington	790	770	98%	634	530	84%
Cajon	814	268	33%	636	348	55%
Chaffey	1,002	832	83%	831	578	70%
Don Lugo	588	485	83%	516	364	71%
Fontana	1,089	838	77%	779	692	89%
Palm Springs	554	451	81%	468	331	71%
Redlands	690	575	83%	821	641	78%
Total	**7,639**	**5,896**	**77%**	**6,268**	**4,578**	**73%**

***Source: CDE**

Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

To measure the actual postsecondary outcomes of students and meet federal reporting requirements, Public *Works*, Inc. administered a follow-up telephone survey starting Fall 2010[7] to seniors providing contact information during the Spring 2010 student survey. The survey gauged baseline outcomes and student opinions related to student activities since high school, the value of student experiences in high school for later life, and future plans of graduates not currently enrolled in school or college after high school. The response rate across the ten high schools was about 71% (2,371 out of 4,578 total graduate surveys). This was approximately 37% of total seniors enrolled (6,268) in 2009-10 as reported by CDE (Table 3).

Table 3: Graduate Follow-up Survey Response Rates, Fall 2010

High School	# of surveys completed	# of graduate surveys*	# of Follow-up surveys completed	Response rate
A.B. Miller	488	473	337	71%
Arroyo Valley	382	318	222	70%
Barstow	224	154	110	71%
Bloomington	530	336	243	72%
Cajon	348	251	185	74%
Chaffey	578	244	200	82%
Don Lugo	364	410	260	63%
Fontana	692	361	264	73%
Palm Springs	331	244	162	66%
Redlands	641	564	388	69%
Total	**4,578**	**3,356**	**2,371**	**71%**

***Includes only those surveys with complete contact information on graduate surveys**
Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

Site Visits

In order to provide qualitative information regarding the implementation of SLC at the school level, Public *Works*, Inc. conducted site visits to each of the ten schools receiving Cohort VI implementation grant funds. Site visits were scheduled by Public *Works*, Inc. staff and coordinated by each school's designated implementation coordinator. The site visit consisted primarily of interviews and focus groups of key administrators, staff and students at the school. In order to speak with a range of school stakeholders, Public *Works*, Inc. requested that the following categories be used in the development of the agenda for the site visit:

- SLC Grant Coordinator/Administrator
- Principal and other key administrators
- Teachers involved in SLC
- Teachers not involved in SLC
- Counselors
- Students participating in SLC (i.e., 9th grade houses and Partnership Academies)
- Students not participating in SLC
- SLC Advisory Committee or Team – including community partners

[7] Follow-up phone surveys were conducted through December 2010.

To prepare for the site visit, Public *Works,* Inc. met with the schools and gathered initial information for all the current and planned smaller learning communities at each site. In addition, Public *Works*, Inc. prepared a demographic and data profile of each school in order to understand the school's enrollment and staffing statistics. Public *Works,* Inc. held training for the site visit team prior to the site visits, which included a review of the overall goals for the site visits, background information and a review of the protocols developed specifically for the site visits.

In order to analyze and summarize the data collected during the site visit for each school site, Public *Works*, Inc. used an implementation checklist prepared specifically for this evaluation. Survey and site visit information was summarized in the checklists completed for each site. The SLC Site Implementation Checklist is included in **Appendix D**. The SLC Site Implementation Checklist provides a means to measure an overall average rating of the status of implementation for individual areas within the initiative. The eight areas rated on the checklist for the SLC grants included:

- Vision, Leadership & Management
- Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Teams
- Rigorous, Relevant Curriculum & Instruction
- Inclusive Programs and Instructional Practices (SLC Structure)
- Accountability and Continuous Program Improvement
- School/District Support for SLC
- Personalization
- Parent and Community Engagement

The following rating scale was used to provide a gauge of the level of implementation of individual components of small learning communities based on survey results and site visits. The scale incorporates a rubric of both effectiveness of implementation and coverage of the school community, which is broadly defined as students, teachers, staff, administrators, parents and community partners as appropriate to the particular strategy.

Checklist Rating Scale:

- 1= No Evidence of Implementation. Strategies have not been developed; few or no school community members involved and/or impacted; planning to take place in the future.
- 2= Planning for Implementation. Strategies are in the planning stages; some or a few school community members are involved in planning; few or no school community members impacted.
- 3= Early Implementation. Strategies are moving beyond planning to implementation; school community members are being recruited for implementation and participation; some school community members impacted.
- 4= Developmental Implementation. Strategies have moved into implementation; implementation at the early developmental stages; impact on school community is growing.
- 5= Solid Implementation. Strategies are in solid implementation stage; impact on participants is evident but continues to be fine-tuned.
- 6= Full Implementation. Strategies are fully implemented; 100% of target school community is participating and impact is positive.

Quantitative Data Collection

Part IV of this report summarizes student outcome data that is available for the schools participating in the grant. Student level data from 2008-09 and 2009-10 for all students at the high schools participating in the SLC grant were collected from the district in the fall of 2010. In addition, data available online through the California Department of Education (CDE) has also been used in many of the tables prepared for this report.

In order to assess the impact of SLC on student achievement, this report presents 2006-07 (Year 1), 2007-08 (Year 2), 2008 –09 (Year 3), and 2009-10 (Year 4) student achievement data for the high schools participating in the Cohort VI grant. Most of the aggregate school level data was collected through the California Department of Education (CDE) Website. In addition, participating school districts provided standardized test and attendance data at the individual student level that has been disaggregated by demographic characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, English language status, and socio-economic status).

Efforts to improve data availability at the individual student level that can be disaggregated by participation in smaller learning communities continue at several of the participating sites. The distinction between school level data and student level data is important to the discussion on how SLC implementation impacts student outcomes. With improved identification of students participating in a particular SLC, CASLE could conduct a more robust analysis of student outcomes. In lieu of being able to systematically identify SLC participation for individual students and SLCs. Given that the analysis of student rosters collected from the ten schools indicated the majority of SLC implementation was concentrated at 9th and 10th grades, a separate analysis of data available for freshman and sophomore has been conducted for the evaluation.

The student outcome analysis across the schools participating in the initiative includes:

- Demographics
- SLC Enrollment and participation
- Dropout and graduation rates
- UC/CSU graduate eligibility
- Academic Performance Index (API)
- Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Freshman and sophomore data was available for the following measures:

- 9th Grade Attendance compared to school-wide
- 9th Grade California Standards Test (CST) English language arts proficiency
- 9th California Standards Test (CST) Mathematics proficiency
- 10th California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) first time test taking result

PART III—STATUS OF SLC IMPLEMENTATION

This part of the report provides an analysis of SLC program implementation across the ten schools organized by the original goals and is based on site visits and survey results.

1) Improve academic achievement for all students.
2) Improve quality of instruction & curriculum.
3) Decentralization and personalization of schools and classrooms.
4) Increase parent and community involvement.
5) Connect students to college, career, and technical development.

Where appropriate, examples of strategies employed by individual schools are described to illustrate the variety of approaches and to provide an opportunity to share information among the schools. Table 4 provides a list of SLC structures in place during 2009-10, across the ten SLC grantee schools.

Table 4: SLCs Structures in place in Year 4

School	Year 4-2009-10
A.B Miller	**MIC Academy**
Arroyo Valley	**9th , 10th Grade Houses** **Academies** *(Teaching, CORE)*
Barstow	**9th , 10th Grade Houses** **Academies** *(Mojave XP, STEM and VALOR)*
Bloomington	**9th , 10th Grade Houses** **Academies** *(Enterprise, Public Services, Arts & Industry, and Professional Services)*
Cajon	**9th , 10th Grade Houses**
Chaffey	**9th Grade Houses** **10th Grade Houses** **Academies** *(Humanities, Arts, and Technology)*
Don Lugo	**9th , 10th Grade Houses** **Academy** *(Health)*
Fontana	**9th , 10th Grade Houses**
Palm Springs	**9th , 10th Graded Houses** **Pathways/ Academies** *(Money, Market, and Management; Health; and Arts Institute)*
Redlands	**9th , 10th Grade Teams** **Academies** *(Arts & Industry, Professional Services, Enterprise and Public Action)*

Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

Status of Implementation by Project Goals

Goal 1: Improve academic achievement for all students

Objective: Increase the percentage of students scoring Proficient and Advanced in Math and ELA. Decrease the percentage of students scoring Far Below Basic and Below Basic in Math and ELA. Decrease the gap in academic proficiency between student sub-groups. Increase the students who pass their core courses in 9th grade. Provide additional interventions that support struggling students and students performing below grade level.

Academic Performance of Participating Schools and Academic Expectations

The implementation of SLCs at the group of schools in the CASLE Consortium occurred at a time of increasing accountability mandates for high schools at the state and federal levels. Through NCLB legislation, high school accountability is currently measured by success on the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which incorporates California's Academic Performance Index (API)[8], but primarily focuses on measuring English language arts and mathematics. Although there are similar student demographics among the ten schools participating in the CASLE Consortium, there is a wide range academic performance on these outcome measures.

The Academic Performance Index (API) for participating schools in 2009-10 ranges from 656 to 766, with a cohort average of 700. The schools averaged a 6% and a 9% increase in ELA and Math proficiency, respectively, over the four years since the baseline year of 2005-06. This translated to an average 42-point increase in API over the same time period. The average percentage of students scoring Far Below Basic and Below Basic in ELA across the cohort decreased 12%, from 40% in 2006 to 28% in 2010. In Algebra I, the percent scoring Far Below Basic and Below Basic across the cohort declined 2%, from 69% (Baseline) to 67% (Year 4). Data showed that student proficiency in Geometry decreased; the percentage scoring Below Basic and Far Below Basic increased 6%, from 54% to 60%.

For context related to the implementation of SLCs, Table 5 provides a summary of the schools that met API growth targets in the baseline and fourth year of the grant period. This indicator of provides data on the academic performance of the school as a whole. A more detailed analysis of school performance on the API and the AYP is provided in Part IV, the student outcome section of the report. As noted in the table, the grantee schools' academic performance varies across the ten schools.

[8] The API was created in 1999 to hold schools accountable for progress in improving student achievement relative to state content standards in core academic areas. For high schools, the API is a composite measure based largely on the California Standards Tests in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. It also includes achievement from the English and Mathematics portions of the California High School Exit Exam. Schools are accountable for closing 5% of the distance annually between their current API score and the threshold of 800 established by the State. The 5% goal includes both school-wide and subgroup targets.

Table 5: Meeting API Growth Targets, 2005-06 (Baseline) and 2009-10 (Year 4)

2006- Baseline	School-wide	Hispanic	Economically Disadvantaged	English Learners	Students w/ Disabilities
A.B. Miller					
Arroyo Valley			√		
Barstow				Not Significant	√
Bloomington					√
Cajon	√	√	√	√	√
Chaffey	√	√	√		
Don Lugo	√	√	√	√	√
Fontana			√		
Palm Springs	√		√		√
Redlands	√	√	√		
2010- Year 4					
A.B. Miller	√	√	√	√	√
Arroyo Valley	√	√	√	√	
Barstow	√	√	√	√	√
Bloomington			√		
Cajon					
Chaffey	√	√	√		
Don Lugo	√	√	√	√	
Fontana	√	√	√		
Palm Springs			√		Not Significant
Redlands	√	√	√	√	

√ = Met API
Source: California Department of Education

Over time, as described more fully in the student outcome section, a greater number CASLE schools have met accountability targets both school-wide and for numerically significant subgroups. Although the number of schools meeting API targets has fluctuated over the years, in 2009-10, seven schools met their school-wide target. Similarly, five schools (A.B. Miller, Arroyo Valley, Barstow, Bloomington, Don Lugo, and Redlands) met their subgroup growth targets for Hispanic, English Learner and Economically Disadvantaged (NSLP) students (Table 5). Growth targets for students with disabilities (SWD) are the area where most schools struggled. Only two schools (A.B. Miller and Barstow) met the API Growth target for SWD in 2009-10. Three schools have been identified as state Tier II persistently low-performing schools. Another school stood out from the other nine schools as its API increased only 1 point over the four years, which is very unusual.

Survey data also provide insight on school progress in improving academic achievement. Across the cohort, 91% of staff surveyed agreed that students understand classroom academic expectations in Year 4, increasing 15% from Year 1. Nearly all (87%) of staff agreed that curriculum and instruction is organized so that all students are expected to learn and perform at high levels in Year 4, up 13% from Year 1, and 82% (15% increase from Year 1) agreed that most staff at their school are committed to the principle that "all children can learn." In student surveys, 81% of 9th graders surveyed and 84% of 12th graders surveyed across the cohort agreed that teachers teach academic subject matter at a high level, increasing 8% from 2006-07. In addition, 79% of 9th graders and 87% of 12th graders agreed that teachers are fair about how they grade them, an incremental improvement of 9% and 3%, respectively. Only 49% of 9th graders and 53% of 12th

graders agreed that they have been encouraged to take Advance Placement (AP) and Honors courses in Year 4, but these reflected small increases since Year 1 of 6% and 4%, respectively. Ten percent of 9th graders and 17% percent of 12th graders (1% increase) felt that school difficulty is "easy." Twenty-five percent of 9th graders and 12% of 12th graders felt that school difficulty was "hard," increasing 3% in 9th grade and dropping 2% in 12th grade. These results show a drop in the level of academic expectations from the students' perspective, from 9th to 12th grade.

Organizing Academic Intervention to Meet Student Needs

Most of the qualitative data collected on the implementation of the SLC initiative, indicates schools were most likely to embrace the idea of SLCs at the 9th and 10th grade. Schools likely viewed SLCs as structures that would provide early academic intervention and a smoother transition to high school, resulting in benefits to students and helping schools meet accountability requirements.

In order to successfully reach more students in these grades, schools designed heterogeneous groupings of incoming students with a smaller core group of teachers to make sure that students are not "lost" in the shuffle of transitioning to high school from middle school. In contrast, SLCs typically implemented with juniors and seniors such as academies and career pathways that are more dependent on student and faculty interest and less tied to core content areas have had less resonance in many of the participating schools. Despite this resistance, some progress has been made in expanding 11th and 12th grade SLC structures at six of the ten-grantee schools, while three sites remain with 9th and 10th SLC structures only.

Through the SLC initiative, stakeholders reported intervention services expanded across the grantee schools. Typically, this involved providing programs and courses to prepare students for the CAHSEE, CSTs and CELDT assessments. While school wide intervention services generally increased, focus groups conducted across the sites indicated that the extent of interventions to support struggling students and specific populations varied across the cohort.

Four schools offered double-block periods in Math and English/Language Arts for students performing Far Below Basic and Below Basic on the CSTs and who struggle in both or either content areas. Many of the English support classes utilized the REACH/READ 180 program. Two of the four schools are under DAIT requirements. One of these schools refers struggling readers with the need for additional assistance to a reading program at the local California State University, San Bernardino campus, within walking distance of the school.

The intervention most common among the majority of the CASLE schools is the credit recovery option/program. At least seven of the ten schools offer either an online or in-class credit recovery option for failing and credit deficient students in the 11th or 12th grade. The credit recovery programs/ software included *Nova Net*, *A Plus*, *PLATO*, *APEX* and a Science Department generated credit recovery class.

Numerous schools assign CAHSEE prep time within the school day as well as preparation for the CST assessment. One school in particular provides a CAHSEE boot camp for sophomores in preparation for their first test taken in the month of February, which includes four six-hour long Saturday sessions with teachers focused on the Math and ELA skills covered on exam. The school additionally provided a support class, *Writing to Communication* for 11th and 12th grade re-takers.

Another grantee school similarly places great emphasis on preparing students the exam via boot camps and collaborating in conjunction with Math and English Department to review key concepts, skills and test-taking strategies. Their English Department utilizes students' journals to assess student performance and provide individualized feedback on a timely manner. Students at this school begin preparing for the CASHEE beginning freshman year through a mock CAHSEE, and daily class warm-ups. The school similarly coordinated and conducted CELDT boot camp with the intention of better preparing EL students along with a 7th Period study skills class for EL students who were identified as having failed multiple classes during the first semester.

House teams at two schools identified struggling students and focused on helping them. For example one school creates a *watch list*, in which each SLC team focused on students who received two or more fails. Three schools had formal freshmen support classes or programs. AVID strategies and formal peer mentoring programs were in place at a few schools, with one school recognized as an AVID demonstration school. Two schools have a dedicated an intervention counselor for struggling students.

Despite a lack of the development of SLC structures in some schools and at upper grade levels, the emphasis on freshmen and sophomores has resulted in a broader recognition of the need to intervene early on and to focus on data and outcomes to make these decisions. Across the cohort, 80% of staff surveyed agreed that there was a clear, connected and comprehensive model for monitoring student progress, increasing 19% from Year 1. Across the cohort, 67% staff surveyed agreed that there is a clear process for referring a student for academic intervention, increasing 13% from Year 1. Nearly all (90%) of 9th graders surveyed, and 94% of 12th graders surveyed across the cohort agreed that they could get tutoring and other help if they are having trouble in school (5% improvement since Year 1).

While structured intervention opportunities have increased generally, SLCs themselves have provided limited direct intervention designed to meet their particular SLC students. Rather, intervention is more likely to be organized at the department level. Ninth and twelfth grade student surveys, indicated there is room for growth in this area. While 70% and 74% agreed that teachers know a student's academic strengths, 61% and 75% agreement that teachers demonstrate that they are interested in student academic success. Moreover, there is a sizeable group (about one quarter to a third) who disagree with these statements. In addition, based on the API and CST performance, there is a much greater need for intervention.

Goal 2: Improve quality of instruction & curriculum

Objective: Teachers will use research-based instructional strategies that address the needs of English Learners, students with learning disabilities, and students of poverty. Teachers will use age-appropriate and culturally relevancy instructional materials and strategies. Teachers will use achievement data and student work to inform instruction. Teacher teams will develop interdisciplinary curriculum projects, project-centered, and problem based learning.

Staff Collaboration

Structured SLC collaboration time was found implemented at eight of the ten CASLE schools. Six schools provided all the SLC houses and/or teams with a common conference period or "family conference period" as one school called it. Two schools assigned common periods to some SLCs and/or teachers. The remaining two sites did not provide a common conference period to any extent.

While structured time was provided through the master schedule for many schools, site visits found that the extent to which SLC teams/ houses actually met and collaborated on common projects or reviewed student data varied widely across and within schools, and may have decreased in comparison to prior years. While some teams met on a much more frequent and formal basis (weekly to every other day), others meet every other week or every two weeks, and often time, some teams did not meet and opted for "random conversations."

Several of the tasks and projects developed and implemented during designated SLC staff collaboration are notable. For example, the school that assigned "family conference period" prompted and facilitated discussion on cross-curricular projects, as well as developed lesson plans, coordinated field trips, award assemblies and parent conferences. Another school discussed student progress, interventions, and instruction/curriculum. This school also provided time for House leads to meet once a month to discuss the SLCs overall. In addition, two schools facilitated formal tasks and expectations for teams to carry out during their meeting time and indicated efficient use of time. One school provided specific questions to be addressed in relation to common students and required meeting minutes to be submitted. The second school developed a SLC meeting protocol that consisted of teams developing weekly goals, measures and plans to attain goals, identification of three common struggling students and assign instructional strategies to address needs.

About half of the schools reported having consistent, regular SLC team meetings, which varied in frequency from weekly to monthly. Schools reported different areas of professional development focus such as: improving the school's Freshmen Success class curriculum, Cornell Notes, and topics from staff surveys. One school, in its 8th year of SLC funding spanning two different cohort grants, has established five SLC re-design teams, one each for its 9th and 10th grade houses, and one each for its three academies. These teams meet monthly, as does the school SLC leadership team.

More than two-thirds (68%) of staff agreed that SLC team members meet regularly for planning, curriculum, and activities. However, only 46% agreed that there is sufficient time for teachers to discuss and analyze student work in SLC team meetings. Most (74%) agreed that teachers are part of a professional community of practice that is collaborative and public, but only 55% of staff agreed that professional development for the SLC initiative is designed by teachers and is specific for their school. Only 58% agreed that SLC topics are a regular feature of school-wide professional development. The majority (64%) of staff agreed that their school has a strong leadership team that guides instruction and the implementation of the SLC initiative. Although there is an approximate 20% increase in staff agreement from the first year on these survey items, after four years of SLC implementation, these survey results are low.

Across the cohort, 73% of staff surveyed agreed that professional development promotes greater alignment of instruction with academic standards and accountability requirements, increasing 13% from Year 1. Nonetheless, six of the ten schools reported little or no use of interdisciplinary projects. Three schools had some teachers implementing common projects or common instructional strategies. One school implemented a cross-curricular research paper focused on the Elizabethan Era that brought together both the English and Biology courses. Another school utilized a common journal for students to use across the team's courses along with a common rubric for teachers to use.

The lack of SLC of widespread interdisciplinary lessons and projects may be tied to the fact that some sites also are implementing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Typically organized by department or course-alike groups, PLCs primarily focused on development and use of common formative assessments. Time in PLCs and the focus of these forums on content-specific topics appears to have reduced the time and emphasis accorded to furthering an interdisciplinary agenda through SLCs.

Data Use

Across the cohort, 76% of staff surveyed agreed that examination of student data is a regular part of school planning and assessment, an increase of 20% since the first year of the grant. However, the use of data to inform instruction across the cohort varied across the ten schools. In site visits, the four cohort schools with APIs over 700 reported having data provided to and used by staff. One of these schools had trained its teachers in the use of Data Director to focus on their lowest five students in each class period, and the teachers had data talks during a certain period of the day. Another school provided student grades by SLC to the teams of teachers. Another schools' OARS-trained staff had department data teams identify students for interventions. Another school provided all teachers with their own data folders which included state and school test results. One DAIT school with an API under 700 did report regular use of data protocols using their benchmark assessments. Interestingly, only one school, another DAIT school, reported being provided with ELA and Math coaches, likely because it was the only high school in its district.

Research–Based Instructional Strategies

The majority of schools reported that English Learners (ELs) and Resource Special Education students were distributed across SLCs rather than being in a single SLC. However, one school, the school with the lowest API, still had evidence of tracking into houses. This school reported providing a week-long summer training on ELs for its math and ELA teachers. The other school under DAIT also reported provided more than one week of EL-focused professional development in the core content areas. Another school had a CELDT boot camp and a 7th period study skills class for ELs with multiple F's, which resulted in an increase in its students' CELDT scores. In addition, the EL coordinator at one school provided instructional strategies and tips for teaching EL students, working closely with departments to provide resources and support in the classroom.

In staff surveys, 87% of staff across the cohort agreed that instruction is culturally responsive and accommodates diverse student interests, learning styles and educational needs, and 82% agreed that school-wide instructional decisions usually take into account the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students. Most (73%) of staff agreed that students experience personalized instruction that is based on diverse learning styles and multiple intelligences. The same percentage agreed that students experience personalized instruction that blends academic rigor with projects that reflect students' interests, life experiences, and culture. Survey results indicate an approximate 10% increase on these survey items on differentiated instruction between Year 1 and Year 4 of the grant.

In student surveys, 74% of 9th graders (8% increase from Year 1) and 77% of 12th graders (6% increase from Year1), agreed that their teachers were willing to alter or modify how they teach in order to make sure that all or nearly all students understand what is being taught. Most (64%) 9th graders and 73% of 12th graders agreed that they have the opportunity to do assignments and projects about interesting topics in class (no change from Year 1 responses). However, 59% of 9th graders and 67% of 12th graders agreed that the assignments and activities in their classes show them that teachers want to connect learning to students' life experiences and culture, decreases of 4% and 5%, respectively from Year 1 to Year 4 of the grant. These are lower percentages for students than for teachers surveyed on similar questions. While 81% of 9th graders and 84% of 12th graders agreed that their teachers provide them information on how they can become higher achieving students (8% and 9% increases since Year 1), only 70% of 9th graders and 74% of 12th graders agreed that teachers know their academic strengths and where they could improve academically.

County and District Support

School leadership teams, site coordinators and administrators rated varying degrees of support from the San Bernardino County CASLE office. Sites indicated very positive feelings about the county's efforts to provide opportunities to network with other schools involved in the initiative. Not only did they find this a worthwhile and excellent use of time, they indicated a desire to allocate more time for the sharing of promising/best practices. They further expressed an interest in networking with other counties that have been involved with SLCs for longer periods of time.

Schools appreciated the efforts of the CASLE office over the past four years, and the feedback from the interviews indicated common themes for desired future supports. With reduction in administrative staff, requests by teachers to limit the number of days away from the classroom, and budget reductions of at least 15%, feedback centered on allowing more flexibility in attendance at CASLE trainings/ meetings with a more focused approach to presentations/ meetings. Specifically, sites desired to condense as much as information as possible into a shorter time commitment (i.e. compress a 3 day session into 1 day).

Further, while they indicated a need for a greater variety of offerings, most common request was to have input on the topics offered for cohort-wide professional development, specifically how to move beyond 9th and 10th grade houses as they feel they are "stalled" at that point. Overwhelmingly, administrators indicated a need for more district support related to Smaller Learning environments. Many feel there is a lack of district knowledge/ understanding of the grant requirements, and therefore, conflicting messages are the norm. It appears budget cuts were done "the same way" at all high schools, irrespective of the needs of schools implementing SLCs.

While data discussions and use of data teams are more common than in the past, but many schools still need support with using data to impact the instructional practices within the classroom. In some districts there is willingness to allow SLC schools to develop common assessments in place of District-wide assessments (DWAs), but there is a need to continue to better align standards, pacing guides, and benchmarks assessments. Schools want local accountability to align assessments with curriculum and instruction.

Furthermore, in some cases schools have several accountability requirements/mandates they need to integrate (i.e. DAIT, SAIT, Tier I or Tier II, PI, etc.), and there is limited support from the districts as to how to "do it." In some cases, district mandates are in conflict with the direction SLC schools wish to head. With cuts District Offices have faced, the challenge is how to provide the needed support to their schools to support the SLCs and still meet all the other mandates and efforts they are subject to.

Site Support

Principals expressed satisfaction with the fact that data is more openly discussed among teachers than in past years. Still, they would like more guidance and direction on how to get teachers to use the data to alter their instructional practices within the classroom. Some schools that have achieved more success in this area are those schools that have instituted common prep time or required meetings with specific agendas.

Overall, those schools that have aligned counseling models to SLCs, and adopted the concept of having counselors loop with the students have had a more positive impact on the school culture. Counselors have been instrumental in ensuring there are more heterogeneous classes in that that they are more evenly distributing RSP and EL students among SLCs. However, lack of purity in terms of SLC teaming is a common problem across grantee schools with too many singletons and fragmentation in the master schedule.

Schools have been successful in providing support for 9th grade students on transitions and mentoring (e.g. Link Crew, etc.). These new structures and schools have placed a stronger emphasis on "college going" culture. Support for all students is evidenced in early intervention programs including CASHSEE prep, emphasis on the importance of CSTs, credit recovery and tutoring.

Nonetheless, many schools lack a common understanding or the vision for SLC implementation beyond 9th and/ or 10th grade houses. Student choice is often not part of student placement in an SLC; rather they are assigned an SLC in 9th grade based upon 8th grade success/grades. For those schools with 10th grade houses, choice is more likely to be part of the process.

As indicated above, there was limited evidence of interdisciplinary or thematic instruction across SLCs. While in many cases personalization was a fairly strong component of SLC implementation, there is a definite need to move beyond that into changes that directly influence curriculum and instruction. Much of the grant money is used for incentives for students and for purchasing "stuff" to improve SLC identity. Principals also expressed the need for a stronger focus on building business and community partnerships, yet feel that time and personnel constraints have limited their efforts to move forward.

Goal 3: Decentralization and Personalization of schools & classrooms

Objective: Increase students' sense of belonging and connectedness to their school. Decrease the number of student suspensions for violence and drug and alcohol than previous years. Decrease student dropout rate. Develop house, academy, and/or career pathway structures to create smaller, safer, and more personalized learning environments. Provide adult mentors and advocates for students. Teachers will form interdisciplinary teams with common groups of students. Teachers will collaborate during common conference periods. Schools will ensure ALL students are participating in SLC structures.

SLC Enrollment and Student and Staff Identification with SLCs

While grantee schools have made considerable progress in implementing SLC structures at the 9th and 10th grade and have expanded SLCs in the 11th and 12th grades, an analysis of enrollment and student rosters demonstrate that a majority of SLC participants do not yet meet the common three courses within an SLC, the federal definition of an SLC (50% of the day). This roster analysis indicated a large range of SLC participation meeting this federal definition from 4% (A.B. Miller) to 67% (Redlands) across the ten schools. About one-third of student enrollment at five other schools met this criterion, with the verified cohort average at 35% (Table 6). Part IV elaborates on this as a student outcome of SLC implementation.

Table 6: Summary of SLC Enrollment by School (3-common course definition of SLC)

School	Year 1 2005-06	Year 2 2006-07	Year 3 2007-08	Year 4 2009-10	2009-10 Met SLC Criteria*
A.B. Miller	8%	25%	45%	7%	4%
Arroyo Valley	32%	36%	63%	73%	39%
Barstow	58%	56%	51%	40%	34%
Bloomington	5%	43%	79%	71%	31%
Cajon	30%	42%	49%	50%	40%
Chaffey	1%	48%	46%	75%	49%
Don Lugo	0%	17%	34%	51%	37%
Fontana	23%	23%	43%	43%	21%
Palm Springs	5%	28%	41%	57%	30%
Redlands	32%	58%	99%	89%	67%
All Sites	**18%**	**37%**	**56%**	**56%**	**35%**

***These numbers were verified based on school-provided rosters of students.**
Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

As further evidence of the need to more fully develop SLCs grades 9th-12th and engage students and staff in the selection and assignment process, the student survey in 2009-10 indicated that many students did not self-identify the SLC/Academy to which they were currently assigned. Based on the student survey responses, only 57% of freshman and 24% of seniors indicated which SLC/Academy they were assigned to currently; the remaining respondents did not identify any assignment (Table 7).

Table 7: % Student Self-Reporting Assignment to SLC 2009-10

Grade Level	Identify SLC	Did not Identify SLC
Freshman (n=5,896)	57%	43%
Seniors (n=4,578)	24%	76%

Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

One question on the staff survey asked respondents to self-identify whether they were currently assigned to an SLC by checking from a list of SLC options (see question 6 in staff survey in Appendix C). Based on the survey responses in 2009-10, about 42% of staff across the sites said that they were not assigned to an SLC and 58 % said they were assigned (Table 8). Again, Redlands High School staff reported the highest levels of assignment to an SLC (96%). Only 20% of A.B. Miller High School staff reported that they were assigned to an SLC in 2009-10.

Table 8: % Staff Self-Reporting Assignment to SLC by Type[9] 2009-10

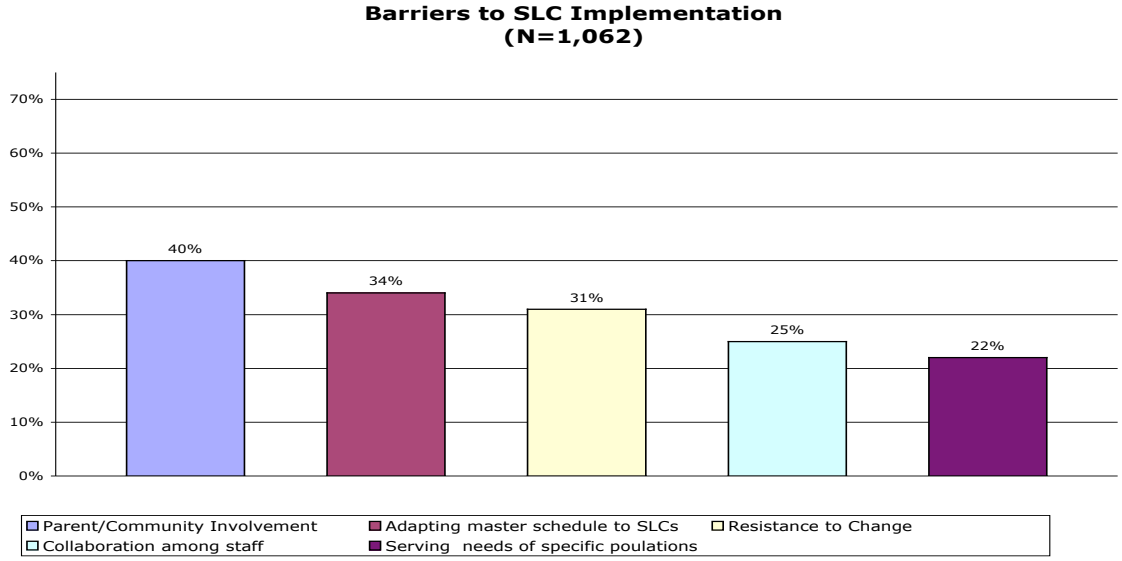
High School	Assigned to SLC	Not Assigned to SLC
A.B. Miller HS (n=95)	20%	80%
Arroyo Valley (n=81)	46%	54%
Barstow (n=65)	66%	34%
Bloomington (n=135)	76%	24%
Cajon (n=107)	33%	67%
Chaffey (n=150)	86%	14%
Don Lugo (n=83)	53%	47%
Fontana (n=128)	38%	63%
Palm Springs (n=76)	45%	55%
Redlands (n=100)	96%	4%
TOTAL (N= 1,020)	**58%**	**42%**

Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

As indicated by the analysis of enrollment and site visits, the master schedule continues to be rated as one of the largest barriers to SLC implementation. Staff survey indicates the master schedule (34%) is seen as a large barrier to SLC implementation (see Figure 1). Moreover, 3% more staff identified master schedule as a barrier in Year 4 compared to Year 1 of the grant. Clearly, changing the master schedule is difficult and requires many levels of negotiation and accommodation. While resistance to change was the single largest barrier in 2006-07 (37%), in 2009-10, perceptions of resistance as a barrier decreased 6% to 31%. Interestingly, parent and community involvement (40%) were perceived as the largest barrier in implementing SLCs on the staff suvey (and increased 11% from Year 1), although the site visits did not reflect such barrier. Put another way, there is no evidence to suggest that parents/community are in opposition to SLC reforms. Rather, school staff likely view engagement of parents/community as a large barrier for all efforts, including SLC implementation.

[9] Respondents could check multiple options.

Figure 1: Top Five Barriers to SLC Implementation, 2009-10 Staff Survey



Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

SLC Coherence & Identity

CASLE schools were most successful in developing coherent 9th and 10th grade house structures as part of the grant. All but one grantee school created both 9th and 10th grade house structures with at least some common students in three or more classes with a team of teachers. These vary in identity and functionality from being only on paper to fairly strong identities.

Site visits indicated that seven of the eight schools with functioning houses had heterogeneous student bodies and honors courses available in all houses. The majority (66%) of staff agreed that admission to SLCs is open and inclusive, an 18% increase from 48% in Year 1. Similarly, 66% agreed that SLCs include heterogeneous groupings of students and are not tracked by student ability in 2009-10, an increase of 26% from Year 1.

Purity of houses (i.e. e., the number of shared students among the team of teachers) was reported to be an issue in two schools' houses. One school had its 9th grade houses' classrooms located in physically distinct pods. Only 30% of staff agreed that SLCs have distinct physical boundaries (7% growth), and 44% (12% growth) agreed that the architectural design and/or use of space at their school support the implementation of SLCs.

For the most part, efforts to expand SLC structures through the CASLE initiative have stalled. Of the eight schools with houses that are functioning on any level, six of them have 11th-12th grade concepts that are only ideas on paper, and the two schools with 9th-10th teams that are only on paper have no 11th-12th grade structures as well. One school has two California Partnership Academies (CPAs) that extend 10th-12th grades, and

another has three academies that are 11th-12th grade structures with formal career themes.

Confirmation of these realities can be seen in that only 58% of staff surveyed agreed that students have opportunities to work with one or more teachers over multiple years (although this represents a 15% increase from Year 1). Approximately half (52%) of staff agreed that SLCs at their school have an educational philosophy that is shared by students, staff, families, and community partners, an increase of 22% from Year 1. About half (56%) of staff agreed that SLCs have unique academic identities, an increase of 19% from Year 1. Only 42% of staff (14% increase from Year 1) agreed that SLCs make decisions related to the master schedule and student programming. In an interesting contrast, however, 62% of staff agreed that their school's master schedule supports SLCs, a large increase of 24% in positive staff perception since the start of the grant.

Six schools reported common conference periods for their SLC teams, but frequency for team meetings and collaboration varied widely from none to monthly to weekly. Only 51% of staff surveyed agreed that there was sufficient time for teachers to support students' academic and personal needs and to help them plan for the future. However, this represented a 21% increase from Year 1. Only 47% of staff agreed that SLCs make decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment, albeit a 16% increase from Year 1. Only 27% agreed that SLCs make decisions regarding budget, personnel, and facilities. However, 61% of staff agreed that SLCs have administrators or teacher-directors who lead a cohesive faculty, an increase of 27% since the onset of the USDE grant.

Guidance and Mentorship

Counseling and administrative responsibilities have become more aligned with the SLC initiative over the course of the grant. For example, two schools have counselors and administrators assigned to SLCs. Another five schools have counselors assigned to SLCs in addition to their alphabetical assignments. Half of the schools said their counselors "looped" forward with the students through the grade levels, which is assumed to be similar to a traditional alphabetical assignment.

Most (61%) of staff surveyed agreed that students complete a written educational plan that encompasses goals for high school and postsecondary education with teachers and/or counselors (15% increase from Year 1), while 82% of staff agreed that students receive verbal counseling regarding their secondary and postsecondary course plan from teachers and/or counselors. However, it is important to note that the counseling model continues to lag in terms of proactively intervening with 9th grade students, with 12th grade students much more likely to receive counseling support and guidance.

Only 44% of 9th graders and 56% of 12th graders reported that they were assigned to a teacher, counselor or other staff member to help them plan their education after their graduate. It is important to note, however, that these percentages have increased 22% for 9th graders and 18% for 12th graders since the first year of the grant.

Only 34% and 32% of 9th graders and 54% and 41% of 12th graders agreed that they have worked with a counselor or a teacher, respectively, to develop a written educational plan that reflects their needs and interests. More than half (58%) of 9th graders reported that their meetings with counselors were to select courses, while 17% reported that they were to plan for college. A smaller proportion (29%) of 9th graders agreed that they talk to their teachers or a counselor regularly about their high school educational plan. Among 12th graders, student-counselor interactions tended to focus on course selection (76%) and college planning (53%). Nearly half (49%) of seniors reported talking to teachers or counselors regularly about their high school plan.

Reflecting students' greater contact with their teachers, 47% of 9th graders (a decrease of 8% since Year 1) and 50% of 12th graders (a decrease 10% from Year 1) rated teachers as most helpful to them in planning for high school and life after high school, while only 35% of 9th graders and 44% of 12th graders rated counselors as most helpful.

Two schools have formal Freshmen Success classes, and two more have special advising activities for freshmen. Two schools have dedicated intervention/crisis counselors. Counselors at several schools conduct presentations to students on effective study habits, drug and anger workshops, college awareness, etc. Several mentioned counselors doing four-year plans and in one case a ten-year plan with their students. One school reported having two social work interns.

More than half (57%) of staff surveyed agreed that all students at this school have an adult advocating for their academic and personal needs, a 19% increase from Year 1. Reflecting a lack of formal advisor periods in the master schedule, only 19% of 9th graders (15% increase from Year 1) and 12% of 12th graders (8% increase from Year 1) reported being enrolled in an Advisory program where they met with a teacher or other school staff member for a non-academic period every day or every week to check on academic progress and plan for life beyond high school. While only 46% of 9th graders agreed that their teachers know something about their goals and aspirations for the future, this increased to 59% among 12th graders surveyed.

One school mentioned decreased discipline issues and increased attendance since SLCs were established, but another indicated as many as 400 students are regularly absent, over 10% of the school student body. Only 42% of staff surveyed agreed that student discipline is <u>not</u> a major problem area at their school, but this has improved 10% since Year 1. However, the vast majority (83%) of staff agreed that students experience a safe learning environment, representing an 8% increase from Year 1. Only 43% (14% increase from Year 1) of staff agreed that SLCs make decisions related to student conduct and issues of community safety, however.

Goal 4: Increase parent and community involvement.

Objective: Invite parent and student input to the planning and implementation of the SLCs. Increase the number of business partners assisting schools in formation of SLCs. Create project based learning opportunities for students with assistance from increased numbers of business partners. Implement strategies that are inclusive of parent, community, and student voices.

Parent Involvement

Engaging parents in the development of the SLCs continues to be an area in need of growth at the CASLE schools. Most sites do not recruit or engage parent in involvement specifically with the SLCs initiative either in planning or decision-making. However, parent outreach with the objective of informing parents about their child's progress and creating better communication between the school and home has increased at majority of the grantee schools.

Tele-parent, automated phone systems, is widely used across the cohort to contact parents regarding attendance, grades events and special announcements. One school indicated sending grade checks home every two weeks as a school-wide measure to inform parents immediately on student progress. Another school put on Parent Academy (6-week session aimed at informing parents about college readiness) as well as had counselors provide a workshop on filing out financial aid paperwork. Parent night at another school reviewed several topics such academic expectations, academic and behavioral standards, understanding report cards and transcripts.

Sixty percent of staff surveyed agreed that SLCs provide information and outreach about their programs to high school students and parents, increasing from thirty nine percent. However, 41% of staff agreed that SLCs provide information and outreach about their programs to middle school students and parents, an 11% increase since Year 1. Although 53% of staff surveyed agreed that parents are considered key collaborators and contributing members to the school community, site visits indicated that only one school mentioned increased parent-teacher conferences organized by SLC. However, 75% of 9th graders surveyed and 80% of 12th grades did agree that their parents feel comfortable with their teachers if they have questions or need information.

Community Involvement

Site visits indicated that project-based learning has not taken hold to any noticeable extent in the cohort schools. Few sites have established any new links to businesses or community organizations through existing SLC and career technical programs. Partnerships between SLCs and local businesses and community organizations have only expanded at three schools and the number of SLC students involved is small.

One school partnered up with local community college, chamber of commerce and Marine base, providing job shadowing and field trip opportunities. Similarly another school teamed up with a local hospital to provide students in the health-related academy internships opportunities. Local community colleges and four-year institutions have

begun to become involved with some grantee schools providing additional assistance for struggling students and mentorship to a limited amount of students.

While 57% of staff agreed that their school encourages partnerships with employers, postsecondary institutions, and others necessary to implement SLCs (a 16% increase from Year 1), only 34% of staff agreed that community partners, employers, and businesses are involved in the development of SLCs (12% increase compared to Year 1). In an interesting and dramatic contrast, 83% of 9th graders and 83% of 12th graders surveyed agreed that they would be prepared for employment when they are finished with high school. Surprisingly, parent/ community involvement was also perceived at the highest barrier to SLC implementation by staff (40%), when limited efforts have been made to solicit or involve parents in SLC implementation.

Goal 5: Connect students to college, career, and technical development

Objective: Increase the number of students meeting A-G requirements. Increase high school graduation rates and college-going rates. Increase number of students participating in Advanced Placement courses and career technical (CTE) courses. Schools will embed career technical courses in SLC structures such as academies and career pathways. Teachers will integrate career education within the core curriculum. Schools will increase the number of courses articulated with college.

College Readiness & Career Preparation

Over 80% of students surveyed in 2009-10 in the CASLE schools agreed that teachers teach academic subject matter at a high level, that teachers provide them with information on how they can become a higher-achieving student, and that they will be prepared to enter college when they are finished with high school. However, only 49% of 9th graders and 53% of 12th graders agreed that they have been encouraged to take AP and honors courses.

University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) eligibility requirements are a guiding principle in the development of curricular practices and in programming courses for students at high schools throughout California. Because it is based on enrollment in UC and CSU eligible courses, what is tracked at the state level does not necessarily provide an accurate gauge of students who are actually competitive in the application process. However, it does provide some guidance regarding student access to the courses accepted by these university systems.

Table 9 provides the percentage of seniors who completed UC/CSU courses in the participating schools in Baseline through Year 3 (Year 4 data is not yet available) of the grant. There was substantial variation (range of 17%-58%) across the schools in 2008-09, the last year for which data is available.

Four of the participating schools experienced an increase in the percentage of students meeting UC/CSU eligibility requirements upon graduation. In Year 3, state graduates increased to 383,643 with 35% UC/ CSU eligible. Across the ten schools, 1,064 of 4,841 graduating students (22%) met the A-G criteria. Grantee schools' UC/CSU eligibility percentages should equal or exceed statewide averages, and among all sites the statewide percentage was not met. Two high schools' graduating seniors met UC/CSU eligibility at the state average (35%), and one fourth of students graduating at two schools met UC/CSU eligibility (Table 9).

Table 9: UC/CSU Graduate Eligibility, 2005-6 to 2008-09[10]

School	Baseline: 2005-06		Year 1: 2006-07		Year 2: 2007-08		Year 3: 2008-09	
	Total Graduate	UC/CSU	Total Graduate	UC/CSU	Total Graduate	UC/CSU	Total Graduate	UC/CSU
A.B. Miller	687	104 (15.1%)	695	182 (26.2%)	655	51 (7.8%)	541	89 (16.5%)
Arroyo Valley	433	106 (24.5%)	369	108 (29.3%)	441	120 (27.2%)	448	77(17.2%)
Barstow	327	95 (29.1%)	291	98 (33.7%)	266	105 (39.5%)	276	0(0%)
Bloomington	485	272 (56.1%)	464	209 (45.0%)	446	205 (46.0%)	463	122 (26.3%)
Cajon	435	114 (26.2%)	416	122 (29.3%)	483	152 (31.5%)	484	86 (17.8%)
Chaffey	496	93 (18.8%)	516	80 (15.5%)	546	112 (20.5%)	486	79 (16.3%)
Don Lugo	466	29 (6.2%)	461	77 (16.7%)	476	84 (17.6%)	436	118 (27.1%)
Fontana	609	69 (11.3%)	597	205 (34.3%)	617	64 (10.4%)	611	88 (4.4%)
Palm Springs	352	128 (36.4%)	315	92 (29.2%)	352	117 (33.2%)	417	146 (35.0%)
Redlands	642	168 (26.2%)	654	184 (28.1%)	690	248 (35.9%)	679	259 (38.1%)
All Sites	**4,932**	**1,178 (23.8%)**	**4,778**	**1,357 (28.4%)**	**4,972**	**1,258 (25.3%)**	**4,841**	**1,064 (22.0%)**
STATE	**349,074**	**125,308 (36%)**	**356,641**	**126,516 (36%)**	**376,393**	**127,594 (34%)**	**383,643**	**135,379 (35%)**

Source: California Department of Education

Evaluation surveys also asked students about participation in a variety of extracurricular activities, particularly those tied to postsecondary and career preparation. For example, 40% of both 9th graders and 12th graders reported participating in an after-school program during the school year, and 7% of both grades reported participating in a college class. Senior were more likely to report participation compared to 9th graders in all the other categories surveyed -- internships (14% vs. 5%), community service (7% vs. 1%), career/interest inventories (17% vs. 5%), college fairs (20% vs. 11%), work experience (12% vs. 4%), job shadowing (22% vs. 4%), career fairs (29% vs. 17%) and field trips (43% vs. 21%).

In light of the student-reported survey data, it is interesting to note that the vast majority (72%) of staff surveyed agreed that students receive career planning and guidance in the form of career inventories and assessments, job shadowing opportunities, field trips, and career fairs (7% increase from Year 1). Similarly, 82% of staff agreed that students have opportunities for learning that extend beyond the instructional day including after-school programs, college courses, internships, etc (increased from 71%). It is possible to infer from these data that staff feel that students are receiving opportunities, but students are not availing themselves of opportunities.

[10] 2008-09, 2009-10 UC/CSU Data not available on CDE.

Conversely, the data may suggest that students have significantly less access to college and career preparation activities than staff think they have.

Survey data also show marked difference in students' reported plans after high school graduation between 9th and 12th grade. For example, 3% of 9th graders reported plans to attend a trade or vocational school, compared to 8% of 12th graders. Similarly, 17% of 9th graders planned on attending a two-year college, compared to 44% of seniors. More than half (59%) of 9th graders planned on attending four-year postsecondary institutions compared to 46% of seniors. Those planning to find a part-time job increased from 32% among 9th graders to 38% of 12th graders. In sum, the optimism of 9th graders is tempered significantly by the time they are seniors.

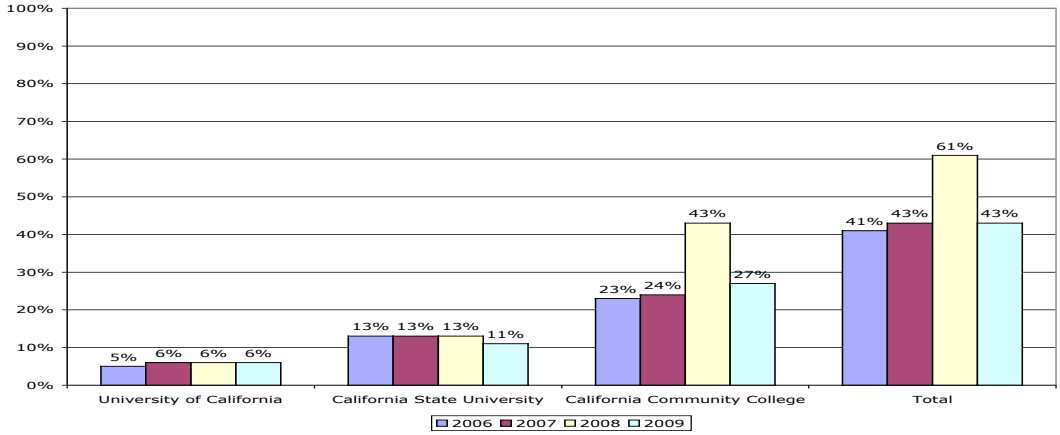
Student responses tied to perceptions of curricular relevance and college preparation were more equal. For example, 72% of 9th graders surveyed and 75% of 12th graders agreed that their classes show how what they are learning will be useful and beneficial in future education or in a future career. Similarly, 78% of 9th graders and 87% of 12th graders agreed that their classes have encouraged them to consider further education after high school.

Site visits revealed that only three schools have CTE courses associated with pathways or SLCs developed under the grant, with more embedded in schools' pre-existing CPAs. Indeed, site visits showed that integration of career education into core classes is limited to some efforts in CPAs. In addition, career inventories are done in Freshmen Success classes in only two schools. In some cases, strong ROP programs exist with CTE courses that could be linked to traditional core academic courses in an SLC.

Postsecondary and Career Placement

It is difficult to isolate postsecondary placement and career preparation improvements through the SLC initiative. The majority of the CASLE schools provided a credit recovery option/program for credit deficient students. At least one school has partnered with local community college for a concurrent enrollment program.

Figure 2: Cohort-wide Post Secondary Enrollment, Baseline – Year 3



Source: California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC)

As shown in Figure 2, California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) data for the entire cohort indicate that postsecondary enrollment slightly increased from 2006 (41%) to 2009 (43%) but also dropped surprisingly from 61% to 43% between 2008 and 2009. In 2009, 6% of graduates enrolled in an UC, 11% at a CSU and 27 % at a California Community College. One reasonable hypothesis is that the economic recession had an immediate impact on students' choices after high school.

The evaluation's graduate follow-up survey given to seniors from the class of 2010 in the fall of 2010 revealed that 73% of the graduates contacted reported being currently enrolled in postsecondary education, with 58% in a public community college and 35% in a four-year college or university. Nearly all (80%) reported attending school full-time, with 77% working part-time (less than 35 hours per week). Very few of the graduates contacted reported placement into the military (2%) or apprenticeship programs (1%).

PART IV—STUDENT OUTCOMES ANALYSIS

This section summarizes the status of student outcomes through 2009-10 for the ten Cohort VI grantee schools (A.B. Miller, Arroyo Valley, Barstow, Bloomington, Cajon, Chaffey, Don Antonio Lugo, Fontana, Palm Springs and Redlands) from seven of San Bernardino County's 36 school districts and one of Riverside County's 25 school districts involved in the SLC initiative. The grantee schools represent Barstow Unified, Chaffey Joint Unified, Chino Valley Unified, Colton Joint Unified, Fontana Unified, Palm Springs Unified, Redlands Unified and San Bernardino City Unified.

Results in this section are derived from performance in 2009-10, the fourth year of a five-year evaluation. Most of the aggregate school level data was collected through the California Department of Education (CDE) Website. School-level data was available for the following measures:[11]

- School Demographics
- Dropout and graduation rates
- UC/CSU graduate eligibility
- Academic Performance Index (API)
- Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Given that roster analysis from the ten grantee schools has indicated a majority of SLC implementation is concentrated at the freshman and sophomore level, 9th and 10th grade student-level data was the focus of analysis. Student level data was available for the following measures:

- Attendance
- California Standards Test (CST) in English/Language Arts
- California Standards Test (CST) in Mathematics
- California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in English/Language Arts and Mathematics

School Demographics

Table 10 (below) summarizes the information about race-ethnicity across the ten grantee schools from Baseline to Year 4. The racial and ethnic composition of the schools has remained fairly consistent over time. In Baseline Year (2005-06), across all ten schools, the student ethnic composition was 62% Hispanic, 22% White, 10% African American, 5% Asian, and 1% others. By Year Four, Hispanic student enrollment increased 7% to 69%, while White, African American, and Asian enrollment decreased 6%, 1%, and 1%, respectively.

[11] Note that UC/CSU eligibility data has been presented in Part III, as has some of the measures on overall school progress for outcomes related to state and federal accountability.

Table 10: Cohort Demographics by Ethnicity, Baseline - Year 4

	African American	Asian	Hispanic	White	Other
Baseline (2005-06)					
Cohort	10%	5%	62%	22%	1%
Year 1 (2006-07)					
Cohort	9%	5%	64%	21%	1%
Year 2 (2007-08)					
Cohort	9%	5%	67%	18%	1%
Year 3 (2008-09)					
Cohort	9%	5%	68%	18%	1%
Year 4 (2009-10)					
Cohort	9%	4%	69%	16%	1%

Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

Table 11 (below) displays student enrollment by grade level. In 2009-10, approximately 28,498 were enrolled at the ten grantee schools. Approximately 7,600 students were enrolled in both 9th and 10th grade, 7,000 in 11th grade and 6,200 in 12th grade. However, 9th grade enrollment across all ten schools decreased by approximately 2,000 from the Baseline Year with declining enrollment in some Districts. Twelfth grade enrollment increased by more than 200 in Year Four. There is obvious attrition and dropouts from 9th -12th grade.

Table 11: Cohort Enrollment by grade level, Baseline - Year 4

	Enrollment	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Baseline (2005-06)					
Cohort	30,786	9,794	8,065	6,829	6,011
Year 1 (2006-07)					
Cohort	29,690	9,007	7,593	7,123	5,869
Year 2 (2007-08)					
Cohort	29,685	8,979	7,558	6,764	6,281
Year 3 (2008-09)					
Cohort	29,174	8,560	7,540	6,868	6,111
Year 4 (2009-10)					
Cohort	28,498	7,639	7,616	6,975	6,268

Source: California Department of Education

Table 12 provides information about the percentages of students who are English Learners (EL), who qualified for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and who were enrolled in Special Education. On average, the percentage of English Learners is 20%, no change from Baseline Year. Sixty percent of the students at these schools met federal criteria for NSLP, increasing 20% from Baseline Year across schools; poverty is growing in the region. Special Education enrollment increased slightly (2%) to 12% of enrollment in 2009-10.

Table 12: Enrollment by Other Student Characteristics, Baseline - Year 4

	English Learners	NSLP Eligible	Special Education
Baseline (2005-06)			
Cohort	20%	39%	10%
Year 1 (2006-07)			
Cohort	20%	50%	10%
Year 2 (2007-08)			
Cohort	21%	51%	10%
Year 3 (2008-09)			
Cohort	20%	56%	11%
Year 4 (2009-10)			
Cohort	20%	60%	12%

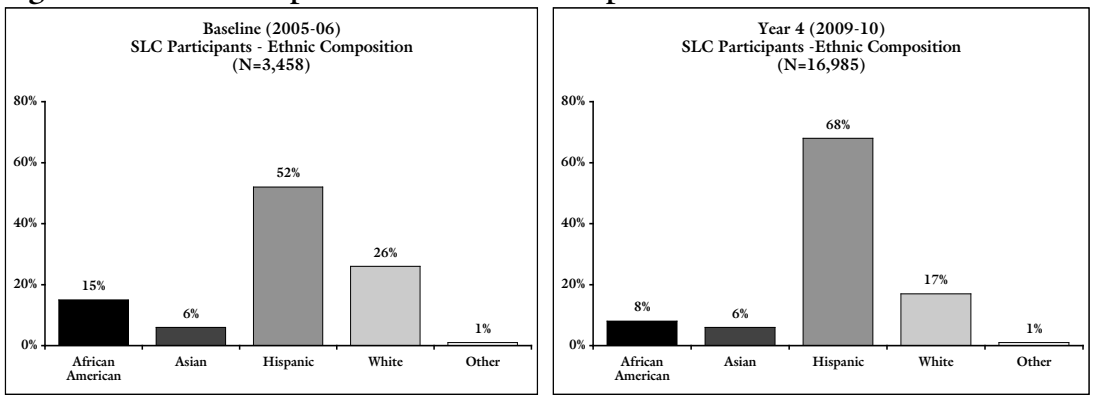
Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

SLC Demographics

This section of the report provides a summary of the demographic data available for students that are enrolled in SLCs in the ten high schools involved in the grant. Figure 3, illustrates the ethnic composition across the grantee schools in Baseline Year and Year 4. When looking at the ethnic composition of SLC students across the Cohort VI schools, Hispanic SLC participation increased 16% from Baseline Year to 68% in 2009-10. SLC participation by White students decreased 9% in Year 4.

The SLC ethnic composition largely mirrors the school-wide ethnic composition at the ten sites. As such, the expansion of SLCs at the ten schools has improved equity and access to SLCs.

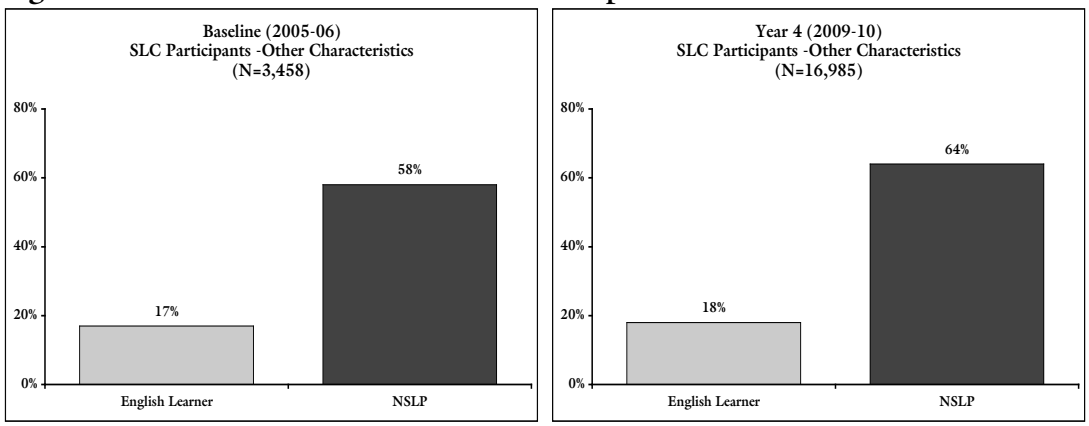
Figure 3: Ethnic Composition for SLC Participants



Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

Figure 4 displays the percentage of students who are English Learners and economically disadvantaged (i.e., eligible for NSLP). In the Baseline Year, 58% of SLC students qualified for NSLP and with 17% were ELs. Similarly, in Year Four, approximately two-thirds of SLC students are eligible for the NSLP and eighteen percent qualified as ELs. Again, these data suggest that SLC participants closely resemble school-wide demographic characteristics.

Figure 4: Other Characteristics of SLC Participants



*** These numbers are based on students enrolled in at least one SLC common course and do not reflect the federal definition of an SLC participant.**

Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

School-wide Measures of Student Outcomes

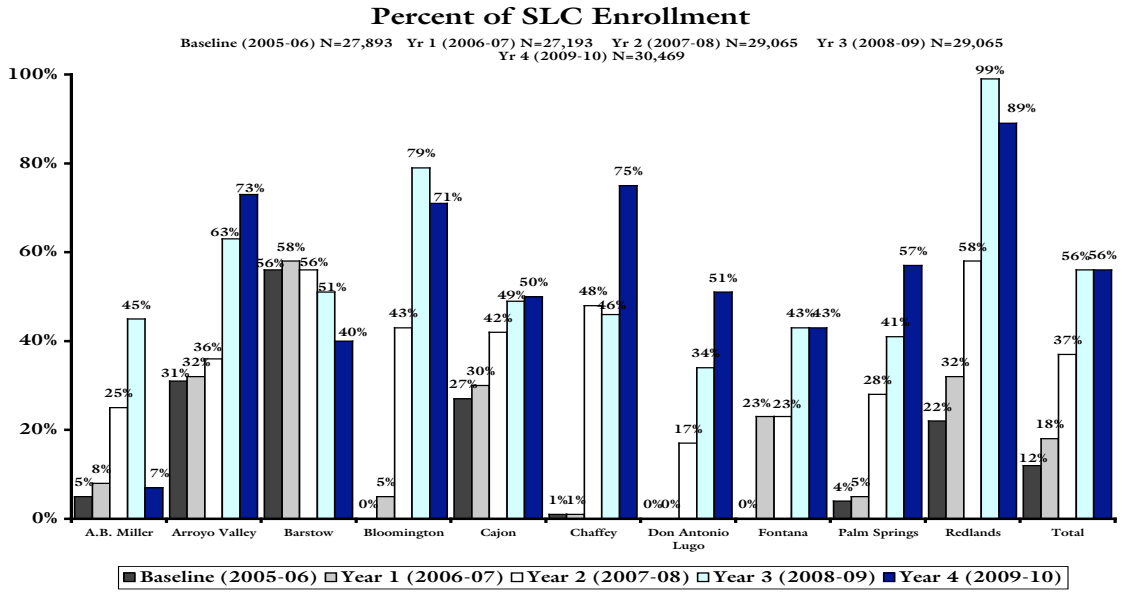
SLC Participation and Enrollment

The SLCs initiative promotes heterogeneous groupings of students with access to rigorous and relevant common courses lead by a team of collaborative teachers. A priority for the initiative is to "enroll students in a coherent sequence of rigorous English language arts, Mathematics, and science courses that will equip them with the skills and content knowledge needed to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation," as established by USDE. SLC students are expected to spend at least half of their school day (typically three courses in a six-period schedule) within an SLC.

In order to assess implementation and student outcomes from the perspective of participation in an SLC, Public *Works*, Inc. collected rosters from the ten participating schools. Based on these data, 56% (16,985) of students grade 9-12 were identified as sharing at least one SLC course in 2009-10 (Figure 5).

In 2009-10, Year 4 of a five year grant, SLC implementation dropped at four of the ten schools, the implementation loss from previous years ranges from 8% to 38%. While some schools regressed in Year 4, five schools expanded their SLCs, expansion ranges from 1% to 29% increase and the fifth grantee school showed no change (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Percent of SLC Enrollment, Baseline- Year 4



Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

Using the USDE SLCs definition of three or more shared SLC courses, a wide range of SLC participation across the high schools was identified (from 4% to 67%). Overall, 10,551 (35%) of 30,469 of students attending the ten grantee schools in 2009-10 shared three or more common classes within a SLC. Two schools (Redlands and Chaffey) enrolled a majority of students in three or more SLC courses (Table 13a).

Schools have focused on the implementation of the 9th grade Houses primarily followed by 10th grade SLC structures. In 2009-10, 75% of 9th grade students and 72% of 10th graders at grantee schools enrolled in at least one SLC course. Freshmen students had the highest concentration of SLC student with common 3 or more courses (55%), followed by 10th graders with 37% "cored" in three or more SLC courses.

Students in grades 11 and 12 showed the least percentage of students with three or more common classes (22% and 20%, respectively), though again, substantial progress has been achieved at some schools (Redlands, Bloomington, and Chaffey) in these grades as well (Table 13b).

Table 13a: % of Students in Common Courses 2009-10

Enrollment	Three Common Courses	Two Common Courses	One Common Courses
A.B. Miller (N=3,340)	4%	5%	7%
Arroyo Valley (N=2,666)	39%	54%	73%
Barstow (N=2,210)	34%	38%	40%
Bloomington (N=3,679)	31%	55%	71%
Cajon (N=2,656)	40%	48%	50%
Chaffey (N=4,137)	49%	69%	75%
DAL (N=2,078)	37%	45%	51%
Fontana (N=4,466)	21%	41%	43%
Palm Springs (N=2,289)	30%	45%	57%
Redlands (N=2,948)	67%	88%	89%
Cohort Total (N=30,469)	35%	49%	56%

Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

Table 13b: Enrollment in SLCs by Grade Level, 2009-10

Overall School Enrollment by Grade Level					
	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade	Total
% Enrolled in SLCs as Indicated by School Rosters					
A.B Miller	22%	0%	1%	0%	7%
Arroyo Valley	97%	96%	53%	25%	73%
Barstow	71%	67%	2%	8%	40%
Bloomington	57%	68%	81%	82%	71%
Cajon	87%	90%	0%	0%	50%
Chaffey	82%	73%	74%	70%	75%
Don Antonio Lugo	96%	93%	0%	0%	51%
Fontana	83%	77%	0%	0%	43%
Palm Springs	87%	87%	24%	19%	57%
Redlands	84%	85%	94%	91%	89%
All Sites	75%	72%	36%	34%	56%
Met 3 (or more) Common Class Requirement as Indicated by PW Analysis					
A.B Miller	13%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Arroyo Valley	85%	35%	12%	6%	39%
Barstow	64%	62%	0%	0%	34%
Bloomington	17%	9%	54%	52%	31%
Cajon	71%	69%	0%	0%	40%
Chaffey	58%	51%	49%	38%	49%
Don Antonio Lugo	78%	59%	0%	0%	37%
Fontana	67%	8%	0%	0%	21%
Palm Springs	60%	46%	6%	3%	30%
Redlands	62%	68%	74%	62%	67%
All Sites	55%	37%	22%	20%	35%

Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

As indicated in the majority of site visits conducted, negotiating what needs to be included in the master schedule is the biggest challenge to implementing true wall-to-wall SLC implementation in accordance with the common core course requirement. The master schedule continues to be a key structural issue in implementation reflecting many of the issues related to prioritizing SLC enrollment and heterogeneous groupings of all students within the structures.

School-wide Performance Measures

Academic Performance Index (API)

The Academic Performance Index[12] (API) is the gauge developed in California to rank schools by their performance based on a formula of students' performance on California Standards Tests (CSTs) and to a lesser extent other measures. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is a series of annual academic performance goals established by the USDE for each school and the state as a whole.

These two measures are a result of the movement to create standards-based instruction and to hold schools accountable for student performance. Thus, they are intended to drive instructional and curricular reform, professional development and programming to provide remedial support for failing students.

Table 14 provides the API Growth scores by school from 2006-2010. In 2009-10, seven schools met their school-wide API growth target. Redlands (766) and Palm Springs (750) received the highest 2010 Growth API scores, from a range of 656-766 among all ten grantee schools. These same two schools (Palm Springs and Redlands) exceeded the statewide API score in each of the last three years (2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10).

Table 14: API Growth, Baseline – Year 4

High School	2006 Growth API	2007 Growth API	2008 Growth API	2009 Growth API	2010 Growth API	Net Change from Baseline
A.B. Miller	637	645	645	639	687	50
Arroyo Valley	590	595	597	615	656	66
Barstow	615	--	618	636	665	50
Bloomington	604	596	681	661	671	67
Cajon	686	683	692	692	687	1
Chaffey	673	666	681	702	715	42
Don Lugo	679	670	674	698	710	31
Fontana	646	626	653	677	688	42
Palm Springs	709	685	716	747	750	41
Redlands	735	742	734	740	766	31
Cohort Average	**657**	**656**	**669**	**681**	**700**	**43**
State-Wide (9-11th Grade)	**680**	**689**	**702**	**713**	**729**	**49**

Source: California Department of Education

[12] The API was created in 1999 to hold schools accountable for progress in improving student achievement relative to state standards in core academic areas. For high schools, the API is a composite measure based largely on the CSTs in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies. It also includes achievement from the ELA and Math portions of CAHSEE. Schools are accountable for closing 5% distance annually between their current API score and the threshold of 800 established by the State. The 5% goal includes both school-wide and subgroup targets.

In 2009-10, the statewide average API for SLC grantee high schools was measured at 729, up 49 points from Baseline Year. Although only two schools obtained an API Growth score greater than the state average, nearly all schools continue to increase their score on the API with an average 43-point increase from Baseline Year.

Adequate Yearly Progress

The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the federal accountability measure from NCLB, is a series of annual academic performance goals established for each school.[13] To meet the AYP in California, schools and LEAs are required to meet or exceed requirements in test participation rate, percent proficient and advanced, API, and graduation rate requirements. In addition, schools and their subgroups are required to meet percent proficient targets, Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) in ELA and Mathematics.

In the Baseline Year, six out of ten schools met the AYP criteria tied to proficiency of 10th grade students on the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in both English/Language Arts and Mathematics. As the AYP target has risen over time[14], the number of schools meeting AYP has declined from four schools in Year One, two schools in Year Two and none in Year Three or Year Four. The two main reasons schools did not pass the AYP include: (1) at least one subgroup did not meet the performance level as required and/or (2) at least one subgroup did not meet the participation rate.

AMOs for the grantee schools, state targets for proficient or advanced percentage in ELA and Mathematics, are provided in Table 15. During Baseline Year all ten school met the state percent proficient target and ranged from 27% to 61% in ELA and 25% to 60% in Mathematics. Additionally, the cohort average that same year was 42% in ELA and 37% in Mathematics, well over the state target.

In Year 2, 2007-08 state percent proficient targets increased to 33.4% in ELA and 32.2% in Mathematics. During the same year, the ten schools met the state target. The percent proficient or advanced ranged from 34%-58% in ELA and 32%-58% in Mathematics. The percent proficient or advanced across the cohort slightly increased to 44% ELA and 42% Mathematics.

In 2009-10, Year 4 of the grant, the AMOs state targets were set at 55.6% (ELA) and 54.8% (Mathematics) of which only two schools (Redlands and Palm Springs) met. On average the cohort has improved proficiency in Mathematics by 9% and 6% in ELA from Baseline Year. While one school has shown a decline in both Mathematics and ELA proficiency from the start of the SLC grant, the increase in proficiency ranges from 2%-15% in Mathematics and 4%-11% in ELA.

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[13] The possible values are "Yes," "No," or "Pending." The report displays a "Yes" only if the school, LEA, or state met all of its AYP criteria for 2010, including requirements for numerically significant subgroups. "No" means results for at least one or more criteria were below the 2010 targets. "Pending" means that the school or LEA with grade twelve students met all AYP criteria other than the graduation rate on the September report. A final determination for these schools will be posted after the graduation data become available.

[14] The state-negotiated federal targets were consistently increased during this time period. For two consecutive years (2004-05 through 2006-07) the state expected schools to obtain 22.3% proficient or advanced in ELA and 20.9% in Mathematics on the CAHSEE for first-time (i.e., 10th grade) students. By Year 4 of the grant (2009-10), the state percent proficient or advanced targets more than doubled, set at 55.6% in ELA and 54.8% in Mathematics.

Table 15: Adequate Yearly Progress by School and Cohort, Baseline – Year 4

AYP – AMOs % Proficient or Advanced

	Baseline: 2005-06		Year 1: 2006-07		Year 2: 2007-08		Year 3: 2008-09		Year 4: 2009-10		Net Change	
School	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
A.B. Miller	37%	29%	33%	37%	41%	41%	36%	32%	41%	40%	4%	11%
Arroyo Valley	27%	31%	30%	33%	34%	32%	32%	37%	38%	36%	11%	5%
Barstow	40%	32%	36%	37%	39%	40%	44%	38%	45%	32%	5%	0%
Bloomington	38%	25%	34%	29%	38%	34%	41%	40%	43%	44%	5%	19%
Cajon	54%	46%	48%	48%	52%	47%	50%	49%	49%	44%	-5%	-2%
Chaffey	38%	36%	34%	38%	39%	37%	41%	45%	46%	46%	8%	10%
Don Lugo	44%	35%	51%	40%	47%	38%	43%	43%	54%	46%	10%	11%
Fontana	35%	33%	32%	38%	40%	41%	38%	43%	41%	44%	6%	15%
Palm Springs	50%	45%	45%	46%	48%	46%	52%	58%	57%	60%	7%	15%
Redlands	61%	60%	55%	63%	58%	58%	59%	58%	69%	62%	8%	2%
Cohort Average	**42%**	**37%**	**39%**	**41%**	**44%**	**42%**	**43%**	**44%**	**48%**	**46%**	**6%**	**9%**
State % Target	**22.3%**	**20.9%**	**22.3%**	**20.9%**	**33.4%**	**32.2%**	**44.5%**	**43.5%**	**55.6%**	**54.8%**	**22.2%**	**22.6%**

Source: California Department of Education

Dropout and Graduation Rates

Dropout and graduation rates are calculated in a variety of ways and are the subject of much discussion related to high school reform. Whether they are calculated over the span of a single year or the four years that high school students typically need to complete their education, most high school administrators and faculty acknowledge that a sizable percentage of students who enroll as freshmen do not graduate four years later.

Tables 16 and 17 provide dropout and graduation rates as they are calculated by the CDE. At the time of this report, dropout rates and graduation rates were not available from the CDE for 2009-10.

The dropout rate used here is the one used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) purposes and is described as a "adjusted one-year dropout rate" calculated based on the number of students who enroll at each grade level compared to those who dropout at the end of the year. It is important to note that the State's methodology used to calculate dropout rates changed in 2006-07. As such, data from 2006-07 forward are considered to be more accurate.

As shown in Table 16, across the ten grantee schools, the adjusted one-year dropout rate increased 0.3% from previous year, ranging from 0.9% to 6.6%. Of the ten grantee schools, six schools showed an increase in their dropout rate between the Year Two and Year Three of grant with largest dropout rate of 6.6%. In addition, while the state average increased 0.8% to 4.9% in 2008-09, eight of the ten schools showed a lower dropout rate in comparison to the state of California.

The lowest dropout rates continued to be found at Palm Springs (0.9%) and Redlands (1.9%). When examining enrollment data by grade levels (Table 16), it is obvious how inaccurate a one-year dropout rate is to measure dropout.

Table 16: School Dropout Rates, Baseline to Year 3

	Baseline 2005-06	Year 1 2006-07	Year 2 2007-08	Year 3 2008-09	Net Change Previous Year
A.B. Miller	1.1%	3.5% (+)	3.5% (=)	3.3% (-)	-0.2%
Arroyo Valley	4.1%	3.7% (-)	2.9% (-)	3.7% (+)	0.8%
Barstow	2.5%	4.9% (+)	6.5% (+)	6.2%(-)	-0.3%
Bloomington	1.0%	5.6% (+)	3.5% (-)	3.6% (+)	0.1%
Cajon	2.5%	2.8% (+)	2.0% (-)	3.9% (+)	1.9%
Chaffey	3.5%	3.4% (-)	4.7% (+)	6.6% (+)	1.9%
Don Lugo	1.8%	1.1% (-)	1.8% (+)	2.4% (+)	0.6%
Fontana	2.6%	5.3% (+)	4.0% (-)	4.2% (+)	0.2%
Palm Springs	4.2%	4.0% (-)	1.5% (-)	0.9% (-)	-0.6%
Redlands	1.9%	2.6% (+)	2.7% (=)	1.9% (-)	-0.8%
Cohort Average	**2.5%**	**3.7% (+)**	**3.4% (-)**	**3.7% (+)**	**0.4%**
State Total	**3.4%**	**5.5% (+)**	**4.9% (-)**	**5.7% (+)**	**0.8%**

Based on Adjusted Grade 9-12 One-year Dropout Rate
(+/-) Indicates change from previous year
Source: California Department of Education

Table 17 provides graduation rates over the same period of time. The graduation rate used for this table is based on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The NCES graduation rate formula is based on the number of graduates (Year 4) divided by number of graduates (Year 4) + Gr. 9 dropouts (Year 1) + Gr. 10 dropouts (Year 2) + Gr. 11 dropouts (Year 3) + Gr. 12 dropouts (Year 4). It is important to note that the State's methodology used to calculate graduation rates changed in 2006-07. As such, data from 2006-07 forward are considered to be more accurate.

In 2008-09, the NCES graduation rate across the ten grantee schools decreased 1.6% to 80.2% from the previous year (81.7%). The graduation rate ranged from 67.0% to 90.4%. Three schools showed an increased graduation rate from the prior year (ranging from 2.3% – 5.3%). Six schools surpassed the statewide graduation rate (78.4%), which decreased (1.8%) from the prior year. Four schools are struggling with their graduation rate and falling below the state average

Table 17: School Graduation Rates, Baseline to Year 3

	2005-06 Baseline	2006-07 Year 1	2007-08 Year 2	2008-09 Year 3	Net Change (Previous Yr.)
A.B. Miller	93.5%	86.0% (-)	86.9% (+)	83.6% (-)	-3.3%
Arroyo Valley	76.2%	78.5% (+)	81.5%(+)	73.7% (-)	-7.8%
Barstow	89.8%	78.4% (-)	68.2% (-)	67.0% (-)	-1.2%
Bloomington	97.0%	78.8% (-)	79.9% (+)	78.6% (-)	-1.3%
Cajon	83.7%	87.0% (+)	86.6% (-)	81.3% (-)	-5.3%
Chaffey	79.1%	81.3% (+)	76.8% (-)	70.8% (-)	-6.8%
Don Lugo	92.5%	92.0% (-)	88.0% (-)	90.3% (+)	2.3%
Fontana	83.9%	75.0% (-)	76.6 % (+)	76.6% (=)	0%
Palm Springs	86.7%	79.5% (-)	84.4% (+)	89.7% (+)	5.3%
Redlands	91.5%	89.0% (-)	87.8% (-)	90.4% (+)	2.6%
Cohort Average	**87.4%**	**82.6% (-)**	**81.7% (-)**	**80.2% (-)**	**-1.6%**
State Total	**83.4%**	**80.6% (-)**	**80.2% (-)**	**78.4% (-)**	**-1.8%**

Source: California Department of Education

Credit Completion

Credit completion was calculated, tracking credit accumulation at the ten grantee sites by grade level (Table 18). Adequate credit completion refers to sufficient credits earned each grade level with the objective of meeting eligibility for graduation by the end of 12th grade. In 2009-10, only half of freshman (56%) and sophomore (55%) students obtained adequate credits to be on track for graduation. The amount of freshman students with adequate credits completed improved 8% from Year 1 of grant. Seniors still enrolled at the school were most apt to earn credits (84%), increasing 4% from Year 1. However this is after students dropout. The rate of on time credit accumulation needs immediate attention given this indicator correlates with dropout and graduation rate.

Table 18: Percentage of Students With Adequate Credits Completed by Grade, 2006-10

	Year 1 2006-07	Year 2 2007-08	Year 3 2008-09	Year 4 2009-10	Net Change
Grade 9 (55 credits or more)					
Cohort	48%	49%	60%	56%	8%
Grade 10 (110 credits or more)					
Cohort	52%	54%	59%	55%	3%
Grade 11 (165 credits or more)					
Cohort	62%	63%	69%	64%	2%
Grade 12 (220 credits or more)					
Cohort	80%	78%	87%	84%	4%

Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

9th and 10th Grade Student Outcome Data

From the beginning of implementation, the grantee schools have focused extensively on implementing structures and strategies that primarily impact 9th and 10th graders. The Freshman Houses/ Academies and Freshman/ Sophomore Houses have provided a personalized educational experience for students, with the goal of facilitating an easier transition to high school and addressing academic needs. Given that the 9th and 10th grades have been impacted the most from SLC implementation in comparison to the upper grades, Public *Works*, Inc. gathered and analyzed achievement data for 9th and 10th graders participating in SLCs. Measures in this section of the report include attendance rates for 9th graders compared to school wide attendance, 9th grade CST performance, and 10th grade CAHSEE performance.

9th Grade School Attendance

Table 19 displays freshman students in SLCs, as well as school-wide attendance across the ten grantee schools. Attendance rates averaged 95% for both freshman and school-wide for the cohort of grantee schools in 2009-10. At five grantee schools, Freshman SLC students showed higher attendance than the school wide percentage, difference ranged from 1% to 2%. Overall, ninth grade SLC students showed no significant difference in daily attendance rates in comparison to previous years.

Table 19: Attendance Rates, SLC 9th Grade & School-wide, Baseline & Year 4

SLC-9th Grade	Baseline		Year 4	
	%	N	%	N
A.B. Miller	96%	15	96%	207
Arroyo Valley	100%	723	92%	764
Barstow	92%	518	94%	449
Bloomington	--	--	99%	609
Cajon	94%	639	95%	706
Chaffey	97%	4	96%	926
Don Lugo	--	--	96%	517
Fontana	--	--	96%	1,045
Palm Springs	--	--	96%	509
Redlands	92%	476	94%	566
All Sites	95%	2,375	95%	6,298
School-wide				
A.B. Miller	94%	4,088	95%	3,325
Arroyo Valley	99%	2,701	92%	2,666
Barstow	92%	1,778	94%	1,464
Bloomington	94%	2,756	99%	3,378
Cajon	94%	2,433	95%	2,652
Chaffey	95%	2,998	95%	4,137
Don Lugo	95%	2,269	96%	2,077
Fontana	95%	3,721	95%	4,446
Palm Springs	95%	2,175	95%	2,289
Redlands	91%	2,944	92%	2,855
All Sites	94%	27,863	95%	29,289

-- Data not available
Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

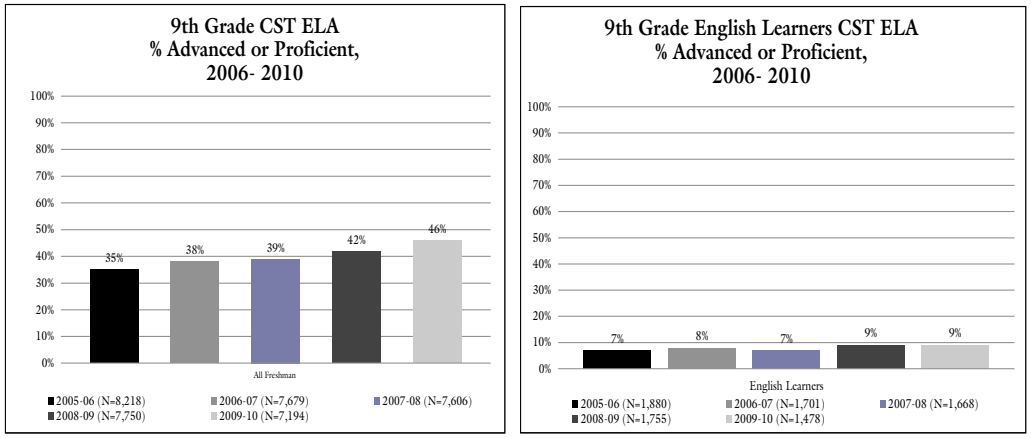
9th Grade Performance on the California Standards Tests

The next section describes 9th grade student proficiency[15] on the California Standards Test (CST) in English Language Arts and Mathematics for at each site and consortium-wide. This section examines 9th grade Advanced or Proficient performance on CST ELA (Figure 5), Algebra I (Figure 6), and Geometry (Figure 7). In addition, 9th grade English Learners (ELs) performance is reported. Detailed information on the progress of individual grantee schools may be found in **Appendix F**.

Compared to Baseline, Cohort VI 9th grade performance on English/ Language Arts increased 11% in Year 4 from 35% (Baseline) to 46% (Year 4). Across all schools, the schools with the highest ELA proficiency include: Redlands (70%), Palm Springs (56%) and Cajon (54%) (Figure 6). Seven of the ten grantee schools demonstrated an increase of ten percent or more in ELA proficiency. However, only 9% of freshman English Learners across the sites performed proficient or advanced in 2009-10, an increase of 2% from Baseline Year (Figure 6).

[15] Proficiency level cut scores for 9th grade ELA are: Far Below Basic (150-264), Below Basic (265-299), Basic (300-349), Proficient (350-396), and Advanced (397-600). Algebra I includes: Far Below Basic (150-252), Below Basic (253-299), Basic (300-349), Proficient (350-427), and Advanced (428-600). Geometry proficiency levels are: Far Below Basic (150-246), Below Basic (247-299), Basic (300-349), Proficient (350-417), and Advanced (417-600).

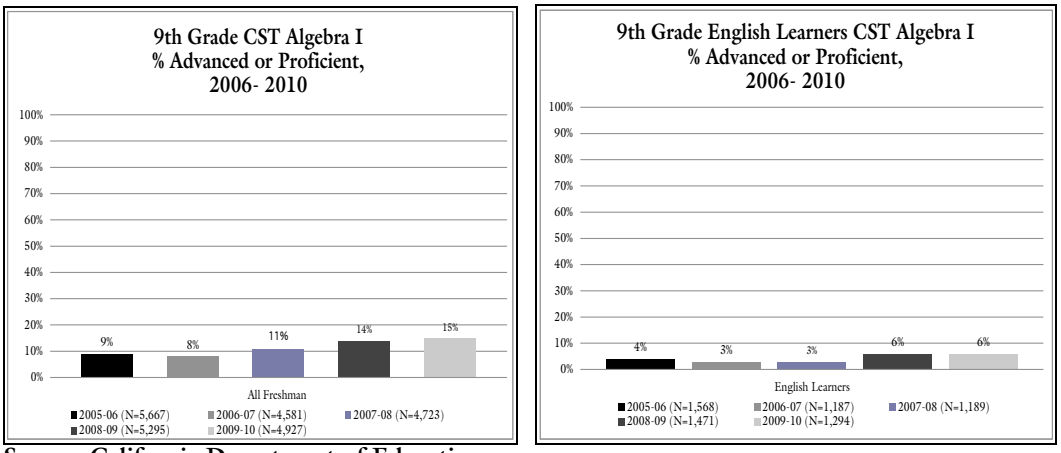
Figure 6: CST Proficiency in ELA in 9th Grade, Baseline – Year 4



Source: California Department of Education

Figure 7 shows advanced or proficient performance on the CST Algebra I improved from 9% in 2005-06 to 15% in 2009-10 (increasing 6%). Fontana (18%) and A.B. Miller (8%) showed the largest improvement from their Baseline data. In addition, Fontana (27%) and Chaffey (24%) showed the most percent of proficient or advanced in Algebra I. Across sites, 9th grade English Learner proficiency in Algebra I improved 2%, with net change ranging from -5% to 5% (Figure 7).

Figure 7: CST Proficiency in Algebra I in 9th Grade, Baseline – Year 4

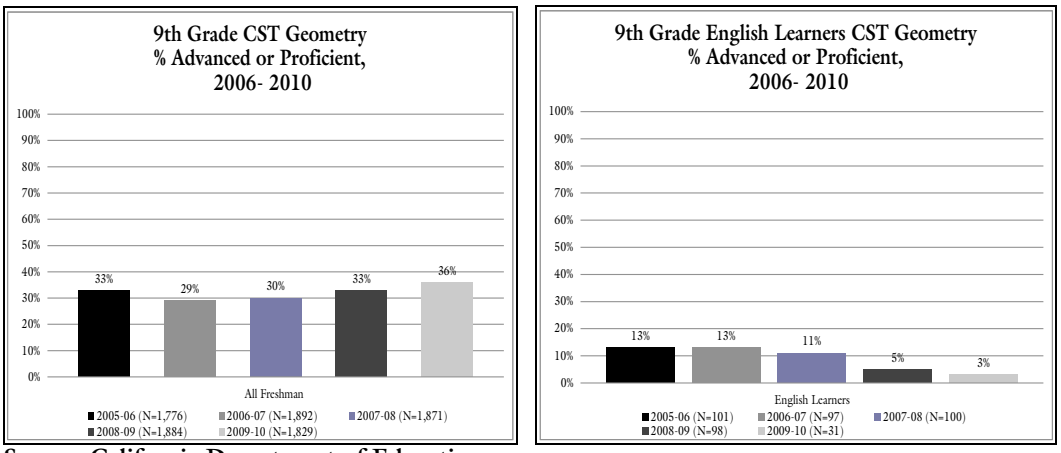


Source: California Department of Education

As shown in Figure 8, improvements in CST Geometry among 9th grade students improved from 33% to 36% (increasing 3%) across the sites. Advanced or proficient performance in 2009-10 ranged from 19% to 65%, of which more than half of tested freshman students are proficient or advance in Geometry at three grantee schools (Chaffey, Fontana, and Redlands). While the number of freshman students tested in Geometry increased at five schools, percent advanced or proficient decreased greatly

from Baseline Year at three schools (8% to 21% decrease. In 2009-10, only one school tested a significant number of English Learners in Geometry, consistent with prior years (Figure 8).

Figure 8: CST Proficiency in Geometry in 9th Grade, Baseline – Year 4



Source: California Department of Education

Table 20 presents freshman proficiency improvement on the Mathematics and ELA CST from 2008-09 (Year 3) to 2009-10 (Year 4). Most (65%) of the lowest performing freshman students enrolled at the ten grantee schools moved out of Far Below Basic (i.e., improved at least one proficiency level) in ELA and 60% of these students improved in Mathematics. The percent of Below Basic 9th graders who moved into a higher proficiency level was 51% in ELA and 27% in Mathematics. Compared to the FBB and BB movement, movement out of the Basic Proficiency was the lowest in both ELA (36%) and Mathematics (19%).

Table 20: 9th Grade ELA/Mathematics CST, Improvements by Proficiency Level, Year 4

	ELA	Math
FBB Improvement (Movement out of Far Below Basic)		
Cohort	**65%**	**60%**
BB Improvement (Movement out of Below Basic)		
Cohort	**51%**	**27%**
B Improvement (Movement out of Basic)		
Cohort	**36%**	**19%**

Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

Table 21 presents sophomore proficiency level[16] improvement on the Mathematics and ELA CST from 2008-09 (Year 3) to 2009-10 (Year 4). More than half (57%) of the

[16] Proficiency level cut scores for 10th grade ELA are: Far Below Basic (150-262), Below Basic (263-299), Basic (300-349), Proficient (350-391), and Advanced (392-600). Algebra I includes: Far Below Basic (150-252), Below Basic (253-299), Basic (300-349), Proficient (350-427), and Advanced (428-600). Geometry proficiency levels are: Far Below Basic (150-246), Below Basic (247-299), Basic (300-349), Proficient (350-417), and Advanced (417-600).

lowest performing sophomores enrolled at the ten grantee schools moved out of Far Below Basic (i.e., improved at least one proficiency level) in ELA and 34%% of these students improved in Mathematics. The percent of Below Basic 10th graders who moved into a higher proficiency level was 28% in ELA and 22% in Mathematics. Movement out of the Basic Proficiency was the lowest in both ELA (13%) and Mathematics (14%).

Table 21: 10th Grade ELA/Mathematics CST, Improvements by Proficiency Level, Year 4

	ELA	Math
FBB Improvement (Movement out of Far Below Basic)		
Cohort	**34%**	**57%**
BB Improvement (Movement out of Below Basic)		
Cohort	**28%**	**22%**
B Improvement (Movement out of Basic)		
Cohort	**13%**	**14%**

Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

Freshman students showed greater movement out of Far Below Basic, Below Basic and Basic and into a higher proficiency level, specifically in ELA. In addition, sophomores showed movement out of their proficiency level at about half the rate as freshman performance in ELA.

10th Grade Performance on the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)

Figure 9 presents the percentage of 10th graders passing the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in English/Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, respectively[17] for all consortium students from Baseline Year through 2009-10 by site, cohort-wide and for key subgroups. Detailed information on the progress of individual grantee schools may be found in **Appendix F**.

The vast majority (77%) of 10th grade students attending the Cohort VI schools passed the ELA portion of the CAHSEE, increasing 5% from Baseline Year. The CAHSEE ELA pass rate among the schools ranged from 67% to 92% in 2009-10. The following schools showed the largest increase on the ELA CAHSEE school wide pass rate: Redlands (9%), Arroyo Valley (8%) and Fontana (8%).

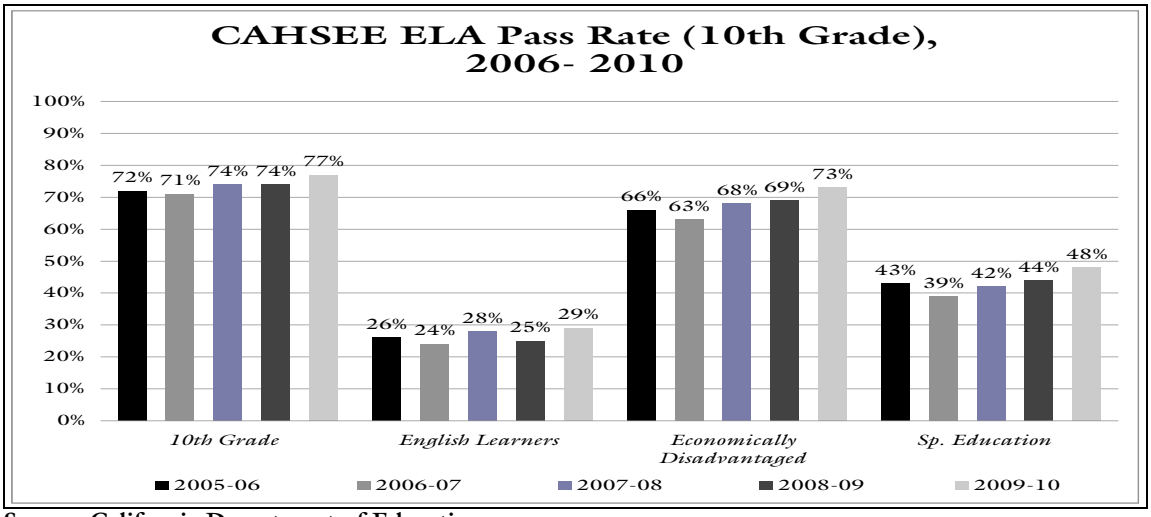
Among economically disadvantaged students, 73% of students passed ELA CAHSEE on the first-time testing in 2009-10, increasing 7% from 2005-06 (Table 24). Redlands (15%) and Palm Springs (13%) had most improvement among economically disadvantaged students in ELA (Table 24).

[17] Passing is equal to a score of 350 on a scale of 200-650. Students must pass both the ELA and Mathematics portion of the CAHSEE to graduate.

Among EL first-time test takers at all grantee sites, 26% passed in 2005-06 (Baseline) and slightly increased to 29% in 2009-10 (Year 4), showing improvements at six schools. Chaffey (13%) and Don Lugo (9%) had the largest increase among ELs.

Special education pass rate indicates a 5% increase from Baseline year on the ELA portion of the CAHSEE. In 2009-10, eight schools showed an improvement from Baseline Year on the first time testing on CAHSEE ELA by Special Education students, with increases from 1% to 22%.

Figure 9: CAHSEE ELA Pass Rate (10th Grade, 1st time takers), Baseline – Year 4



Source: California Department of Education

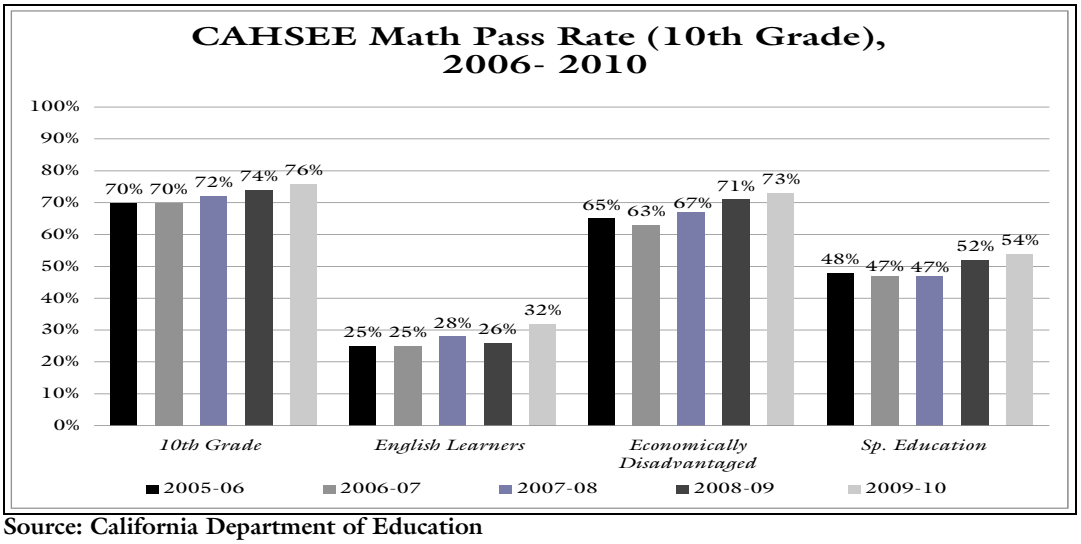
Most (76%) percent of Cohort VI sophomore students passed the Mathematics portion of the CAHSEE (Table 25). The CAHSEE Mathematics pass rate among the schools ranged from 64% to 87%. Across all schools, the largest increases in school wide first time test taking on the Mathematics portion of the CAHSEE occurred at Bloomington (14%).

Seventy-three percent of economically disadvantaged students passed the Mathematics portion of the CAHSEE on the first time taking the test in 2009-10, improving 8% from Baseline. Among the Cohort VI schools, Bloomington (18%) and Palm Springs (16%) showed the greatest increase by economically disadvantaged students on the Mathematics portion of the CAHSEE.

Thirty-two percent of EL first-time test takers passed, increasing seven percent from Baseline Year. The largest net gains among the English Learner subgroup took place at Fontana (19%) and Barstow (18%).

Special Education students' pass rate showed a 6% increase from Baseline Year (48%) to Year 4 (54%). Bloomington (27%) and Don Lugo (19%) showed the largest increase from Baseline.

Figure 10: CAHSEE Mathematics Pass Rate (10th Grade, 1st time takers), Baseline – Yr. 4



Source: California Department of Education

Summary

Ten Cohort VI grantee schools were involved in the SLC initiative, with 2005-06 as their Baseline Year and 2009-10 as their Year Four of implementation. Below we have summarized the progress of the schools in terms of student achievement.

- Demographics: Racial and ethnic composition of the grantee schools has maintained consistent throughout the grant. In 2009-10, student population was 69% Hispanic, 16% White, 9% African American and 1% Asian. On average, the English Learner population has also remained consistent (20%) while the number of economically disadvantaged has increased to 60%.

- SLC Participation: Roster analyses demonstrate great discrepancy between the percent of students participating in an SLC and the percent of students who fulfilled the initiative requirement of three common courses within the assigned SLC. Approximately one-third (35%) of students attending the ten grantee schools met the three common classes or more. Freshman students had the highest concentration of SLC enrollment with common three or more courses (55%), followed by 37% of sophomores. Both eleventh and twelfth grade showed lower percentages of students with three or more common classes (22% and 20%). In addition, there was variation in the number of students enrolled in an SLC among the ten grantee schools. Redlands (89%), Chaffey (75%), and Arroyo Valley (73%) are among the schools with the largest SLC participation rate, when reporting SLC enrollment as one identified common course.

- Academic Performance Index: The number of schools meetings API targets has fluctuated over the last four years. In 2009-10, the Cohort API average was 700, increasing 43 points from the Baseline Year. The API net change from Baseline to Year 4 ranged from 1 to 67 points. Redlands (766), Palm Springs (750), Chaffey (715) are among the schools to obtain the highest 2010 API Growth. In addition, Bloomington (67 points), Arroyo Valley (66 points), A.B. Miller (50 points), and Barstow (50 points) were among the grantee schools with the highest attainment from 2006.

- Adequate Yearly Progress: None of the grantee schools met all AYP criteria for 2009-10. The two main reasons include: (1) the subgroups did not meet the performance level as required for the CST ELA and Mathematics, and/or (2) the subgroups did not meet the 95% participation rate. The Cohort on average has improved proficiency by 9% in Mathematics and 6% in ELA from Baseline Year. The grantee schools to show the highest % Proficient or Advanced include: Redlands with 69% in ELA and Mathematics in 62%, Palm Springs with 57% in ELA and 60% in Mathematics, and Don Lugo with 54% in ELA. Arroyo Valley (11%) and Don Lugo (10%) showed the highest attainment in ELA proficiency from Baseline year. Bloomington (19%), Fontana (15%) and Palm Springs (15%) also showed the greatest increase in Mathematics proficiency in comparison to 2005-06.

- Dropout/Graduation Rates: Comparing Year 3 of the grant with the previous year (Year 4 data not yet available), the adjusted one-year dropout rates increased at six grantee schools from the previous year, ranging from 0.8% to 4.9%, with a Cohort average of 3.7%. Seven of ten schools showed no change or a decrease in the adjusted four-year graduation rate from the prior year (ranging from 0% to a 7.8% decrease). Nonetheless, the Cohort Graduation average was 80.2% and six schools surpassed the statewide graduation rate (78.4%), which decreased 1.8% from the prior year.

- Adequate Credit Completion: Seniors were most likely (84%) to earn an adequate number of credits to be on-track for graduation (84%, increasing 4% from Year 1. However, this may be because students who are very credit deficient at this point have dropped out. More than half of freshman (56%)and sophomore (55%) students obtained adequate credits, improving 8% from Year 1 of grant.

- California Standards Tests: Compared to Baseline Year, the percentage of Grade 9 students scoring Proficient or Advanced on ELA CSTs increased 11% since baseline to 46% in Year 4. Advanced or Proficient on CST Algebra improved 6%, from 9% in 2005-06 to 15% in 2009-10. Advanced or proficient performance in ELA was the highest at Redlands, Palm Springs and Cajon. Fontana and Chaffey showed the highest 9th grade percent advanced or proficient in Algebra I and Geometry.

- California High School Exit Exam: The CAHSEE ELA first time test taking pass rate from Baseline Year showed an increase in school-wide (5%), as well as among Economically Disadvantaged (7%), Special Education (5%) students, and English Learners (3%). Similarly, the CAHSEE Mathematics pass rate improved 6% school-wide, 8% among Economically Disadvantaged, 7% among English Learners and 5% and among Special Education. Redlands (92%), palm Springs (82% and Don Lugo (82%) obtained the highest first time test taking pass rate on CAHSEE ELA. Similarly, Redlands (87%), Palm Springs (83%) and Don Lugo (81%) obtained the highest first time test taking pass rate on CAHSEE Mathematics.

- Attendance: Freshman SLC participants and school-wide attendance rates were identical (95%) in Year 4.

Part V—Conclusion and Recommendations

The high schools included in this evaluation are members of a growing movement to break up large high schools into smaller learning communities (SLC). In San Bernardino County's Center for the Advancement of Smaller Learning Environments (CASLE) initiative, the grantee schools have made great progress in implementing SLC structures at the 9th and 10th grade and begun to further implemented career pathways/ academies at the 11th and 12th grade. In Year 4 of the five year grant, approximately three fourths freshman and sophomore students attending the ten grantee schools participated in an SLC, 75% in 9th grade and 72% in 10th grade. While all of the grantee schools implement 9th grade and 10th grade Houses, with the exception of one school development of SLC structures in 11th and 12th grade is very limited. Roster analysis indicates 36% of 11th grade and 34% of 12th grade students participated in an SLC across the CASLE schools. Cohort VI has one more year to be wall-to-wall (100%).This part of the report summarizes key accomplishments and challenges across the participating schools in Year 4 of the grant.

Key Accomplishments

Academic Intervention

Through the SLC initiative, the grantee schools have expanded intervention services and have tailored aspects of the SLC initiative to meet greater numbers of students needs academically and to support them in their transition to high school. Several schools offer double blocks of English Language Arts (ELA) interventions and double blocks Mathematics interventions. Schools have implemented intervention curriculum or programs such REACH/Read 180, CAHSEE Prep courses and an outside reading support program at a local post-secondary institution. The grantee schools have provided support specialized in assisting and preparing students for the CAHSEE, CSTs and CELDT assessments. In addition, credit recovery options were the most common intervention across the majority of schools (e.g. *Nova Net, A Plus, PLATO, APEX).* Several SLCs reported specific strategies they had implemented to make sure that students are on track with their grades and academic progress.

Rigorous Curriculum

The academic performance across the ten schools ranges from the mid-600s to high 700. Despite this range, all ten schools emphasize to rigorous academic standards. On average, the cohort increased 73 points on the API from Baseline to Year 4 of grant. The average percentage of students scoring far below basic and below basic decreased significantly from 40% to 28% in ELA. This same indicator decreased only 2% in Algebra I and 6% in Geometry. A few schools have also reported a drop in the amount of ninth grade failing students.

Adult-Student Relationships

CASLE schools have focused on improving personalization with students through the creation of Houses and Academies/ Pathways, particularly with 9th and 10th graders. The House structures have delivered identity and personalization through adult-relationships. The schools have mentoring programs in place (e.g. Link Crew, Freshman Mentoring Programs, Intervention / Crisis Counselors). In addition, some students "loop" with their counselors over multiple years, which providing deeper connections between counselor and students.

Achievement Outcomes

Academic achievement increased in English/ language arts and Mathematics among students involved in SLC restructuring. Freshman SLC student percent proficient or advanced on CST ELA increased 11% and CST Algebra I increased 6% from Baseline to Year 4. Also, English Learners appear to benefit from participation in SLC restructuring with 23% of SLC EL 9th graders performing proficient or advanced on the CST Geometry.

- Demographics: Racial and ethnic composition of the grantee schools has maintained consistent throughout the grant. In 2009-10, student population was 69% Hispanic, 16% White, 9% African American and 1% Asian. On average, the English Learner population has also remained consistent (20%) while the number of economically disadvantaged has increased to 60%.

- SLC Participation: Roster analyses demonstrate great discrepancy between the percent of students participating in an SLC and the percent of students who fulfilled the initiative requirement of three common courses within the assigned SLC. Approximately one-third (35%) of students attending the ten grantee schools met the three common classes or more. Freshman students had the highest concentration of SLC enrollment with common three or more courses (55%), followed by 37% of sophomores. Both eleventh and twelfth grade showed lower percentages of students with three or more common classes (22% and 20%). In addition, there was variation in the number of students enrolled in an SLC among the ten grantee schools. Redlands (89%), Chaffey (75%), and Arroyo Valley (73%) are among the schools with the largest SLC participation rate, when reporting SLC enrollment as meeting one identified common course.

- Academic Performance Index: The number of schools meetings API targets has fluctuated over the last four years. In 2009-10, the Cohort API average was 700, increasing 43 points from the Baseline Year. The API net change from Baseline to Year 4 ranged from 1 to 67 points. Redlands (766), Palm Springs (750), Chaffey (715) are among the schools to obtain the highest 2010 API Growth. In addition, Bloomington (67 points), Arroyo Valley (66 points), A.B. Miller (50 points), and Barstow (50 points) were among the grantee schools with the highest attainment from 2006.

- Adequate Yearly Progress: None of the grantee schools met all AYP criteria for 2009-10. The two main reasons include: (1) the subgroups did not meet the performance level as required for the CST ELA and Mathematics, and/or (2) the subgroups did not meet the 95% participation rate. The Cohort on average has improved proficiency by 9% in Mathematics and 6% in ELA from Baseline Year. The grantee schools to show the highest % Proficient or Advanced include: Redlands with 69% in ELA and Mathematics in 62%, Palm Springs with 57% in ELA and 60% in Mathematics, and Don Lugo with 54% in ELA. Arroyo Valley (11%) and Don Lugo (10%) showed the highest attainment in ELA proficiency from Baseline year. Bloomington (19%), Fontana (15%) and Palm Springs (15%) also showed the greatest increase in Mathematics proficiency in comparison to 2005-06.

- Dropout/Graduation Rates: Comparing Year 3 of the grant with the previous year (Year 4 data not yet available), the adjusted one-year dropout rates increased at six grantee schools from the previous year, ranging from 0.8% to 4.9%, with a Cohort average of 3.7%. Seven of ten schools showed no change or a decrease in the adjusted four-year graduation rate from the prior year (ranging from 0% to a 7.8% decrease). Nonetheless, the Cohort Graduation average was 80.2% and six schools surpassed the statewide graduation rate (78.4%), which decreased 1.8% from the prior year.

- Adequate Credit Completion: Seniors were most likely (84%) to earn an adequate number of credits to be on-track for graduation (84%, increasing 4% from Year 1. However, this maybe because students who are very credit deficient at this point have dropped out. More than half of freshman (56%)and sophomore (55%) students obtained adequate credits, improving 8% from Year 1 of grant.

- California Standards Tests: Compared to Baseline Year, the percentage of Grade 9 students scoring Proficient or Advanced on ELA CSTs increased 11% since baseline to 46% in Year 4. Advanced or Proficient on CST Algebra improved 6%, from 9% in 2005-06 to 15% in 2009-10. Advanced or proficient performance in ELA was the highest at Redlands, Palm Springs and Cajon. Fontana and Chaffey showed the highest 9th grade percent advanced or proficient in Algebra I and Geometry.

- California High School Exit Exam: The CAHSEE ELA first time test taking pass rate from Baseline Year showed an increase in school-wide (5%), as well as among Economically Disadvantaged (7%), Special Education (5%) students, and English Learners (3%). Similarly, the CAHSEE Mathematics pass rate improved 6% school-wide, 8% among Economically Disadvantaged, 7% among English Learners and 5% and among Special Education. Redlands (92%), palm Springs (82% and Don Lugo (82%) obtained the highest first time test taking pass rate on CAHSEE ELA. Similarly, Redlands (87%), Palm Springs (83%) and Don Lugo (81%) obtained the highest first time test taking pass rate on CAHSEE Mathematics.

Key Issues and Challenges

Master Schedule

The key structural issue among the CASLE schools continues to be adapting the school master schedule in order to prioritize SLC enrollment and promote equity. At most schools, the master schedule has continued to follow the departmental organizational model, which does not necessarily promote the distribution of staff and assignment of students into coherent SLCs where at least half of the courses are shared or "cored" by SLC. Many teachers continue to resist changes associated with the master schedule because it will affect what and whom they teach and when they will teach it. Indeed, adapting the master schedule and resistance to change to SLCs were identified as the most significant barriers by staff survey respondents.

The lack of fundamental changes to the master schedule is most apparent in the on-going inequity regarding the federally defined SLCs participation, meeting three or more courses in an SLC. Although 56% of students across the cohort are in enrolled in at least one SLC course, a considerably lower 35% truly meets the federal requirement of enrollment in three or more SLC classes. In addition, there are more 9th (55%) students in SLCs meeting the requirement than 10th (37%), 11th (22%) and 12th (20%) graders. Schools continue to struggle to reorganize the master schedule to prioritize and address SLC requirements.

Staff Collaboration

The expansion of SLC structures spurred schools to implement structured common planning time. Eight school provided a common conference period to either all or some of their Houses/ teams. However, while structured common time was prioritized in the master schedule at nearly all the schools, schools indicated SLC meetings and collaboration did not occur as often and to some extent less than prior years. Thus collaborative teams who did in fact meet and planned, developed an academic identity for their SLC and to reach consensus on what a personalized high school experience will mean for the students enrolled in "their" SLC. Given limited coring of students into shared teams of 3 or more classes, it makes sense that team meetings decrease or were nonexistent. In very few cases did teams coordinate cross-curricular projects or lesson plans. SLC teams' collaboration has generally decreased while schools have provided the structured time.

Survey results found seventy-four percent of staff agree or strongly agree that teachers are part of a professional community of practice that is collaborative and public. Slightly higher levels of agreement were found for survey questions about SLC-based regularly meeting for planning, curriculum and activities. collaboration and professional development (78%). However, 46% of staff felt there was suffiecient time for teachers to discuss and analyze student in team meetings.

The intention of common planning time is to develop interdisciplinary projects and common assessments, creation of intervention courses and mentoring programs for struggling students, solicitation of community partners, and organization of parent outreach, but this did not happen across all schools. Rather, schools who did have

allotted meeting time stated during the site visits that they were not meeting regularly to discuss students they had in common (many did not have common students), rather, teachers were utilizing their prep period for other tasks and so forth. Even when they are in place, cohort schools do not always increase collaboration.

English Learner Intervention

While intervention services have expanded across the grantee sites, there is great need for specialized English Learner (EL) interventions, given that on average 20% of their student population are ELs. Only two schools coordinate a specialized EL CELDT bootcamp. Two schools conduct a week-long EL professional development: during summer and DAIT provided, utilizing SDAIE strategies. Approximately 70 % of 9th and 74% of 12th grade students indicated on student survey that teachers are aware of students' academic strength and areas of improvement. Results indicate there is need to focus on approximately 30% of students who feel their specific academic needs are not well understood. In addition, site visits support the need for specific interventions based on the challenges of ELs.

SLC Data

Very few schools have local fields available through their database systems to identify students (and staff) by SLC placement. While four schools indicate using data via Data Director and OARS software to identify target students and assign intervention, data used to inform instruction is not present across the ten schools. Schools need to utilize existing data in a purposeful manner to ensure balance and equity in terms of SLC student and staff assignments. For example, sites need to run data on student and staff characteristics prior to finalizing master schedules to ensure adequate teaming of teachers and students. Similarly, schools should move in the direction of analyzing and presenting data on student outcomes by SLC. For example, staff should receive information by SLC on the number of students meeting A-G requirements, attending school, earning D/F grades, and successfully graduating. Dissemination of these data will likely showcase SLC accomplishments to staff that might otherwise remain unaware, while also highlighting areas in need of further investigation and/or focus.

Recommendations to Schools

The primary focus of the SLC grant has been on school-level structural change and strategies intended to include all students in an SLC by the end of the grant period; the grant ends in 2011 for Cohort VI. In addition to the structural changes noted above, Public *Works*, Inc. continues to recommend that schools:

- ***Strengthen existing 9th and 10th grade house models to further develop academic intervention strategies and identify students in need of support.*** There has been substantial progress in terms of development and implementation of the 9th grade House model. However, all Houses within a school are not equal in terms of quality or cohesiveness in terms of teaming. Most were successful in implementing structural supports for SLC like staff allocations, cored classes in at least three subjects for students, and support system such as peer mentoring. The

level of collaboration among staff and personalization strategies utilized was largely dependent on staff initiative and buy-in. There is a need to focus on consistency in the 9th grade house structures across the sites. Schools should continue to strengthen their house structures by improving SLC teams.

- ***Build and/ or strengthen 11th-12th grade models that are focused on student interest and school engagement.*** Schools must clarify and communicate to all stakeholders the details (i.e., structural and strategic) for continued staff and student involvement. Involvement of more staff and students in SLCs will assist in promoting coherence within the school master schedule and maintaining what has been accomplished through the grant.

- ***Continue to use what has been learned from SLCs to promote equity in school master schedules.*** Schools need to forgo minor alterations to the master schedule and engage in comprehensive reform aimed at promoting heterogeneous groupings of students, at all grade levels, who are grouped into classes that share students/staff from their assigned SLC. As part of this effort, schools must move from an access standpoint, toward an equity lens for school restructuring. Put another way, expanding student choice is not a sufficient mechanism to achieve school-wide equity. SLC restructuring requires "de-tracking" to ensure that the master schedule process does not unfairly give preference regarding staff assignments, class size, and access to Advanced Placement and/or Honors programs. All SLCs must fairly represent the school's instructional staff in terms of credentials and teaching experience. All SLCs must fairly represent the student body in terms of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and academic performance levels. To achieve this, schools should continue to allow choice via student preference along with other data equity.

- ***Continue to make solid connections between SLC to standards-based instructional reforms and accountability mandates.*** Like the recommendation above, schools have substantial "marketing" to do among their own staff regarding what has been learned from the instructional basis of SLC reforms. It must be made clear to all stakeholders that standards-based education is available and accessible to all students, not just for the highest achieving students (e.g., GATE, AP/Honors, etc.). Solid connections are especially important, as not all core academic departments have bought into the relevance and sustainability for the SLC initiative. All staff must be shown how and why SLC will deepen standards-based instruction by providing personalized, relevant pedagogy to a wide proportion of students.

- ***Continue to connect the SLC initiative's emphasis on personalized instruction to a broader delivery of counseling and guidance.*** Student survey results collected over the last four years as part of this evaluation indicate irregular access to personalized counseling and guidance during high school from both teachers and counselors. Student surveys suggest a need for improving the systems for ensuring that students a) develop a written four-year plan for high school graduation and beyond that reflects their needs and interests and b) meet regularly with teaches and counselors to review, modify, and adjust this plan based on changing conditions. The SLC initiative at each school can and should

address the lack of adequate proactive counseling and guidance by providing personalized instruction and regular interactions between students and faculty and other staff regarding high school success, postsecondary planning, and career preparation.

- ***Redgardless of SLC model implemented, core teachers and students should be cored in three or more courses together.*** The USDE established the following priority: "enroll students in a coherent sequence of rigorous ELA, Mathematics, and science courses that will equip them with the skills and content knowledge needed to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation." Given the roster analysis school sites must place emphasis and prioritize coring students together in three or more classes.

Recommendations to the Districts and County

At the District and County levels, the SLC initiative has required a commitment to on-going technical assistance, training, and support to strengthen SLCs at this level and support sustainability. In order to provide direction following the end of the grant, Public *Works*, Inc. makes the following recommendations to the eight districts and CASLE to implement through each district and the county with follow-up support and oversight to schools.

- ***Continue to assist schools in the alignment of school improvement plans and accountability mandates.*** Many schools function with multiple school plans, mandated by a variety of funding sources that do not coherently communicate a unified instructional vision for school improvement. It is increasingly necessary that schools map out reform efforts across these plans in order to create coherency and communication of a vision for instructional improvement that cuts across multiple compliance mandates and reporting structures. In this way, what is best about how SLCs were implemented can function more as an "umbrella" for high school reform. District and/or County leaders can work with site-based leadership teams to effectively "filter" and "translate" external mandates for change into a coherent instructional improvement plan that makes sense to the classroom teacher. At a minimum, this means clarifying school priorities and showing how SLC implementation is intended to complement, not supplant, standards-based instructional reforms.

- ***Continue to assist schools in designing and allocating professional development time to support school improvement priorities.*** "Equally" sharing time between departments and SLCs is not necessarily sufficient to foster professional collaboration and ensure the best use of time. Schools that have taken the time to sequence and connect professional development topics have been more successful at maximizing the time and providing faculty with a coherent message about school reform efforts. Districts and the County could play a valuable role in helping schools strategically identify professional development and common planning time topics, sequencing how these topics are delivered, and then choosing the most appropriate group (SLCs, departments, grade-level teams or school-wide faculty) for this to occur. The district and/or County might also

provide schools with training, templates, facilitation, and/or data needed to effectively diagnose student needs and strategize SLC efforts around improved academic achievement.

- ***Use the lessons learned from SLC implementation to provide guidance on master schedules that meet challenges and promote equity, particularly in the 11th-12th grades.*** To be able to maintain what has been accomplished for freshmen and to a lesser extent in the 11th-12th grades in terms of SLC offerings, schools will continue to need technical support on how to develop a master schedule, which simultaneously meets SLC objectives for coherent interdisciplinary teams, common planning time, and equitable distribution of shared students with the host of instructional demands and compliance mandates. Although schools have made good progress on developing 9th and 10th grade structures in the master schedule, most schools have struggled with 11th – 12th grade SLC structures and pathways.

- ***Assist schools in organizing information data systems to allow schools to extract and examine data by SLC.*** While all can agree that educators should make decisions that are informed by student achievement data, easily identifying students involved in an SLC continues to be a challenge. To maintain participation in SLCs and to be able to distinctly identify how students are performing and the instructional support they need, an SLC identifier in the data system continues to be important. Moreover, unless data of this sort is available, school decision-makers and leaders of SLCs will be hard-pressed to differentiate instruction and deliver academic intervention tied to the needs of students identified as part of an SLC.