**Smaller Learning Communities
2006-07 Evaluation Report
Inglewood Unified School District
Morningside High School**
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Part I—Introduction

With the leadership of the Gates Foundation in creating 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 what many say is the opportunity for badly needed secondary school improvement—providing what is often lacking in high school education and the possibility for curricular change, meaningful collaboration, and systemic student support.

This report provides evaluation results from 2006-07 for Morningside High School in the Inglewood Unified School District (IUSD). Morningside received a US Department of Education Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) implementation grant in 2004-05. [1] IUSD hired Public *Works*, Inc., a non-profit headquartered in Pasadena, California, to conduct a third-party evaluation of the SLC initiative.

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 plan, implement or expand SLCs. The grants support a range of strategies including creating schools within schools with varying degrees of autonomy, [2] restructuring the school day to allow for cohort scheduling and more consistent student-adult interactions, and formal adult mentoring and advisory programs. [3] Implementation of these structural changes share the goals of a more personalized high school experience for students in smaller schools within schools and to improve student achievement and performance.

Continued under the Bush Administration's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the program provides three-year implementation grants ranging from $250,000 to $550,000 per school. In total, the U.S. Department of Education has awarded over $734,177,166

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[1] The U.S. Department of Education has awarded funds on an annual basis. Cohort III schools are schools who first received implementation funding in the 2003-04 school year. Cohort IV schools received funding in 2004-05. Cohort V schools received implementation funding in 2005-06. Cohort VI schools received funding in 2006-07.

[2] 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.

[3] 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.

through 2006 to schools across the nation, with funding for this program growing each year.

Background to the SLC Approach

High School Student Performance

In the late 1990's, after years of reform focused on implementing standards-based accountability systems which tended to yield improved student outcomes at the elementary level, questions about the stubborn lack of progress among high school students came to the forefront as the new frontier of education reform. Both performance on international assessments and national measures of student achievement indicated the need for dramatic improvement.

In 2003, US students placed 28th in mathematics and 29th in problem solving out of 40 participating countries with sufficient data on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Further, from 1992 to 2002, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicated that 60 percent or more of 12th graders performed below the Proficient level (Klekotka, 2005).

The achievement gap continued to be large with African-American and Hispanic students at the end of high school having reading levels equivalent to White eighth-graders (Phi Delta Kappa International, Topics & Trends, Volume 5, Issue 4). Other data suggested that even college-going high school students were unprepared to succeed in college. For instance 25% of freshmen at four-year institutions and 50% of freshmen at two-year colleges did not return for the second year (Phi Delta Kappa International, Topics & Trends, Volume 5, Issue 1).

The persistent and high dropout rate across the nation also began to receive more attention, especially as researchers pinpointed the problems existing in so-called "dropout factories" characteristic of many urban school districts. As the No Child Left Behind Act and state accountability strategies such as exit exams have raised the profile of the number of students who don't complete high school, a key study by Robert Balfanz at the Center for Social Organization of Schools based at Johns Hopkins University identified approximately 2,000 schools in 15 states (one of which is California) that account for 80 percent of high school dropouts located primarily in urban areas, the South, and the Southwest (Balfanz, 2004 and Samuels, 2007).

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.

The actions of the nation's governors followed many years of commission reports, conferences, and research identifying the anonymity, apathy and alienation so prevalent among our nation's youth combined with the overriding consensus that it was driven in large part by the very structure of high school education embodied in large, comprehensive high schools. 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

Practitioners and policymakers have debated the appropriate size for high schools from at least the mid-20th century when population growth and funding practices resulted in large high schools becoming the norm. Ted Sizer of the Coalition of Essential Schools (organized in 1984) and Deborah Meier (known for her work with Central Park East in New York City in the late 1980's and early 1990's) were among the more vocal and renowned advocates for small, personalized learning environments for high school students. In turn, private foundation funding from the Gates Foundation beginning in 2000 and earlier Annenburg Foundation grants to reform urban schools favored the movement toward small schools or smaller subunits within the larger campus.

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, due to an increased sense of community and genuine investment in the school and learning (Cotton, 2001).

Based on these reviews of research and other information from high school students themselves, attention was placed on school size as the "lever" for improving high school student outcomes. However, in their review of the research related to small school size, authors Lee, Ready, and Welner report that "not all small-school news is good" and that "a bit of caution may be in order" (p. 7). They found issues related to privacy in which the reputations of students' siblings or parents preceded them and that small schools often attempted to replicate the more comprehensive curriculum of larger high schools with faculty teaching out of their specialties. The lesson for those attempting to break up large high schools is that smallness by design or by choice appears to have the most impact on how small schools perform. "Much of the enthusiasm for small schools focus on those small schools that *want* to be small, often have selective entrance criteria, and are staffed by innovative faculty and attended by committed students (Lee, 2002, p8)."

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 (i.e., reorganization of student placement and staff assignments) and strategies (i.e., 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 all with the goal to create a more personalized high school experience for students and to improve student achievement and performance (see Table 1 for a summary of common approaches to SLCs).

Table 1: Structures and Strategies for Small Learning Communities

Small Schools and Schools-within-Schools	The term "small school" or "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 (Small Schools Project, 2001a). Teachers and students are self-selected. The school has its own leader, school-day schedule and classroom space. Small schools, like other small learning community models, can have a focus, or theme, be identified as an "alternative" school, or have a number of other labels attached. Regardless, small schools operate autonomously.
Academies	Under the academy model, high schools organize the curricula and education program for a subset of students (usually ranging from 200-400 students) around one or more themes, typically career or occupationally related. Under the model, a small group of students is grouped with a team of teachers responsible for creating interdisciplinary and personalized curriculum across career and academic content. Students stay with this team of teachers typically for grades 10-12. In addition, career academies partner with employers, postsecondary institutions and other community groups to infuse the curriculum and educational experience of students with one-to-one mentors, internships, service learning and other extracurricular support.
Magnet Schools	Magnet schools, usually with a core focus such as mathematics and science, performing arts or humanities, typically draw students from an entire district and have often been used as a strategy for racial desegregation of urban school districts. Although magnets are "choice" programs open to all, the admission processes are often complicated and include factors such as timing of application, race/ethnicity, preferences for existing siblings, transportation considerations, teacher recommendations and grades. Magnet students often benefit from additional fiscal and personnel resources including a core group of faculty that primarily teach within the Magnet and additional individual support through a Magnet director and/or specially assigned counselor.
Houses	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 as a way to help freshmen transition into the larger high school by offering a separate house for sub-sets of the entering freshmen class who are paired with a core group of teachers and separated from the rest of the school. Often, houses can contain a sequence of career-related and/or academic courses that lead toward graduation (Cotton, 2001). Houses are often an alternative option for groups aiming to produce the same positive student outcomes as small schools, but do not quite have the intention, funding or resources available to achieve a completely autonomous small school.
Other "Small" Strategies	Comprehensive high schools are devising additional strategies for breaking up the learning experiences of students so that they can form more significant attachments to adults and their peers. Examples of these strategies include: • Advanced courses for high-achieving students • Newcomer schools for immigrant students entering a school system for the first time • Modifications to the high school schedule (for example, block scheduling) • Ninth-grade house plans similar to houses but involving only the ninth grade • Advisory systems in which students are placed under the guidance and care of a teacher or administrator for their entire school experience (essentially a personal academic and social guidance counselor)

Source: Public *Works*, Inc.

Complementary Reforms to Support Smaller Learning Communities

As comprehensive high schools break up into smaller units and new schools are started, what is being learned is that size is no guarantee for success. Schools that have experienced the most success have implemented complementary reforms that bring about improvements for student outcomes.

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 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 supports credit attainment and on time graduation (Toch, 2007).

Since 2001, 11 states and LAUSD, the second largest school district in the nation, required students to complete a full college-prep course sequence. In addition, 22 states currently require graduation exams. Many feared that these increases in graduation requirements would result in higher dropout rates. In addition, there was fear that these initiatives requiring more academic coursework runs counter to the notion of relevance and personalized learning.

However, emerging research indicates that may not necessarily be the case and that the combination of rigorous coursework with relevance is supportive of students graduating. For example, one study from Johns Hopkins University found that "enrollment in career-technical education is positively associated with higher graduation rates, but *only* when the tech courses are taken along with more challenging academic courses (Toch, 2007, p. 435)." On the other hand, an evaluation of efforts to raise graduation requirements in Chicago noted that simply calling courses college-prep was not sufficient and that the courses needed to be taught by capable teachers that can provide a challenging curriculum and motivation for students to complete the material (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 on judging effectiveness based on results (DuFour, 2004).

In the context of SLCs, professional development to support improved pedagogical methods can be delivered within SLC teams, it is also important to complement this professional development within the content areas of teachers departments or specialties (Quint 2006). With more collaboration and targeted professional development, faculty and staff in SLCs and small schools work together to improve curriculum quality. This enables teachers in these settings to teach across content areas and spend more time personalizing curriculum and lessons to address the needs of individual students.

Personalized and differentiated instruction offers teachers more flexibility and more options in teaching students based on what works, which includes considerations for learning styles, socio-cultural influences and possible learning disabilities (US Dept. of Education, 1999). This increased tailoring of education to individual needs contributes to the narrowing of the achievement gap, and at the same time reduces the effects of ethnic minority and poverty, by harnessing group effort and focusing it upon helping all students in the specific areas they need the most (Howley, Strange, and Bickel, 2000).

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 implemented first in Philadelphia and in other districts across the nation focused on providing 9th graders with accelerated "catch-up" courses in reading and math. *Talent Development* high schools offer a double dose of math and English for an entire year (90 minutes each). "During the first semester, they take classes designed to give them the academic and study skills necessary to handle college-prep courses later on; during the second semester, teachers follow the district's regular curricula for English and algebra, supplemented with special materials developed by Johns Hopkins University (Toch, 2007, p. 436)." 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). However, the evaluation cautioned that simply increasing the amount of time in English and math classes for freshmen does not result in higher student achievement—*Talent Development* also implements special curricula to maximize learning during the extra time.

Implementation Issues for Smaller Learning Communities

While many high school reformers were entering uncharted territory as the SLC movement took hold, evaluation results and lessons learned are beginning to surface that may help to keep reform on track. Evaluation results funded by the Gates Foundation of its own high school reform initiative, findings from the MDRC evaluation of three widely implemented models, and an evaluation of New York City's New Century High Schools Initiative are just a few examples of recent publications indicating both the promise of and trouble spots to watch out for in the implementation of SLCs. In particular, early SLC implementers quickly learned that though small learning environments often provided the context to make reform possible, the break up into smaller units was only the beginning, not the end of the process.

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. Facilities suitable to these new small schools were difficult to come by and the multiple roles of instructional leaders, personal advisors, and participants in distributed leadership challenged these teachers (AIR/SRI, April 2003).

The evaluation's examination of large school conversions also found that conversions of existing schools take longer than first envisioned with planning encompassing a two-year process. Further, conversion high schools had more difficulty instituting the type of structures for personalization that emerged in new small schools after the one start-up year. Teacher commitment to SLC change in conversions was also more tenuous due, in part, to the fact that SLC planning teams tended to involve a small proportion of teachers at the school (AIR/SRI, April 2003).

Impact of SLCs on Student Achievement

In the most recent round of evaluations of high school conversions and new start-up schools, the impact of SLCs on student achievement is mixed. While many have made progress in a key reform area—improved school climate, 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 math 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.[4] However, their study found poor rigor in mathematics assignments at new and redesigned high schools (AIR/SRI, 2005b). Despite these mixed results related to specific academic content areas and SLCs, the 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).

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[4] 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, 2005).

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. In the context of SLCs, autonomy can have a variety of definitions or approaches. For instance, 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.

The variation in levels of autonomy also presents one of the largest stumbling blocks in implementing the types of learning environments most connected to student success— those that allow for collaboration among adults and personalization for students. As high schools go through the conversion process, 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, 2002). SLC conversion schools vary greatly in the numbers of students per SLC, which is often dependent on the overall size of the school and the number of SLCs the faculty deems is feasible to implement. 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. While there are both opponents to and advocates for ability-based tracking, researchers are finding that grouping students in SLCs can either serve to dismantle or reinforce low, medium, and high-ability tracks. "What research exists on schools-within-schools suggested that secondary schools that engage in this reform improve their social environments. However, early indications also suggest that the reform may increase internal stratification inside high schools, especially if unrestrained choice is the means used for students to be matched to sub-units (Lee, 2002, p. 34)." 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 their 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). Building in more autonomy and a separate identity for each SLC, reducing the number of student and teacher "cross-overs" between SLCs, and allowing for flexibility in the master schedule (i.e., not maintaining a common bell schedule) are all strategies for managing the master schedule in converted high schools. In addition, reducing the number of small, specialized programs may also contribute to SLC purity.

Research on the use of various block scheduling (e.g., 4X4 blocks, alternating A/B days) has not yielded a consensus on the impact of these types of schedules on student achievement. In a comparison of a traditional schedule to a 4X4 block schedule, there were no differences in academic achievement, teacher satisfaction with the schedule, or the use of instructional strategies. However, other research has found that block schedules may result in fewer discipline problems and failures, less time spent on classroom administration, and the opportunity for students to earn more credits with the 4X4 block schedule, a real benefit for students in need of credit recovery (i.e., those who failed academic courses) and/or (Phi Delta Kappa International, Topics & Trends, November 2006, Volume 6, Issue 4).

In *Talent Development* schools, double-blocked schedules were found to be especially useful for freshmen because it allows students to earn more credits per year (i.e., it has a built in safety net for students who fail core academic courses and need to repeat these courses) than other types of scheduling. Traditional scheduling allows for students to attempt fewer courses. Semester-long, intensive "catch-up" courses allow ninth-grade students to have additional support in reading and mathematics, key to staying in school and graduating (Quint, 2006).

Physical Space

A study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics reported that 14 percent of US public schools are overcrowded and eight percent are severely overcrowded. Moreover, schools enrolling mostly minority students are more likely to be overcrowded than schools with less than half minority enrollment (Lee, 2002). Year-round schedules and multiple tracks are commons strategies for addressing these over crowded schools. Given this context, especially in urban areas, for high schools converting to SLCs, creating space that supports autonomy can be an overwhelming challenge. For instance, locating teachers by SLC may not be possible given the facility's configuration. The traditional organization of most high schools into departments (e.g., English, Math, Science) is also usually reflected in the layout of buildings making it difficult to co-locate a team of teachers from

multiple disciplines. This is further complicated in over-crowded schools where teachers must sometimes move from classroom to classroom and where students attend on different year-round tracks.

Reform Context in Inglewood

Located in the southwest portion of Los Angeles County, the Inglewood Unified School District (IUSD) served 15,945 students in grades K-12 in 2006-07. Since 2003-04, IUSD has experienced a 13% decline in enrollment (i.e., fewer students enrolling in elementary grades due to demographic and socioeconomic trends in Southern California). Like other districts in California, secondary schools have had a more difficult time achieving federal accountability targets. None of IUSD's elementary schools have been identified as Program Improvement (PI). By contrast, all but one of the secondary schools are now PI schools.

Morningside High School (the high school receiving the U.S. Department of Education SLC grant) has also been a Program Improvement school since 1998-99. Based on failure to meet State accountability goals 2001-2004, Morningside entered the School Assistance Intervention Team (SAIT) audit process in Fall 2004. Morningside The school became subject to a Corrective Action Plan monitored by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). Many of the key corrective actions that the school is implementing supported the goals and objectives of SLCs during the time of the USDE grant including:

➢ Developing and monitoring a system for implementing a standards-based intervention program based on State Board of Education approved materials.

➢ Identifying and using multiple measures for ongoing monitoring of student placement in 9th and 10th grade intervention courses.

➢ Developing a master schedule that guarantees equity and access for all students.

➢ Providing teacher teams with time to develop, share, and provide feedback on standards-aligned instructional units.

➢ Ensuring that regularly scheduled faculty, department and professional development meetings are focused on the review of assessment data and instructional strategies to address the gaps in student achievement.

➢ Developing and implementing a system and procedure for articulation with feeder middle schools around student achievement data.

Overview of SLC Implementation

Morningside received a three-year SLC implementation grant from USDE beginning in 2004-05. No SLCs existed at Morningside prior to receipt of the grant and 2004-05 essentially functioned as a planning year as no new SLCs were established. In 2005-06 (Year 2), the focus of SLC activities was on the implementation of a 9th grade house structure for all freshmen, which included a designated area on campus. In addition, Morningside piloted a 9th grade advisory (16 advisories, structured as 25:1 student: teacher ratio). There were plans for developing academies for grades 10-12 in 2006-2007 (Year 3), however no progress was made on this front. Instead, the school implemented a 10th grade house in 2006-2007 and an advisory program school-wide.

Public *Works*, Inc. Evaluation and Report

As required by the US Department of Education, districts receiving SLC Implementation Grants are required to hire a third-party evaluator. The evaluation conducted by Public *Works*, Inc. encompasses both quantitative (student and school outcomes) and qualitative (progress in implementing SLCs as outlined in the grant) analytic approaches.

In order to frame the current evaluation, Public *Works*, Inc. worked with IUSD to develop a set of categories to be used in data collection and to organize the analysis. The categories employed by the evaluation reflect both IUSD's application for SLC funding and research-based components found to be critical for early implementers of SLCs including:

1. Vision, Leadership & Management
2. Teaching and Learning Teams
3. Rigorous, Relevant Curriculum & Instruction
4. Inclusive Programs and Instructional Practices (SLC Structure)
5. Accountability and Continuous Program Improvement
6. School/District Support for SLCs
7. Personalization
8. Parent and Community Engagement

Report Organization

Following this introduction, Part II provides a more detailed methodology of the evaluation. Part III provides quantitative data on student and school outcomes for Morningside through the third year of grant implementation. Part IV contains an analysis of the qualitative data regarding program implementation, rating Morningside in the eight categories listed above. Part V concludes the report with recommendations. Appendices include the bibliography, staff survey results, student survey results, and the site implementation checklist used to evaluate SLC implementation.

Part II—Evaluation Methodology

Evaluation Approach

The evaluation of IUSD SLC Cohort IV grant 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. The evaluation is an annual process over the three-year grant cycle. Four primary data collection methodologies have been used for the analysis contained in this report:

- A review of the literature related to SLC implementation;
- Staff and student surveys;
- Site visit to the grantee high school; and,
- Compilation of student achievement and school performance data.

Literature Review

The review of literature conducted for this evaluation examined several dimensions of the implementation of SLCs including: the rationale and context for high school reform, a summary of the bodies of research supporting SLCs as a reform strategy, a typology of strategies to implement SLCs and lessons learned from early implementers. Public *Works*, Inc. prepared an extensive bibliography for the literature review, which is included as **Appendix A**.

Surveys

Public *Works*, Inc. developed two surveys of key stakeholders for this evaluation, one for school staff and one for students. The school was provided with the results of the surveys. This was the third administration of the staff and student surveys. The staff and student survey results are contained in **Appendix B**.

Staff Survey

The staff survey was developed to ask all school staff about their knowledge and involvement in the SLC initiative at their school. The survey information provides information about the percentage of school staff self-reporting that they are currently involved in planning or assigned to an SLC and opinions about various aspects of implementation at their school. Teachers, counselors and administrators were the primary respondents to the survey though all members of the staff participating in the school's faculty meeting were invited to complete a survey.

Staff surveys were administered to staff at Morningside in May 2007. In order to calculate a response rate, Public *Works*, Inc. used the CBEDS reported number of certificated staff to estimate the number of staff at the school. In order to ensure a high response rate, the surveys were administered at faculty meetings where all staff was present. The following table displays the response rate for Morningside based on the number of completed surveys. Overall, Public *Works*, Inc. achieved a 47% response rate in 2007.

Table 2: Staff Survey Response Rates

	# of certificated staff	# of completed surveys	Response rate
2004-05	97	57	59%
2005-06	110	49	45%
2006-07	93	44	47%

The analysis of the staff survey included overall frequencies and area means. In addition, Public *Works,* Inc. examined cross-tabulations of results by SLC participation, the number of years of teaching and by subject area. A chi-square test was performed on the cross-tabulations in order to determine statistical significance at the .05 level.

Student Survey

In order to provide a baseline assessment of student opinions and experiences in high school, students were surveyed with regard to their expectations for learning, classroom instruction, counseling and guidance, and personalization. Students were also asked to identify if they currently participate in a small learning community and their participation in activities such as after-school programs, college courses, internships and the like. The survey concluded with demographic questions including grade, sex, race-ethnicity, highest-level math class and plans after graduation in order to track student responses to small learning community implementation over time.

Public *Works*, Inc. administered surveys to 9th and 12th graders. CBEDS enrollment numbers were used to calculate the number of students enrolled at these two grades. Overall, Public *Works*, Inc. achieved a 58% response rate for freshmen and 58% for seniors.

Table 3: Student Survey Response Rates

	9th grade enrollment	# of surveys completed	Response rate	12th grade enrollment	# of surveys completed	Response Rate
2004-05	454	333	73%	294	109	37%
2005-06	430	353	82%	294	120	41%
2006-07	365	211	58%	287	168	58%

The analysis of student surveys included overall frequencies and area means as well as responses summarized for the school. Cross tabulations were prepared by gender, ethnicity, and perception of school. A chi-square test was performed on the cross-tabulations in order to determine statistical significance at the .05 level.

Site Visit

In order to provide qualitative information regarding the implementation of SLCs at the school level, Public *Works*, Inc. conducted a site visit at Morningside. The site visit was scheduled by Public *Works*, Inc. staff and coordinated by the school's assistant principal with responsibility over the SLC grant. The site visit consisted primarily of interviews and focus groups of administrators, staff and students at the school. In order to speak with a range of school stakeholders, Public *Works*, Inc. met with the following:

- SLC grant site administrator

- District SLC grant coordinator
- Principal and other administrators
- Teachers (SLC and Non-SLC)
- Counselors
- Students grades 9-12 (SLC and Non-SLC)

To prepare for the site visit, Public *Works*, Inc. reviewed demographic and achievement data for the school. Public *Works*, Inc. held a training for the site visit team prior to the site visit, which included a review of the overall goals for the site visit, background information and a review of the protocols developed specifically for the site visit.

In order to analyze and summarize the data collected during the site visit, Public *Works*, Inc. used an implementation checklist prepared specifically for this evaluation. Survey and site visit information was summarized in the checklists completed. The checklist is included in **Appendix C**.

The Site Visit 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 grant included:

1. Vision, Leadership & Management
2. Teaching and Learning Teams
3. Rigorous, Relevant Curriculum & Instruction
4. Inclusive Programs and Instructional Practices (SLC Structure)
5. Accountability and Continuous Program Improvement
6. School/District Support for SLCs
7. Personalization
8. 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

In order to assess the impact of SLCs on student achievement and school performance, this report presents outcome data for the past three years (2004-05, 2005-06, and 2006-07) in relation to 2003-04 (baseline prior to receipt of the USDE SLC grant). The student achievement and school performance indicators included in this report include:

- o California Standards Test (CST), English Language Arts and Mathematics;
- o California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), English Language Arts and Mathematics;
- o Graduation Rate; and
- o College Entrance Examinations.

Part III—Quantitative Analysis

This section of the report presents student achievement and school performance data for Morningside High School, a Cohort IV school receiving U.S. Department of Education funding to implement Smaller Learning Communities (SLCs). This report presents student achievement data for the three-year period of SLC grant implementation (2004-05, 2005-06, and 2006-07).

Descriptive analyses were performed on multiple achievement indicators including:

- o California Standards Test (CST), English Language Arts and Mathematics;
- o California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), English Language Arts and Mathematics;
- o Graduation Rate; and
- o College Entrance Examinations.

Student Demographic Characteristics

In 2006-07, the majority of students at Morningside were Hispanic/Latino (60%) followed by African-American (38%) students (see Table 4). Similarly, a majority (78%) of the student population qualified for Free/Reduced Price meals. Less than one-third (29%) of the student body was identified as English Learners. Special Education students comprised 10% of student enrollment. In the last three years, there has been very little change in the school's demographic composition other than an increase of students eligible for Free/Reduced Meals (+40%).[5]

Table 4: Summary of Student Demographics at Morningside High School

	2004-2005		2005-2006		2006-2007	
	Number (N)	% of Enrollment	Number (N)	% of Enrollment	Number (N)	% of Enrollment
Ethnicity						
African American	579	38.6%	592	38.6%	524	38%
Hispanic/Latino	894	59.6%	917	59.7%	814	60%
Other	26	1.8%	26	1.7%	25	1.8%
Special Populations						
English Learners	452	30.2%	387	25.2%	391	28.6
Special Education	137	9.1%	140	9.1%	139	10%
Free/Reduced Meals	561	37.9%	889	58.3%	1.060	78%

Source: California Department of Education

Student Achievement Results

To analyze student proficiency in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, this report focuses on the California Standards Test (CST) and the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). The CST is administered every Spring to IUSD students and scored as part of

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[5] The increase in the percentage of students eligible for Free/Reduced Meals is likely due to school policies to identify and secure completed applications from students rather than a change in the type of student attending Morningside.

the State's Standardized Testing and Reporting Program (STAR). The purpose of the CST is to assess students' performance in relation to the California Academic Content Standards. These standards, adopted by the State Board of Education, are grade and content specific and outline what students in California are expected to know and be able to do. Based on their performance, students are assigned one of the following five proficiency levels: Advanced (A), Proficient (P), Basic (B), Below Basic (BB) and Far Below Basic (FBB). A student who performs at or above the Proficient level is considered to have met the State standards.

Beginning in 2005-06, no student will receive a public high school diploma without passing the English/Language Arts and Mathematics portions of CAHSEE. The primary purpose of CAHSEE is to significantly improve achievement in public high schools and to ensure that students graduate with grade level competency in reading, writing, and mathematics. Students begin taking CAHSEE in the 10th grade and have until the 12th grade to pass the exam. High school students must score a 350 or higher in both subject areas to pass CAHSEE.

English/Language Arts

Approximately half of students (grades 9-11) at Morningside scored in the lowest proficiency levels (Far Below Basic or Below Basic) from 2005-2007 on the CST for English/Language Arts (see Table 5). In the 9th-10th grade, which has been the focus of SLC efforts, the proportion of Advanced or Proficient students improved slightly since 2005. Additionally, there was a decline in the proportion of 9th graders scoring in the lowest proficiency levels from 2005 to 2006, however, no change from 2006 to 2007. Put another way, 9th grade students in Below Basic have not moved into the Basic category since 2006. However, there were more 10th grade students scoring in the lowest proficiency levels from 2005 to 2006 (+6%), followed by a decrease of 10% in these low proficiency levels from 2006 to 2007.

Table 5: CST ELA Proficiency Levels by Grade Level

English Language Arts	2005 (N=1,112)			2006 (N=1,000)			2007 (N=965)		
	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic or Far Below Basic	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic or Far Below Basic	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic or Far Below Basic
Grade 9	20%	31%	49%	20%	36%	44%	21%	35%	44%
Grade 10	11%	34%	54%	12%	29%	60%	16%	35%	50%
Grade 11	19%	27%	53%	11%	27%	62%	12%	27%	62%

Source: California Department of Education

Data from 2005-2007 show that more than half of the 10th grade students successfully passed the English/Language Arts section of the CAHSEE on their first try (see Table 6). This percentage has decreased 6% from 2005 to 2006, then rebounded with an 8% increase from 2006 to 2007. There were increases in the pass rates between 2006 and 2007 for all subgroups with the exception of English Learner students. Most notably, male students experienced a 13% increase from 2006 to 2007. It is important to note that all of the 10th graders in 2007 were enrolled in an SLC at Morningside, which focused on increasing CAHSEE pass rates.

Table 6: CAHSEE ELA Pass Rates (10th grade only)

Groups	2005			2006			2007		
	Number Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Number Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Number Tested	# Passing	% Passing
TOTAL	**367**	**208**	**57%**	**408**	**208**	**51%**	**339**	**201**	**59%**
Male	205	112	55%	203	80	39%	174	91	52%
Female	162	96	59%	205	128	62%	164	109	66%
African American	138	69	50%	170	84	49%	119	66	55%
Hispanic	222	134	60%	229	119	52%	212	128	60%
Other Ethnicities	7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
English Learners	125	49	39%	115	33	29%	97	288	29%
Economically Disadvantaged	183	111	61%	268	133	50%	280	166	59%
Special Education	34	1	3%	8	*	*	5	N/A	N/A

Source: California Department of Education   *Not numerically significant

Mathematics

From 2005-2007, the vast majority (80% or more) of students at Morningside scored in the lowest proficiency levels (Far Below Basic or Below Basic) on the CST for Mathematics (Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra II). As shown in Table 7, the scores of 9th graders were slightly higher than those of 10th or 11th graders but the overall level of Mathematics achievement at Morningside is very low. Moreover, Mathematics achievement on the CST has declined across all grade levels since 2005.

Table 7: CST Mathematics Proficiency Levels by Grade Level

Mathematics	2005				2006				2007			
	Number Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic or Far Below Basic	Number Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic or Far Below Basic	Number Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic or Far Below Basic
Grade 9	322	5%	17%	78%	396	2%	15%	82%	311	2%	11%	87%
Grade 10	342	1%	7%	93%	334	1%	6%	92%	268	0%	2%	97%
Grade 11	460	2%	6%	93%	271	1%	3%	96%	168	1%	0%	99%

Source: California Department of Education

Nonetheless, there has been a dramatic increase in the percentage of 10th grade students at Morningside that successfully pass the Mathematics section of the CAHSEE on their first try (see Table 8). This year, slightly more than half of 10th graders passed the CAHSEE, with the exception for English Learners (29%). Increases occurred among all subgroups and most markedly for Male (18%) and African American (16%) students. It is important to note that the Mathematics CAHSEE primarily tests grade 7 standards (70% of the exam).

Table 8: CAHSEE Mathematics Proficiency (10th grade only)

Groups	2005			2006			2007		
	Number Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Number Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Number Tested	# Passing	% Passing
TOTAL	**363**	**158**	**44%**	**383**	**165**	**43%**	**336**	**187**	**56%**
Male	202	84	42%	183	72	39%	173	99	57%
Female	161	74	46%	200	93	47%	163	88	54%
African American	137	57	42%	147	58	39%	118	65	55%
Hispanic	219	98	45%	227	102	45%	209	118	56%
Other Ethnicities	7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
English Learners	123	35	28%	115	30%	26%	95	27	28%
Economically Disadvantaged	181	81	45%	254	109	43%	272	150	55%
Special Education	33	3	9%	1	*	*	4	*	*

Source: California Department of Education   *Not numerically significant

Other Performance Indicators

Graduation Rate

As shown in Table 9 below, the graduation rate at Morningside High improved 19% from 2003-04 to 2005-06 (from 80% to 99%). The graduation rate[6] was determined by dividing the number of 12th grade graduates by the sum of number of dropouts over a four-year period and number of 12th grade graduates. Morningside virtually eliminated 9th grade dropouts (from 35 to 1) and eliminated the number of 10th grade dropouts (from 21 to 0). Data on 2006-07 is not currently available from CDE.

Table 9: Graduation Rate

	Dropouts Grade 9 through Grade 12	Grade 12 Graduates	Graduation Rate
2003-04	57	233	80.3%
2004-05	22	283	92.8%
2005-06	3	227	98.7%

Source: California Department of Education

Nonetheless, a follow-up survey conducted on recent graduates indicates that a majority of former students were enrolled in a post-secondary program (63% in 2007). Moreover, of the students that were not enrolled in school, 72% planned on enrolling in the coming year.

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[6] The calculation is outlined in *California's Consolidated State Application for No Child Left Behind* and is based on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) definition for graduation rate.

Table 10: Self-Reported Data on school enrollment

	Are you currently enrolled in any school?		If you are not currently enrolled in school or college, do you plan to enroll in the next year or two?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
2004-05	64%	36%	n.a.	n.a.
2005-06	70%	30%	71%	29%
2006-07	63%	37%	72%	28%

Most (52%) of students enrolled in a post-secondary program reported attending a two-year community college with 41% saying that they were attending a four-year college or university.

Table 11: Self-Reported Data on school-type enrollment[7]

	In what type of school are you enrolled? (mark one)		
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Four-year college or University	43%	40%	41%
Public Community College	36%	23%	52%
Less than 2-year private or public vocational school	12%	7%	8%
Intend to achieve Master's degree	3%	13%	n.a.
No degree plans	9%	17%	n.a.

College Entrance Exams Performance

As a prerequisite for admittance, most four-year colleges or universities require students to provide results of either the SAT or the ACT assessment. Both of these tests are tools used by colleges and universities to assess the academic potential of student applicants. Though either test qualifies applying students for admission to most colleges, the major differences are that the SAT tests critical thinking and reasoning and the ACT assesses students' comprehension of academic content. These academic assessment tools are crucial components of a student's college application and provide some indication of eligibility for postsecondary education at institutions of higher education.

As shown in Table 12 below, the average Verbal SAT score among Morningside's students has increased slightly since 2003-04 and remained unchanged in Mathematics. Nonetheless, scores in 2006 were well below the State average of 495 for verbal and 516 for math. The average ACT score at Morningside decreased slightly between 2003-04 and 2004-05. ACT data for 2005-06 was unavailable at the time of this report's writing. It is important to note that none of the 12th graders included in Table 12 would have been involved in a SLC for the three years reported below.

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[7] Percentage of students enrolled in a community college in 2006-07 is artificially inflated

Table 12: Average SAT and ACT Scores

	SAT Scores			ACT Scores	
	Verbal Avg. Score	Math Avg. Score	Number Tested	Average Score	Number Tested
2003-04	391	387	115	16.7	53
2004-05	386	372	113	15.8	29
2005-06	404	387	194	n.a.	n.a.

Source: California Department of Education

PART IV—QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This part of the report summarizes the analysis of the qualitative data collected for this evaluation. After a brief sketch of Morningside's approach to SLC implementation, this section focuses on rating Morningside in terms of eight dimensions of SLC implementation:

1. Vision, Leadership & Management
2. Teaching and Learning Teams
3. Rigorous, Relevant Curriculum & Instruction
4. Inclusive Programs and Instructional Practices (SLC Structure)
5. Accountability and Continuous Program Improvement
6. School/District Support for SLCs
7. Personalization
8. Parent and Community Engagement

Within each of these areas of implementation, Public *Works*, Inc. has included a benchmark, which describes what a fully implemented high school organized around SLCs for all students would look like in each area. Following the benchmark for each area, Public *Works*, Inc. has provided an overall rating based on site visit, survey, and quantitative outcome data.

The rating is based on the following six-point scale: 1—No evidence of implementation; 2—Planning for implementation; 3—Early implementation; 4—Developmental implementation; 5—Solid implementation and 6—Full implementation.

Description of Morningside High School

Morningside High School is a comprehensive high school on a traditional calendar. In 2006-07, the student body was comprised of 1,365 students (60% Hispanic/Latino and 38% African-American). English Learners (EL) comprised 29% of total pupil enrollment, 97% of whom spoke Spanish as their primary language. Morningside also enrolled 10% Special Education students.

No SLCs existed at Morningside prior to receipt of the grant. In 2005-06, Morningside implemented houses for 9th graders. In 2006-07, 10th grade houses were also implemented and the advisory period was expanded to all students 9-12. At the end of three-year grant period, 54% of the student body was enrolled in a SLC (i.e., well short of the federal goal for 100% or wall-to-wall implementation. Staff overwhelmingly agreed that SLC implementation was often eclipsed by other school improvement efforts such as, WASC and SAIT.

Vision, Leadership, and Management

Benchmark: *Implementation is characterized by a shared vision created by a group of educators, support staff, administrators, parents, and community who comprise the school learning community who assume responsibility for the learning of every student through a distinctive and focused standards-based curriculum.*

▼(2.0 Average in 2004-05)

1	2	3	4	5	6
No evidence of implementation	Planning for implementation	Early implementation	Developmental implementation	Solid implementation	Full implementation

▼(3.0 Average in 2005-06)
▼(3.0 Average in 2006-07)

In 2006-2007, Morningside's SLC implementation consisted of 9th-10th grade houses in geographically separate parts of the campus. Four teams each serving approximately 100 9th-10th grade students were implemented so that the group of students in each house stayed together most of the school day. Students in the 9th grade house generally took English, Algebra I, and an elective course together, while those in the 10th were cored in their English, Geometry, and World History courses. Additionally, these students shared an advisory class. Morningside did not make progress in terms of developing theme-based academies to serve 11th-12th grade students (i.e., academy structures that 10th graders would select from). Instead, juniors and seniors were incorporated into a daily advisory period.

Morningside did succeed in involving a wider group of staff in the development of the school's SLC goals/vision in the third year of grant implementation. For instance, department chairs were brought into conversations regarding looping and student advisories, as well as discussions about possibly changing the course sequence in Math. Nonetheless, most staff uninvolved in the 9th-10th grade houses remained uncertain about the direction of SLC implementation and saw very few connections between SLCs and other school improvement efforts.

As shown in Table 13 below, survey responses of staff from Spring 2007 continued to highlight the need for better school-wide communication. For example, the survey revealed that after three years of the grant less than half (44%) of staff felt that the vision for SLC was clear. Indeed, 47% of staff respondents were completely unaware of the school's vision as it pertains to SLCs. Moreover, only 28% said that they have a say in school decisions and one-third (35%) agreed that they receive communication once major decisions are made.

Table 13: 2007 Staff Perceptions of Vision & Management (% Agreement) (N=44)

The vision and goals for implementing small learning communities are well understood by staff.	44%
The school has a strong leadership team that guides instruction and the implementation of SLCs.	42%
The results of major school decisions are communicated to all staff.	35%
All staff members have a say in school decisions.	28%
Most staff members at this school trust one another.	24%

In addition, interview with school staff indicated that there is confusion about the school's priorities. Some staff view SAIT and WASC (accreditation visit scheduled for Spring 2007) as more important than implementing the SLC grant. Put another way, Morningside had not come to consensus on how or whether SLCs will be a vehicle for transforming secondary education. Consequently, the vision for a wall-to-wall SLC reform effort never materialized at Morningside.

In terms of the Vision, Leadership, and Management benchmark, Morningside would be well-served to focus on the following:
- o Communicating the school-wide SLC vision as well as concrete, short-term goals related to SLC implementation to all staff.
- o Clarifying issues that relate to SLC versus departmental priorities.
- o Taking active steps to make the development of the master schedule more transparent to staff.
- o Showcasing linkages and overlap between SLC implementation, compliance with SAIT corrective actions, and WASC accreditation.

Teaching and Learning Teams

Benchmark: *SLC teams have structured opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and learning in order to collaborate and work with small groups of students. SLC teams share no more than 300 students and team members are assigned to SLCs for at least half of their school day. Common planning time and professional development resources are used to support SLC goals and to reflect on student work and performance and to adjust curriculum and instructional strategies.*

▼(1.0 Average in 2004-05)

1	2	3	4	5	6
No evidence of implementation	Planning for implementation	Early implementation	Developmental implementation	Solid implementation	Full implementation

▼2.0 (Average in 2006-07)
▼(2.0 Average in 2006-07)

In 2006-07, professional development was largely focused on content support by coaches (especially Math/English) for less experienced teachers, pacing, and assessments. School-wide professional development also concentrated on preparing for WASC. As a result, there was less time available for teachers to meet in interdisciplinary SLC teams (i.e., 9th and 10th grade house teachers). For example, staff met once during the second semester in

order to discuss SLC vision as it pertains to advisories.

Survey responses of 9th-10th grade house teachers were significantly less positive in this area of grant implementation (see Table 14). More than one-third (42%) survey respondents disagreed that SLCs were able to meet regularly for planning and even fewer (23%) noted that teachers have a role in designing professional development related to SLC implementation. Consequently, most staff saw no connection between school-wide professional development and SLC implementation efforts. In focus groups, comments included the following: "They [school and district] don't support teaming" and "It's always a learning year and never an action year."

Table 14: Staff Perceptions of Teaching & Learning (% Agreement) (N=44)

SLC team members meet regularly for planning, curriculum, and activities.	38%
SLC topics are a regular feature of school-wide professional development.	33%
There is sufficient time for teachers to support students' academic and personal needs and to help them plan for the future.	32%
Professional development for the SLC initiative is designed by teachers and is specific for our school.	25%
There is sufficient time for teachers to discuss and analyze student work in SLC team meetings.	19%

Teachers in the 9th and 10th grade houses were especially interested in devoting more professional development and collaboration time to personalization strategies. Indeed, on the survey only 38% felt that there was adequate time for supporting students academic and personal needs and only 32% said that sufficient time was allocated for discussing and analyzing student work.

In terms of the Teaching and Learning Teams benchmark, Morningside would be well-served to focus on the following:
   o Allocating more time for teachers to meet by SLC/house.
   o Providing teachers work more time to discuss and analyze student work.
   o Involving teacher leaders in the development of the school's professional development calendar.

Rigorous, Relevant Curriculum and Instruction

Benchmark: *A standards-based educational program embodies high expectations for every student to achieve grade-level standards and meet high school graduation requirements. Students are expected to meet college entrance requirements and are prepared for post-secondary education and training experiences and the world of work. Curriculum is adapted to individual student learning needs and is organized around topics of interest to students. Multiple forms of assessment provide opportunities to reflect personalized learning.*

▼(2.0 Average in 2004-05)

1	2	3	4	5	6
No evidence of implementation	Planning for implementation	Early implementation	Developmental implementation	Solid implementation	Full implementation

▼(2.0 Average in 2005-06)
▼(3.0 Average in 2006-07)

The findings from Morningside's SAIT audit clearly articulated the need for improving alignment of teaching and learning to State content standards, increasing student engagement and teacher expectations for students, providing interventions to students struggling to meet standards, and improving assessment practices.

Against this backdrop, SLC planning concentrated on implementing reforms to improve high school graduation rates and CAHSEE scores. For example, the 9th-10th grade house structures were designed, in part, to enroll the majority of students in parallel intervention courses, effectively "doubling" the time spend on English and/or Mathematics.[8] Similarly, the implementation of the advisory period was intended to assist students in meeting graduation requirements and preparing for postsecondary education.

Although SAIT, WASC, and SLC have all communicated a common message about increasing academic rigor and scaffolding instruction so that more students are able to access academic content at grade level, there is limited evidence of systemic improvement in student achievement. As indicated in Section III of this report, student achievement remains quite low, with improvements concentrated in English/Language Arts and in CAHSEE preparation.

Despite ongoing low levels of student achievement, the majority of staff were satisfied with the school's instructional program. Staff responses in this area suggest that instructional delivery is rigorous, responsive to student needs, and data-driven.

Table 15: Staff Perceptions of Rigorous, Relevant Curriculum and Instruction (% Agreement) (N=44)

Students understand classroom academic expectations	86%
Curriculum and instruction is organized so that all students are expected to learn and perform at high levels.	77%
Instruction is culturally responsive and accommodates diverse student interests, learning styles, and educational needs.	74%
School-wide instructional decisions usually take into account the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students.	72%
Examination of disaggregated student data is a regular part of school planning and assessment.	70%
There is a clear, connected and comprehensive model for monitoring student progress.	52%

Student survey responses also paint a moderately positive picture of the school's instructional program (see Table 16). For example, most students reported clear academic expectations and teaching at a high level of rigor. Fewer students agreed that classes were interesting and challenging, or encouragement to take AP or advanced coursework.

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[8] 9th grade students who did not need English or Math remediation participated in a Geography elective.

Table 16: Student Perceptions of Curriculum & Instruction (% Agreement)

	9th Grade (N=333)	12th Grade (N=109)
I will be prepared to enter college when I am finished with high school.	74%	75%
I can get tutoring and other help if I'm having trouble in school.	68%	71%
My teachers are clear about what they expect from me.	66%	75%
Teachers and administrators encourage me to challenge myself.	62%	73%
Teachers teach academic subject matter at a high level.	62%	67%
My teachers are fair about how they grade me.	59%	69%
My classes are interesting and challenging.	55%	57%
I have the opportunity to do assignments and projects about interesting topics in class.	55%	58%
I have been encouraged to take AP and advanced classes.	33%	57%

A majority (74%) of staff survey respondents agreed that students had opportunities for learning that extended beyond the regular day (e.g., after-school programs, internships, etc.), and half were confident about the process for referring a student to academic intervention. For their part, most students also responded positively when surveyed about access to tutoring. However, only 33% of 9th graders and 21% of 12th graders reported attending after-school programs in 2006-07.

Some of the discrepancy between student/school outcomes and survey data may be attributed to school staffing. As shown in Table 17, Morningside has had a low proportion of fully credentialed teachers relative to district averages and quite lower than State averages in each of the last four years. Similarly, Morningside has a higher proportion of 1st and 2nd year teachers compared to the district in each of the last four years. Combined with the fact that 9th (and 10th) grade courses tended to be staffed by the newest and least experienced teachers, the staffing characteristics of Morningside may explain some of the lack of widespread academic improvement in student outcome measures.

Table 17: Staffing Characteristics, 2003-04 to 2006-07

	Fully Credentialed		Intern or Pre-Intern		Emergency or Waiver		Average Years Teaching		# 1st or 2nd Year Teachers	
	School	IUSD	School	IUSD	School	IUSD	School	IUSD	School	IUSD
2003-04	54%	62%	20%	19%	29%	25%	11.2	10.8	33%	25%
2004-05	56%	65%	25%	27%	23%	18%	8.9	9.0	34%	23%
2005-06	58%	73%	25%	17%	19%	12%	8.5	8.9	41%	26%
2006-07	62%	75%	21%	16%	20%	11%	10.3	9.4	29%	24%
Net Change	8%	13%	1%	-3%	-9%	-14%	-0.9	-1.4	-4%	-1%

Source: California Department of Education

In terms of the Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum and Instruction benchmark, Morningside would be well-served to focus on the following:
   o Working with the district to ensure that Morningside is fully staffed at the start of each school year with credentialed teachers in core subject areas.
   o Continuing professional development and coaching in the areas of academic rigor, relevance, and culturally responsive pedagogy.

o Building upon the SLC structures to include a more focused concentration on pedagogy, personalization, and other strategies for engaging and supporting students.

Inclusive Programs and Instructional Practices (SLC Structure)

Benchmark: *Each SLC has a coherent educational program and approach that is known and shared by students, staff, families and community partners. SLC membership is based on students' and teachers' interest and choice to ensure equitable access. SLCs have a unique academic identity and include distinct, heterogeneous group of students and an administrator or teacher leader that leads a cohesive faculty team. SLC teams make decisions related to: curriculum, instruction and assessment; budget, personnel and facilities; master schedule and student programming; and student conduct and issues of community safety. SLCs range in size from 100 to 300 students and students are blocked for at least one half of the school day in an SLC.*

▼(1.0 Average in 2004-05)

1	2	3	4	5	6
No evidence of implementation	Planning for implementation	Early implementation	Developmental implementation	Solid implementation	Full implementation

▼(3.0 Average in 2005-06)
▼(3.0 Average in 2006-07)

During 2006-07, a house model was implemented that included all 9th-10th grade students at Morningside High School. Thus, the current SLC structure is inclusive and equitable. Moreover, efforts at the 9th-10th grade are appropriate in terms of size and the master schedule ensures that 9th-10th grade students stay together most of the school day.

Nonetheless, staff awareness of these important structural changes in place at Morningside is quite low. As shown in Table 18, 23%-51% of staff checked "Don't Know" when asked about the school's structural effort to promote equity and enhance opportunities to learn via SLC reforms. Staff were least informed about parent/student outreach.

Table 18: Staff Perceptions of Inclusive Programs & Instructional Practices (N=44)

	% Agreement	% Don't Know
Most staff at this school are committed to the principle that "all children can learn."	70%	16%
SLCs include heterogeneous groupings of students and are not tracked by student ability.	66%	28%
Admission to SLC is open and inclusive.	62%	23%
SLCs provide information and outreach about their programs to high school students and parents.	44%	30%
SLCs provide information and outreach about their programs to middle school students and parents.	28%	51%

Staff perceptions of the prominence and role of SLCs on campus also show low levels of awareness (see Table 19) despite three years of SLC grant implementation. On average, 26% of staff checked "Don't Know" when asked about the degree of SLC autonomy

and/or identity on campus. Additionally, staff involved in the SLC initiative were least positive regarding the degree of influence and autonomy granted to SLCs. These results suggest the SLCs remain largely under the purview of school leadership and faculty directly involved. Put another way, SLCs are not seen as a reform that exerts school-wide influence.

Table 19: Staff Perceptions of SLC Identity (N=44)

Survey Item	% Agreement	% Don't Know
The school's master schedule supports SLCs.	61%	20%
SLCs have administrators or teacher directors who lead a cohesive faculty.	45%	17%
SLCs have distinct physical boundaries.	43%	19%
SLCs have unique academic identities.	37 %	26%
SLCs have an educational philosophy that is shared by students, staff, families, and community partners.	31%	29%
SLCs make decisions related to master schedule and student programming.	31%	28%
SLCs make decisions related to student conduct and issues of community safety.	21%	26%
SLCs make decisions regarding budget, personnel, and facilities.	9%	35%

For their part, students reported mixed levels of identification with SLCs. Most equated SLCs with the advisory class (i.e. my SLC is my advisory class), others were familiar with the term SLC but are not aware of the purpose behind it. Among school administrators, one has been given primary responsibility for the SLC grant; other administrators have not been assigned to SLC teams.

In terms of the Inclusive Programs and Instructional Practices benchmark, Morningside would be well-served to focus on the following:
- o Increasing student identification within a particular SLC team.
- o Highlighting SLC accomplishments and milestones during faculty meetings and school-wide professional development.
- o Widening administrative "ownership" of the SLC initiative by assigning more administrators to distinct SLC responsibilities.

Accountability and Continuous Program Improvement

Benchmark: *Members of the SLC work together, share expertise, and exercise leadership to ensure that student achievement and personal success is the intended result of all decisions. Internal and external sources of school data are used to make decisions. SLC teams retain primary responsibility, appropriate autonomy and are accountable for making decisions affecting the important aspects of the small learning community.*

▼(1.0 Average in 2004-05)

1	2	3	4	5	6
No evidence of implementation	Planning for implementation	Early implementation	Developmental implementation	Solid implementation	Full implementation

▼(2.0 Average in 2005-06)
▼(2.0 Average in 2006-07)

In 2006-07, Morningside benefited from increased availability of formative assessment data.   As part of a district-wide secondary Mathematics focus, quarterly assessments of Algebra I data were administered and scored for the first time.   In addition, the emphasis under SAIT for more data-driven planning focused attention on diagnosing student needs. For example, the large number of "intensive" intervention students (i.e., those two or more grade levels behind) was used as a rationale for parallel classes (double-blocking) for 9th grade students. Survey data (see Table 15) suggest that 70% of staff agree that the school is regularly using disaggregated student achievement data to guide decision-making.

At the same time, only limited progress was made on SLC autonomy and *school-wide* accountability for SLC success precisely because SLC reforms were eclipsed by SAIT and WASC preparation in the minds of many staff. Staff who thought they would have more autonomy and a direct role in shaping school reform were disappointed. Insufficient time for SLC teams to collaborate also negatively influenced staff morale of those assigned to the 9th and 10th grade houses, while also suggesting to uninvolved faculty that SLC reforms were less of a priority. Survey also suggest that faculty want more time devoted to examination of student work and linking data to pedagogy.

In terms of the Accountability and Continuous Program Improvement benchmark, Morningside would be well-served to focus on the following:
  o Showcasing to staff how data has been used to shape school improvement efforts as well as results from existing programs/initiatives.
  o Continuing to train teachers to interpret student assessment data and, more importantly, use these data to modify and refine teaching practices.

School/District Support for SLCs

Benchmark: *School and district policies and practices support the implementation of SLCs. School-wide and departmental goals, professional development, scheduling and staffing align with and support SLC needs. Members of the SLC teams retain primary responsibility, appropriate autonomy and accountability for decisions related to individual SLCs.*

▼(1.0 Average in 2004-05)

1	2	3	4	5	6
No evidence of implementation	Planning for implementation	Early implementation	Developmental implementation	Solid implementation	Full implementation

▼(2.0 Average in 2005-06)
▼(2.0 Average in 2006-07)

In 2006-07, Morningside continued to focus on addressing the SAIT corrective action steps. These efforts are focused on improving the quality of instruction through alignment to State standards, using grant funds to provide content coaching to teachers, and building academic intervention programs/options for struggling students.

While more staff now view SLCs as an important mechanism for school-wide instructional reform, SAIT continued to overshadow the SLC initiative as the primary focus of the school. In addition, staff expressed wariness about "overreach" as Morningside attempted to comply with the requirements of SAIT, SLCs, and now WASC (accreditation visit

planned for Spring 2007). In sum, the existence of multiple, and potentially competing priorities tended to convey the impression of an unfocused, over committed school.

One key success for Morningside was the development of a master schedule that embodied the school's reform priorities. In each of the prior three school years, Morningside's SLC effort had been hampered by the lack of a master schedule that was inadequately planned or not publicized to staff. As a result, Morningside experienced a poorly organized opening of the school year. Thanks to proactive planning and greater transparency, Morningside was able to develop a Fall 2007 master schedule that prioritized 9th and 10th grade coring for SLC teams, as well as a daily advisory period. In 2007, more than half (61%) of staff agreed that SLCs are supported within the master schedule.

At the district level, support centered on: 1) assisting Morningside in accessing and using data to guide and inform school improvement efforts through the development of a formative assessment system in Mathematics; 2) appointing a new principal to Morningside; 3) providing ongoing professional development for secondary Math teachers and principals on research-based, standards-aligned teaching and learning; 4) monitoring SLC grant budget expenditures; 5) promoting alternative scheduling to address intervention needs

Unfortunately, district support was not evident in the area of staffing. Historically high levels of staff turnover at Morningside have meant that many of the teachers staffing the 9th-10th grade house were new (2 years or less teaching experience) teachers, many of whom acknowledged a need for additional support with classroom management skills, content/pedagogy, and personalization.

In terms of the School/District Support benchmark, Morningside would be well-served to continue focusing on the following:
   o Emphasizing the importance of 9th grade transition with specific interventions for freshman
   o Creating a professional development calendar for the school prior to the end of the school year that balances the need for content-oriented training and collaboration within departments with interdisciplinary forums for SLC teams to collaborate around personalization and thematic curricula.
   o Highlighting commonalities among and across SAIT, SLCs, and WASC in terms of school structures and strategies for improving student achievement.
   o Formulating areas where SLC teams will have some degree of autonomy (e.g., master schedule, staffing, discretionary budgets, assessment, student conduct, etc.)

At the district level, IUSD should focus on the following:
   o Regularly attending and facilitating school SLC planning/governance meetings.
   o Staffing Morningside with credentialed teachers in core academic subjects (particularly English and Mathematics); IUSD should "audit" the school's master schedule for balance of teacher placement by experience so that more veteran, credentialed teachers are assigned to 9th and 10th grade students.
   o Coaching or training administrators on how to adapt their role to SLCs (i.e., devolving more authority to teacher leaders, moving away from strictly functional responsibilities to oversight for an entire SLC).
   o Monitoring the effectiveness of embedded academic interventions (i.e., those offered during the school day) for students 2+ grade levels behind).

    o   Assisting Morningside in the establishment of partnerships with parents, community, employers, postsecondary institutions and others as part of SLC implementation.

Personalization

Benchmark: *Each student's educational experience is characterized by sustained and mutually respectful personal relationships with students, faculty and administrators. Students are known by a group of educators who advise/advocate for them and work closely with the student and his or her family over time. The size of the SLC is appropriate to its vision and mission ranging in size from 100 to 300 students.*

▼(2.0 Average in 2004-05)

1	2	3	4	5	6
No evidence of implementation	Planning for implementation	Early implementation	Developmental implementation	Solid implementation	Full implementation

▼(2.0 Average in 2005-06)
▼(2.0 Average in 2006-07)

Personalization is the primary rationale for implementing SLCs at Morningside High School. Through a more personalized educational experience, Morningside aims to increase student engagement, high school graduation rates, and postsecondary eligibility.

More than half of staff survey respondents agreed that students are experiencing personalized instruction (see Table 20). More than half also agreed that students are receiving verbal counseling and a safe learning environment. Staff were least optimistic about personalized counseling and guidance. For example, only 36% agreed that all students have adult advocates[9] and only 23% agreed that students complete a written educational plan on high school and postsecondary goals.

Table 20: Staff Perceptions of Personalization (N=44)

	% Agreement
Students experience a safe learning environment.	72%
Students experience personalized instruction that is based on diverse learning styles and multiple intelligences.	68%
Students have opportunities to work with one or more teachers over multiple years (e.g., looping and student advisories).	68%
Students receive verbal counseling regarding their secondary and postsecondary course plan from teachers and/or counselors.	68%
Students experience personalized instruction that blends academic rigor with projects that reflect students' interests, life experiences, and culture.	65%
All students have an adult advocating for their academic and personal needs.	36%
Students complete a written educational plan that encompasses goals for high school and postsecondary education with teachers and/or counselors.	23%

Student survey respondents were less sanguine about the extent of personalization in place at Morningside. For example, less than half of all students surveyed reported feeling safe while at school and only about half felt connected to a school-wide community (see Table

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[9] Unlike their peers with more experience, the majority of teachers with less than five years of teaching experience responded positively to this survey item in a statistically significant manner.

21). Overall seniors were more positive compared to freshmen. For example, 42% of seniors agreed that they have an adult at the school to go to for support compared to only 32% of freshman.

Table 21: Student Perceptions of Personalization (% Agreement)

	9th Grade (N=211)	12th Grade (N=168)
I have an adult at this school that I can go to for help with school and for personal support.	62%	67%
I feel that I belong to a school-wide community.	49%	60%
I feel safe when I am at school.	38%	48%
I have worked with a *teacher* to develop a written educational plan that reflects my needs and interests.[10]	32%	42%
I have worked with a *counselor* to develop a written educational plan that reflects my needs and interests.	28%	46%
I talk to my teachers or a counselor regularly about my high school education plan.	23%	56%

Like staff, students were least positive about personalized counseling and guidance. Both 9th and 12th grade students tended to *disagree* that they had worked with either a counselor or a teacher on a written educational plan. Few students said that they talked with a counselor or teacher regularly about their plans for the future. Moreover, among the seniors who said that they met with a counselor more than three times in 2006-07, most (73%) reported that these meetings were focused on immediate needs (e.g., selecting courses) rather than a post-high school plan.

Student focus groups provided limited evidence of personalization, particularly counseling and guidance. For example, students reiterated their concern that the school appears more focused on high school graduation than helping students plan for life after high school. Students also indicated that they would like the advisory period improved to include more organized discussions around careers (career day, interests, scenarios), college preparation, teen issues/current events, as well as provide a time for students to showcase their interests/talents.

In terms of the Personalization benchmark, Morningside would be well-served to focus on the following:
- o Personalizing counseling/guidance in a more systemic way that identifies roles for both teachers and counselors in helping students set goals for high school and beyond, as well as regular monitoring of student progress toward these goals.
- o Using data (formative assessments, grades, etc.) to personalize instruction and/or intervention.
- o Developing a true "curriculum" or menu of options for the advisory period.

Parent & Community Engagement

Benchmark: *All members of the SLC are viewed as critical allies and are included in the school community (i.e., students, teachers, support staff, parents, administrators, business and community partners). Ongoing partnerships are aimed at supporting continuous improvement of student achievement and personal success. Authentic engagement of school partners leads to sustained participation of partners in decision-making and implementation of school efforts.*

▼(1.0 Average in 2004-05)

1	2	3	4	5	6
No evidence of implementation	Planning for implementation	Early implementation	Developmental implementation	Solid implementation	Full implementation

▼(1.0 Average in 2005-06)

▼(2.0 Average in 2006-07)

In 2006-07, brochures on the 9th and 10th grade houses were created for parents. In addition, principal met with nearly all parents of in-coming 9th and 10th graders. Staff noted an increased parental presence before/after school around the 9th-10th grade houses as well as increased articulation between parents and advisory teachers. Nonetheless, the overall level of parent involvement at Morningside remains low and plans have not been implemented to make parent/community involvement more of an overt focus. To date there has been little focus on building partnerships with business or community organizations to assist in SLC implementation.

As shown in Table 22, staff members were not very positive about parent/community involvement. Indeed, more than one-third (43%) of the staff survey respondents cited parent involvement as a top area in need for improvement at Morningside.

Table 22: Staff Perceptions of Parent/Community Involvement (N=44)

	% Agreement
Community partners, employers and businesses are involved in the development of small learning communities.	47%
Parents are considered key collaborators and contributing members to the school community.	44%
This school encourages partnerships with employers, postsecondary institutions and others necessary to implement small learning communities.	19%

Students were more positive about parent involvement, particularly parent-teacher interactions and parental support of learning at home (see Table 23).

Table 23: Student Perceptions of Parent/Community Involvement (% Agreement)

	9th Grade (N=211)	12th Grade (N=168)
My parents feel comfortable with my teachers if they have questions or need information.	73%	73%

In terms of the Parent/Community Involvement benchmark, Morningside would be well-served to focus on the following:
- o Providing opportunities for parents/community members to participate in school planning and decisions related to SLCs.

- o Offering parent meetings/outreach to explain the accomplishments and direction of SLC implementation.

PART V—CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Student and School Outcomes

On all measures of student achievement and school performance, Morningside High School is significantly underperforming on high stakes measures such as the CST and CAHSEE after three years of the grant. Quantifiable success was most evident in higher CAHSEE pass rates, particularly for male students, and higher graduation rates (i.e., fewer 9th and 10th grade dropouts). Morningside also met 2007 Academic Performance Index (API) targets for the first time in many years. Nonetheless, Morningside continues to have clear challenges in improving student achievement, especially in Mathematics.

Summary of SLC Implementation

During 2006-07, Morningside expanded SLC structures to all 9th and 10th grade students, reaching 54% of student enrollment. Grade level houses were provided with set-aside space on campus and students in the houses were cored in three or more courses. In addition, the advisory period was expanded to include grades 9-12. No progress was made in terms of developing thematic SLC academies in 2006-07 (the third year of a three-year grant). As such, it is unclear whether or how SLC efforts will reach more students. Moreover, it is clear that SLC implementation was hampered throughout the grant period by the existence of multiple competing reform priorities (notably State-mandated SAIT corrective actions and preparation for WASC).

Morningside achieved only planning status in terms of implementing SLC benchmarks on a school-wide basis.

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

In order to successfully implement SLCs, Morningside must a) develop structures for grades 11-12 so that more staff are involved in SLC and b) involve all staff in delivering personalized instruction that augments academic rigor with differentiated and responsive pedagogy, curricular relevance, and enhanced counseling and guidance tied to postsecondary education. Key recommendations for addressing these and other aspect of SLC implementing in need of additional focus and attention include:

o Vision, Leadership, and Management. There is a need for broader communication of the school-wide vision, including clarity on issues that relate to SLC versus departmental priorities. The vision for SLCs must be delivered so that more staff

> understand that the SLC initiative is connected to SAIT corrective actions and WASC insofar as SLC reforms intend to personalize instruction and otherwise engage and support students.
>
> o Teaching and Learning Teams. Professional development should allocate more time for teachers to meet by SLC/house, preferably focused on discussion and analysis of student work and assessment data. In addition, teachers should play a larger role in creating the school's professional development calendar.
>
> o Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum and Instruction. Professional development and coaching continue to be needed in the areas of academic rigor, relevance, and culturally responsive pedagogy.
>
> o Inclusive Programs and Instructional Practices. Morningside should widen administrative "ownership" of the SLC initiative by assigning more administrators to distinct SLC responsibilities. Faculty effort should center on increasing student identification within a particular SLC team.
>
> o Accountability and Continuous Program Improvement. Morningside should continue to train teachers to interpret student assessment data and, more importantly, use these data to modify and refine teaching practices. Communication to staff should continually showcase how data is being used to drive school decisions.
>
> o School/District Support. Top priority should center on highlighting commonalities among and across SAIT, SLCs, and WASC in terms of professional development, school structures and other strategies for improving student achievement. Morningside should also begin to formulate areas where SLC teams will have some degree of autonomy (e.g., master schedule, staffing, discretionary budgets, assessment, student conduct, etc.)
>
> o Personalization. Counseling/guidance should become more systemic by clarifying the roles of both teachers and counselors in helping students set goals for high school and beyond, as well as regular monitoring of student progress toward these goals. In addition, the advisory period needs to become formalized such that there is a common expectation regarding staff and student responsibilities.
>
> o Parent/Community Involvement. Morningside needs to provide more opportunities for parents/community to participate in school planning, decisions, etc. related to SLCs. Morningside should also offer parent meetings/outreach to explain the accomplishments and direction of SLC implementation.

Morningside's SLC implementation efforts have also highlighted a number of areas where district-level actions are necessary including:

- Teacher Recruitment and Retention. IUSD must prioritize teacher recruitment and retention for lower-achieving schools. At Morningside High, the lack of fully credentialed staff in core academic areas as well as the propensity to disproportionately staff 9th (and to a lesser extent 10th) grade courses with newer teachers likely diminished the impact of reform efforts on student achievement.

- Master Schedule Development and Oversight. IUSD should assist schools in terms of designing a master schedule that prioritizes school improvement goals prior to the end of each school year. IUSD should "audit" the school's master schedule for balance of teacher placement by experience so that more veteran, credentialed teachers are assigned to 9th and 10th grade students.

- Professional Development and Support for Administrators. IUSD should coach and train administrators on how to adapt their role to SLCs (i.e., devolving more authority to teacher leaders, moving away from strictly functional responsibilities to oversight for an entire SLC). In addition, administrators need training on implementation and monitoring of academic intervention programs and services for both "intensive" and "strategic" students.

- Professional Development and Support for Teachers. IUSD should continue funding coaching and professional development in the core areas of English/Language Arts and Mathematics in order to help Morningside (and other schools) meet state and federal accountability targets.

- Parent/Community Outreach. District personnel should play a larger role in helping schools establish partnerships with parents, community, employers, and postsecondary institutions.

Appendix A:
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Appendix B:
Survey Results

2006-07 Small Learning Communities
Confidential Student Survey (N = 211)

P U B L I C
W O R K S

District: INGLEWOOD USD
Cohort: IV
School: MORNINGSIDE HIGH SCHOOL
Grade: 9th

Section I: Experiences in Your Classes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 My classes are interesting and challenging.	5%	36%	54%	5%
2 I have the opportunity to do assignments and projects about interesting topics in class.	4%	35%	54%	6%
3 Teachers and administrators encourage me to challenge myself.	8%	22%	48%	23%
4 My teachers know my name and the names of my friends in class.	3%	16%	48%	33%
5 I have been encouraged to take AP and advanced classes.	23%	44%	30%	3%
6 I can get tutoring and other help if I'm having trouble in school.	6%	12%	50%	32%
7 My teachers are clear about what they expect from me.	4%	21%	57%	17%
8 My teachers are fair about how they grade me.	17%	25%	44%	14%
9 Teachers teach academic subject matter at a high level.	11%	28%	55%	6%
10 My parents feel comfortable with my teachers if they have questions or need information.	10%	17%	51%	22%
11 I have an adult at this school that I can go to for help with school and for personal support.	14%	24%	34%	28%
12 The classes I take incorporate my life experiences and my culture.	20%	34%	39%	6%
13 My classes have encouraged me to consider further education after high school.	9%	20%	45%	26%
14 I have worked with a counselor to develop a written educational plan that reflects my needs and interests.	25%	47%	21%	7%
15 I have worked with a teacher to develop a written educational plan that reflects my needs and interests.	28%	40%	26%	6%
16 I will be prepared to enter college when I am finished with high school.	6%	13%	42%	39%
17 I feel safe when I am at school.	27%	34%	35%	3%
18 I talk to my teachers or a counselor regularly about my high school educational plan.	27%	49%	20%	3%
19 I feel that I belong to a school-wide community.	16%	36%	45%	4%
20 The classes I take relate to my future college and career goals.	13%	32%	41%	13%
21 I will be prepared for employment when I am finished with high school.	6%	12%	49%	33%
22 I have the support I need at home to complete my homework and do well in school.	5%	9%	41%	45%

Section II: High School Learning Experiences

23 Are you currently involved in any of the following program offerings at this school? (mark all that apply)

8%   An Academy (a program made up of a group of students and teachers who share classes usually organized around a career theme)

5%   A Pathway (where students take a sequence of courses that lead them to their future college and career goals)

9%   A ROP class or program (such as business, culinary arts, or drafting)

9%   A House (where groups of students are assigned to a set of teachers who help them figure out classes, what they want to do after high school)

7%   A Magnet program (with a specialty core focus such as math, science, creative arts, or a career theme or cluster

53%   An Advisory program (where groups of students are assigned to a teacher or other faculty member on a regular basis to support planning my school and career decisions)

16%   None

21%   I don't know

4%   Other

24 Has anyone at the school told you about the kinds of programs listed in Question #23 that are available to you at this school?

37%   Yes
33%   No
29%   Don't Know

25 Are you assigned to a teacher or other staff member to help you plan your education in high school and after you graduate?

17%   Yes
58%   No
25%   Don't Know

26 How many times have you met with a counselor this school year?

17%   None
33%   1-2 times
23%   3-5 times
26%   more than 5 times

27 If you met with a counselor this school year, please select the reason or reasons you met. (mark all that apply)

56%   Selecting courses
35%   Help with a personal issue
13%   Planning for college

28 This school year, have you participated in any of the following activities? (mark all that apply)

33%	After-school program	2%	College class
4%	Internship	2%	Work experience
0%	Community service project	5%	Job shadowing
1%	Career/interest inventory	43%	Career fair
2%	College fair	24%	Field trip
3%	Guest speakers in your class		

29 What ADULT at this school is MOST helpful to you in planning for high school and life after high school? (mark all that apply)

52%	Teacher	30%	Counselor
6%	Principal	2%	Career center staff
2%	Assistant Principal	1%	Library staff member
3%	Office staff member	2%	Teaching assistant
19%	Coach	9%	Someone else at the school (what is their job)

Section III: About You

30   What grade are you in?

100%   9th
  0%   10th
  0%   11th
  0%   12th

31   Are you:

51%   Male
49%   Female

32   What is your ethnicity?

30%   African American
 1%   American Indian or Alaskan Native
 1%   Asian American/Pacific Islander
62%   Hispanic/Latino
 1%   White/Caucasian
 4%   Other

33   Have you taken or are you currently taking an AP class?

 8%   Yes
92%   No

34   What is the highest-level math class that you have taken, including any class that you are currently taking?

 2%   No math
81%   Algebra I
12%   Geometry
 4%   Algebra II
 0%   Trigonometry
 0%   Calculus
 0%   Other

35   What are your plans after high school graduation? (mark all that apply)

 0%   Attend a trade or vocational school
12%   Attend a two-year college
51%   Attend a four-year college or university
22%   Find a full-time job
25%   Find a part-time job
 4%   Join the military
 1%   Become an apprentice
13%   Other
14%   Don't know

36   School is:

15%   Easy
66%   Just right
19%   Hard

37   I am a student in (if your school has tracks):

N/A   Track A
N/A   Track B
N/A   Track C

2006-07 Small Learning Communities
Confidential Student Survey (N = 168)

PUBLIC
W O R K S

District: INGLEWOOD USD
Cohort: IV
School: MORNINGSIDE HIGH SCHOOL
Grade: 12th

Section I: Experiences in Your Classes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 My classes are interesting and challenging.	2%	35%	55%	7%
2 I have the opportunity to do assignments and projects about interesting topics in class.	2%	28%	64%	6%
3 Teachers and administrators encourage me to challenge myself.	4%	27%	55%	14%
4 My teachers know my name and the names of my friends in class.	1%	10%	55%	34%
5 I have been encouraged to take AP and advanced classes.	17%	36%	34%	13%
6 I can get tutoring and other help if I'm having trouble in school.	7%	23%	58%	11%
7 My teachers are clear about what they expect from me.	4%	20%	57%	20%
8 My teachers are fair about how they grade me.	5%	17%	64%	14%
9 Teachers teach academic subject matter at a high level.	4%	26%	63%	7%
10 My parents feel comfortable with my teachers if they have questions or need information.	5%	22%	59%	14%
11 I have an adult at this school that I can go to for help with school and for personal support.	10%	23%	46%	21%
12 The classes I take incorporate my life experiences and my culture.	9%	41%	45%	5%
13 My classes have encouraged me to consider further education after high school.	7%	12%	55%	27%
14 I have worked with a counselor to develop a written educational plan that reflects my needs and interests.	13%	41%	35%	11%
15 I have worked with a teacher to develop a written educational plan that reflects my needs and interests.	12%	46%	35%	7%
16 I will be prepared to enter college when I am finished with high school.	4%	15%	58%	23%
17 I feel safe when I am at school.	18%	34%	41%	7%
18 I talk to my teachers or a counselor regularly about my high school educational plan.	6%	38%	48%	8%
19 I feel that I belong to a school-wide community.	7%	33%	55%	5%
20 The classes I take relate to my future college and career goals.	12%	30%	48%	10%
21 I will be prepared for employment when I am finished with high school.	3%	21%	54%	22%
22 I have the support I need at home to complete my homework and do well in school.	4%	8%	51%	36%

Section II: High School Learning Experiences

23 Are you currently involved in any of the following program offerings at this school? (mark all that apply)

5%   An Academy (a program made up of a group of students and teachers who share classes usually organized around a career theme)

9%   A Pathway (where students take a sequence of courses that lead them to their future college and career goals)

12%   A ROP class or program (such as business, culinary arts, or drafting)

2%   A House (where groups of students are assigned to a set of teachers who help them figure out classes, what they want to do after high school)

4%   A Magnet program (with a specialty core focus such as math, science, creative arts, or a career theme or cluster

67%   An Advisory program (where groups of students are assigned to a teacher or other faculty member on a regular basis to support planning my school and career decisions)

21%   None

4%   I don't know

4%   Other

24 Has anyone at the school told you about the kinds of programs listed in Question #23 that are available to you at this school?

39%   Yes
46%   No
14%   Don't Know

25 Are you assigned to a teacher or other staff member to help you plan your education in high school and after you graduate?

50%   Yes
40%   No
10%   Don't Know

26 How many times have you met with a counselor this school year?

1%   None
12%   1-2 times
26%   3-5 times
61%   more than 5 times

27 If you met with a counselor this school year, please select the reason or reasons you met. (mark all that apply)

73%   Selecting courses
26%   Help with a personal issue
49%   Planning for college

28 This school year, have you participated in any of the following activities? (mark all that apply)

21%   After-school program   7%   College class
18%   Internship   6%   Work experience
7%   Community service project   20%   Job shadowing
18%   Career/interest inventory   55%   Career fair
11%   College fair   63%   Field trip
9%   Guest speakers in your class

29 What ADULT at this school is MOST helpful to you in planning for high school and life after high school? (mark all that apply)

48%   Teacher   53%   Counselor
3%   Principal   29%   Career center staff
10%   Assistant Principal   2%   Library staff member
2%   Office staff member   1%   Teaching assistant
13%   Coach   4%   Someone else at the school (what is their job)

Section III: About You

30 What grade are you in?

   0%   9th
   0%   10th
   0%   11th
   100%   12th

31 Are you:

   48%   Male
   52%   Female

32 What is your ethnicity?

   32%   African American
    1%   American Indian or Alaskan Native
    1%   Asian American/Pacific Islander
   63%   Hispanic/Latino
    0%   White/Caucasian
    4%   Other

33 Have you taken or are you currently taking an AP class?

   43%   Yes
   57%   No

34 What is the highest-level math class that you have taken, including any class that you are currently taking?

   0%   No math
   2%   Algebra I
   1%   Geometry
   57%   Algebra II
   3%   Trigonometry
   13%   Calculus
   25%   Other

35 What are your plans after high school graduation? (mark all that apply)

   8%   Attend a trade or vocational school
   40%   Attend a two-year college
   51%   Attend a four-year college or university
   13%   Find a full-time job
   33%   Find a part-time job
   2%   Join the military
   1%   Become an apprentice
   7%   Other
   2%   Don't know

36 School is:

   16%   Easy
   75%   Just right
   8%   Hard

37 I am a student in (if your school has tracks):

   N/A   Track A
   N/A   Track B
   N/A   Track C

2006-07 Small Learning Communities
Staff Survey   (N = 44)

PUBLIC
W O R K S

District: INGLEWOOD USD
Cohort: IV
School: MORNINGSIDE HIGH SCHOO

Respondent Characteristics

1   **Stakeholder Group**

9%   Administration
80%   Classroom Teacher
0%   Teaching Assistant
11%   Counselor
0%   Other Classified

2.   **Years at School**

32%   2 years or less
27%   3-5
16%   6-10
25%   More than 10

3.   **Years Teaching (Teachers Only)**

8%   2 years or less
24%   3-5
18%   6-10
50%   More than 10

4   **Subject (Teachers Only)**
(shade all that apply)

14%   English
14%   Social Studies
14%   Math
16%   Science
5%   Special Ed
9%   Career Technical education/ROP
16%   Other

5.   **Grade Levels Currently Teaching**
(Teachers Only)
(shade all that apply)

48%   9th
48%   10th
48%   11th
48%   12th

The Small Learning Communities initiative is designed to personalize and scale down the educational experiences of students in large, comprehensive high schools. Small learning communities are structured in a variety of ways but typically consist of a group of students (between 100 and 500 students) who have the opportunity to develop personal relationships with small groups of peers and teachers in separate and distinct units within the school.

6   **I am currently assigned to work in a Small Learning Community at this school:**

52%   Yes
48%   No

If you answered Yes above, which of the following Small Learning Communities are you assigned to (shade all that apply):

9%   An Academy (school-within-a-school organized around a theme)

0%   Pathway (where students take a sequence of courses that lead them to their future college and career goals)

0%   ROP course sequence or program (3 or more courses within a career technical sequence)

43%   House (where students are divided into groups of several hundred, either across grade levels or by grade level to personalize the educational experience; for example, a freshman house)

0%   Magnet program (with a specialty core focus such as math, science, creative arts, or a career theme or cluster

57%   Advisory (where small groups of students are assigned to a faculty member and meet on a regular basis to provide opportunities to personalize education, support career and college planning, and check in on academic progress)

0%   Other

Rigorous, Relevant Curriculum & Instruction	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
7 Students understand classroom academic expectations (i.e., they understand what standard they are being held accountable for).	5%	7%	77%	9%	2%
8 Instruction is culturally responsive and accommodates diverse student interests, learning styles and educational needs.	0%	23%	60%	14%	2%
9 School-wide instructional decisions usually take into account the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students.	2%	14%	56%	16%	12%
10 Curriculum and instruction is organized so that all students are expected to learn and perform at high levels.	5%	12%	70%	7%	7%
11 There is a clear, connected and comprehensive model for monitoring student progress.	2%	35%	47%	5%	12%
12 Examination of disaggregated student data is a regular part of school planning and assessment.	2%	24%	60%	10%	5%

Teaching & Learning Teams	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
13 Small learning community team members meet regularly for planning, curriculum and activities.	14%	28%	26%	12%	21%
14 There is sufficient time for teachers to discuss and analyze student work in small learning community team meetings.	19%	33%	19%	0%	30%
15 There is sufficient time for teachers to support students' academic and personal needs and to help them plan for the future.	14%	40%	30%	2%	14%
16 Teachers are part of a professional community of practice that is collaborative and public.	10%	19%	50%	5%	17%
17 Professional development for the SLC initiative is designed by teachers and is specific for our school.	7%	42%	23%	2%	26%
18 Professional development promotes greater alignment of instruction with academic standards and accountability requirements.	5%	26%	44%	9%	16%
19 Small learning community topics are a regular feature of school-wide professional development.	7%	37%	26%	7%	23%

Personalization	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
20 Students experience personalized instruction that is based on diverse learning styles and multiple intelligences.	5%	19%	63%	5%	9%
21 Students experience personalized instruction that blends academic rigor with projects that reflect students' interests, life experiences and culture.	2%	19%	60%	5%	14%
22 Students complete a written educational plan that encompasses goals for high school and postsecondary education with teachers and/or counselors.	21%	33%	16%	7%	23%
23 Students receive verbal counseling regarding their secondary and postsecondary course plan from teachers and/or counselors.	14%	7%	56%	12%	12%
24 Students receive career planning and guidance in the form of career inventories and assessments, job shadowing opportunities, field trips and career fairs.	7%	12%	63%	5%	12%

Personalization	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
25 All students at this school have an adult advocating for their academic and personal needs.	12%	24%	29%	7%	29%
26 Students have opportunities to work with one or more teachers over multiple years (e.g., "looping" and "student advisories").	5%	16%	56%	12%	12%
27 Student discipline is not a major problem area at this school.	44%	37%	12%	2%	5%
28 Students experience a safe learning environment.	5%	19%	67%	5%	5%
29 Students have opportunities for learning that extend beyond the instructional day including after-school programs, college courses, internships, etc.	0%	21%	60%	14%	5%
30 There is a clear process for referring a student for academic intervention.	7%	35%	37%	14%	7%

Identity of Small Learning Communities	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
31 Small learning communities at this school have an educational philosophy that is shared by students, staff, families and community partners.	7%	32%	29%	2%	29%
32 Small learning communities have unique academic identities.	12%	26%	35%	2%	26%
33 Small learning communities have distinct physical boundaries.	10%	29%	38%	5%	19%
34 Small learning communities make decisions regarding curriculum, instruction and assessment.	7%	40%	26%	2%	26%
35 Small learning communities make decisions regarding budget, personnel and facilities.	16%	40%	7%	2%	35%
36 Small learning communities make decisions related to the master schedule and student programming.	12%	30%	26%	5%	28%
37 Small learning communities make decisions related to student conduct and issues of community safety.	12%	42%	16%	5%	26%
38 Small learning communities have administrators or teacher-directors who lead a cohesive faculty.	14%	24%	38%	7%	17%
39 The school's master schedule supports small learning communities.	2%	17%	46%	15%	20%

Inclusive Programs and Instructional Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
40 Admission to small learning communities is open and inclusive.	0%	14%	42%	21%	23%
41 Small learning communities include heterogeneous groupings of students and are not tracked by student ability.	2%	5%	47%	19%	28%
42 Small learning communities provide information and outreach about their programs to *high school* students and parents.	2%	23%	37%	7%	30%

Inclusive Programs and Instructional Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
43 Small learning communities provide information and outreach about their programs to *middle school* students and parents.	5%	16%	23%	5%	51%
44 Most staff at this school are committed to the principle that "all children can learn."	2%	12%	49%	21%	16%

Vision, Leadership & Management	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
45 The vision and goals for implementing small learning communities are well understood by staff.	14%	33%	30%	14%	9%
46 All staff members have a say in school decisions.	16%	47%	26%	2%	9%
47 The results of major school decisions are communicated to all staff.	17%	40%	33%	2%	7%
48 Most staff members at this school trust one another.	26%	26%	21%	2%	24%
49 This school has a strong leadership team that guides instruction and the implementation of the small learning communities initiative.	19%	33%	35%	7%	7%
50 The architectural design and/or use of space at this school support the implementation of small learning communities.	14%	21%	40%	14%	12%

Parent and Community Engagement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
51 Parent and Community Engagement	12%	23%	40%	7%	19%
52 Community partners, employers and businesses are involved in the development of small learning communities.	14%	35%	12%	7%	33%
53 Parents are considered key collaborators and contributing members to the school community.	12%	23%	37%	7%	21%

Barriers to Implementing Small Learning Communities

Directions: In order to help evaluate the implementation of small learning communities at your school, we would like you to shade the top <u>three</u> areas that you see as the biggest barriers to implementation of the school's plan that exist today.

54. Teaching to rigourous academic standards	16%	55. Collaboration among staff	32%
56. Adequate professional development	30%	57. Adequacy of facilities	20%
58. Serving the needs of specific populations	2%	59. Meeting state accountability measures	14%
60. Academic support and intervention for students	27%	61. Parent/Community involvement	43%
62. School governance and decision-making	16%	63. Curricular access & equity	0%
64. School leadership and vision	23%	65. Student guidance & counseling	14%
66. Teacher teaming	9%	67. Resistance to change	30%
68. Adapting master schedule to SLCs	16%		
69. Other (please specify)	2%		

70. What is your opinion of the SLC initiative and your school's progress in implementation?

Thanks again for you participation. Questions regarding the survey should be directed to:

P U B L I C
W O R K S

**90 North Daisy Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91107
phone # 626-564-9890**

Appendix C: Inventory

Inglewood USD Small Learning Communities
Site Implementation Checklist

Cohort IV, Year 1, 2004-05

Research Questions/Focus of Evaluation:

Family and Community Connections:
- Engaged and involved parents, business and community members
- Improved school climate and safety

Authentic Curriculum:
- Modification of instruction and the delivery of curriculum

Personalization:
- Personalized learning environment for students

Improved Student Outcomes and Achievement:
- Improved student achievement, eligibility and preparation for career and postsecondary ed, and student enrollment in postsecondary options and employment

Structures for Collaboration and Teaching and Learning Teams:
- Structured opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and learning teams to collaborate and work with small groups of students
- Support for teacher collaboration in the development of authentic curriculum
- Collaboration among staff to increase personalization

Rating Scale

Using rubric of effectiveness of implementation and coverage of school community

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.

School community includes students, teachers, staff, administrators, parents and community partners as

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

Site Visit Description:

Dates Visited:

Please attach site visit agenda and who was interviewed.

Description of school and overall SLC implementation strategies:

Names of SLCs/Grade Level Configurations:

Best Strategies/accomplishments:

Need to improve/in need of help:

Vision, Leadership and Management Benchmark

Implementation is characterized by a shared vision created by a group of educators, support staff, administrators, parents, and community who comprise the school learning community who assume responsibility for the learning of every student through a distinctive and focused standards-based curriculum.

INDICATORS	Rating (1-6)	Description of Strategies and Status of Implementation
(1) The vision related to implementing SLCs incorporates: ☐ Improved student outcomes and achievement ☐ Authentic & rigorous curriculum ☐ Personalization ☐ Structures for collaborative teams ☐ Family and community connections		
(2) Stakeholders are involved in planning, implementing and problem solving related to the execution of the school's vision for SLCs.		
(3) The vision is periodically revisited and reevaluated based on community input and implementation experience.		
(4) Stakeholders are aware of the vision for converting to SLCs and how each SLC fits together.		
(5) Major decisions regarding SLCs are communicated to all staff and stakeholders. Roles for the implementation of SLCs are clear to stakeholders.		
(6) The principal and administrators demonstrate strong, engaged and positive leadership for the SLC initiative.		
(7) The overall school budget reflects school-wide improvement goals including the implementation of SLCs.		
(8) Architectural design and uses of space support the school's SLC vision and mission.		
AVERAGE RATING:		

1) What is working really well at this site in this area?

2) What needs the most improvement?

3) What technical assistance needs have been identified?

Teaching and Learning Teams Benchmark

SLC teams have structured opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and learning in order to collaborate and work with small groups of students. SLC teams share no more than 300 students and team members are assigned to SLCs for at least half of their school day. Common planning time and professional development resources are used to support SLC goals and to reflect on student work and performance and to adjust curriculum and instructional strategies.

INDICATORS	Rating (1-6)	Description of Strategies and Status of Implementation
(1) There is flexibility in scheduling that allows SLC teams to plan instruction and develop curriculum to implement SLCs.		
(2) SLC teams have common planning time and regular, ongoing meetings to discuss students, their work and to plan and implement SLC activities.		
(3) Teachers are part of a "professional community of practice" that is collaborative and public.		
(4) Professional development for the SLC initiative is designed by teachers and supports site-specific goals.		
(5) Professional development supports the use of student data and assessment results to inform instruction and to make mid-course corrections in instructional practice.		
(6) Professional development prepares teachers, counselors and other school staff to personalize the educational experience of students through the SLC initiative.		
(7) Professional development supports alignment of instruction with academic standards and accountability requirements.		
(8) Leadership development is included for SLC leads and administrators.		
(9) SLC teams share no more than 300 students in common for instruction.		
(10) SLC team members are assigned to SLCs for at least one half of their schedules.		
AVERAGE RATING:		

1) What is working really well at this site in this area?

2) What needs the most improvement?

3) What technical assistance needs have been identified?

Rigorous, Relevant Curriculum and Instruction Benchmark

A standards-based educational program embodies high expectations for every student to achieve grade-level standards and meet high school graduation requirements. Students are expected to meet college entrance requirements and are prepared for post-secondary education and training experiences and the world of work. Curriculum is adapted to individual student learning needs and is organized around topics of interest to students. Multiple forms of assessment provide opportunities to reflect personalized learning.

INDICATORS	Rating (1-6)	Description of Strategies and Status of Implementation
(1) SLC course offerings align to district graduation and university admission requirements.		
(2) SLCs share clear expectations that align with state content and performance standards.		
(3) Curriculum and instruction is organized according to individual SLC educational philosophy and may involve thematic, interdisciplinary units.		
(4) Curriculum and instruction is organized so that all students are expected to learn and perform at high levels.		
(5) Multiple forms of assessment reflect personalized learning and offer students opportunities to demonstrate learning.		
(6) Curriculum and instruction is articulated (up to post-secondary and down to middle schools) to provide a coherent educational experience resulting in students moving toward graduation.		
(7) Teachers adapt instruction based on the needs of individual students and attend to all learners including English language learners, standard English language learners, and students with special needs.		
(8) High quality, credentialed teachers teach in all SLCs.		
(9) Structured intervention is designed to meet individual student needs.		
(10) There is an adequate supply of basic classroom supplies, supplemental resources and Board adopted textbooks that are standards aligned.		
AVERAGE RATING:		

1) What is working really well at this site in this area?

2) What needs the most improvement?

3) What technical assistance needs have been identified?

Inclusive Programs and Instructional Practices (SLC Structure) Benchmark

Each SLC has a coherent educational program and approach that is known and shared by students, staff, families and community partners. SLC membership is based on students' and teachers' interest and choice to ensure equitable access. SLCs have a unique academic identity and include distinct, heterogeneous group of students and an administrator or teacher leader that leads a cohesive faculty team. SLC teams make decisions related to: curriculum, instruction and assessment; budget, personnel and facilities; master schedule and student programming; and student conduct and issues of community safety. SLCs range in size from 100 to 300 students and students are blocked for at least one half of the school day in an SLC.

INDICATORS	Rating (1-6)	Description of Strategies and Status of Implementation
(1) SLCs have a coherent educational program and approach that is known and shared by students, staff, families and community partners. Instruction is flexible and tailored to diverse student needs.		
(2) Each SLC includes a distinct, heterogeneous group of students based on student interest and choice.		
(3) Each SLC has an administrator or lead teacher that leads a cohesive faculty team based on faculty interest and choice. Counselors and teacher specialists collaborate with the teams.		
(4) SLC teams make decisions related to: □ Curriculum, instruction, and assessment. □ Budget, personnel and facilities □ Master schedule and student programming □ Student conduct and issues of community safety		
(5) Access to SLCs is open and inclusive. SLCs are designed to be accessible to all subgroups.		
(6) Size of SLCs are appropriate to the vision and mission (range in size from 100 to 300 students).		
(7) Students within an SLC are together for at least 50% of their school day.		
AVERAGE RATING:		

1) What is working really well at this site in this area?

2) What needs the most improvement?

3) What technical assistance needs have been identified?

Accountability and Continuous Program Improvement Benchmark

Members of the SLC work together, share expertise, and exercise leadership to ensure that student achievement and personal success is the intended result of all decisions. Internal and external sources of school data are used to make decisions. SLC teams retain primary responsibility, appropriate autonomy and are accountable for making decisions affecting the important aspects of the small learning community.

INDICATORS	Rating (1-6)	Description of Strategies and Status of Implementation
(1) Stakeholders display personal and collective responsibility for achieving the vision and mission for SLC vision and mission of success for all students.		
(2) Internal and external school data from multiple sources are used to make decisions.		
(3) Funds, time, personnel, partnerships and facilities are used to support the mission and vision of the school.		
(4) Decision-making and reporting processes incorporate the use of technology.		
(5) Student data is accessible by SLC.		
AVERAGE RATING:		

1) What is working really well at this site in this area?

2) What needs the most improvement?

3) What technical assistance needs have been identified?

School/District Support for SLCs Benchmark

School and district policies and practices support the implementation of SLCs. School-wide and departmental goals, professional development, scheduling and staffing align with and support SLC needs. Members of the SLC teams retain primary responsibility, appropriate autonomy and accountability for decisions related to individual SLCs.

INDICATORS	Rating (1-6)	Description of Strategies and Status of Implementation
(1) School-wide improvement goals align with SLC needs.		
(2) Department goals align with SLC needs		
(3) School and district professional development plans and resources accommodate SLC needs.		
(4) District policies support the implementation of SLCs including autonomous decision making at the school and SLC levels. District negotiates teacher union contract with provision to support SLC staffing needs.		
(5) School scheduling and staffing support the implementation of SLCs.		
(6) Options for Honors/AP classes are available across all programs.		
AVERAGE RATING:		

1) What is working really well at this site in this area?

2) What needs the most improvement?

3) What technical assistance needs have been identified?

Personalization Benchmark

Each student's educational experience is characterized by sustained and mutually respectful personal relationships with students, faculty and administrators. Students are known by a group of educators who advise/advocate for them and work closely with the student and his or her family over time. The size of the SLC is appropriate to its vision and mission ranging in size from 100 to 300 students.

INDICATORS	Rating (1-6)	Description of Strategies and Status of Implementation
(1) Students are known and valued by their peers and staff and have access to adult mentors/advisors and role models.		
(2) Students experience personalized instruction that incorporates student experiences and cultures. Instruction is based on diverse learning styles and multiple intelligences.		
(3) SLC serves a population of 300-500 students with increased teacher-adult contact and community responsibility.		
(4) Students prepare a written secondary course plan and postsecondary plan with teachers and/or counselors.		
(5) Verbal counseling from teachers and/or counselors is a regular part of student educational programming.		
(6) Students receive college and career planning and guidance in the form of career inventories and assessments; job shadowing opportunities; field trips; and career fairs.		
(7) Adults have available, timely, and comprehensible student data for advisory and course planning.		
(8) Students have opportunities to work with one or more teachers for multiple years in caring, supportive relationships (differing models of advisory, mentoring, dropout prevention)		
(9) Adults conduct parent outreach and conferences on student's personal needs to support students.		
(10) Students have opportunities for learning that extend beyond the instructional day including after-school programs, college courses, internships, etc.		
(11) Students have access to and participate in academic intervention and support services as needed.		

(12) Specific strategies are present to transition freshmen into the school that support them academically, personally and socially.	
AVERAGE RATING:	

1) What is working really well at this site in this area?

2) What needs the most improvement?

3) What technical assistance needs have been identified?

Parent and Community Engagement Benchmark

All members of the SLC are viewed as critical allies and are included in the school community (i.e., students, teachers, support staff, parents, administrators, business and community partners). Ongoing partnerships are aimed at supporting continuous improvement of student achievement and student's personal success. Authentic engagement of school partners leads to sustained participation of partners in decision making and implementation of school efforts.

INDICATORS	Rating (1-6)	Description of Strategies and Status of Implementation
(1) School encourages partnerships with community members, employers, postsecondary institutions and others necessary to implement SLCs.		
(2) Community partners, employers and businesses are involved in the development of curriculum, activities and other components to support SLCs.		
(3) Parents are considered key collaborators and contributing members to the school community.		
(4) Opportunities are provided for people to gather easily at appropriate times and locations.		
(5) Parents are involved in decision-making for their students including SLC choice, curriculum planning, student activities and future plans.		
AVERAGE RATING:		

1) What is working really well at this site in this area?

2) What needs the most improvement?

3) What technical assistance needs have been identified?