Smaller Learning Communities
2010-11 Final Evaluation Report
Los Angeles Unified School District

Cohort 6, Year 5
(Grant # S215L060084)

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Part I—Introduction and Literature Review

This report provides the evaluation results from 2010-11 for the seven comprehensive high schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) that received U.S. Department of Education Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) implementation grants as part of Cohort 6.[1] LAUSD hired Public Works, a non-profit headquartered in Pasadena, California, to conduct a third-party evaluation of the SLC efforts at the following seven Cohort 6 schools.

- Bell High School
- Chatsworth High School
- Franklin High School
- Monroe High School
- Polytechnic High School
- Van Nuys High School
- Westchester High School

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 originally provided three-year implementation grants ranging from $250,000 to $550,000 per school. The previous LAUSD grantees: five Cohort 6 schools received three-year grants totaling $2,399,710 beginning in the 2003-04 school year. The seven Cohort 6 schools in LAUSD received three-year grants beginning in the 2004-05 school year in the amount of $3,850,000. Cohort V (10 schools) received a five-year implementation grant of $10,625,000 in 2005-06. LAUSD also received $6,068,191 in implementation funding for schools involved in the Cohort 6 grant cycle. No LAUSD schools were funded in Cohort 7; LAUSD received $3,001,615 for funded in Cohort 6II (three schools) began funding in the 2008-09 school year. Both Cohort 6 and VIII received five-year grants with a review of implementation after year three. Schools making progress would then receive the additional two years of funding.

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[1] The U.S. Department of Education has awarded funds on an annual basis. Cohort 6 schools received five-year grants beginning in 2006-07. However, two of the schools in Cohort 6 were prior grantees from Cohort 6 (Monroe and Polytechnic).

[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.

Background to the SLC Approach

The 21st Century Take on High School Reform

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

Launched in 2000, the Gates Foundation five-year high school initiative provided over a billion dollars in funding on a range of fronts—at the individual school level to break up large schools or start new schools, for researchers and policymakers to learn more about effective practices, and most recently, to build capacity at the district level to sustain widespread change. While high school reform has been characterized by "dozens of actors and innumerable initiatives," reformers are "focusing primarily on five strategies: 1) improving school climate; 2) strengthening curriculum and instruction; 3) raising graduation requirements; 4) helping freshmen get up to speed academically; and 5) preventing students from dropping out" (Toch, 2007, p. 434).

Lessons Learned About the Impact of School Size

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

Common Approaches to Implementing SLCs

Under the U.S. 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. Listed below are a few common SLC approaches:

- *Small Schools and Schools-within-Schools:* Small school or school-within-a-school refer to an autonomous school that, while it may be in its own building or in a building with another school, is organizationally, fiscally, and instructionally independent and may focus on a specific theme (Small Schools Project, 2001a).
- *Academies:* Academy schools organize the curricula and education program for a subset of 10th –12th grade students (usually ranging from 200-400 students) around one or more themes, typically career or occupationally related. Students are grouped with a team of teachers who provide interdisciplinary and personalized curriculum. In addition, career

- academies partner with postsecondary institutions and other community groups to provide internships, service learning and other extracurricular opportunities.
- *House:* A house contains classrooms for teachers of core subjects who function as a team to instruct a small group of students (ranging from 100-500) (Sammon, 2000). In some models, students can take additional subjects elsewhere in the school, though not always with the same students in their house. Some schools have used the house model to transition freshman into the larger high school. Often, houses can contain a sequence of career-related and/or academic courses that lead toward graduation (Cotton, 2001).
- *Other "Small" Strategies:* Comprehensive high schools are devising additional strategies aimed at forming significant attachments among adults and their peers. Some schools provide advanced courses for high-achieving students, newcomer schools for immigrant students new to a school system, and modifications to the high school schedule.

Complementary Reforms to Support Smaller Learning Communities

College Prep Curriculum for All

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

Professional Learning Communities and Distributed Leadership

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

Ninth Grade Transition

Ninth grade is the linchpin grade level to ensuring high school success. It is the "last place along the K-12 pipeline where a large number of students are retained before dropping out of school completely (West, 2009, pg. 9)." The Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University examined the first time 9th grade retention. The center created a "first time ninth grade estimate (calculated by dividing the number of first-time 9th graders by the total number of students enrolled in 9th grade)." The study collected self-reported data from the NCES' National Education Surveys Program, and achievement data from six states in various regions of the country over nine different years of data collection spanning 1991 to 2007. It should be noted that the only factor that was shown to decrease 9th grade retention was urban school setting. Data showed the more rural the school setting (smaller

schools); the greater number of first time 9th grader students in attendance. More school districts have focused on 9th graders because students who fail to earn sufficient credits to matriculate to 10th grade are much more likely to dropout.

Implementation Issues for Smaller Learning Communities

Conversions vs. Start-ups

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

Early findings from the evaluation indicated that after the first year of operation, new small high schools had already made great strides in establishing deeper and more supportive student-teacher relationships both academically and personally. However, these environments required a large amount of work to put in place, more than the teachers had first anticipated. Further, the work of establishing a new school was more complicated and time-consuming leading to significant shortfalls of the resources necessary to implement all of the components needed to meet the challenging student populations they had been successful in recruiting. 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).

Autonomy

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

Size

While there is no consensus on the "perfect" size for a high school or an SLC, a large-scale quantitative study using nationally representative and longitudinal data explored the ideal size of a high school based on student learning. Using data from 10,000 students in 800 public and private schools in the US, achievement gains in mathematics and reading over the course of high school were found in schools of between 600 and 900 students (a

middle-sized high school). However, maintaining an even smaller school size was a more important factor for schools enrolling high proportions of disadvantaged students (Lee, 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. In an article describing the "multiple pathways" approach embedded in many SLC reforms, authors Jeannie Oakes and Marisa Saunders describe how important it is to implement programs that consciously allow students to select programs based on their interests rather than being "selected or directed" based on past achievement, where they are assumed to be going after high school, or their perceptions of the level of difficulty of the courses in a given SLC (2007).

Managing the Master Schedule

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

Reform Context in LAUSD

Reforms aimed at expanding SLCs in LAUSD were shaped by decentralization and standards-based instruction reforms begun in the 1990's. Decentralization efforts such as School Based Management (SBM) in 1989 and LEARN reforms in 1993 aimed at providing local schools and parents with greater decision-making authority. In 2001, advocates of greater decentralization reorganized LAUSD into eleven semi-autonomous local districts, reduced to eight local districts beginning in July 2004.

Driven by the standards-based instruction movement and State accountability mandates, LAUSD adopted standards-based instructional reforms. Beginning in 2000, LAUSD developed standards-based instructional guides specifying curricular scope and sequence at each grade level and subject area. LAUSD also adopted the *Principles of Learning* developed by the University of Pittsburgh as a guiding force for assessing teaching practices and student learning. As part of this effort to deepen the alignment of instruction with

state content standards, LAUSD also funded schools with literacy and math coaches and prioritized professional development for teachers on standards-based instruction. In addition, LAUSD has implemented a system of periodic (formative) assessments to help teachers differentiate English/Language Arts instruction at the elementary level, as well as in English, Mathematics, and Science at the secondary level. According to its SLC position paper, these reforms were part of the first stage of developing equity and excellence in LAUSD schools.

Due in part to the focus on standards-based instructional reforms, elementary student achievement has improved over multiple years. Unfortunately, these improvements have not been replicated at the secondary level. Therefore, LAUSD moved into a second stage of the standards-based reform. As stated in LAUSD's position paper on SLCs, the District recognizes that "we cannot reach new heights of equity and excellence while confined by a bureaucracy with a tendency to conserve customs or practices that work only for a small fraction of the student body." Therefore, LAUSD is currently engaged in a variety of reforms to address the size and constraints of large comprehensive high schools, including creating SLCs within existing high schools and establishing new small schools.

Growing research on the potential for SLCs to enact substantive instructional reform at the secondary level combined with the availability of funding for SLCs from the sources such as the U.S. Department of Education and the Gates Foundation prompted LAUSD to develop a list of essential attributes that will guide the implementation of SLCs at both new secondary schools in the district and large, urban schools engaged in transformation efforts.

Finalized in Summer 2004, these eight attributes include the following: 1) Unifying Vision; 2) SLC Identity; 3) Rigorous, Standards-Based Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment; 4) Professional Development; 5) Equity & Access; 6) Personalization; 7) Accountability & Distributed Leadership; and 8) Collaboration, Parent & Community Engagement.

For this final, grant end report, these eight attributes were reconfigured to address the five goals in the LAUSD's original SLC grant application:

1. Structural Implementation of SLCs (Vision, Equity, and Identity)
2. Rigorous, Standards-Based Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment
3. Professional Development
4. Personalization
5. Parent & Community Engagement

The implementation grants received by the seven comprehensive high schools included in this evaluation can be used to support a variety of SLC structures and strategies. Structures include academies, houses (grouping students in semi-autonomous structures—for instance, freshmen houses), schools-within-schools (with a higher degree of autonomy than a house structure) and magnet programs. Strategies supported by the grant include freshmen transition programs, multi-year groupings, alternative scheduling, adult advocate systems (such as formal mentoring programs) and teacher advisory systems (in which small groups of students are paired with a teacher during an advisory period to support individualized attention and personalization of the counseling function). The strategies and structures at each of the Cohort 6 high schools included in this evaluation are described in more detail under Goal 1 in Section III of this report.

Despite the variety of ways in which the grants can be used to support SLCs, it is expected that SLCs will be available to students "wall-to-wall" by the end of the grant period. In other words, all students must have the opportunity to participate in a SLC. Before proceeding to the evaluation of the structures and strategies that current grantee schools are using to implement SLCs, it is essential to recognize that SLCs have existed in LAUSD at the secondary level for more than two decades. School-within-a-school programs such as magnet schools, academies (including California Partnership academies), and Humanitas programs have provided a *subset* of students with rigorous, personalized, thematic and interdisciplinary instruction. The challenge now is to scale up these existing specialized programs so that <u>all</u> students benefit from participation in SLCs.

Figure 1: Small Learning Communities Graphic Illustration

	Rigor	Relevance	Relationships
	Standards-based Instruction	*Student Engagement*	*Personalization*
Structures	Instructional Guides	Thematic Contextualized Learning	Freshman/9th grade house
	Secondary Periodic Assessments	Career Technical Education (CTE)	Advisory periods
	State-adopted materials	Interdisciplinary curricula	Assignment of counselors to SLCs
	Content-specific coaching	Connections to prior knowledge and student background	Looping
	Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)		Adult advocates/mentors
Strategies	Differentiated/Scaffolded teaching	Project-based learning	Student-centered pedagogy
	Research-based instructional strategies	Performance assessment	Culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy
	High level discussions and questioning (Accountable Talk)	Service learning	Student goal setting (Individual Graduation Plans)
	Targeted academic intervention	Work-based learning	Relationship building (field trips, guest speakers, recognition assemblies)
	Culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy	Culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy	Proactive counseling
			Student leadership and enrichment opportunities
Outcomes	High academic expectations and college readiness manifest as increased:	Increased student engagement and retention of knowledge manifest as:	Student connections to school and individual teachers/counselors manifest as:
	CST	Student attendance	Student attendance
	CAHSEE	College/career exposure	Decreased suspensions/expulsions
	College eligibility (A-G completion)	Increased graduation rates/lower dropout rate	Increased graduation rates/lower dropout rate
	EL redesignation	Completion of Individual Graduation Plans (IGP)	Completion of Individual Graduation Plans (IGP)

As shown in Figure 1 above, SLCs are an "umbrella" for high school reform impacting all three Rs – Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. In the traditional high school, increasing academic rigor has been the primary emphasis of educational reform. Like other districts across California and the nation, standards-based instructional reforms have focused attention on the need for a guaranteed, viable curriculum for all students. LAUSD has developed instructional guides in the academic core areas specifying curricular pacing to address key standards, as well as suggested model lessons and practice assessments. LAUSD has also implemented a system for formative assessments in the core academic areas. These Secondary Periodic Assessments (SPA) are intended to provide teachers with data on student academic progress "along the way" tied to the curriculum taught. Site-based academic content coaches and mandated participation in State-approved professional development tied to State-adopted texts are additional manifestations of the emphasis accorded to academic rigor in the last 5-7 years.

SLCs aim to augment this emphasis on academic rigor with relevance and relationships so that students are engaged and connected to a rigorous, standards-based instructional program. Curricular relevance is manifest in efforts to ensure that students have opportunities to participate in hands-on, project-based learning that allows them to apply and connect learning within and across academic disciplines. Relevance also means connecting learning to real-life applications that showcase how learning will be applied in career/workplace settings so students understand how and why what they are learning is important beyond high school. Through exposure to contextualized, thematic learning, students are more likely to retain knowledge and skills that they have been taught.

The relationships focus of SLCs addresses directly the need to personalize the high school educational experience so that fewer students are allowed to drift and/or fall through the cracks. Personalization strategies intended to connect students to the staff (teachers, counselors, administrators) within a smaller learning environment so that individual student needs are met. Personalization includes "bonding and branding" activities that provide students with effective transitions into high school and a distinctive educational experience (i.e., how participation in one SLC is different from that received by other students who have chose another SLC) during their high school years. More importantly, however, personalization of instruction means student-centered pedagogy that takes into account student interests, talents, background, and aspirations. Personalization also implies a greater emphasis on individualized counseling and guidance so that all students develop accountability for their own learning and have a concrete plan for high school graduation and beyond that is the frequent focus of student-adult interactions.

In October of 2004, the Los Angeles Board of Education moved further in the direction of supporting the Smaller Learning Communities through the approval of Bulletin 1600. This policy memorandum called for the establishment and development of SLCs across all high schools within the district. Significantly, Bulletin 1600 reiterated support for the eight essential LAUSD attributes and established a formal procedure for complying with the attributes. As outlined in Bulletin 1600, all new and existing secondary schools must submit a proposal to the central SLC committee after which is submitted to the superintendent. This proposal must first contain evidence that school stakeholders have developed a vision for SLCs that meets local needs. Each SLC at a school must submit a request for proposal (RFP) that outlines how the SLC will embody the eight attributes. Second, schools must show evidence that their SLC design has considered the impact of

how a multitude of SLCs will co-exist within a larger high school structure through a school-wide impact report. In essence, the Bulletin 1600 approval process is designed to force SLC teams and schools to really think through the changes they intend to implement as part of SLCs.

In 2008, the Los Angeles Board of Education went further, passing a resolution on the desirability of converting all comprehensive high schools into Small Schools of no more than 500 students. Existing large schools would be transformed into campuses of multiple Small Schools, to be phased in first among the district's high priority schools commencing in 2010. By 2020, LAUSD "will be transformed into a district containing a portfolio of school options, a preponderance of which are Small Schools."

District support for the implementation of SLCs has been coordinated through the Office of School Redesign. Although primarily a site-level initiative, the implementation of SLCs in the period 2003-2006 included regular meetings with central district staff to participate in professional development on SLC practices throughout the U.S., review local SLC evaluation results, discuss promising practices, and raise questions related to District policies and support. In 2006, LAUSD shifted oversight and supervision of SLCs to the eight local districts within LAUSD. While the Office of School Redesign continues to provide some professional development support and fulfills the compliance accountability and reporting functions associated with the USDE grantees, local districts are primarily responsible for assisting the high schools in their purview in moving toward the eight SLC attributes.

Public Works Evaluation and Report Organization

As required by the U.S. Department of Education, districts receiving SLC Implementation grants are required to hire a third-party evaluator. In 2003, LAUSD hired Public Works, a 501c(3) corporation headquartered in Pasadena with a wide range of experience conducting evaluations in the area of public education and school reform.

Following this introduction, Part II of this report presents the methodology used to complete the evaluation. Part III contains analysis of SLC implementation in terms of the five SLC grant goals. Part III also provides student and school outcome data on the seven Cohort 6 schools from 2005-06 (baseline prior to the SLC grant) to 2010-11 (after five years of SLC grant implementation). Part IV includes conclusions and recommendations.

PART II—EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation conducted by Public Works encompassed two primary analytic approaches: quantitative (improvement in student and school outcome indicators) and qualitative (progress in implementing SLCs in relation to grant goals). In addition, the evaluation examined the kinds of technical assistance and/or support needed to effectively implement SLCs at large, urban high schools. In this way, the evaluation design allowed the district and individual schools to use the data collected for the evaluation to improve program implementation throughout the grant period.

In order to frame the current evaluation, Public Works worked with LAUSD to develop a set of categories to be used in data collection and to organize the analysis. The categories employed by the evaluation mirrored the eight LAUSD attributes, which encompass the areas of importance, contained in both LAUSD's application for SLC funding and research-based components found to be critical for early implementers of SLCs.

Qualitative Evaluation Approach

Three primary data collection methodologies were used for the analysis contained in the qualitative section (Section III) of the report:

1. A review of the literature related to SLC implementation;
2. Staff and student surveys; and
3. Site visits to each high school.

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 prepared an extensive bibliography for the literature review, which is included as **Appendix B**.

Surveys

Public Works developed four surveys of key stakeholders for this evaluation, one for school staff and three for students. Each school was provided with the results of the surveys individually and for the group of even schools funded by the grant. These surveys will be administered annually as part of the evaluation. The staff and student survey results summarized across the seven high schools are contained in **Appendix C**. More detailed results by cohort are available at www.publicworksinc.org.

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 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. Staff surveys (teachers, counselors, and administrators) were administered to staff at the 7 high schools between March and June 2011. In order to calculate a survey response rate, Public Works used the California Department of Education (CDE) reported number of certificated staff to estimate the number of staff at each school. Table 1 shows the response rate of completed surveys from the grantee schools for each of the last five years.

Table 1: Staff Survey Response Rates, 2007-2011

Cohort 6 Schools	Staff Response Rates				
	2007 (N=1,022)	2008 (N=939)	2009 (N=872)	2010 (N=825)	2011 (N=729)
Bell	90%	68%	78%	81%	83%
Chatsworth	86%	91%	71%	94%	98%
Franklin	77%	70%	68%	92%	82%
Monroe	98%	80%	85%	80%	69%
Polytechnic	69%	77%	79%	80%	84%
Van Nuys	89%	94%	65%	84%	87%
Westchester	83%	79%	100%	68%	30%
Average	**85%**	**80%**	**78%**	**83%**	**76%**

Source: School Reported Enrollment

Student Surveys

In order to collect student opinions and information about their experiences in high school, students were surveyed with regard to their expectations for learning, classroom instruction, counseling and guidance, and personalization. Students are also asked to identify if they currently participate in a SLC and their participation in activities such as after-school programs, college courses, internships and the like. The survey concludes with demographic questions including grade, sex, race-ethnicity, highest-level Mathematics class and plans after graduation in order to track student responses to smaller learning community implementation over time. To assess the impact of the initiative over time, Public Works administered the surveys to 10th and 12th graders. Response rates for this survey are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Student Survey Response Rates, 2007-2011

Cohort 6 Schools	10th Grade Response Rates				
	2007 (N=3,828)	2008 (N=4,129)	2009 (N=3,498)	2010 (N=3,923)	2011 (N=3,130)
Bell	79%	78%	69%	59%	71%
Chatsworth	64%	79%	84%	92%	62%
Franklin	57%	59%	73%	82%	68%
Monroe	50%	79%	79%	82%	59%
Polytechnic	61%	66%	70%	100%	68%
Van Nuys	62%	82%	90%	81%	73%
Westchester	58%	60%	96%	44%	60%
Average	**62%**	**72%**	**80%**	**77%**	**66%**
Cohort 6 Schools	12th Grade Response Rates				
	2007 (N=2,865)	2008 (N=3,156)	2009 (N=2,688)	2010 (N=2,893)	2011 (N=3,162)
Bell	76%	62%	85%	82%	72%
Chatsworth	71%	78%	81%	90%	66%
Franklin	71%	75%	69%	68%	91%
Monroe	100%	87%	81%	81%	87%
Polytechnic	26%	61%	68%	83%	88%
Van Nuys	48%	58%	66%	66%	92%
Westchester	100%	64%	67%	38%	49%
Average	**70%**	**69%**	**74%**	**73%**	**78%**

Source: grantee school site per report AT-14.

Graduate Student Follow-Up

In order to comply with federal reporting requirements for the SLC grants, Public Works conducted follow-up phone interviews each Fall 2007-2010 with graduates from the seven Cohort 6 grantee sites to measure postsecondary outcomes of students. The follow-up survey focused on student activities since high school, the value of student experiences in high school for later life, and future plans of graduates not currently enrolled in postsecondary education after high school.

Table 3: Graduate Follow-up Survey Response Rates

Cohort 6 Schools	12th Grade – Response Rates			
	2007 (N=2,067)	2008 (N=2,076)	2009 (N=1,581)	2010 (N=1,737)
Bell	76%	70%	71%	73%
Chatsworth	86%	74%	63%	75%
Franklin	67%	71%	74%	70%
Monroe	75%	75%	72%	70%
Polytechnic	72%	62%	71%	72%
Van Nuys	73%	69%	70%	70%
Westchester	79%	65%	74%	71%
Average	**75%**	**69%**	**71%**	**72%**

Source: Public Works

Site Visits

In order to provide qualitative information regarding the implementation of SLCs at the school level, Public Works conducted site visits to each of the seven schools in Cohort 6. The site visit consisted primarily of interviews and focus groups of key administrators, staff and students at the school. In order to speak with a range of school stakeholders, Public Works requested that the following categories be used in the development of the agenda for the site visit:

- √ SLC Grant Coordinator/Administrator
- √ Principal
- √ Teachers
- √ Counselors
- √ Students (grades 9-12)
- √ SLC Advisory Committee or Team

To prepare for the site visit, Public Works requested that each school complete an inventory of current and planned SLCs and to provide the school's current Master Schedule. In addition, Public Works prepared a demographic and data profile of each school in order to understand the school's enrollment and staffing statistics. Public Works held a training for the site visit team prior to the site visits, which included a review of the overall goals for the site visits, background information, a review of the protocols developed specifically for the site visits, and qualitative methods to be used.

In order to analyze and summarize the data collected during the site visit for each school site, Public Works used an implementation checklist prepared specifically for this evaluation. Survey and site visit information was summarized in the checklists completed for each site (see **Appendix D**). 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 grants included:

1. Unifying Vision
2. SLC Identity
3. Rigorous, Standards-Based Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment
4. Equity & Access
5. Personalization
6. Accountability & Distributed Leadership
7. Collaboration, Parent & Community Engagement
8. Professional Development

The following rating scale was used to provide a gauge of the level of implementation of individual components of SLCs 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.

SLC 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 Measures and Sources

In order to evaluate the grantee schools on variety of objective indicators, Public Works collected the following student-level quantitative data from LAUSD for 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10, and 2010-11.

Demographic Data
- Student identification number
- Gender (Male/Female)
- Grade Level (by credits accumulated and chronological age)
- Date of birth (if applicable)
- Ethnicity
- Free/Reduced Meal eligibility or National School Lunch Program (Yes or No)
- Track (if applicable)
- Special Education (Yes or No)
- Gifted and Talented/GATE (Yes or No)
- English Language proficiency (EO, IFEP, EL, RFEP)
- ID 01 SLC Codes from Field 140[4]

Achievement data
- Number of days attended and days enrolled
- California High School Exit Exam Status (Pass/Fail) and Scaled Scores in English/Language Arts & Mathematics[5]

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[4] This field denotes which kind of SLC as student is enrolled in.

[5] 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. For this study, Public *Works*, Inc. used both the passing score of 350, as well as more

- California Standards Test (scaled scores <u>and</u> proficiency levels) English Language Arts and Mathematics[6]
- Graduation status (graduation date)

In addition, the evaluation utilized data available at the school-level from the California Department of Education including:

- Adjusted 1-year and 4-year dropout rates[7];
- Graduation rates[8]; and,
- Percentage of graduates meeting UC/CSU eligibility.[9]

The quantitative section of the report focuses documents the changes in student outcomes from either the baseline year (2005-06) or Year 1 (2006-07), in relation to Year 5 (2010-11) for Cohort 6 schools. For most indicators, this report compares Cohort 6 schools, to "other" LAUSD comprehensive high schools that have not received a USDE grant. The data under analysis excluded: 1) magnet schools and programs and 2) small, autonomous schools under 500 students. For a complete list of schools included in analyses, please consult **Appendix F**.

The next section of the report profiles the status of SLC implementation in relation to the original SLC grant goals, referencing selected SLC attributes and integrating qualitative and quantitative data on the Cohort 6 schools.

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rigorous cut scores established by CDE to meet NCLB proficiency requirements (i.e., Adequate Yearly Progress). These cut scores more accurately reflect CST performance levels and signify 10th grade achievement of proficiency in English/Language Arts and Mathematics for both years analyzed.

[6] The CST is administered every Spring to LAUSD students and scored as part of 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, Proficient, Basic, Below Basic and Far Below Basic. A student who performs at or above the Proficient level is considered to have met the State standards.

[7] Data on this indicator was "adjusted" for the first time in 2006-07 to reflect more accurate tracking of the number of students at high schools over time.
[8] Based on the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) definition required for reporting under the No Child Left Behind Act.
[9] This indicator reflects the proportion of 12th grade graduates who complete the A-G sequence of courses, which lead to eligibility at public, four-year colleges and universities in California.

PART III—IMPLEMENTATION OF SLC GOALS

This section of the report focuses on the status of SLC implementation in terms of the five LAUSD goals in the district's USDE SLC grant application. It is critical to note that the evaluation conducted by Public Works used both the eight LAUSD SLC attributes and the five grant goals to benchmark what a fully implemented high school organized around SLCs for all students would look like. The evaluation was not intended to rate or score individual SLCs within a high school. Where appropriate, examples of innovative strategies or approaches employed by individual schools are described to illustrate the variety of approaches and to share information on best and promising practices.

Goal 1: Structural Implementation of SLCs

As part of reorganization into SLCs, participating high schools aimed to have all staff and students enrolled in a SLC comprised of 300-500 students. Each SLC intended to offer a distinctive academic identity and shared educational approach. To implement SLC structures, schools were charged with: 1) restructuring the school master schedule to align with SLC principles; 2) distributing students to SLCs in an equitable manner (i.e., heterogeneous grouping); and 3) empowering SLCs to exercise some degree of autonomy in decision-making and functioning.

School Characteristics

As shown in the Table 4 below, Cohort 6 schools enrolled an average of 2,817 students with 147 certificated staff members in 2009-10 (2010-11 staff data not available). An average of 99% of the faculty were fully credentialed, slightly above the LAUSD average. Teachers meeting NCLB definition of "high-quality teachers" (i.e., credentialed in subject area teaching) taught 91% of the core academic courses exceeding the district average by 3%. In terms of teacher experience, 3% of the teachers were first or second year teachers, a lower percentage than the LAUSD average of 6%.

Table 4: Characteristics of Cohort 6 Schools

Cohort 6 Schools	Student Enrollment	Total Certified Staff*	% Fully Credentialed Teachers**	% Core Taught by NCLB Compliant Teachers**	%1st & 2nd Year Teachers*
Bell	4,286	209	99%	86%	3%
Chatsworth	2,940	135	99%	91%	1%
Franklin	2,258	120	98%	91%	2%
Monroe	2,749	146	98%	92%	3%
Poly	3,041	189	100%	96%	4%
Van Nuys	2,946	147	99%	89%	2%
Westchester	1,499	84	99%	91%	7%
Cohort 6 Average	*2,817*	*147*	*99%*	*91%*	*3%*
LAUSD Total/Average	*206,767*	*32,872*	*98%*	*88%*	*6%*

Source: California Department of Education or *2009-10 School Accountability Report Card

As shown in Figure 2, the demographic characteristics of students enrolled at the Cohort 6 schools have remained largely stable in the five years since baseline (2005-06). As in previous years of the grant, Cohort 6 schools continued to be predominately Hispanic/Latino (75%), with smaller concentrations of Asian (9%), African-American (8%), and White (7%) students. Of these students enrolled at Cohort 6 schools, 80% were eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), 19% were English Learners (EL), 9% were identified as Special Education, and 15% were identified GATE. Since the first year of the grant, the proportion of EL students has declined by 13%, the percentage of students eligible for NSLP increased by 8%, and the percentage of GATE students increased 4%.

Figure 2: Cohort 6 Schools, Student Demographic Characteristics
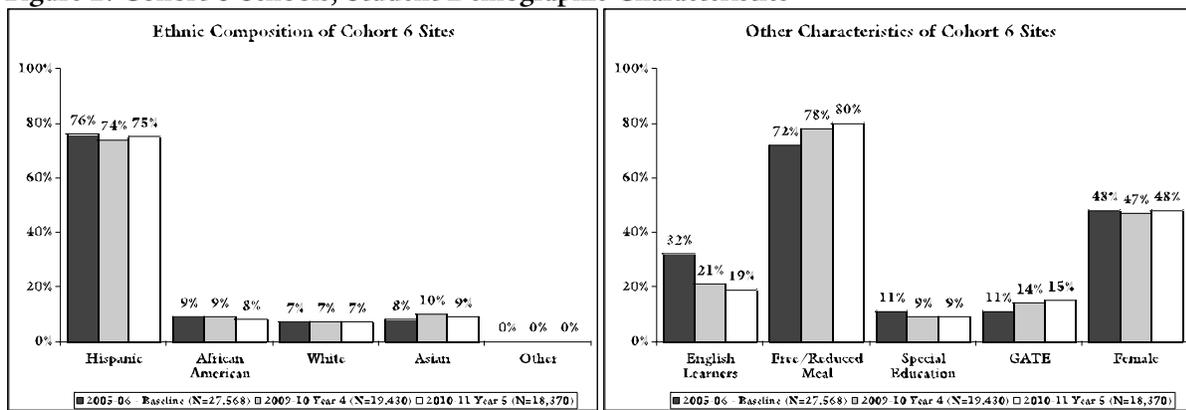
Source: LAUSD Planning, Assessment and Research Branch

SLC Participation

At baseline (2005-06), the seven Cohort 6 schools had 30% of their students enrolled in an SLC (see Figure 3 on next page). Pre-existing SLC students derived largely from the inclusion of Monroe and Polytechnic, schools that were recipients of a Cohort 6 USDE SLC grant, as well as the large magnet population at Van Nuys. By Year 5 (2010-11), the vast majority (92%) of students enrolled were in a SLC. By the final year of the grant, the majority of all 9th and 10th grade students were enrolled in SLCs. For the upperclassmen, there was a 9% decrease for 11th grade students and a 6% decrease for 12th grade students from Year 4 (2009-10) to Year 5 (2010-11). Detailed numbers illustrating the individual SLCs developed and/or expanded at these schools may be found in **Appendix E**.

Table 5: Cohort 6 SLC and Non-SLC Student Enrollment by Grade (% in SLC)

Grade Level	Enrolled in SLC					
	Baseline (N=8,283)	Year 1 (N=12,570)	Year 2 (N=17,819)	Year 3 (N=19,951)	Year 4 (N=18,598)	Year 5 (N=16,935)
9th Grade	4,024 (41%)	5,378 (72%)	5,856 (89%)	6,642 (99%)	5,585 (99%)	5,651 (99%)
10th Grade	2,304 (32%)	2,996 (45%)	4,409 (85%)	5,137 (98%)	5,188 (99%)	4,586 (97%)
11th Grade	1,224 (22%)	2,780 (50%)	3,819 (86%)	4,002 (94%)	4,021 (91%)	3,375 (82%)
12th Grade	731 (15%)	1,416 (28%)	3,735 (84%)	4,170 (98%)	3,804 (93%)	3,323 (87%)
Total	8,283 (30%)	12,570 (51%)	17,819 (86%)	19,951 (98%)	18,598 (96%)	16,935 (92%)

Source: LAUSD Planning, Assessment and Research Branch

Figure 3: Cohort 6 Schools, SLC Participation by Year
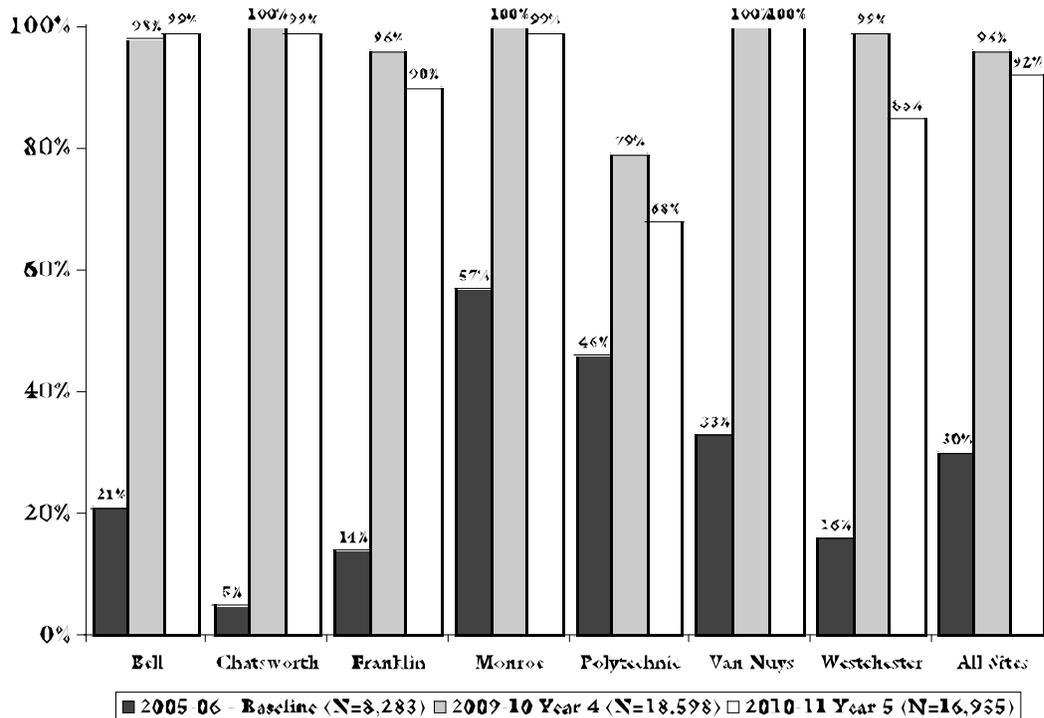
Source: LAUSD Planning, Assessment and Research Branch

SLC Structures and Strategies

The types of structures and strategies used to design the SLC varied across Cohort 6 schools (Table 6). The schools have modeled SLCs in two ways. In the first model, the SLCs place 9th grade students in a house or an academy for their first year and then students move into an organized SLC for grades 10-12. The majority of the Cohort 6 schools (five out of seven) had a 9th grade house or academy by the end of the grant. The second way that the schools structured SLCs is to have vertical structures for 9th-12th grades. This structure has students enrolled in an SLC when they enter into high school. This vertical model structure builds on the previous structures for 9-12th SLCs such as magnets and career academies.

Table 6: SLC Structures and Strategies, 2010-11

Cohort 6 Schools	% SLC	Freshmen House/ Academy	Advisory Period	Career Pathway SLC	Other Themed SLC	Magnet Program	Common Planning by SLC
Bell	99%	●	●	●	●	○	○
Chatsworth	99%	●	○	●	●	○	○
Franklin	90%	○	○	●	○	●	○
Monroe	99%	●	●	●	○	●	○
Polytechnic	68%	●	●	●	●	●	○
Van Nuys	100%	○	○	●	●	●	○
Westchester	85%	●	○	●	●	●	○

Source: Public Works evaluation site visits and school-provided documentation

● = Complete   ◗ = Partial ○ = Not occurring

All Cohort 6 schools have continued to grow their career pathway SLCs. These career pathways do not solely focus on job training, but exposes students to a broad number of industries and career sectors with a strong emphasis on educational preparation and real life applications of learning that provides students with the opportunity to seek postsecondary education or training in one of these fields. Cohort 6 career pathways include a variety of industries including, but not limited to healthcare, business and finance, technology and engineering, public education, public service/law/government, visual and performing arts, media and communications, law enforcement and criminal justice, etc. For a complete listing of SLCs by school see **Appendix E**.

Five of the seven Cohort 6 schools have themed SLCs that cater to social justice, math/science, Humanitas, global studies, American studies, and leadership. These themes usually do not fit into any one-career pathway. In addition, five schools have one or more magnet programs. Some of these are organized around career pathways (e.g., performing arts, medicine, aerospace, law enforcement, transportation, etc.), while others strongly focus on academic orientation (e.g., math/science/technology, etc.).

Table 6 also shows that only three schools have implemented an advisory period for students within their SLCs. For the three schools that do have an advisory period, time is set-aside for teachers or staff and students to interact in a non-academic setting (see Goal X on Personalization for a more detailed discussion of advisories).

Unifying Vision for SLC Implementation

Cohort 6 schools steadily progressed in the first three years in terms of cultivating a unifying vision for SLC implementation, as shown in Figure 4 below. However, by Year 4, SLCs implementation began to regress and ultimately stalled at an "Early Implementation" phase. To some extent, the lack of progress resulted from two consecutive years of state and district budget cuts, which generated staff layoffs and/or transfers of key administrative, counseling, and teaching staff.

Although communication and distributed leadership waned somewhat cohort-wide in Year 5, there were some successes during the grant period. At three Cohort 6 schools, the administrative team demonstrated strong, engaged, and positive leadership for the SLC initiative. At these three schools, administrative roles became more decentralized, centering mostly on support and monitoring of SLCs. These schools decentralized administrative offices by SLC. They also showed a much higher propensity for: a) articulating the overall school vision and rationale for school restructuring; b) clarifying the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholder groups in implementing SLCs; and c) regularly working together under collaborative norms to achieve desired results.

Over the five years of the grant, survey data indicate that staff became more positive about Vision, Leadership, and Management of SLCs. On average, 63% of staff survey respondents were positive by the end of the grant, an improvement of 15% (see Figure 5; for detailed results, please consult **Appendix C**).

Both survey data and site visit findings suggest the large increases in school-wide communication, particularly the creation of platforms that clearly and effectively

communicated the results of school decisions to the entire faculty (74% agreement in Year 5 and 18% improvement over time). Three of the Cohort 6 schools showed evidence of school-wide forums to encourage SLC communication and data sharing, as well as membership expansion on school-wide SLC decision-making teams. Across all Cohort 6 schools, only 14% of staff identified school governance as a barrier to SLC implementation in 2011, and 17% more staff reported that they had a say in school decisions in 2011 compared to 2006.

Figure 4: Unified Vision Attribute Rating
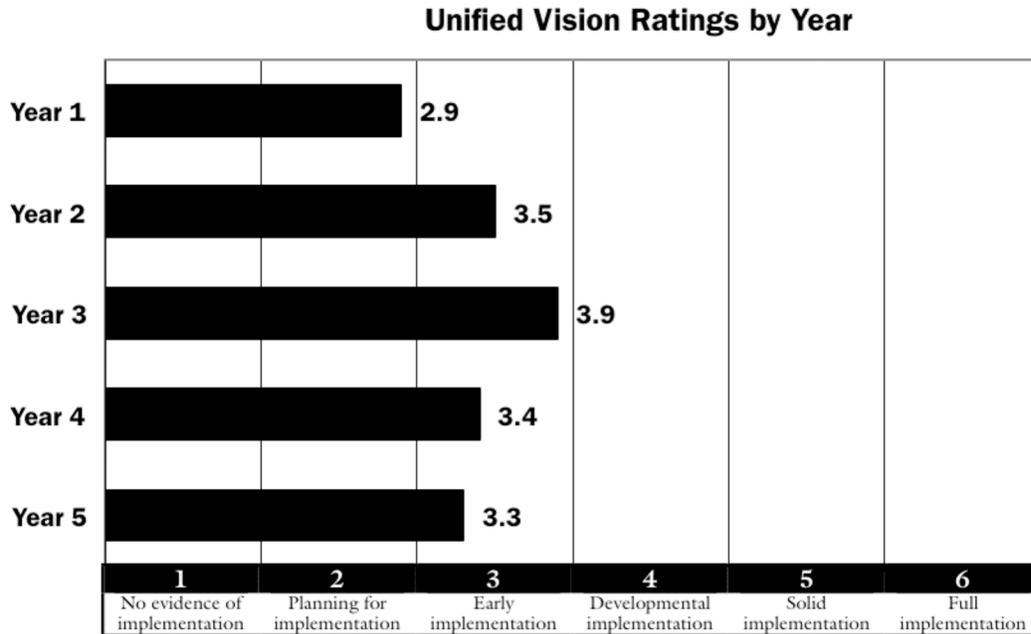
By the end of the grant, two-thirds (66%) agreed that the vision and goals for SLC were understood by staff, an increase of 12% over time. Similarly, two-thirds were positive about the leadership team guiding SLC implementation, an increase of 12%. There were also large increases (18%) in staff perceptions of the reorganization of physical space to support SLCs, although only 55% were in agreement about this at the end of the grant. Still, it is important to note that the percentage of staff citing "adequacy of facilities" as a barrier to SLC implementation declined from 32% of staff in 2006 to only 18% by the end of the grant.

Figure 5: Staff Perceptions of Vision, Leadership and Management

Vision Leadership & Management

Legend: ☐2007 (N=1,285) ■2008 (N=1,218) ☐2009 (N=1,074)
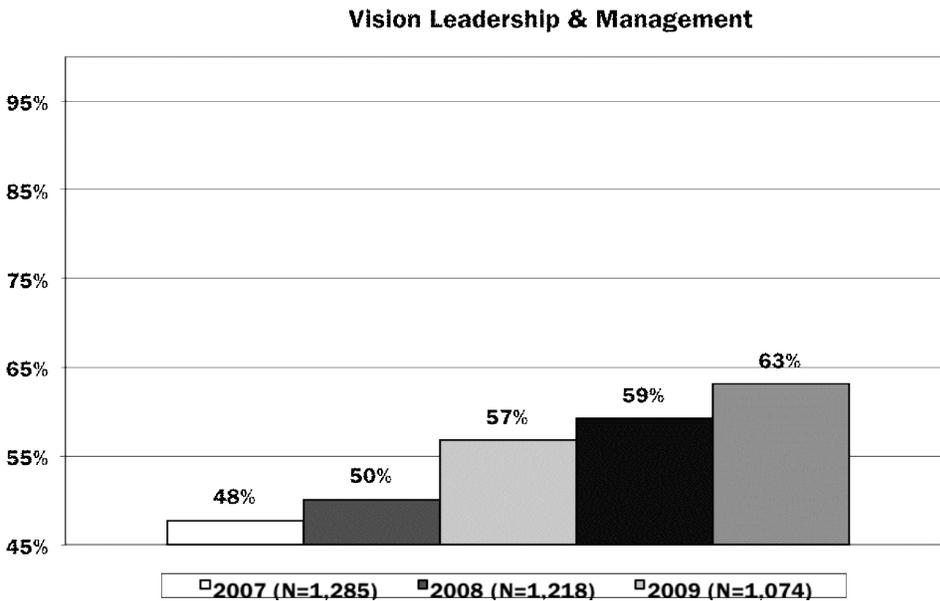
Equity and Access

Cohort 6 schools showed minimal change on this attribute over the life of the grant. As shown in Figure 6 below, schools remained at the Early Implementation stage in terms of ensuring heterogeneous groupings of students and delivering culturally responsive and relevant education.

Figure 6: Equity Attribute Rating

Equity Rating by Year

Year 1	2.8				
Year 2	2.9				
Year 3	3.1				
Year 4	3.1				
Year 5	2.9				

1	2	3	4	5	6
No evidence of implementation	Planning for implementation	Early implementation	Developmental implementation	Solid implementation	Full implementation
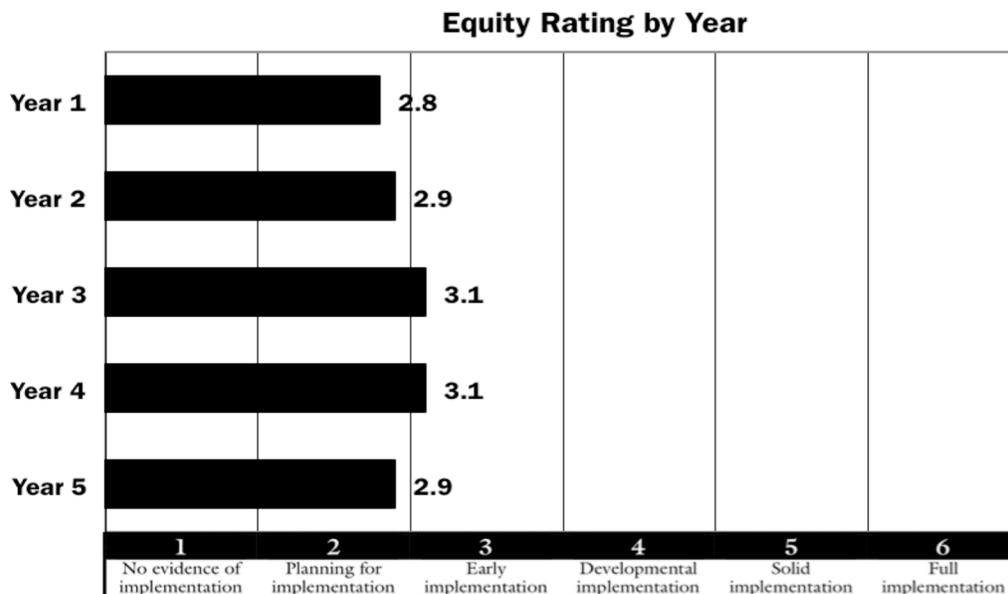
As seen in **Appendix E**, Cohort 6 schools made progress in improving the equitable placement of students. In particular, there were improvements in the demographic representation of historically underrepresented students into SLCs. Equity was largely reached in terms of distributing students on the basis of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, special education, and GATE.   Schools with magnets schools were the least equitable in terms of being representative of the school-wide 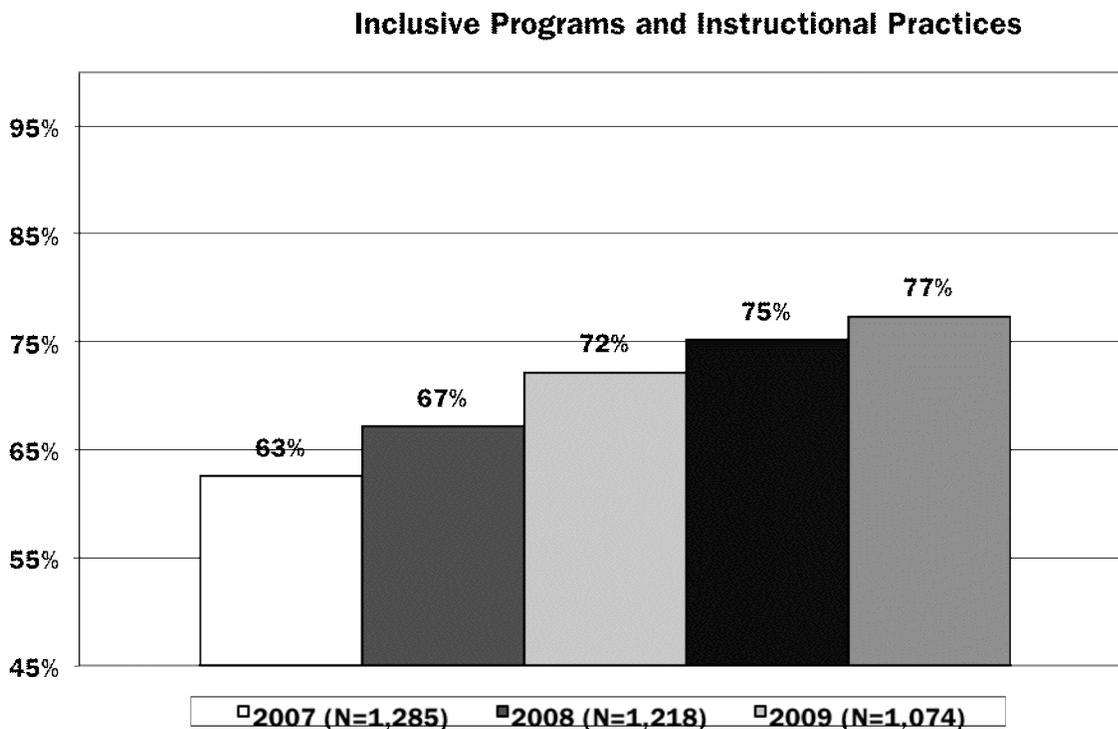demographic composition.   Excluding magnets, inequities were most common for gender and English Learner representation to the various SLCs on campus.

Over the five years of the grant, school staff became more positive about Inclusive Programs and Practices.   On average, 77% of staff survey respondents were positive by the end of the grant, an improvement of 15% (see Figure 7; for detailed results, please consult **Appendix C**).

Figure 7: Staff Perceptions of Equity

Inclusive Programs and Instructional Practices

Values by year: 63%, 67%, 72%, 75%, 77%

Legend: 2007 (N=1,285)   2008 (N=1,218)   2009 (N=1,074)

For example, 13% more staff agreed that admission to SLCs was "open and inclusive" (76% agreement in 2011) and 17% more agreed that SLCs included heterogeneous groupings of students (79% agreement in 2011). However, in 2011 site visits, some schools reported a high level of dissatisfaction with a lack of equitable distribution of Advanced Placement and Honors students, with some career pathways portrayed as "dumping grounds" and "not college going."

Although structural aspects of equity have improved, the classroom dimension of equity expressed as culturally relevant and linguistically responsive pedagogy remains a work in progress. Little evidence exists that Cohort 6 schools, as a group, have incorporated Culturally Relevant and Responsive Education (CRRE) approaches in a deliberate or

systematic way. Few stakeholders could articulate a common definition or list of pedagogical techniques associated with this approach apart from general references to small group instruction or more real-life examples as part of lessons. In addition, the vast majority of school-based interviewees and focus group participants confirmed that cultural relevance and linguistically responsive pedagogy was not a focus of professional development or serious discussion over the last five years. Several of those interviewed characterized it as a district mandate lacking sufficient focus, guidance, or support to become a reality in the classroom.

SLC Identity

Cohort 6 schools steadily progressed in the first three years in terms of cultivating a distinctive, semi-autonomous SLC identity, as shown in Figure 8 below. However, by Year 4, SLCs implementation stalled. In the last three years of the grant, Cohort 6 schools remained between Early and Developmental implementation and did not progress any further. At the end of the grant, SLC identity was strong among some individual SLCs but not true of SLCs school-wide at nearly all schools.

Figure 8: SLC Identity Attribute Rating
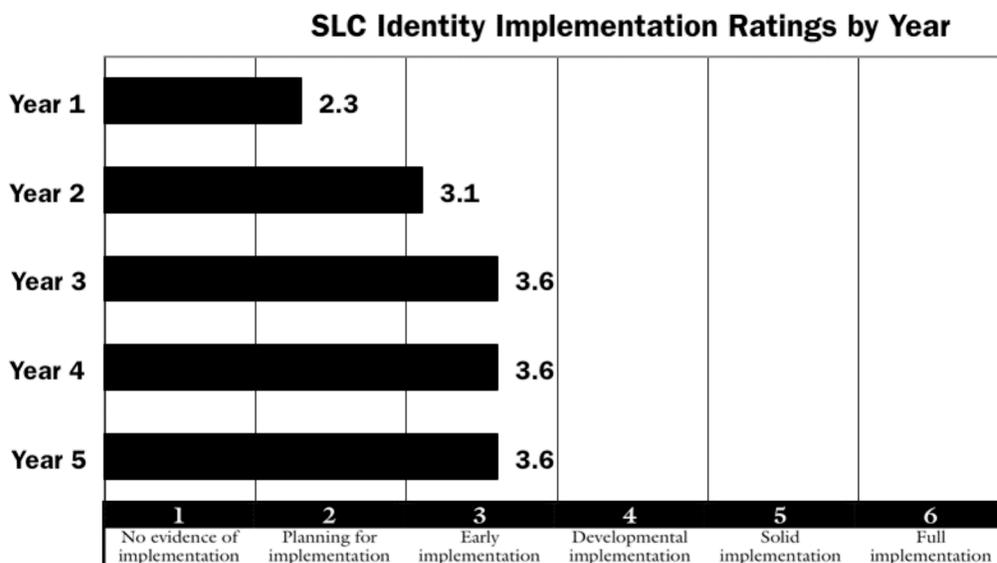
Over the five years of the grant, school staff became more positive about SLC Identity. On average, 63% of staff survey respondents were positive by the end of the grant, an improvement of 12% (see Figure 9; for detailed results, please consult **Appendix C**).

Staff were most likely to report growth in terms of having distinct physical boundaries for SLCs (54% agreement in 2011; 19% improvement over the five-year grant). At one point or another during the grant, six of the seven Cohort 6 schools had reorganized physical space on-campus to ensure grouping of teachers by SLC. These efforts tended to prioritize grouping 9th graders together. However, by the final year of the grant, the majority of Cohort 6 schools continued to make an effort to host all of the students within the same SLC and within the same area.

Survey results clearly indicate that staff were most positive about the development of "unique academic identity" (74% agreement in 2011) and leadership of SLCs (75% agreement). Site visits confirmed that all schools were at least moderately successful in distributing leadership to decentralized SLCs and empowering them to create "schools within a school."

Figure 9: Staff Perceptions of Identity

SLC Identity
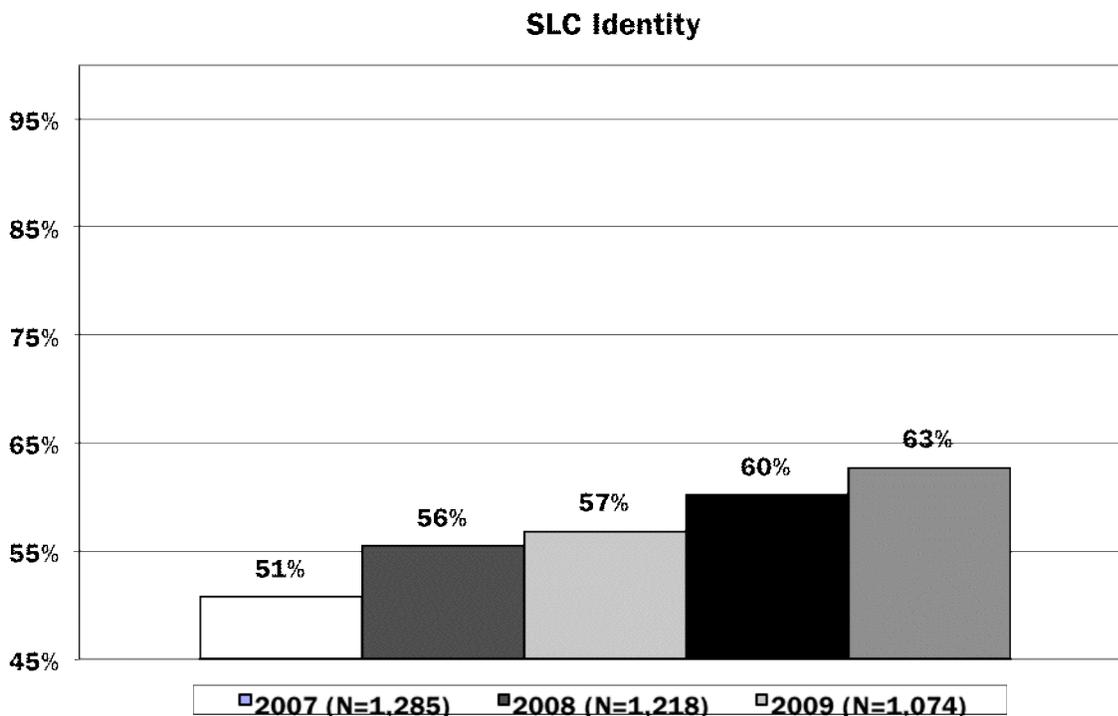
Nonetheless, specific areas of autonomy remained underdeveloped.   After five years of the grant, only 51%-61% of staff survey respondents agreed that SLCs exercise significant autonomy in terms of designing the instructional program, allocation of funding or personnel, or management of student behavior/discipline. Evaluation site visits confirmed a gradual decrease in SLC autonomy. In the beginning of the grant, many schools were characterized by strong collaboration among all stakeholders, with siginificant SLC voice in shaping school instructional priorities and staffing decisions.   By the later years of the grant, SLCs were less likely to be included in decisions or de-emphasized within the schema of school improvement priorities.

For example, a key aim of the grant was the reorganization of the master schedule to group students into course sections comprised primarily of students from the same SLC.   This so-called "purity" would enable teachers to make thematic linkages in the curriculum based on students' selection of SLC.   A survey of SLC Lead Teachers in 2009-10 and 2010-11 revealed that the academic subjects most likely to that were likely to be rated "pure" within the SLCs (characterized as 85-100% SLC purity) were: English, History, and, to a lesser degree, Science. Mathematics, and elective courses were much less likely to group students by SLC.

While staff survey respondents reported significant progress in terms of developing a school master schedule supportive of SLCs (68% agreement in 2011; 16% improvement over the grant), it is important to note that only 57% of staff survey respondents in 2011 (11% improvement over the grant) agreed that SLCs played a key role in making decisions about school master schedule and student programming. It is also worth noting that the percentage of staff citing "adapting the master schedule to SLCs" as a key barrier declined from 45% in 2006 to 22% in 2008, but then increased to 30% by the end of the grant.

Indeed, data from the evaluation's site visits strongly support the contention that competing school improvement priorities, especially targeted academic intervention in English and Mathematics, limited the flexibility of schools to safeguard SLC purity as a guiding principle for master scheduling. In addition, reductions of staff under state and district budget cuts, further reduced schools' ability to provide SLC purity in the master schedule. During site visits, school stakeholders identified additional factors, which constrained the development of SLC identity including:

- *Changes to School Calendar and Demographics:* Some schools that were previously on the year round calendar returned to the traditional school calendar. As a result, there was a loss of teachers due to the consolidation of the school site. There were also eliminations and consolidation of SLCs due to changes to student enrollment based on changing demographics and or new high schools opening up in the students' neighborhoods.

- *Budgetary Issues:* The budget crises in the state and within the district had a direct impact on SLC Identity. SLC lead teachers and other teacher leaders within SLC were displaced or moved.   In addition, many of the assistant principals assigned to SLCs were replaced with administrators who were unfamiliar with or uninterested in SLCs.

- *Intra-School Factors:* Some schools reported competition among SLCs for teachers, students, and honors/AP classes. There was also debate at some schools (and in some local districts) regarding whether to prioritize content area reforms through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) or to pursue school improvement through interdisciplinary SLCs. One school shifted away from SLCs in the last year of the grant to focus on the reopening the school as a set of magnet programs.

Summary

The structural elements of SLCs are largely in place at all of Cohort 6 grantee high schools. Lead teachers, counselors, and administrators have been assigned to SLCs. Schools have endeavored to improve the equitable distribution of students to SLCs. Some grantee schools were making progress in terms of developing distinctive educational identities evident in adoption of common pedagogical techniques, project-based learning within and across subject areas, and modified assessment practices. Nonetheless, master schedule alignment to SLC principles remains a major obstacle. In addition, the declining budgetary climate and accompanying staff turnover, as well as competing school improvement priorities, have adversely affected SLC implementation at these schools.

Goal 2: Rigorous, Standards-Based Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment

In conjunction with the move to SLCs, schools were required to provide a standards-based educational program, which embodies high expectations for every student so that they achieve grade-level standards, use appropriate technology, district adopted textbooks, and materials to support instruction, meet high school graduation requirements, college entrance requirements and are prepared for post-secondary experiences and the world of work. Instruction would be adapted based upon learning needs within a rigorous culturally relevant and linguistically responsive curriculum; student performance will be measured to report on progress and accomplishments and to inform future instructional practices. Multiple forms of standards-based assessments will be used, including some benchmarks by the district. Additionally, school indicators will used as measures of school progress including, for example, attendance, dropout rates, and the number of high school graduates.

Schools were tasked with using SLCs to improve the rigor of the instructional program, augmenting standards-based academic rigor with personalized and relevant curricula tied to SLC interdisciplinary themes. Drawing on evidence from key indicators of student achievement and school performance, as well as survey data from staff and students, the evaluation derived a rating for Rigor. As shown in Figure 10 below, Cohort 6 schools progressed from "Planning for Implementation" to "Early Implementation" in terms of providing a rigorous standards-based instructional program over the course of the grant. Grantee schools made more progress early in the grant (from Year 2 to Year 3) and then experienced only modest improvements thereafter.

Figure 10: Rigor Instruction and Assessment Attribute Rating
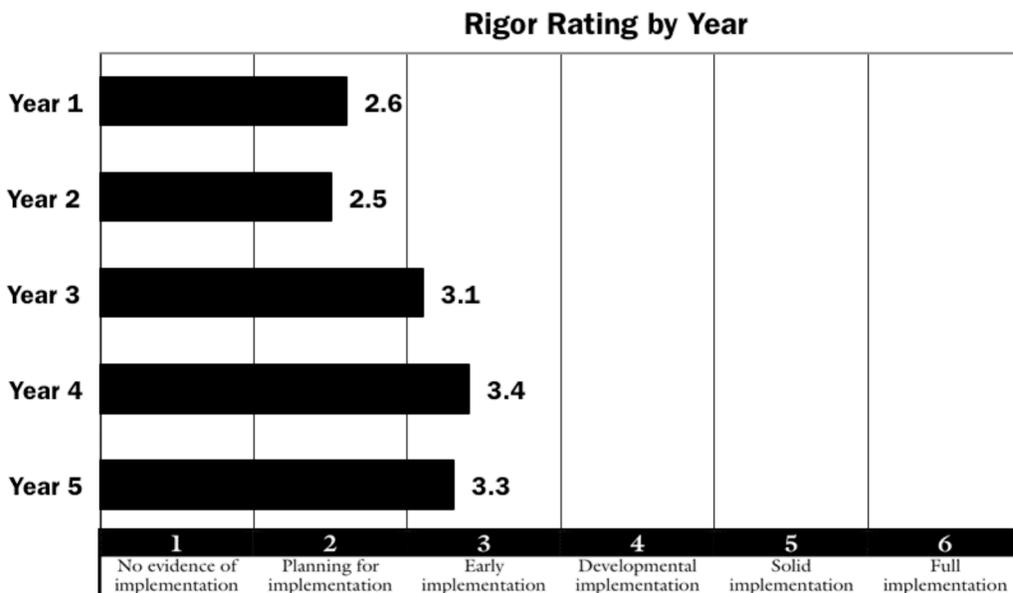
Composite Measures of Student Achievement

All public schools in California are subject to separate accountability targets emanating from the State and Federal government. At the State level, schools must show growth on the Academic Performance Index (API), a composite of student achievement on the California Standards Tests (CSTs) in grade 9-11 English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, as well as the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), which tests 10th graders in English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

The API serves as a proxy measure of Academic Rigor insofar as it indicates how successful as school has been in raising the scores of students in key academic areas. Because the API "weights" growth among the lowest-performing students, changes in the API growth score also reflect school progress in serving students performing below grade level. In the analysis of composite state and federal accountability below, this report displays data from 2006-2011 for all schools. Other tables in this report are comprised of data from baseline (the year prior to SLC grant or first year of SLC implementation) to current year whenever possible.

As shown in Table 7, the growth API score has increased by an average of 67 points (ranging from 34-116 points) since 2006 at Cohort 6 schools. Put another way, the average API increased about 13 points annually. This suggests a modest level of academic rigor at Cohort 6 schools. Of course, some schools showed much greater API gains. API scores increased the most at Polytechnic (116 points) and Bell (102 points), with large increases also occurring at Van Nuys (88 points) and Franklin (63 points). On average, Cohort 6 schools earned an API of 690 in 2011, below the statewide average of 742 among California public high schools serving grades 9-11. Only one Cohort 6 school (Van Nuys) exceeded the state average with two additional schools (Chatsworth and Polytechnic) close to the state average.

Table 7: Academic Performance Index and Adequate Yearly Progress by School

Cohort 6	2006 Growth Score	2007 Growth Score	2008 Growth Score	2009 Growth Score	2010 Growth Score	2011 Growth Score	Net Change	Program Improvement Status/Year
Bell	579	580	592	640	671	681	**102**	Yes/1997-98
Chatsworth	697	704	704	706	717	731	**34**	Yes/2009-10
Franklin	600	601	603	639	659	663	**63**	Yes/ 1997-98
Monroe	608	610	618	655	667	659	**51**	Yes/2001-02
Polytechnic	609	608	635	649	693	725	**116**	Yes/2010-11
Van Nuys	656	670	723	728	716	744	**88**	Yes/2007-08
Westchester	615	589	603	629	649	633	**18**	Not in PI
Cohort Average	*601*	*603*	*616*	*653*	*682*	*690*	*67*	*Yes*

Source: California Department of Education

For high schools, federal accountability is termed "Adequate Yearly Progress" or AYP, based on the percentage of 10th grade students who attain proficiency[10] on the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in English/Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics the first-time the exam is administered (generally Spring of the sophomore year). AYP provides a measure of Academic Rigor insofar is it provides an indication of how many students are going beyond merely passing CAHSEE and, instead demonstrating proficiency against a set of key, standards-based criteria in ELA and Mathematics. In interpreting AYP, however, it is important to keep in mind that the target percentage (i.e., the percentage that must demonstrate proficiency) under AYP has increased markedly over the five year grant (increase of 33.3% in ELA and 33.9% in Mathematics).

In terms of Federal accountability under AYP in ELA, Cohort 6 schools performed slightly above or equal to district-wide averages in the last five years. On average, schools in Cohort 6 increased an average of 9.9% in the proportion of students meeting proficiency on ELA AYP, compared to 14.6% for the district. For the 2010-11 school year, Westchester and Polytechnic high schools scored the best on this measure. In 2011, only two of the seven Cohort 6 schools met AYP in ELA. The district-wide average also fell short of the federal AYP targets in 2011. Indeed, the vast majority (more than 80%) of the district's high schools are in Program Improvement. In sum, the percentage of students showing higher levels of performance on CAHSEE ELA is improving but at a rate lower than envisioned under the federal timetable for accountability.

Table 8: Adequate Yearly Progress (ELA) by School (% Advanced and Proficient)

Cohort 6	AYP Goal 22.3%		AYP Goal 22.3%		AYP Goal 33.4%		AYP Goal 44.5%		AYP Goal 55.6%		AYP Goal 66.7%	
	% Proficient	Met Goal	% Proficient	Met Goal	% Proficient	Met Goal	% Proficient	Met Goal	% Proficient	Met Goal	% Proficient	Met Goal
	2006	2006	2007	2007	2008	2008	2009	2009	2010	2010	2011	2011
Bell	30.1%	Yes	25.9%	Yes	30.1%	No	30.2%	No	34.6%	No	34.3%	No
Chatsworth	51.5%	Yes	43.6%	Yes	54.2%	Yes	46.6%	Yes	51.3%	No	51.5%	No
Franklin	34.3%	Yes	27.4%	Yes	34.4%	Yes	35.8%	No	43.0%	No	43.9%	No
Monroe	38.8%	Yes	28.0%	Yes	30.0%	No	31.7%	No	33.3%	No	38.4%	No
Polytechnic	34.1%	Yes	30.8%	Yes	41.7%	Yes	49.1%	Yes	56.2%	Yes	57.1%	No
Van Nuys	38.8%	Yes	44.1%	Yes	54.9%	Yes	55.3%	Yes	57.4%	Yes	63.7%	No
Westchester	40.3%	Yes	32.7%	Yes	38.2%	Yes	37.4%	No	37.7%	No	48.4%	Yes
Cohort Average	38.3%	Yes	33.2%	Yes	40.5%	Yes	40.8%	No	44.7%	No	48.1%	No
District Average	*32.4%*	*Yes*	*33.4%*	*Yes*	*37.1%*	*Yes*	*40.7%*	*No*	*43.4%*	*No*	*47.0%*	*No*

Source: California Department of Education

In terms of Federal accountability under AYP in Mathematics, Cohort 6 schools performed below the district at baseline, but have scored roughly the same as the district-wide averages for the last five years. Schools in Cohort 6 increased the proportion of students meeting Mathematics proficiency an average of 15.3%, compared to district gains of 13.9%. Of the Cohort 6 schools, Polytechnic and Van Nuys scored best on this measure. However, due to rising targets, only two of the seven Cohort 6 schools met AYP in Mathematics in 2011. The district-wide average also fell short of the federal AYP targets in 2011. Like ELA AYP, the percentage of students showing higher levels of performance on CAHSEE Math is improving but at a rate lower than envisioned under the federal timetable for accountability.

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[10] The "cut score" for proficiency on the CAHSEE for proficiency is 380, compared to the score of 350 necessary to simply pass the exam.

Table 9: Adequate Yearly Progress (Mathematics) by School (% Advanced and Proficient)

Cohort 6	AYP Goal 20.9%		AYP Goal 20.9%		AYP Goal 32.2%		AYP Goal 43.5%		AYP Goal 54.8%		AYP Goal 66.1%	
	% Proficient	Met Goal	% Proficient	Met Goal	% Proficient	Met Goal	% Proficient	Met Goal	% Proficient	Met Goal	% Proficient	Met Goal
	2006	2006	2007	2007	2008	2008	2009	2009	2010	2010	2011	2011
Bell	41.0%	Yes	44.2%	Yes	52.5%	Yes	51.9%	Yes	52.3%	No	54.7%	No
Chatsworth	45.4%	Yes	47.6%	Yes	54.5%	Yes	45.4%	Yes	49.1%	No	49.6%	No
Franklin	26.7%	Yes	27.5%	Yes	31.1%	No	39.5%	No	39.0%	No	45.4%	Yes
Monroe	34.8%	Yes	29.9%	Yes	31.0%	No	40.2%	No	40.4%	No	36.9%	No
Polytechnic	30.0%	Yes	41.6%	Yes	51.7%	Yes	58.1%	Yes	59.4%	Yes	61.0%	No
Van Nuys	39.0%	Yes	49.2%	Yes	56.3%	Yes	62.1%	Yes	60.5%	Yes	64.4%	Yes
Westchester	27.1%	Yes	25.5%	Yes	29.3%	No	36.7%	No	33.6%	No	39.4%	Yes
Cohort Average	**34.9%**	Yes	**37.9%**	Yes	**43.8%**	Yes	**47.8%**	Yes	**47.8%**	No	**50.2%**	No
District Average	**38.1%**	Yes	**38.8%**	Yes	**43.1%**	Yes	**48.0%**	Yes	**48.0%**	No	**52.0%**	No

Source: California Department of Education

It is important to note that even the schools that are making "progress" (exceeding district averages and meeting AYP) are still in Program Improvement (PI) status. As schools continue to increase academic achievement school-wide, they are often failing to garner the needed proficiency levels from numerically significant subgroups (e.g., English Learners and Students with Disabilities) to exit Program Improvement. Of Cohort 6 schools, only Westchester was not in Program Improvement in 2011. It is also worth noting that LAUSD entered district Program Improvement status in 2004-05. In fact, the vast majority (more than 80%) of the district's high schools are in some stage of Program Improvement.

Student Achievement at SLC Grantee Schools

To examine the performance of schools in terms of student achievement, the evaluation's analyses focus on the percentage of students who improved at least one CST proficiency level annually. Specifically, the evaluation calculated the percentage of students who improved from Far Below Basic, Below Basic, and Basic in the years 2006-2011.[11] These results were calculated using student-level data provided by LAUSD. For analytic purposes, the results compared the seven Cohort 6 schools to other comprehensive high schools in LAUSD that have not received USDE SLC grant funds. These results excluded students in magnet programs and magnet schools, as well as small, autonomous and/or special themed high schools that enrolled less than 500 students grades 9-12. In this way, the evaluation aimed to compare large, urban high schools funded to implement SLCs to other large, urban high schools not federally funded but still subject to the requirements of Bulletin 1600 which require all students to be enrolled in SLCs within 3-5 years.

The data included below is school-wide in nature rather than a comparison between SLC and Non-SLC students because nearly all students at Cohort 6 schools were enrolled in a SLC by 2010-11. It is safe to assume that some of the students at the "other" LAUSD high schools also participated in a SLC during the same period, but in lieu of SLC rosters from these schools, the evaluation was unable to provide a percentage of SLC enrollments at these schools. Table 10 below provides the percentage of students in SLCs at the Cohort 6 schools who were included in the analyses that follow. The only Cohort 6 school that had a significant drop in student SLC enrollment was Polytechnic. This decline is due

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[11] For Cohort 6 schools, 2006 was the baseline year before receipt of the grant.

to upperclassmen not enrolling in an SLC. Over the last two years several SLCs within Polytechnic have been subject to large declines in enrollment (see **Appendix E**).

Table 10: Cohort 6 SLC Enrollment by Year

School	% in SLC					
	2006	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
Bell	21%	56%	98%	98%	98%	99%
Chatsworth	5%	32%	16%	97%	100%	99%
Franklin	14%	25%	97%	97%	96%	90%
Monroe	60%	83%	100%	99%	100%	99%
Polytechnic	44%	57%	97%	95%	79%	68%
Van Nuys	33%	58%	100%	99%	100%	100%
Westchester	16%	37%	100%	99%	99%	85%
Cohort 6 Average	*41%*	*57%*	*90%*	*98%*	*96%*	*92%*

Source: LAUSD Planning, Assessment and Research Branch and school provided SLC rosters

English/Language Arts (ELA)

As shown in Table 11 below, Cohort 6 schools showed 16% net growth 2006-2011 in the percentage of Far Below Basic students in ELA who improved at least one CST proficiency level, compared to 18% growth among LAUSD high schools that did not receive the USDE SLC grant. However, Cohort 6 schools were more likely to move students out of Far Below Basic in each of the last four years. In 2011, Cohort 6 schools showed postitive movement among 57% of prior year Far Below Basic students, compared to 49% of non-grantee LAUSD schools. Among Cohort 6 schools, the largest increases in the proportion of Far Below Basic students advancing at least one CST proficiency level occurred at Franklin and Bell. Detailed information on the progress of individual schools may be found in **Appendix F**.

Table 11: ELA CST, Improvements by Proficiency Level, 2006-2011

FBB Improvement (Movement out of Far Below Basic)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Net Change
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	31%	46%	52%	41%	50%	57%	16%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	31%	49%	50%	39%	46%	49%	18%
BB Improvement (Movement out of Below Basic)							
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	19%	29%	30%	31%	37%	41%	22%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	19%	31%	32%	25%	33%	36%	17%
B Improvement (Movement out of Basic)							
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	12%	19%	20%	17%	24%	23%	11%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	13%	22%	21%	14%	22%	20%	7%

Source: LAUSD Planning, Assessment and Research Branch

Compared to baseline, Cohort 6 also showed more growth (22%) in the percentage of Below Basic students in ELA who improved, compared to LAUSD high schools not receiving the grant, which showed a 17% growth from baseline. Cohort 6 school were more likely to improve the scores of prior year Below Basic students in each of the last three years compared to non-grantee LAUSD high schools. In 2011, Cohort 6 moved 41% of

students out of Below Basic in 2011 compared to 36% at non-grantee LAUSD schools. Among Cohort 6 schools, the largest increases in the proportion of Below Basic students advancing at least one proficiency level occurred at Bell, Chatsworth and Franklin.

Cohort 6 showed an improvement of growth (11%) in moving students out of the Basic category compared with LAUSD high schools not receiving the grant (7%). Cohort 6 school were more likely to improve the scores of prior year Basic students in each of the last three years compared to non-grantee LAUSD high schools. In 2011, Cohort 6 schools moved 23% of students out of Basic compared to 20% at non-grantee LAUSD schools. The largest increases in the proportion of Basic students advancing at least one proficiency level occurred at Polytechnic, Chatsworth and Van Nuys.

As shown in Table 12 (below), 10th grade ELA CAHSEE pass rates improved 12% at Cohort 6 schools over the USDE SLC grant, compared to 9% improvement among non-grantee LAUSD high schools. In 2011, Cohort 6 and non-grantee schools passed essentially the same percentage of students on ELA CAHSEE (76% and 77%, respectively). Among Cohort 6 schools, Van Nuys and Chatsworth showed the most growth in CAHSEE pass rates in ELA.

Table 12: ELA CAHSEE 10th Grade Pass Rates, 2006-2011

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Net Change
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	64%	63%	72%	75%	75%	76%	12%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=21 schools)	63%	62%	70%	73%	73%	77%	9%

Source: LAUSD Planning, Assessment and Research Branch

In sum, Cohort 6 schools showed equal or greater rates of improvement on ELA CST and ELA CAHSEE and higher percentages of positive CST proficiency level movement compared to non-grantee schools. These data seem to suggest increased academic rigor at the Cohort 6 schools.

Mathematics

In Mathematics, students are tested based on their course of enrollment, rather than grade level. For the analyses of California Standards Test (CST) in Mathematics, the evaluation examined grade 9-11 CST results in Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II.

As shown in Table 13, Cohort 6 showed an 8% (an improvement from baseline) growth in positive movement out of Far Below Basic, compared to 2% at other, non-grantee LAUSD high schools. Cohort 6 schools were more likely to move students out of Far Below Basic in all years of analysis. In 2011, Cohort 6 schools showed improvement in Mathematics among 53% of prior year Far Below Basic students, compared to 44% of students at non-grantee LAUSD schools. The schools most likely to move students out of Far Below Basic in Mathematics included Polytechnic, Bell, and Monroe.

Table 13: Mathematics CST, Improvements by Proficiency Level, 2006-2011

FBB Improvement (Movement out of Far Below Basic)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Net Change
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	45%	49%	51%	47%	54%	53%	8%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	42%	45%	44%	41%	47%	44%	2%
BB Improvement (Movement out of Below Basic)							
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	14%	16%	18%	15%	24%	27%	13%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	9%	12%	13%	11%	15%	16%	7%
B Improvement (Movement out of Basic)							
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	10%	12%	14%	14%	18%	21%	11%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	7%	10%	11%	10%	13%	13%	6%

Source: LAUSD Planning, Assessment and Research Branch

Cohort 6 schools showed the more growth (13%) in the percentage of Below Basic students in Mathematics who improved, compared to LAUSD high schools not receiving the grant (7%). The rate of improvement at Cohort 6 schools exceeded that of non-grantee school in all years of the grant. In 2011, 27% of the prior year Below Basic students at Cohort 6 schools showed positive gains, compared to 16% at non-grantee schools. The school that was most likely to move students upward from Below Basic in Mathematics was Bell.

Cohort 6 proved more effective (11% increase) in moving students out of Basic than LAUSD high schools not receiving the grant (6% increase). The rate of improvement at Cohort 6 schools exceeded that of non-grantee school in all years of the grant. In 2011, 21% of the prior year Basic students at Cohort 6 schools showed positive gains, compared to 13% at non-grantee schools. The schools most likely to move students upward from Basic in Mathematics were Bell and Van Nuys.

As shown in Table 14 below, Cohort 6 schools showed growth of 19% in the CAHSEE Mathematics pass rate since baseline. This was slightly higher than LAUSD high schools not receiving the grant (18%). Indeed, CAHSEE Mathematics pass rates were higher at Cohort 6 schools compared to non-grantee schools in all five years of the SLC grant. In 2011, 80% of 10th graders at Cohort 6 schools passed CAHSEE Mathematics, while LAUSD high schools not receiving the grant passed 76%. Among Cohort 6 schools, the schools that showed the largest increases in Mathematics CAHSEE pass rates were Polytechnic and Franklin.

Table 14: Mathematics CAHSEE 10th Grade Pass Rates, 2006-2011

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Net Change
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	61%	63%	73%	78%	78%	80%	**19%**
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=21 schools)	58%	57%	68%	72%	72%	76%	**18%**

Source: LAUSD Planning, Assessment and Research Branch

In sum, Cohort 6 schools showed equal or greater rates of improvement on Math CST and Math CAHSEE and higher percentages of positive CST proficiency level movement and CAHSEE Math performance compared to non-grantee schools. These data seem to suggest increased academic rigor at the Cohort 6 schools.

Graduation and College Eligibility

Data on high school graduation rates indicate that Cohort 6 schools improved the four-year graduation rate (using National Center on Educational Statistics definition) improved 6.6% between 2006-07[12] and 2009-10 (2010-11 data not available). This was slightly higher than the 5.8% improvement in graduation rate found among non-grantee LAUSD high schools.

Table 15: Average School Graduation and UC/CSU Eligibility Rates, 2006-07 to 2009-10

School	2006-07			2009-10		
	NCES Graduation Rate	Average # of Graduates	Graduates with UC/CSU Required Courses	NCES Graduation Rate	Average # of Graduates	Graduates with UC/CSU Required Courses
Cohort 6	72.0%	497	48.0%	78.6%	506	53.2%
Other LAUSD HS	69.0%	411	48.0%	74.8%	405	56.7%
State Total/Average	*80.6%*	*356,641*	*35.5%*	*80.5%*	*405,087*	*36.3%*

Source: California Department of Education   *2010-11 data not available

LAUSD has a Board adopted policy that requires all students to be enrolled in an A-G college preparatory course of study as 9th and 10th graders. Originally, the policy was supposed to start with the class of 2010 (9th graders in 2006-07), and further delayed to the incoming class of 2012. As such, all students, upon entering high school, are now placed on a "college track" by the very fact that they are automatically enrolled in courses required for college entrance (A-G).

According to data in Table 15 above, the proportion of high school graduates meeting the A-G requirements for postsecondary eligibility improved 5.2% at Cohort 6 schools between 2006-07 and 2009-10. Non-grantee LAUSD high schools improved 8.7% during the same time period.

Findings from the evaluation site visits further suggest that grantee SLC schools have a long way to go in terms of formalizing and implementing plans to create a college-going culture for all students. In particular, data on credit accumulation at SLC grantee sites suggest that many students are struggling to pass (at a lower threshold than required for postsecondary eligibility) courses in this more rigorous A-G sequence.

As shown in Table 16 below, roughly half of students at Cohort 6 schools had inadequate course credits to matriculate to the next grade level.[13] Moreover, 9th and 10th grade

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[12] The California Department of Education changed the methodology used to compute this indicator in 2006-07. As such, data from Cohort 6's baseline (2005-06) is an inappropriate point of comparison.
[13] Adequate credit completion refers to students "on pace" to earn credits that would allow them graduate on time For 9th graders, adequate credit accumulation was set at 55 credits (i.e., passing all but one course with a letter grade of "D" or better). The cut points were set at 110 credits for 10th graders, 165 credits for 11th graders, and 220 for 12th graders.

students in Cohort 6 schools underperformed relative to other non-grantee LAUSD high schools (10% difference on average in 2011 for 9th graders and an 8% difference for 10th graders). Cohort 6 11th and 12th graders performed better than the underclassmen, but not as well as students attending other, non-grantee LAUSD high schools in 2011.

Table 16: % of Students Earning Adequate Credits Toward High School Graduation

	2009	2010	2011	Net Change
Grade 9 (55 credits or more)				
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	50%	51%	49%	-1%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	57%	59%	59%	2%
Grade 10 (110 credits or more)				
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	54%	53%	51%	-3%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	62%	59%	59%	-3%
Grade 11 (165 credits or more)				
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	54%	58%	61%	7%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	61%	64%	65%	4%
Grade 12 (220 credits or more)				
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	63%	65%	69%	6%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	63%	69%	73%	10%

Source: LAUSD Planning, Assessment and Research Branch

Data on the actual rates of postsecondary placement is also disappointing. As shown in Table 17, the proportion of students at Cohort 6 schools actually enrolled in UC/CSU campuses declined 3% from 20% in 2005-06 to 17% in 2009-10, mirroring the district-wide decline of 2%. Student enrollment in public two-year community colleges also declined 2% (to 35% of graduates) at Cohort 6 schools but this was significantly better than the 9% decline district-wide.

Table 17: UC/CSU Attendance Rates, 2005-06 to 2009-10

School	2005-06 UC/CSU Attendees	2005-06 12th Grade Enrollment	2005-06 UC/CSU Rate of Attendance	2009-10 UC/CSU Attendees	2009-10 12th Grade Enrollment	2009-10 UC/CSU Rate of Attendance	Net Change
Bell	100	584	17%	90	726	12%	**-5%**
Chatsworth	106	644	16%	126	704	18%	**2%**
Franklin	109	441	25%	80	440	18%	**-7%**
Monroe	103	512	20%	65	424	15%	**-5%**
Polytechnic	147	830	18%	126	883	14%	**-4%**
Van Nuys	126	655	19%	109	552	20%	**1%**
Westchester	103	394	26%	76	396	19%	-7%
Cohort Total/Average	*113*	*580*	*20%*	*96*	*589*	*17%*	*-3%*
District Total/Average	*7,244*	*30,115*	*24%*	*8152*	*37184*	*22%*	*-2%*

Source: California Postsecondary Education Commission, California Department of Education   2010-11 not available

Table 18: CCC Attendance Rates, 2005-06 to 2009-10

School	2005-06 CCC Attendees	2005-06 12th Grade Enrollment	2005-06 CCC Attendance Rate	2009-10 CCC Attendees	2009-10 12th Grade Enrollment	2009-10 CCC Attendance Rate	Net Change
Bell	256	584	44%	252	726	35%	**-9%**
Chatsworth	258	644	40%	283	704	40%	**0%**
Franklin	157	441	36%	130	440	30%	**-6%**
Monroe	192	512	38%	125	424	29%	**-9%**
Polytechnic	225	830	27%	205	883	23%	**-4%**
Van Nuys	235	655	36%	210	552	38%	**2%**
Westchester	166	394	42%	204	396	52%	**10%**
Cohort Total/Average	*213*	*580*	*37%*	*201*	*589*	*35%*	*-2%*
District Total/Average	*11,815*	*30,115*	*39%*	*11,701*	*38,805*	*30%*	*-9%*

Source: California Postsecondary Education Commission, California Department of Education   2010-11 not available
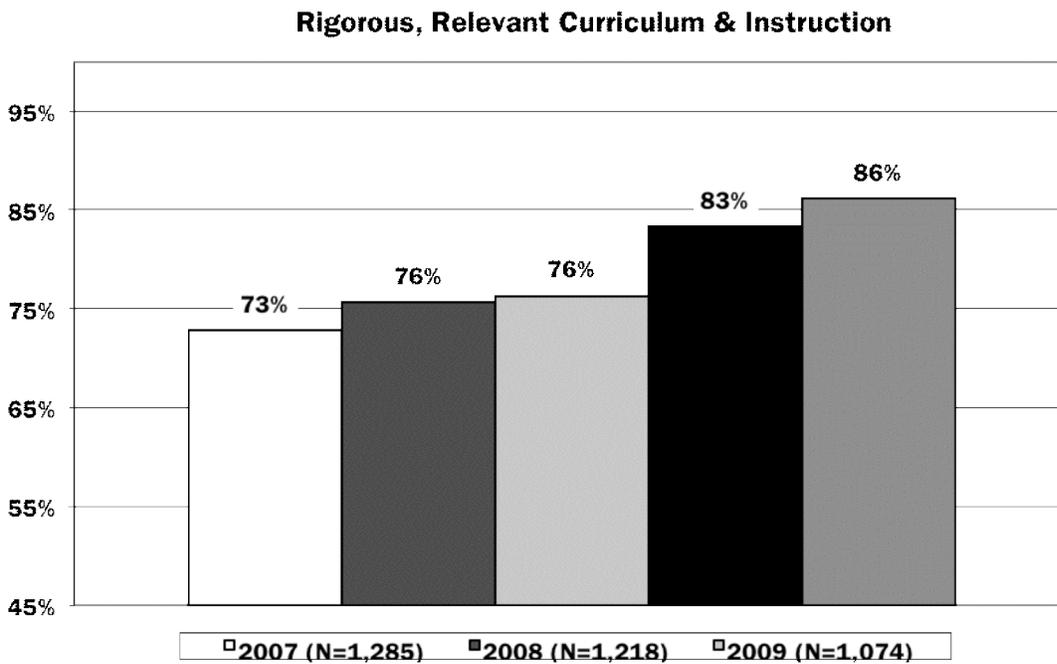
Academic Intervention

While virtually all SLC grantee schools offered a variety of school-wide intervention opportunities available at the schools, academic intervention was largely offered on a school-wide basis, and disconnected from SLCs. Some schools emphasized 9th grade transitional support, such as tutoring or "self-contained classes" to provide remediation. Also, there were a small number of individual SLCs that used "electives" unique to the SLC theme to address learning gaps or build student skills needed in core subjects. Most typically, school wide intervention programs were employed focused on after-school or Saturday tutoring (e.g., Beyond the Bell), embedded academic interventions mandated by LAUSD (e.g., Read 180, High Point, etc.), CAHSEE preparation and credit recovery.

Perceptions of Academic Rigor

Over the five years of the grant, school staff became more positive about Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction.   On average, 86% of staff survey respondents were positive by the end of the grant, an improvement of 13% (see Figure 11; for detailed results, please consult **Appendix C**).
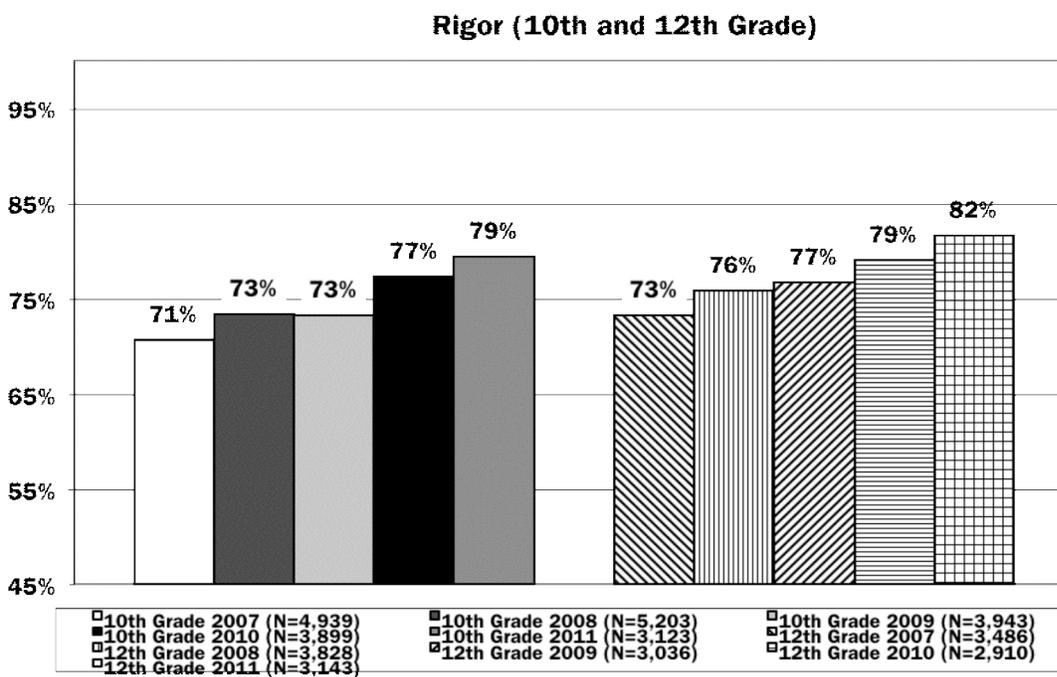
Both survey data and site visit findings suggest high levels of staff satisfaction with the quality of the instructional program. Staff were consistently most positive about students understanding academic expectations (89% agreement in 2011; increase of 10% over the grant) and the responsiveness of instruction to student interest and needs (92% agreement in 2011; an increase of 11% over the grant).   The greatest improvements, according to staff survey respondents, were in the development of models for monitoring student progress (84% agreement in 2011; increase of 17%) and examination of disaggregated student assessment data (79% agreement; increase of 18%).

Figure 11: Staff Perceptions of Rigor

Rigorous, Relevant Curriculum & Instruction

73% 76% 76% 83% 86%

□2007 (N=1,285)   ■2008 (N=1,218)   □2009 (N=1,074)

Students also expressed high levels of satisfaction with the rigor of the instructional program at their schools (see Figure 12). On average, 10th and 12th grade agreement to survey items increased 8% from 71% to 79% among 10th graders and from 73% to 82% among 12th graders over the five year grant.
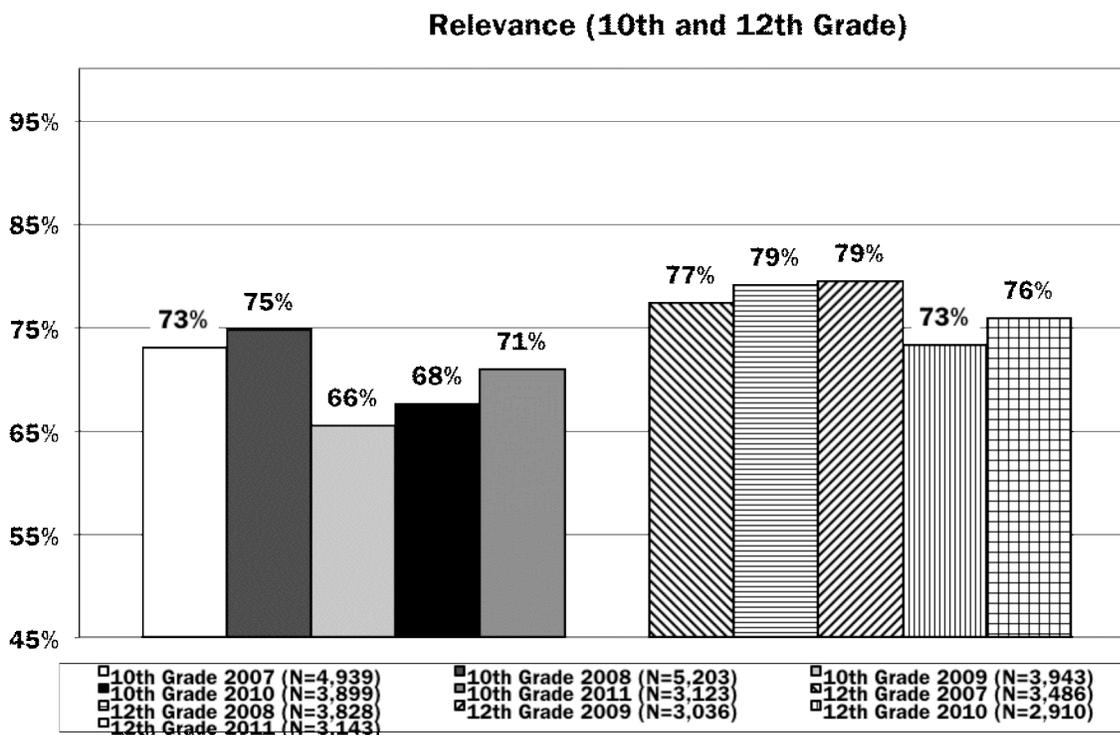
Figure 12: Student Perceptions of Rigor

Rigor (10th and 12th Grade)

71% 73% 73% 77% 79% 73% 76% 77% 79% 82%

□10th Grade 2007 (N=4,939)   ■10th Grade 2008 (N=5,203)   □10th Grade 2009 (N=3,943)
■10th Grade 2010 (N=3,899)   □10th Grade 2011 (N=3,123)   □12th Grade 2007 (N=3,486)
□12th Grade 2008 (N=3,828)   ▨12th Grade 2009 (N=3,036)   □12th Grade 2010 (N=2,910)
□12th Grade 2011 (N=3,143)

Students in both grades 10 and 12 were consistently most positive about access to tutoring (91% in 2011; increase of 3% and 5%, respectively) and preparation for college (85% in 2011; increase of 8% and 9%, resepectively) In terms of improvement over time, student perceptions of encouragement to Advanced Placement (AP) courses improved the most (63%/64% in 2011; increases of 18% and 17%, respectively), followed by perceived rigor of subject matter instruction (83% in 2011; increases of 14% and 11%, respectively).

Students also expressed high levels of satisfaction with the relevance of the instructional program at their schools (see Figure 13). On average, 10th and 12th grade agreement to survey items decreased slightly 9-2%) from 73% to 71% among 10th graders and decreased –1% from 77% to 76% among 12th graders over the five year grant. Students in both grades were most positive about encouragement to consider postsecondary education (85% and 88% agreement among 10th and 12th graders, respectively, in 2011). Close to 80% of studnets also believed that they would be preprared for employment upon completion of high school. Over time, 11% more 10th graders and 7% more 12th graders agreed that they had opportunities to do assignments and projects tied to interesting topics. Thoughout, students were least positive about "teachers knowing something about my goals and aspirations for the future" (46% of 10th graders and 61% of 12th graders in 2011).

Figure 13: Student Perceptions of Relevance

Relevance (10th and 12th Grade)

10th Grade 2007 (N=4,939)	10th Grade 2008 (N=5,203)	10th Grade 2009 (N=3,943)
10th Grade 2010 (N=3,899)	10th Grade 2011 (N=3,123)	12th Grade 2007 (N=3,486)
12th Grade 2008 (N=3,828)	12th Grade 2009 (N=3,036)	12th Grade 2010 (N=2,910)
12th Grade 2011 (N=3,143)		

It is important to note that students who reported interacting with a counselor three or more times annually were statistically more likely to agree with all survey items tied to rigor and relevance in all five years. In other words, counselor interaction was good "predictor" of students perceiving a more rigorous, and a more relevant instructional program. The same was true for females compard to males. Females consistently viewed the instructional

program as more rigorous and relevant compared to males. Lastly, Hispanics were statistically more likely to be positive comapred to non-Hispanics on all survey items *except* encouragement to enroll in AP courses.

However, these staff and students survey findings were somewhat at odds with data from the evaluation site visits which indicated a lack of clear evidence that curriculum and instruction had been reorganized under SLC implementation *on a school-wide basis* to ensure that all students were exposed to a more rigor or relevance *delivered by and/or though SLCs.*

Several schools stated that one or more SLCs had begun to implement interdisciplinary units and/or projects. However, well-established SLCs (e.g. Humanitas) were more likely to have developed interdisciplinary curricula. Only one Cohort 6 school successfully developed interdisciplinary curricula for the majority of its SLCs where the thematic orientation of the SLC was evident and infused (at least in part) into classroom instruction. Another four Cohort 6 schools showed moderate advances in this area. At these schools, SLC teams had begun to plan common lessons/units tied to SLC themes, integrate project-based learning activities in classroom teaching, and had reached some degree of consensus on a common set of instructional strategies or practices which would be implemented throughout their SLC. However, interviewees at many schools cautioned that changes designed to improve academic rigor were either only occurring in "pockets" (i.e., 1-3 SLCs per school) or were more "teacher-driven" than "SLC-driven."

Many teachers also expressed the sentiment that interdisciplinary assessments or projects (i.e., the instructional agenda of SLC collaboration) were increasingly discouraged in order to focus on standards tested on the California Standards Test (CST) and California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). Moreover, many teachers also expressed that they did not feel supported or guided in how to integrate SLC goals into curriculum and instruction.

Summary

Student achievement data indicate that Cohort 6 schools were successful in improving student achievement as measured by the API, CSTs, and CAHSEE. Cohort 6 schools also succeeded in improving four-year cumulative graduation rates. On these indicators, Cohort 6 schools tended to outperform comparable non-grantee LAUSD high schools. At the same time, Cohort 6 schools made only modest progress in increasing the proportion of students eligible for entrance to four-year public colleges and universities. While school were able to increase the proportion of students meeting proficiency on CAHSEE, they were unable to meet annual federal targets. Efforts to enhance academic rigor in terms of credit accumulation and postsecondary eligibility have fallen short, compared to non-grantee schools. In addition, most SLC grantee schools have struggled to integrate ongoing demands for delivery of rigorous standards-based instruction with an interdisciplinary agenda that places SLCs at the forefront of personalized instruction, provision of academic intervention, and enhanced curricular relevance. To the extent that substantive instructional changes have occurred, these tended to be confined to a subset of SLCs within a given school. Because of this mixed record of success with regard to Rigor, Cohort 6 schools were rated as being in the 'Early Implementation' rating for the last three years of the grant.

Goal 3: Professional Development

Effective, targeted professional development is an essential component of SLC implementation. Historically, school based professional development has been organized around a combination of district mandated topics, school wide foci, and departmental needs. The goals for SLCs professional development is to: 1) increase time for professional development and collaboration to increase staff capacity with regards to: a) standards and curriculum alignment, b) use of data to guide instruction, and c) delivery of rigorous student centered and differentiation instruction; 2) assist school team designs and implement professional development that is coherent, sequenced and reflective of local needs; and 3) provide centralized training and professional development on targeted topics that reflect key SLC implementation needs in multiple schools.

Effective, targeted professional development is an essential component of SLC implementation. Historically, school-based professional development has been organized around a combination of district mandated topics, school-wide foci, and departmental needs. The evaluation data assembled for this report indicates that Cohort 6 schools had a gradual level of implementation for this attribute, moving from "Planning for Implementation" to "Early Implementation" (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Professional Development Attribute Ratings
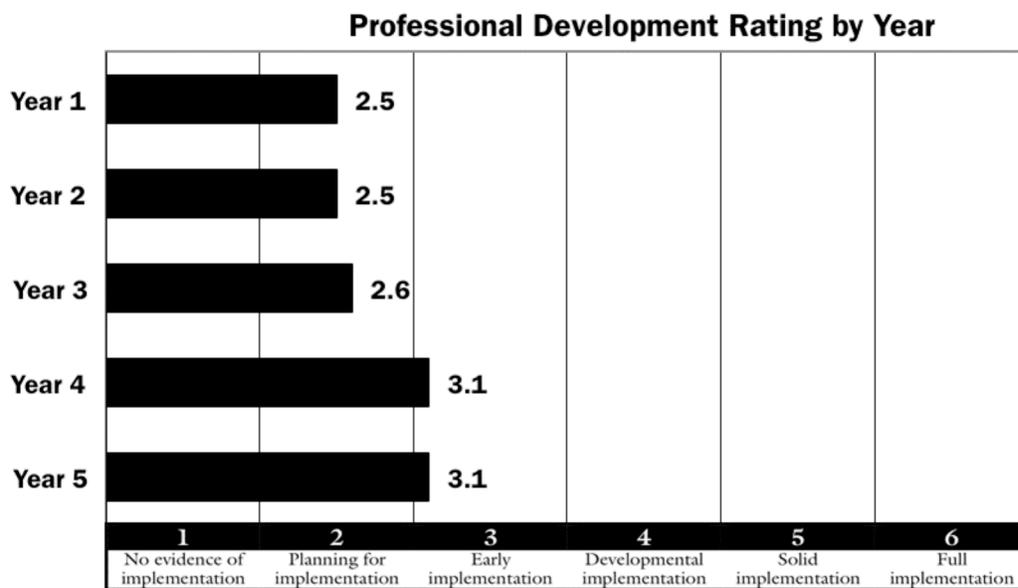
Staff Perceptions of Professional Development

Over the five years of the grant, school staff became more positive about Professional Development. On average, 69% of staff survey respondents were positive by the end of the grant, an improvement of 13% (for detailed results, please consult **Appendix C**).

Figure 15: Staff Perceptions of Professional Development

Professional Learning Community
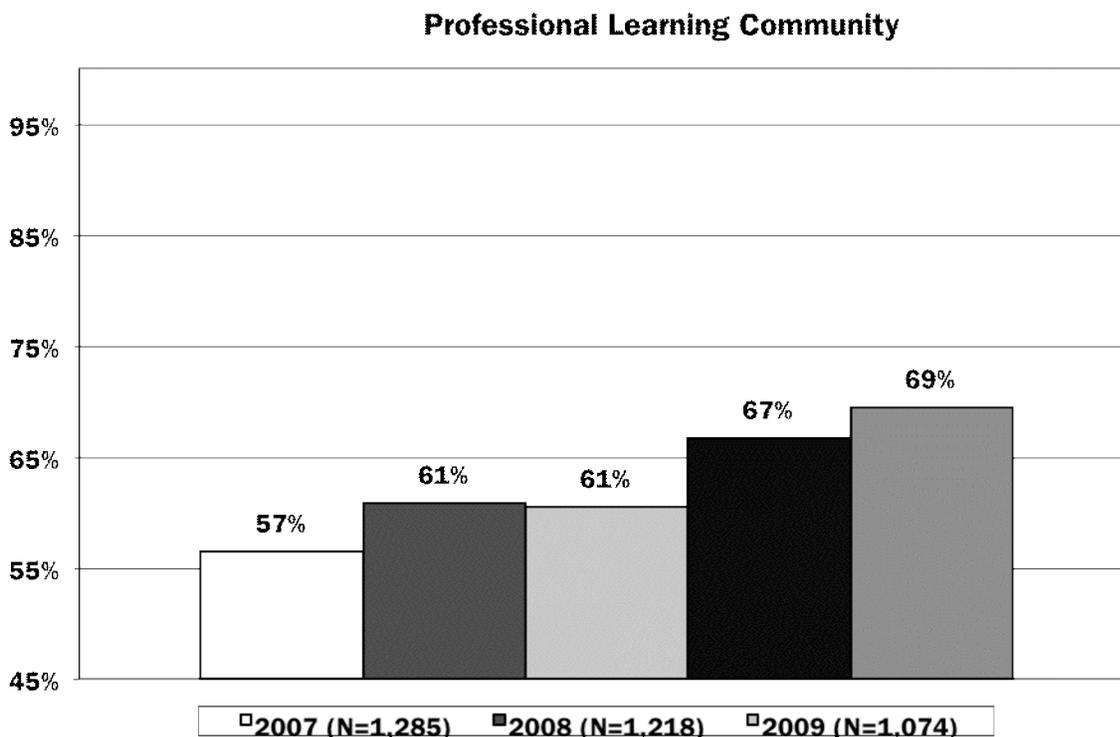
Both survey and site visit data suggest that SLC team members met regularly (typically 1-2 times per month) for planning and collaboration. Survey responses to this item increased from 71% in Year 1 to 79% in Year 5. Teachers also responded favorably to being a part of a professional development community practice that was collaborative and public (79% agreement in 2011; increase of 13%). Staff were also quite positive about the alignment of professional development with standards and accountability (75% agreement in 2011; increase of 12%).

According to the SLC Lead Teacher Survey, the majority of SLC teachers for both years (Year 4 and 5) did not have a common conference period for planning and collaboration during the last two years. Most SLCs met 1-2 times per month, often on banked time Tuesdays or after-school. During these SLC meetings the most common topics included: a) designing personalization activities/experiences; b) analyzing summative data; c) building a college-going culture; and d) referral of students to intervention programs/services; and, e) interdisciplinary/thematic unit lesson planning.

Staff survey data indicate that SLC implementation gradually allocated more time for interdisciplinary teams to discuss and support students assigned to their SLC. Despite improvement, however, only a bare majority of staff felt that the time was sufficient for the task at hand. For example, only 54% of 2011 staff agreed that there was sufficient time for SLC teams to discuss and analyze student work. Still, this represented an increase of 19% over the five-year grant. Similarly, 59% agreed in 2011 that SLC teams meet to support student needs, but this reflected 20% improvement over the grant. Data collected from SLC lead teachers suggest that staff desired more focused professional development within SLC teams on: a) personalizing teaching via differentiation and scaffolding of lessons; b)

using assessment data disaggregated by SLC to target student needs; c) developing common lesson plans and/or common instructional strategies; and d) developing thematic and/or interdisciplinary units tied to SLC themes and pathways.

For some of the SLCs there was competition between subject area departments and SLCs in terms of time for professional development and collaboration. At these schools, course-alike and departmental groupings (often referred to as Professional Learning Communities or PLCs) tended to receive more time than interdisciplinary teams of teachers. Indeed, faculty at many schools reported struggling to reconcile the *subject-specific* orientation of the district's instructional guides and formative assessments with SLC reforms aimed at ensuring that personalization and relevance are embedded into the students' *interdisciplinary* educational experiences tied to SLC themes. Put another way, content area and school-wide priorities continued to overshadow the prominence of SLC implementation in school-based professional development. In addition, staff survey respondents were more likely to cite "collaboration among staff" as a barrier to SLC implementation in 2011 (31%) compared to 2006 (24%). In effect, collaboration time increasingly became a flashpoint of contention at many Cohort 6 sites.

Another common and related challenge hinged on the propensity for WASC accreditation to displace SLC professional development and collaboration time. It is interesting to note that there was essential no change over the term of the grant in the proportion of staff agreeing that SLC topics were a feature of school-wide professional development or faculty meetings (68% agreement in 2011).

District-provided Professional Development

LAUSD's Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and School Support: Secondary Programs-Instruction conducted ongoing professional development for SLC lead teachers and administrators. In the early years of the grant, the professional development focused on the planning and coordination of implementation with topics such as: freshmen transition strategies and bridge programs; personalization; student advisories; increasing graduation rates; decreasing dropout rates; increasing student attendance; addressing A-G requirements; and preparing students for postsecondary education.

During the first year of the grant, LAUSD also sought to clarify the administrators' role within the SLCs; therefore, the District provided a professional development to explain how administrators can support and help sustain an SLC. The District also provided counselors with professional development that would assist in developing their leadership roles in an SLC environment.

In the later years of the grant, the professional development focused on: providing time for teachers to discuss student and school outcomes and data; examining student work to improve instruction; and training school teams on the district's Response to Instruction and Intervention model to ensure student graduation and postsecondary eligibility. School teams received training from District staff on how to access and utilize student data available in the LAUSD's My Data system. SLC lead teachers received training on effective teacher leadership to equip them with tools to enable them to become effective teacher leaders. Cohort 6 school teams were provided collaborative planning time both on and off

site for curriculum planning and to review student data to guide instruction In addition, counselors were provided professional development on creating a pure SLC master schedule.

LAUSD also enlisted the support of outside partners for SLC professional development. For example, the Los Angeles Educational Partnership (LAEP) conducted trainings on Project-Based Learning, Student Led Conferences, Shared Inquiry method, Adaptive Schools seminar. The Wildwood Outreach Center provided school teams professional development on Advisories, Professional Learning Communities, Habits of Mind and Heart, Project-Based Learning, and Critical Friends Group. The integration of the arts across the content areas was facilitated by a two-year partnership established between the District and the Music Center by the Project Director. Music Center Teaching Artists serve as coaches, and assisted teachers in interdisciplinary planning and integrating the arts into the curriculum using thematic and Project-Based Learning strategies.

LAUSD Career Technical Education (CTE) Office also provided professional development tied to integrating Multiple Pathways/Linked Learning into SLCs, which set the stage for authentic Linked Learning within CTE pathways. The CTE Office provided quarterly professional development training to assist teachers with identifying students for CTE and to ensure administrators were trained to provide master schedule access to Linked Learning pathways. In addition, these trainings were used to disseminate best practices and models for aligning SLC implementation.
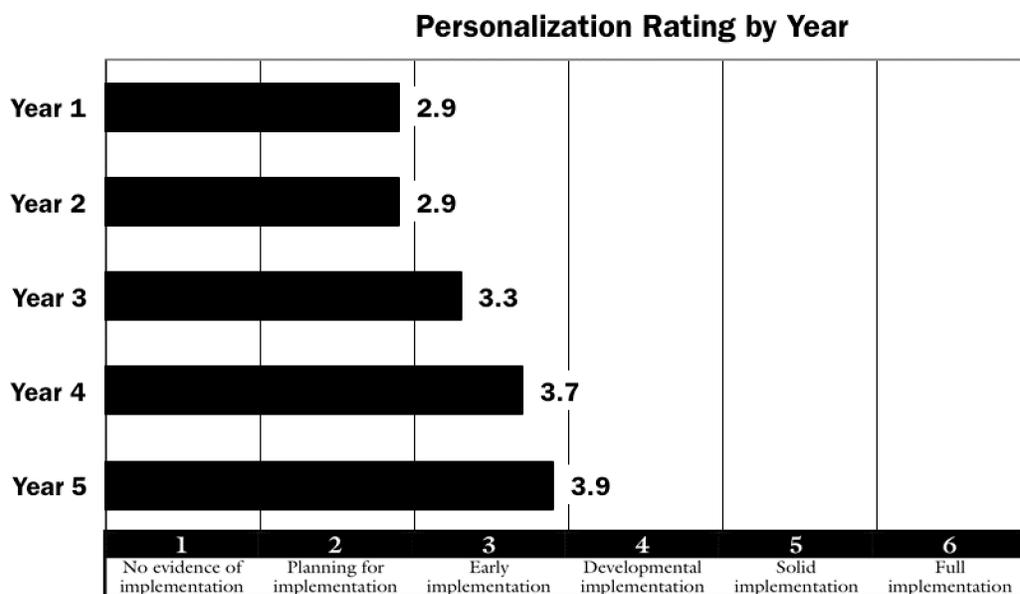
Summary

Professional development has shown only modest improvement over the term of the grant at Cohort 6 schools. While some schools reorganized professional development to support the development of distinctive academic approaches and instructional strategies within SLCs, Cohort 6 as a whole did not consistently provide staff with sufficient structured common planning time. Despite progress, after five years of the grant, SLC teachers continued to feel that the school-wide instructional agenda provided inadequate time for SLC teams to collaborate around agreed upon instructional priorities based on the needs of "their" SLC students. In addition, the professional development calendar at most schools unsuccessfully attempted to balance district mandates, departmental needs, and time for SLC interdisciplinary teams to develop. District-providing professional development sought to address key gaps and build capacity but these efforts were largely overshadowed by the fact that SLC implementation was seen as one of many competing initiatives at Cohort 6 schools, rather than an umbrella approach to school restructuring and improvement. Lacking both a larger share of time and autonomy in the area of professional development, professional development witnessed minimal growth over the period of the USDE SLC grants.

Goal 4: Personalization

Schools will use SLC to demonstate sustained and mutually respectful personal relationships where every student is well known by a group of educators who advise/advocate for them and work closely with them and their families over time. The size of the SLC is appropriate to its vision and mission, generally ranging from 300-500 students.

For many schools, personalization was at the heart of the move toward SLCs. With the typical grantee high school enrolling approximately 3,000 students, students can get "lost" in the educational system. By taking large, impersonal comprehensive high schools and breaking them up into smaller communities of learners, it was believed that stronger adult-student relationships could develop and students could get the attention they needed to achieve. Creating SLCs within large campuses increased the chance that all students would receive the attention and targeted support they need to stay in school, graduate and become eligible for postsecondary education.

Figure 16: Personalization Attribute Rating

Personalization Rating by Year

	Rating
Year 1	2.9
Year 2	2.9
Year 3	3.3
Year 4	3.7
Year 5	3.9

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

However, simply knowing students is not sufficient to create a truly personalized learning environment. Personalization is about creating a learner-centered environment *in the classroom*, with an emphasis on addressing individual learning needs and moving toward a student-centered learning environment. Personalized education means that schools systematically help students assess their own talents and aspirations, plan a pathway to meet their own purposes, work cooperatively with others on challenging tasks, maintain a record of their explorations, and demonstrate their learning against clear standards in a wide variety of media, all with the close support of adult mentors and guides. Furthermore, in a personalized learning environment, teachers play a dual role as both subject-matter coaches and student advisors/advocates (Keefe, 2007). In order for this to occur, differentiation to

meet individual student needs must be a focus and the roles and responsibilities of teachers would change.

As shown in Figure 16 above, Cohort 6 schools grew steadily from "Planning for Implementation" to "Early Implementation" on this SLC attribute, ultimately ending the grant at "Developmental Implementation." Cohort 6 schools have made a concerted effort to improve their level of commitment to personalization efforts. Grantee schools have focused on enhancing relationships between adults and students, while also making the accompanying changes to begin providing some personalized pedagogy.

Personalization Activities and Perceptions

In order to deepen student identification and connection to the adults and peers that were in their SLCs, schools created advisory/homeroom periods, organized peer mentoring programs, identified dedicated staff that could respond to student needs and found ways to foster SLC pride and identification.

Over the five years of the grant, school staff became more positive about Personalization. On average, 76% of staff survey respondents were positive by the end of the grant, an improvement of 14% (for detailed results, please consult **Appendix C**).

**Figure 17: Staff Perceptions of Personalization**
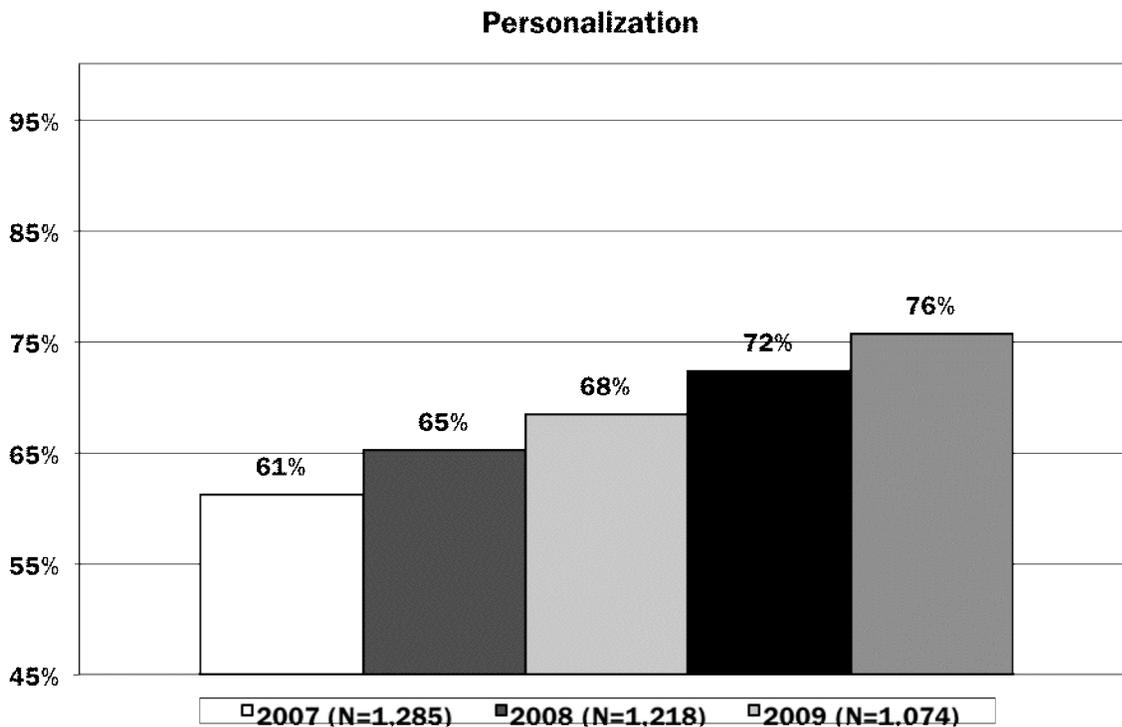
Over the life of the grant, staff perceptions of personalization were highest in terms of: a) providing personalized instruction; b) students receiving verbal counseling regarding postsecondary planning; c) extent of career planning and guidance available to students; and d) opportunties for students to participate in extended day learning. Each of these

areas was highly rated at the beginning of the grant and continued to grow 10%-13% over the five-year grant period.

By contrast, school acknowledged the need to provide personalized support to their students. For example, only 44% of staff agreed that all students at their schools had an adult that was advocating for their needs in 2006. By Year 5, 69% agreed at the end of the grant students had someone advocating for their needs, an increase of 25%. Similarly, the percentage of staff agreeing that students completed a *written* educational plan for high school and beyond increased 16% to 63% of staff in 2011. Lastly, staff ratings of intervention processes increased 18% to 76% agreement over the course of the grant.

Cohort 6 schools also showed evidence that students' perceptions of belonging to a school-wide community increased through their participation in SLCs. On average, student ratings of Relationships increased 7% among 10th graders (60% in 2011) and 9% among 12th grade students (69% in 2011).

Figure 18: Student Perceptions of Relationships
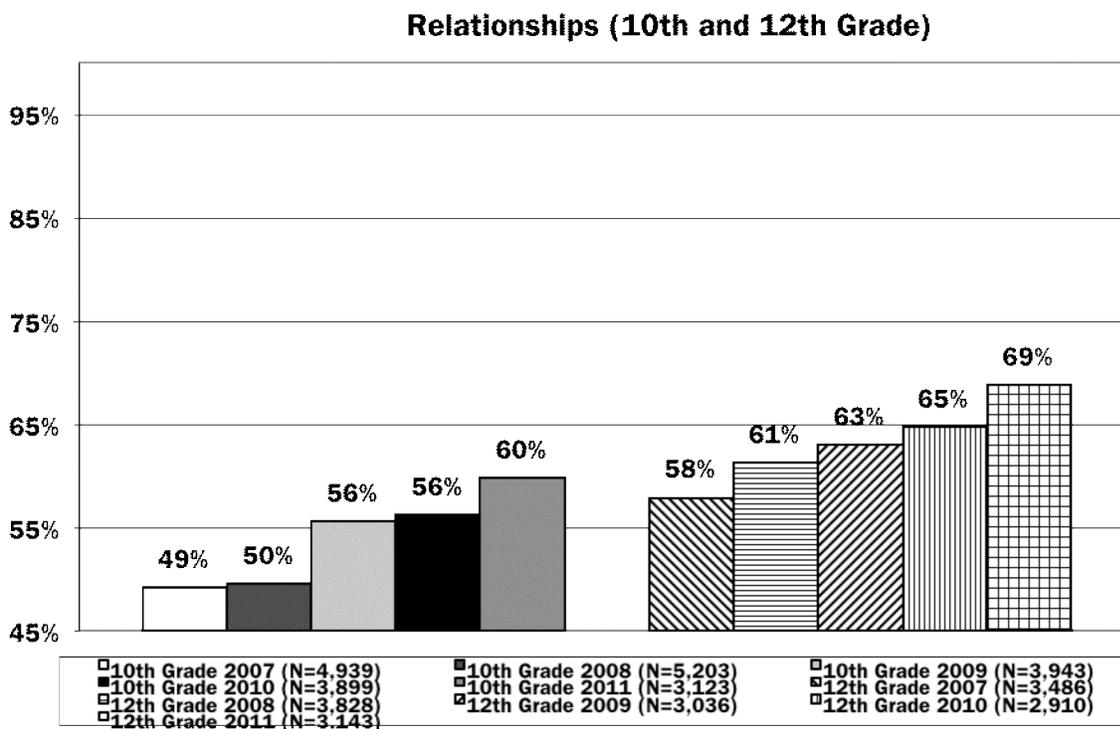
Students reported a 13%-14% increase in their sense of belonging to a school wide community over the five years of the grant. Schools were also able to increase students' perceptions of safety at their schools. Students in grade 10 experienced a 13% increase to 60%, with 12th grade students reporting a 16% increase in this indicator to 78% in 2011. During the same time period, staff reported a 13% increase (80% agreement in 2011) in safety over the life of the grant.

Personalization activities also encompassed a renewed focus on counseling and guidance. SLC teams, in conjunction with the counselor and administrator assigned to the SLC, were charged with sharing information about students, and using these data to work with students and family members on solutions and to monitor student progress. In a distributed model of counseling, the roles of teachers and counselors were envisionsed to become less functionally distinct; rather all adults in the SLC know and work together, interacting frequently in order to advocate for individual students as needed and to make sure students are on the right path toward graduating and preparing for college.[14]

Data from the evaluation suggest that there were improvements in student perceptions of guidance and counseling services at Cohort 6 schools. At the beginning of the grant, students were unlikely to report that they had talked to a counselor or teacher about their educational plans. Only 27% of 10th graders and 46% of 12th graders reported that they had done this in 2006 (Year 1 of the grant). These percentages increased 17% at both grade levels of the course of the grant. Nonetheless, only 30% of 10th graders and 44% of 12th graders reported that they had worked on a *written* educational plan with a counselor to outline their paths to graduation and beyond at Year 5.

Moreover, there was no "closing of the gap" separating the peceptions of 10th and 12th graders over time. Seniors routinely rated personalization higher, suggesting that counseling and guidance did not become overtly proactive; seniors continued to receive priority in delivery of counseling and guidance services. For example, 44% of 10th grade students reported that they regularly talked to an adult about their plans in 2011 compared to 63% of 12th grade students. Seniors were also more likely to report that they had attended college fairs, career fairs and had been exposed to opportunities for internships and other college/career preparation activities.

As in the case for Academic Rigor, students who reported interacting with a counselor three or more times annually were statistically more likely to agree with all survey items tied to relationships in all five years. In other words, counselor interaction was good "predictor" of students perceiving a higher quality of personalized relationships and connection on campus.   The same was true for females compared to males. Females consistently viewed the instructional program as more personalized rigorous and relevant compared to males.   Lastly, Hispanics were statistically more likely to be positive compared to non-Hispanics on all survey items tied to Personalization.

Quantitative Indicators of Personalization

Pupil Attendance

Pupil attendance is one proxy indicator for personalization in that students who are connected to school tend to attend school.   Pupil attendance increased at Cohort 6 schools 4%-6% depending on grade level. Improvements in pupil attendance largely mirrored trends at other, non-grantee LAUSD high schools. Detailed information on individual schools is presented in **Appendix F**.

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[14] For the term "distributed counseling," this report drew from Jacqueline Ancess, "Small Alone is Not Enough: How can educators recover the purposes of small schools?" *Educational Leadership*, Volume 65, Number 8 (May 2008).

Table 19: Attendance Rates by Grade, 2006-2011

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Net Change
Grade 9							
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	89%	90%	92%	93%	95%	94%	5%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	88%	90%	92%	93%	94%	94%	6%
Grade 10							
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	90%	91%	92%	94%	95%	95%	5%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	89%	91%	92%	93%	94%	95%	6%
Grade 11							
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	90%	91%	92%	94%	95%	96%	6%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	89%	91%	92%	93%	94%	95%	6%
Grade 12							
Cohort 6 (N=7 schools)	92%	92%	93%	93%	95%	96%	4%
Other LAUSD High Schools (N=23 schools)	90%	91%	92%	93%	93%	94%	4%

Source: LAUSD Planning, Assessment and Research Branch

School Dropout Rates

Dropout rates provide another quantitative proxy measure of school efforts to implement Personalization. As shown in Table 20 below, the adjusted one-year dropout rate at Cohort 6 schools decreased 2.2% from 2006-07[15] to 2009-10, compared to 0.6 at non-grantee LAUSD schools. Similarly, the four-year derived dropout rates among Cohort 6 schools decreased 10.7%, compared to a 5.8% decrease among LAUSD schools not receiving grants. Detailed individual school results may be found in **Appendix F**.

Table 20: Average School Dropout Rates, 2006-07 to 2009-10

School	2006-07			2009-10		
	Average Enrollment (9-12)	Adjusted 1-Year Derived Dropout Rate (9-12)	Adjusted 4-Year Derived Dropout Rate (9-12)	Average Enrollment (9-12)	Adjusted 1-Year Derived Dropout Rate (9-12)	Adjusted 4-Year Derived Dropout Rate (9-12)
Cohort 6	3,424	6.0%	26.0%	2,937	3.8%	15.3%
Other LAUSD HS	2,514	6.0%	29.0%	2,187	5.4%	23.2%
State Total/Average	*1,997,181*	*5.0%*	*18.9%*	*1,999,684*	*4.6%*	*17.4%*

Source: California Department of Education   *2010-11 data not available

Student Advisories

Advisories generally seek to ensure that every student has a personal advocate (advisor) who knows his or her characteristics, attitudes, knowledge, skills and learning styles and facilitates the on-going development of his or her talents and interests. Advisors usually help students establish a personal plan for progress, follow student attendance and academic progress, and make provide guidance on adjustments as needed. Ultimately, advisories provide a regular, set aside period where adults get to know students better as

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[15] In 2006-07, California altered the way in which dropout rates were calculated to take into account longitudinal tracking of individual students over time. As such, baseline data from 2005-06 is not comparable.   In addition, 2010-11 data was not available at the time this report was published.

they guide students through the high school experience, ensuring both student and school goals are met.

Findings from the evaluation site visits indicate that three of the seven Cohort 6 schools had a full-fledged Advisory Period in Year 5 to enhance personalization. Over the course of the grant, three other schools had instituted a partial (i.e., some but not all grade levels and/or some but not all SLCs) form of Advisory to personalize the educational process. However, not all of these Advisory structures were sustained throughout the grant.

Summary

Most of the grantee schools cited personalization as their number one focus for SLC implementation. Evidence exists to suggest that relationships between adults and students have been enhanced through the implementation of SLCs. Looping of staff with students has become more common, and more staff appeared to be accepting a role in mentoring and advocating for "their" students. Similarly, student interactions with counselors were improving around postsecondary and career preparation, but further improvements appear to be warranted. Both pupil attendance and dropout rates improved at Cohort 6 schools. Personalization had less of an impact on classroom instructional practices. Staff tended to see personalization as activities and interactions, rather than a wholesale move toward differentiating instruction based on student background, personal interests, aspirations, and learning needs. Nonetheless, students appreciated sharing classes with other students by SLC as well as the sense of "ownership" and "connection" that SLCs brought to their high school experience.
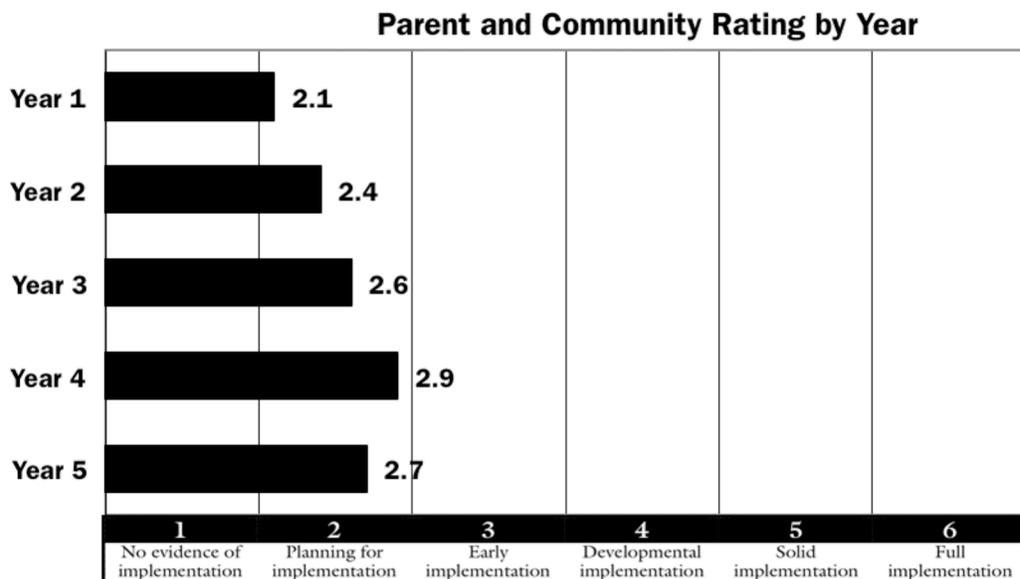
Goal 5: Parent & Community Engagement

All members of the SLC are viewed as critical allies and are significantly included in the school community (i.e., students, teachers, support staff, parents, administrators, business, and community partners). School cultivate and nurture ongoing relationships with parents and community partnerships aimed at supporting continuous improvement of student achievement. Authentic engagement leads to sustained participation in critical school decisions and implementation of school efforts.

High performing SLCs understand and value the power of collaboration and see parents and external partners from business, community, and postsecondary institutions as integral to student success. SLCs that meaningfully engage parents to support students and teachers in this work are more likely to reach their desired goals. Similarly, when partners from the community, local employers, and post-secondary institutions get involved in SLCs, student access to mentoring, internships, job shadowing, field trips, and guest speakers, is expanded, leading to a strong experience of college and career preparation. When these activities are integrated into the student learning experiences, inside and outside the classroom, students become more actively engaged in their education and begin to see the relevance of pursuing further education after high school.

As shown by the ratings in Figure 19 below, Cohort 6 schools made limited progress on this attribute. At baseline, few schools had addressed this attribute, preferring instead to focus on changes to school structure and internal reforms. Even after five years of implementation under the USDE grant, schools straddle Planning and Early Implementation. In sum, parent/community engagement has been minimally affected by the implementation of SLC reforms.

Figure 19: Parent and Community Engagement Average Ratings

Parent Communication and Engagement

Engaging parents in SLC planning and decision-making continues to be the aspect of SLC implementation where LAUSD high schools have made limited progress. Almost none of the schools provided evidence that they had significantly connected parents to SLC implementation efforts. In other words, there had not been any significant changes at a *school-wide* level designed to involve parents in decisions related to SLC selection, curriculum planning, student activities, or modifications to SLC design.

Nonetheless, staff perceptions of parent and community involvement increased an average of 13%, from 49% in Year 1 to 62% in Year 5. Most (67%) staff agreed that parents were seen as key collaborators and contributing members of the school community, a 13% net increase from Year 1. Both 10th and 12th grade students rated parent comfort with school faculty high throughout the grant. The vast majority (74%-79%) of students survey agreed that their parents would be comfortable asking questions or requesting information from teachers (increases ranged from 3%-5% over the five-year grant).

Despite these high ratings, staff reported parents/community involvement as the greatest barrier to SLC implementation in all five years of the grant, with 31% to 40% of staff citing this as a barrier to SLC implementation. It is important to note that parental resistance to SLCs was non-existent; rather, staff at Cohort 6 schools tended to view parent involvement as an insurmountable challenge at the high school level. Because of difficulties in involving parents in past activities, events, and outreach, many schools simply did not devote much effort to link SLC restructuring to parent involvement strategies.

Instead, the majority of parent participation activities occurred at the school level, typically through Parent Centers located on school campuses. These Parent Centers offered a variety of workshops and classes to build their knowledge base and boost their capacity to effectively assist their children. The Parent Center was also where parents typically gathered for school governance meetings.

Parent involvement also tended to rely on school-wide parent initiatives already underway to create home-school connections. Schools typically had only one or two parent events per year and these were insufficiently connected to SLC implementation. For example, Parent Centers on these campuses were not involved in informing or enlisting parents around SLC issues. Parents were largely informed about student selection or placement into SLCs *after the fact*.

Indeed, the absence of *school-wide* strategies for involving parents at the majority of SLC grantee schools prompted several individual SLCs to organize their own efforts. For example, some individual SLCs at a handful of schools initiated student-led conferences as a way to encourage students to take ownership of their learning. Other SLCs provided updates at monthly parent meetings or distributed monthly newsletters to parents.

Some grantee schools referred to their school Website as tool to communicate SLC information (mission, goals, faculty, course offerings, and connection to A-G or CTE courses) and upcoming events. However, only two of the Cohort 6 grantee sites had fully functional Web pages that were easily accessible from the school's homepage that allowed

the visitor to access pertinent SLC information The remaining schools had links to SLC pages but offered scant information about the SLCs on campus.

External Partnerships

Cohort 6 grantee schools experienced better success at developing external partnerships, compared to parent outreach. The majority (68%) of the staff survey respondents in 2011 agreed that their school encouraged partnerships with employers and postsecondary institutions. This percentage increased 13% over the five-year grant. School staff were less inclined to agree that community partners were involved in the development and functioning of SLCs (52% agreement in 2011; an increase of 14%).

Site visits and follow up with SLC lead teachers indicate that SLCs enlisted various partners representing businesses, non-profit organizations, and institutions of higher education (Table 21). These partnerships typically provided access to college readiness and career preparation programs and services, including college field trips, mentoring, and counseling, as well as job shadowing, internships, mock interviews, etc.

Table 21: Types of Partnerships

Business and Industry	Non Profit or Community Based Organizations	Institutions of Higher Education	Other
22	20	15	2

Data collected from the Cohort 6 schools to document external partnerships indicate that most of the grantee schools had relationships with community-based organizations. These partners were quite varied, representing museums, foundations, health clinics, and other types of associations or non-profits. Some schools established business/employer partnerships, representing multiple industry sectors (e.g., financial services, aviation/aeronautics, legal, health care, automotive, retail, engineering, and manufacturing). In addition, all Cohort 6 schools had at least one SLC that forged a partnership with a postsecondary institution, most typically with community colleges.

Many of the partnerships cited by Cohort 6 schools involved long-standing relationships involving pre-existing SLCs (e.g., magnet programs, Humanitas, California Partnership Academies) or were limited to one or two SLCs on campus or characterized by a more generalized partnership with the school as a whole.

Summary

Cohort 6 schools continued to struggle with parent engagement, particularly connecting parent involvement and outreach to SLC implementation. Instead, some individual SLCs have acted in an entrepreneurial fashion to connect with parents.   In general, schools offered traditional school activities (report card dispersal, parent-teacher conference, back-to-school night) through SLCs but did not fundamentally alter the content of the activity. Parents largely remained unaware of SLC offerings and merely signed off of their child's SLC choice. Schools were markedly more successful in developing external partnerships. However, these tended to affect a minority of SLCs on campus and typically were not concretely linked to SLC development or implementation. Instead, they tended to provide access to general college readiness and career preparation programs and services.

PART IV – CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions on SLC Implementation

SLC Enrollment and Participation

The schools in Cohort 6 have increased the proportion of students enrolled in SLCs from 30% at baseline (2005-06) to 92% of enrollment in Year 5 (2010-11). Virtually all (97%-99%) 9th and 10th graders were involved in a SLC by 2010-11; more than 80% of all 11th and 12th graders were in a SLC at the end of the grant. The expansion of SLCs also increased the proportion of historically underrepresented students in SLCs. Data on the distribution of students to SLCs indicate that (apart from magnet programs) schools were largely successful in ensuring equity in terms of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, Special Education, and GATE subgroups. Lingering inequities mostly hinge on concentrations of English Learners in some SLCs as well as gender imbalances in how students select from the menu of available SLCs on campus.

SLC Attribute Ratings

As shown in the Table 22 below, Cohort 6 sites achieved the highest levels of school-wide SLC implementation, and greatest growth, in the areas of Personalization and SLC Identity. While there was not any attributes that scored significantly low in comparison to others, it should be noted that after five years of the grant, Cohort 6 schools yielded an overall rating of "Early Implementation" or a three on the six-point implementation scale used as part of the evaluation.

Table 22: SLC Implementation Ratings[16] by Year, Cohort 6 schools

SLC Attribute	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	Net Change
Unifying Vision	2.9	3.5	3.9	3.4	3.3	0.4
SLC Identity	2.6	3.1	3.6	3.6	3.6	1.0
Rigorous Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	2.6	2.5	3.1	3.4	3.3	0.7
Professional Development	2.5	2.5	2.6	3.1	3.1	0.6
Equity & Access	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.1	2.9	0.1
Personalization	2.9	2.9	3.3	3.7	3.9	1.0
Accountability & Distributed Leadership	2.6	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.1	0.5
Parent and Community Engagement	2.1	2.4	2.6	2.9	2.7	0.6
Overall	2.6	2.9	3.2	3.3	3.2	0.6

Source: Public Works

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[16] Rating used the following scale: 1= No Evidence of Implementation; 2= Planning for Implementation; 3= Early Implementation; 4= Developmental Implementation; 5=Solid Implementation; and 6= Full Implementation.

In examining these ratings of SLC implementation, it is important to note that the school was the unit of analysis. In other words, the aggregate school rating may or may not reflect what is occurring within particular SLCs. Indeed, certain SLCs were found to show higher levels of implementation, but their level of implementation was not necessarily reflected on the school-wide implementation scale. In large part, the Cohort 6 schools implemented SLCs in an uneven fashion, with greater variation within schools than across schools.

Key Accomplishments

Restructured high schools to align with SLC principles of school improvement. Evaluation data confirmed that the vast majority (more than 90%) of both staff (teachers, counselors, and administrators) and students were assigned to an SLC at each of the seven high schools by the end of the five-year grant. During this period, there was an increase in distributed leadership at schools linked to empowerment of the lead teachers within SLCs. Grantee schools ensured the allocation of time regularly (at least monthly) for SLCs teams to plan and collaborate. A few schools also began to provide some parent outreach and intervention services by SLC rather than the traditional school-wide approach.

Improved key measures of student achievement. Cohort 6 grantee schools saw an increase in Academic Rigor as manifest in student achievement gains on the California Standards Test (CSTs) in English/Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. The rate and the extent of CST improvement, SLC students performed better on the SLCs compared to LAUSD high schools that were not participating in the grant:

- o English/Language Arts: On average, 57% of students at Cohort 6 schools moved out of Far Below Basic (FBB) in ELA in 2011 compared to prior year achievement. This percentage represents a 16% improvement from baseline. Cohort 6 schools were more likely (8% more students in 2011) to show movement out of FBB compared to LAUSD high schools that never received federal SLC grant funding. Similarly, 41% of students at Cohort 6 schools moved out of Below Basic (BB) in ELA in 2011 compared to the prior year achievement. This percentage represents a 22% improvement from baseline. Cohort 6 schools were more likely (5% more students in 2011) to show movement out of BB compared to LAUSD high schools that never received federal SLC grant funding.

- o Mathematics: On average, 53% of students at Cohort 6 schools moved out of Far Below Basic (FBB) in Mathematics in 2011 compared to prior year achievement. This percentage represents an 8% improvement from baseline. Cohort 6 schools were more likely (9% more students in 2011) to show movement out of FBB compared to LAUSD high schools that never received federal SLC grant funding. Likewise, 27% of students at Cohort 6 schools moved out of Below Basic (BB) in Mathematics in 2011 compared to the prior year achievement. This percentage represents a 13% improvement from baseline. Cohort 6 schools were more likely (11% more students in 2011) to show movement out of BB compared to LAUSD high schools that never received federal SLC grant funding.

On the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), 10th grade pass rates increased by 12% on ELA and 19% for Mathematics. These rates were comparable to the rate of improvement at non-SLC LAUSD high schools, and greater than the statewide rate of improvement over the five-year grant period.

Improved degree of personalization. Within the SLCs there was an increase in attention to monitoring student progress and sharing data on student achievement across faculty members. SLCs continued to place a greater emphasis on smoothing the transition of 9th graders to high school and the development of the counseling and guidance roles for SLC teachers. Cohort 6 schools also showed improvements on quantitative indicators tied to personalization including:

o   Graduation Rate: Between 2006-07 and 2009-10, the NCES four-year graduation rate at Cohort 6 SLC grantee schools increased by 6.6% (2010-11 data not available at time of publication). LAUSD high schools that never received federal SLC grant funding showed a 5.8% increase in high school graduation rate and the statewide graduation rate decreased by 0.1% during the same time period.

o   Dropout Rate: Between 2006-07 and 2009-10, the adjusted four-year derived dropout rate at Cohort 6 SLC grantee schools decreased by 9.7% (2010-11 data not available at time of publication). LAUSD high schools that never received federal SLC grant funding showed a 5.8% decrease in dropout rate and the statewide dropout rate decreased by 0.4% during the same time period.

o   Attendance Rate: Student attendance increased by 4-6% since baseline at the Cohort 6 SLC grantee schools. In 2010-11, average student attendance varied from 94%-96%. This pattern of improvement was very similar to that of schools that never received federal SLC grant funding.

Implementation Challenges and Barriers

For the Cohort 6 high schools included in this evaluation, five key issues related to SLC implementation loomed largest as challenges. These included: 1) adapting master schedules to prioritize a SLC vision that includes ALL students grouped by SLC in at least 50% of courses; 2) ensuring adequate time for SLC teams to meet and collaborate on the development common lessons, thematic units, common assessments, or student work; 3) linking SLCs more concretely to ongoing efforts to improve instructional practices so that SLCs were seen as a vehicle for augmenting standards-based instructional reforms; 4) defining clear areas for SLC autonomy in order to increase staff ownership of the SLC initiative and true change in school culture; and 5) minimizing faculty and administrative turnover to provide continuity and sustainability of SLC implementation. Based on ratings of SLC implementation conducted by the evaluation team, most Cohort 6 schools seemed to plateau in Year 3 or Year 4 of the grant.

Vision and Structural Reform. In general, Cohort 6 schools were inadequately successful in clarifying the rationale, purpose, and direction of SLC reforms to staff within an environment characterized by a host of competing district and school priorities. While two schools (Monroe and Polytechnic) were consistently rated highly in this category, most grantee schools were not able to adapt the school master schedules to prioritize a SLC vision that includes all students grouped heterogeneously by SLC in at least 50% of their courses. Students typically were grouped by SLC in two courses (40%) of their course load. In addition, the autonomy of SLCs was not sufficiently defined to deepen distributed leadership and institutionalize decentralized school cultures.

Rigor and Relevance of the Instructional Program. Data from this evaluation does not support the notion that SLC implementation significantly changed the extent of classroom differentiation, embedded academic intervention, and tiered support for struggling students. Although two schools (Monroe and Polytechnic) achieved high ratings in this category, the majority of Cohort 6 schools made very modest progress in adapting and developing curricula aimed at increasing relevancy, constructivist learning approaches, and real world applications of learning tied to SLC

themes. In addition, some of the quantitative data assembled for this evaluation suggest a need for more emphasis on college readiness and building a college culture on high school campuses including:

- Course Credit Accumulation: The percentage of 9th and 10th graders meeting the minimal credits for matriculation to the next grade level did not improve for underclassmen over the last three years at Cohort 6 schools. On average, Cohort 6 schools underperformed relative to LAUSD high schools that did not receive federal SLC grant funding on this indicator.

- Postsecondary Eligibility: Between 2006-07 and 2009-10, the percentage of graduates with UC/CSU eligibility at Cohort 6 SLC grantee schools decreased by 5.1% (2010-11 data not available at time of publication). LAUSD high schools that never received federal SLC grant funding showed an increase of 2.0% and the statewide UC/CSU eligibility rate decreased by 0.2% during the same time period.

- Postsecondary Placement: Using information from the California Postsecondary Education Commission, Cohort 6 schools saw the average attendance rate at UC/CSU schools decrease 5% from 2005-2006 to 2009-10, the most recent year of available data. The attendance rate at California Community Colleges increased 1% over the same time period.

Professional Development. The majority of Cohort 6 schools struggled with allocating sufficient time for SLC (interdisciplinary) teams to collaborate given pressures to prioritize course and department-alike groupings of teachers. Cohort 6 schools also struggled to focus SLC professional development and collaboration on instructional topics (e.g. creation, of common lessons, thematic units, and performance assessments). In addition, schools provided limited training for SLC lead teachers, counselors, and administrators on how their roles and responsibilities were envisioned to change under SLC reforms.

Staffing and Leadership. With the state and district budget shortfalls resulting in a high level of personnel turnover, SLCs struggled to provide continuity and sustainability of SLC implementation. Losses in the following areas hampered SLC implementation: 1) Multiple changes in district leadership (Superintendent, Board of Education, and Local District) affecting oversight and extent of support/emphasis place upon the initiative; 2) High rates of teacher and administrative turnover tied to State budget crisis, particularly turnover among lead teachers assigned to SLCs; and 3) Elimination of assistant principal and counseling positions assigned to SLCs as a result on on-going State budget shortfalls.

Parent and Community Engagement. Schools were not very successful in defining an authentic and meaningful role for parents and external partners in developing and participating in decisions *related to SLCs.* More commonly, outreach was school-wide in nature and centered on establishing or nurturing external partnerships with business/industry groups, community-based organizations, or postsecondary institutions. Most parent and community engagement efforts were either limited to a minority of SLCs or campus or loosely coupled to SLC implementation efforts.

SLC Lessons Learned by Attribute

In the section below, we have provided a set of "lessons learned" for each of the eight LAUSD SLC attributes. These represent a set of actions and priorities, within each attribute, for enhancing SLC implementation that may be helpful to schools, local districts, LAUSD central office, and the Board of Education.

Unifying SLC Vision:

❖ **Define what the transition from SLCs to Small Schools will entail, prioritizing the commitment to standards-based instructional reform augmented by curricular relevance and personalized relationships**. Although the Los Angeles Board of Education adopted a resolution on the phased transition to small, autonomous secondary schools, there is a great deal of uncertainty in the field about how this will occur. Will each SLC become a small school? What will autonomy consists of? Is the instructional agenda for change different under small schools? All these and many more are the kind of questions that schools are asking.   Each implies a need for a stronger statement from LAUSD on the role/function of SLCs during a transition to small schools. Therefore, we urge LAUSD to disseminate a vision for change that brings together district directives on standards-based instruction, dropout prevention, and school-wide accountability that includes SLCs as the primary vehicle for high school restructuring with a set of benchmarks for how these entities will become effective and accountable small, autonomous schools.

❖ **Clarify and continually reinforce the rationale, purpose, and direction of SLC reform efforts.** Implementing SLCs on a school-wide basis is a revolutionary paradigm shift in how high school education ought to be organized, therefore, it is necessary to continually communicate the roles and responsibilities of all staff in carrying out SLC restructuring, as well as information on SLC progress during school-wide faculty meetings, professional development, school newsletters, and other communication methods.

❖ **Minimize administrative turnover to help project a sense of continuity to SLC restructuring.** As administrators change, SLC implementation tends to stall. LAUSD should continue to consider policies that would ensure continuity and stability within key leadership positions such as a minimum of a three-year term for high school administrators.

❖ **Create transparent governance structures and work to become more inclusive and communicative.** Developing SLCs requires empowering teachers and cultivating teacher-leaders who are able to demonstrate collective responsibility for student learning. Pre-existing governance, departmental and programmatic structures need to make room for the expansion of school leadership under SLCs.

❖ **Align school improvement plans.** Many schools function with multiple school plans, mandated by a variety of funding sources that do not coherently communicate a unified instructional vision for school improvement. It is increasingly necessary that schools map out reform efforts across these plans (e.g., SAIT, WASC, etc.) in order to create coherency and communication of a vision for instructional

improvements that cuts across multiple compliance mandates and reporting structures.

SLC Identity:

❖ **Publicize SLC autonomy in curriculum, instruction, and assessment**. Explicit direction from LAUSD on the appropriate autonomy of SLC teams (and ultimately small schools) in redesigning curriculum, instruction and assessments should be disseminated to high schools and local district. Indeed, incorrect assumptions about the limits of SLC autonomy have handicapped SLC implementation at many schools. Other schools have defined SLC autonomy in the local context but then encountered difficulties with district staff charged with oversight. Given the Board adopted policy requiring all secondary schools to move toward SLCs and now small schools, there must be a clearer statement from the district on where SLC autonomy is necessary and expected.

❖ **Continue to focus on establishing a strong identity for each SLC that is evident in what students are learning in the classroom.** Each SLC needs to develop a distinct approach to learning that is evident in thematic linkages, specific instructional strategies, personalization strategies, and/or assessment methods that is clearly understood by staff and students.

❖ **Nurture collaboration within SLC teams.** SLC teams of teachers, counselors, and administrators (the "triad" of SLC support) need opportunities to collaborate and work together to create an academic SLC identity that should be supported by school and local district leadership. Furthermore, schools would benefit from clearly delineating the responsibilities of the triad of support.

❖ **Define and expand areas for SLCs to exercise semi-autonomous decision-making.** Schools must move forward in creating a distinct "academic" identity in each SLC. SLCs would be well-served to articulate the set of common instructional strategies that will serve as the instructional "glue" for all teachers regardless of subject area. In addition, schools need to configure the master schedule to ensure that classes conform to SLC purity (i.e., 85% or more students from the same SLC) and establish their own clear boundaries regarding SLC autonomy in the area of budget, staff selection, and student discipline.

Rigorous Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment:

❖ **Focus SLC efforts on changing classroom instruction.** It was common for schools to focus on the implementing the structures of SLC redesign and improving the relationships between staff and students rather than aggressively changing instructional practices to encompass curricular relevance or personalized approaches to learning. SLCs must work to modify and adapt instructional delivery based on the their thematic focus and unique student needs. While it is difficult and time-consuming work but not impossible to achieve when SLC leaders (SLC lead teachers, administrators assigned to SLCs, and dedicated counselors) work together to plan and implement standards-based lessons that also integrate the thematic

orientation of the SLC in applications (relevance) and differentiated, scaffolded support for students (personalization).

❖ **Utilize SLCs more effectively as the vehicle for establishing a college-going culture**. Over the course of the grant, student expectations for postsecondary education have been raised, but postsecondary eligibility and actual postsecondary attendance did not increase. SLCs offer the opportunity tailor thematic approaches to learning (in the core academic program) that link high school experiences more concretely to postsecondary pathways and eventual career options. Similarly, SLCs might play a more proactive role in providing students with exposure to note-taking and study skills, as well as increase opportunities for academic dialogue and student research projects of the kind that will be needed for success at the postsecondary level.

❖ **Consider employing SLCs as a vehicle for the delivery of academic intervention.** Academic intervention at most of the grantee sites was unsystematic and relied largely on student volition (i.e., students volunteering to attend after-school tutoring or Saturday School) and is typically reactive and not proactive in orientation (e.g., mandates for CAHSEE preparation courses for 12th grade non-passers). Given these conditions, SLCs may well be better-positioned to develop and manage student intervention (during the school day or in extended day programs) more effectively than school-wide programs by taking a role in organizing student referral/intake, monitoring intervention attendance, providing differentiated instruction for intervention courses/programs, and conducting parent outreach tied to student participation in intervention.

❖ **Improve articulation with feeder middle schools.** Middle school articulation should focus on beginning the SLC "conversation" earlier during the 8th grade year rather than the traditional Spring visits to program incoming 9th graders in order to allow students and parents the opportunity to make informed choices about a high school program of study. In addition, transferring middle school student data to high school staff must be provided in a timely fashion so that high schools to allocate students to SLCs in a balanced and equitable manner.

Professional Development:

❖ **Provide time for SLC teams to meet during the regular school day.** To the extent possible, schools should provide common conference periods for teachers by SLC to institutionalize common planning and regular interdisciplinary interactions tied to rigor, relevance, and relationships. In lieu of common conferencing, schools should dedicate time for SLC teams to collaborate at least twice monthly during banked time or other professional development forums.

❖ **Become more strategic in designing and allocating professional development time.** Simply dividing time between SLCs and departments does not necessarily reflect a coherent plan based on priorities. School leaders need to strategically identify topics sequence for the year, choose the most appropriate group (SLCs, departments, grade-level teams or school-wide faculty) for the topic, and ensure that

professional development activities are connected to school-wide improvement priorities.

❖ **Foster the development Professional Learning Communities, organized by SLC, and focused on responding to staff and student needs.** In order to create SLC identity and personalize student learning can be connected to a focus on instructional improvements and student results, schools need to provide instructional leaders (SLC leads and department chairs) with training on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and work with faculty to develop an annual professional development plan that sequences topics, providing teachers time to apply, reflect and collaborate on instructional strategies and to analyze student data/work samples.

❖ **Create a coherent professional development plan that markets SLC as an umbrella reform for school improvement instead of one of many initiatives.** Schools need to understand how multiple reform efforts are connected so that they can effectively "filter" and "translate" external mandates into a coherent instructional improvement plan that makes sense to the classroom teacher. Even better, high schools should submit an annual professional development plan to their local district that clearly specifies how professional development will address rigor, relevance, and relationships, allocating this topics between SLC teams, subject area departments, and school-wide professional development forums.

❖ **Create processes to measure and monitor the impact of professional development on classroom instructional practices.** Few schools had processes in place to systemically monitor the "transfer" of professional development to the classroom so that SLC lead teachers, counselors, and administrators assigned to SLCs have the necessary capacity to serve as instructional resources and agents of change. All three positions need additional, differentiated training on how to adequately monitor whether SLCs have implemented strategies or approaches from professional development. This is where PLC strategies on focusing on results provide a good venue for deepening leadership capacity in this area.

Equity and Access:

❖ **Create school-wide recruitment practices that ensure all students and parents develop a comprehensive understanding of their SLC options.** Schools must ensure that students *and parents* understand their SLC options and see their choices as an important step in meeting educational goals. Students *and their parents* must have the information and exposure needed to make informed choices, particularly when such choices affect their entire high school experience and exposure to postsecondary options. These concerns are especially acute at schools that utilize a 9th-12th SLC structure and, as such, rely upon middle school articulation to inform and recruit students into SLCs.

❖ **Continue to monitor and balance staff and student placement into SLCs.** Schools need to continue to make efforts to ensure the master schedule process is balanced to ensure equitable distribution of students and staff. Student choice is not a sufficient mechanism to achieve equity on its own. Additional data need to be

collected to ascertain the extent to which SLCs fairly represent the school's instructional staff in terms of credentials and teaching experience.

❖ **Provide schools with Local District support to ensure heterogeneous groupings of students and address student intervention needs.** Local Districts should monitor master schedules and work with schools to ensure heterogeneous grouping of students. Local Districts can also help schools restructure time to support intervention, personalization and advisement needs of SLCs. Schools need help understanding how to leverage "smallness" to better meet student needs.

❖ **Prioritize the development of strategies to embed culturally relevant and linguistically responsive pedagogy.** Professional development and teacher collaboration should incorporate discussion and reflection on how best to incorporate the key elements of this pedagogical approach. At a minimum, each SLC needs to arrive at a common definition and set of expectations in terms of how curriculum, instruction, and assessment will be modified to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body.

Personalization:

❖ **Move beyond relationship building to personalized instruction.** Evidence from the evaluation suggests that relationship building is a necessary but insufficient condition for effective personalization. Strengthened student-teacher relations must translate into a more tailored learning process that meets students' interests, needs and capacities. SLCs need to restructure learning environments to support by allowing both teachers and counselors to meet with students regularly to talk about goals, academic progress, college preparation, and career exploration.

❖ **Continue to include goal-setting and the on-going management of student goals tied to post-high school plans as key aspects of personalization.** Students, parents and teachers need accurate information about high school graduation requirements and pre-requisites for four-year colleges and universities. In lieu of the establishment of advisory periods at more grantee schools, additional information regarding high school graduation and postsecondary requirements (i.e., A-G requirements) could be integrated during SLC recruitment efforts and middle school articulation, and then followed up during the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) process that is a mandated aspect of student counseling.

❖ **Provide more systematic and data-driven intervention through SLCs that is less reliant on student initiative.** Academic intervention remains insufficiently integrated with school-based systems that are capable of identifying students who clearly need additional help to master rigorous standards. Allowing SLCs to provide and manage intervention may prove to be more effective than using a school-wide approach to intervention, which could lead to academic intervention becoming proactive rather than reactive.

❖ **Expand extended learning opportunities beyond the walls of the high school campus.** SLCs need to continue to find ways to connect standards-based instruction to the thematic orientation of SLC via community service projects,

service learning, internships, etc, while simultaneously addressing the need for embedding cultural relevance into the educational experience, in order to help students connect their education to the future.

Accountability and Distributed Leadership:

❖ **Continue to monitor and provide oversight of school master schedules**. Although there has been improvement in terms of establishing "pure" classes (i.e., course sections where all or nearly all of students belong to the same SLC), this is a concern at a number of grantee sites. In addition, none of the Cohort 6 sites have provided SLC teachers with common conference (prep) periods as a structural support for teacher collaboration. These findings indicate a need for local districts to monitor (and provide support to) school master schedules for evidence of a commitment to the principles of reform embodied in the SLC initiative. Specifically, district oversight should include examination of class rosters for SLC purity (i.e., do classes group students by SLC?), content coverage (i.e., do students stay within their SLC for most or all subjects?) equity and access to SLCs (i.e., are students grouped heterogeneously across the different SLCs?), and high expectations (i.e., what percentage are enrolled and being successful in A-G courses?). Local Districts can also help schools restructure time to support intervention, personalization and advisement needs of SLCs. Schools need help understanding how to leverage "smallness" to better meet student need.

❖ **Continue to provide district-wide leadership development for SLC Lead Teachers, Department Chairs, Counselors and Assistant Principals**. The move toward distributed leadership has placed greater demands on teacher leaders, counselors, and assistant principals assigned to SLCs. Even with the trainings that LAUSD has provided, many are grappling to define their new roles and responsibilities. LAUSD should continue invest in comprehensive capacity building by offering training in a number of key areas including master schedule development, understanding school budgets, facilitation skills, college and career preparation, and how to analyze and use student data/work samples to drive instructional decision-making. LAUSD should continue to visibly demonstrate that it is committed to building the capacity of front-line staff to serve as instructional resources and agents of change.

❖ **Support schools and teachers in the use of data openly and regularly and disaggregated by SLCs.** Schools have formative and summative data about student achievement and they have the capacity to access and manipulate data as needed. However, only half of the grantee schools are making widespread use of data, especially data disaggregated by SLC. Schools would benefit from clear performance targets, such as an increase in CAHSEE pass rates or decrease in ninth grade retention tied to SLC implementation. When crafted carefully and with input from multiple stakeholders, success indicators provide clarity about expectations, motivate behavior, foster a shared vision, and promote more honest dialogue about student achievement.

Parent and Community Engagement:

❖ **Develop more systematic ways to involve parents up-front in the design of SLCs and on into SLC implementation.** Schools need to involve parents in the design and construction of SLCs to ensure ownership and reinforce the importance of parent involvement from the beginning. This would decrease the tendency for schools to delay SLC connections until they involved in the SLC placement process (such as the signing off of student SLC preference forms, or SLC orientations).

❖ **Give Parent Centers a higher profile in SLC implementation.** Train parent center representatives to inform parents about the school's SLC offerings. Involve parent center representatives in advisement activities, college awareness campaigns, and academic support strategies. Parent Centers have the potential to become "parent advisors" demonstrating how SLCs support students to meet increased academic expectations.

❖ **Create SLC advisory boards for parents and external partners in order to link these stakeholders more concretely to the development and expansion of SLCs**. Schools should develop SLC advisory boards, comprised of parent and partner representatives that could assist schools in outreach, provide opportunities for participation in SLC decision-making, and showcase school commitment to altering the status quo. That outreach would allow SLCs addresses misconceptions about college and career preparation and equip families with skills needed to chart a post-high school pathway for students.