

**Smaller Learning Communities  
2010-11 Evaluation Report**

**San Bernardino County Office of Education  
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**CASLE COHORT 6**

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## PART I—INTRODUCTION

This report provides the results of the final year of a five-year evaluation conducted during the 2010-11 school year of ten comprehensive high schools that received US Department of Education Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) Implementation Grants in San Bernardino and Riverside County. San Bernardino Superintendent of Schools' (SBCSS) Center for the Advancement of Smaller Learning Environments (CASLE) hired Public Works, a non-profit headquartered in Pasadena, California, to conduct a third-party evaluation of the efforts in the following SLC Cohort VI schools:

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

### **About the US Department of Education Grants**

Since 2000, the U.S. Department of Education's SLC grant program has provided planning and implementation grants to high schools with 1,000 or more students in order to implement SLCs. The grants support a range of strategies including creating schools-within-schools with varying degrees of autonomy,<sup>1</sup> restructuring the school day to allow for cohort scheduling and more consistent student-adult interactions, and formal adult mentoring and advisory programs.<sup>2</sup>

Implementation of these structural changes share the goals of a more personalized high school experience for students in smaller schools or more autonomous units within schools with improved student achievement and performance. These SLC reforms have combined with the push for accountability of the standards-based reforms of the 1990s and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). SLC reform strategies are intended to match academic achievement (*Rigor*) with curricular approaches that bring meaning and application to students (*Relevance*) along with enhanced personal connections to adults and other students (*Relationships*), the "New 3 Rs". As such, SLC reform involves changes that offer the possibility for curricular change, meaningful collaboration, and systemic student support.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

Continued under the Bush Administration's NCLB, the program now provides five-year (originally three-year) SLC implementation grants ranging from \$250,000 to \$550,000 per school. The ten Cohort VI schools in SBCSS received a five-year implementation grant of \$5,978,641 beginning in the 2006-07 school year.

### ***Background to the SLC Approach***

#### *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Take on High School Reform*

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

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

#### *Lessons Learned About the Impact of School Size*

Beyond improving academic achievement, research suggested that small schools built a more positive and productive educational environment conducive to student learning. A sense of community constructed through student self-selection, as well as increased staff interest in students, led to greater feelings of belonging and more investment in making the school a quality place to learn. Classroom discipline problems, disruptions, and assaults were found to be less common in small schools (Cotton, 2001). However, authors Lee, Ready, and Welner found, found that small schools often attempted to replicate the more comprehensive curriculum of larger high schools with faculty teaching out of their specialties and often had selective entrance criteria (Lee, 2002).

#### *Common Approaches to Implementing SLCs*

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

- *Small Schools and Schools-within-Schools:* Small school or school-within-a-school refer to an autonomous school that, while it may be in its own building or in a building with another school, is organizationally, fiscally, and instructionally independent and may focus on a specific theme (Small Schools Project, 2001a).
- *Academies:* Academy schools organize the curricula and education program for a subset of 10<sup>th</sup> –12<sup>th</sup> 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) typically organized by grade level (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 (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).

### *9<sup>th</sup> Grade Support Systems*

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

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

### **Implementation Issues for Smaller Learning Communities**

#### *Conversions vs. Start-ups*

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

Early findings from the evaluation indicated that after the first year of operation, new small high schools had already made great strides in establishing deeper and more supportive student-teacher relationships both academically and personally. However, these environments required a large amount of work to put in place, more than the teachers had first anticipated. Further, the work of establishing a new school was more complicated and time-consuming leading to significant shortfalls of the resources necessary to implement all of the components needed to meet the challenging student populations they had been successful in recruiting (AIR/SRI, April 2003).

#### *Impact of SLCs on Student Achievement*

Many SLC schools have made progress in a key reform area—improved school climate. However, there is less conclusive evidence of the impact on student achievement. For instance, the MDRC summary of its evaluations of Career Academies, *First Things First*,

and the *Talent Development* model found improvements in eleventh-grade Mathematics and reading tests in *Talent Development* schools for students where the interventions had been in place the longest but no effect on achievement within the Career Academies they studied (Quint, 2006). The evaluations of Gates-funded new and converted high schools found some improvements in reading and language arts especially in high schools that had implemented the Foundation's Attributes of High-Performing Schools to a higher degree.<sup>3</sup> However, their study found poor rigor in Mathematics assignments at new and redesigned high schools (AIR/SRI, 2005). Despite these mixed results related to specific academic content areas and SLCs, the early MDRC study of Career Academies found reduced dropout rates, improved attendance, and increased likelihood of on-time graduation among Career Academy students, especially those most at risk off dropping out (Kemple, 2000).

### *Autonomy*

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

### *Size*

While there is no consensus on the "perfect" size for a high school or an SLC, a large-scale quantitative study using nationally representative and longitudinal data explored the ideal size of a high school based on student learning. Using data from 10,000 students in 800 public and private schools in the US, achievement gains in Mathematics and reading over the course of high school were found in schools of between 600 and 900 students (a middle-sized high school). However, maintaining an even smaller school size was a more important factor for schools enrolling high proportions of disadvantaged students (Lee, 2002). For most of the SLCs in high school conversion schools a range of 200 to 400 students per SLC is feasible, particularly in urban settings.

### *Tracking*

Tracking students by their perceived ability is a long-standing practice prevalent in American high schools that has been the subject of deep controversy especially related to the persistent achievement gap for low-income and minority students. In an article describing the "multiple pathways" approach embedded in many SLC reforms, authors Jeannie Oakes and Marisa Saunders describe how important it is to implement programs

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

that consciously allow students to select programs based on their interests rather than being “selected or directed” based on past achievement, where they are assumed to be going after high school, or their perceptions of the level of difficulty of the courses in a given SLC (2007).

### *Managing the Master Schedule*

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

## **Reform Context in San Bernardino County**

San Bernardino County is located in inland Southern California, a region known as the Inland Empire. The San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools (SBCSS) provides programs and services to 413 public schools and 44 high schools, serving approximately 130,000 students in grades 9 through 12, and is the Local Educational Agency (LEA) for the Smaller Learning Communities Implementation Grant. SBCSS’s *Center for the Advancement of Smaller Learning Environments* (CASLE) was established as the umbrella organization that is central to the leadership, support, and oversight of grant implementation to the ten Cohort VI<sup>4</sup> grantee high schools, and any other high school in the county engaged in SLC reform.

The ten Cohort VI grantee schools in this study are from seven of San Bernardino County’s 36 school districts:

- Barstow Unified School District consists of eight elementary schools, one junior high school, two high schools, and one intermediate school. The SLC participating school, Barstow High School, was originally a Cohort III school and was refunded in Cohort VI, and enrolls about 1,700 students.
- Chaffey Joint Unified School District is a 9-12 District that enrolls more than 25,000 students. The District currently operates eight comprehensive high schools, two continuation high schools, and one community day school. The participating SLC school, Chaffey High School, enrolls about 3,700 students.

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<sup>4</sup> Barstow High School was also funded under Cohort III.



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- Chino Valley Unified School District operates 24 elementary schools, six junior high schools, four comprehensive high schools, and two alternative high schools. The participating SLC school, Don Lugo High School, enrolls about 2,300 students.
- Colton Joint Unified School District operates 18 elementary schools, four middle schools, three comprehensive high schools, and one alternative high school. The participating SLC school, Bloomington High School, enrolls about 2,800 students.
- Fontana Unified School District consists of 29 elementary schools, seven middle schools, four comprehensive high schools, and two continuation schools. Of the two SLC participating schools, A.B. Miller High School enrolls about 2,800 students, and Fontana High School enrolls about 3,400 students.
- Palm Springs Unified School District consists of 15 elementary schools, four middle schools, three comprehensive high schools, and six alternative schools. The participating SLC school, Palm Springs High School, enrolls about 2,200 students.
- Redlands Unified School District consists of 15 elementary schools, four middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, and three alternative schools. The participating SLC school, Redlands High School, enrolls about 2,800 students.
- San Bernardino City Unified School District is located in the heart of the Inland Empire and is currently the seventh largest school district in California. The district consists of 41 elementary, eight middle, and seven high schools. Of the two SLC schools participating in Cohort VI, Arroyo Valley High School enrolls about 2,900 students, and Cajon High School enrolls about 2,900 students.

CASLE used its experience with previous cohorts to focus on an incremental approach, starting with 9<sup>th</sup> grade houses. Based on literature related to dropouts and underperforming students, 9<sup>th</sup> grade is the crucial grade-level to implement SLCs in order to attain a sense of personalization in engagement. CASLE has focused schools on the implementation of heterogeneous 9<sup>th</sup> grade Houses that transition to 10<sup>th</sup> grade Houses or other SLC structures (e.g. pathways).

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

- 1) Decentralize and personalize schools and classrooms.
- 2) Improve the quality of curriculum and instruction.

- 3) Connect students to college, career, and technical development.
- 4) Improve academic achievement for all students.
- 5) Increase parent and community involvement.

## **Public Works' Evaluation and Report Organization**

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

Following this introduction, Part II provides a more detailed methodology of the evaluation. Part III includes an analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data regarding program implementation across the ten schools based on site visit and survey results, as well as quantitative data gathered from various sources, organized by the original project goals listed above. Part IV is a conclusion and summary of grant accomplishments and challenges. Appendices include a map of participating schools, bibliography, staff survey results, student survey results, a description of each school along with their SLC approaches, and detailed information on student achievement in English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

## PART II—EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

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

### Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data collected for this report includes a staff surveys and three student surveys, which have been collected annually throughout the grant period. In addition, PW staff met with students, staff and administration from all ten high schools during a daylong site visit in Spring 2011 to assess the status of SLC implementation in Fall 2010 through Spring 2011.

### Surveys

PW developed four surveys of key stakeholders for this evaluation for: school staff, freshmen, seniors, and a follow-up survey of seniors conducted during the fall after graduation. These surveys are administered annually as part of the evaluation. Each CASLE school receives their results, the results combined across the 10 schools, and their individual Cohort results. Cohort survey frequencies are included in **Appendix C**.

#### Staff Survey

The staff survey was developed to solicit input from all school staff about their knowledge and involvement in the SLC initiative at their school. The survey is administered during a spring staff meeting and all members of the staff participating in the school's faculty meeting are invited to complete a survey. In order to calculate a response rate, PW uses the California Department of Education (CDE) reported number of certificated staff to estimate the number of staff at each school. The following table displays the response rate for each school based on the number of completed surveys (Table 1). In total, PW achieved response rates of 78%-86% during the five-year grant period.

**Table 1: Staff Survey Response Rates, 2007-2011**

High School	Staff – Response Rates				
	2007 (N=1130)	2008 (N=1090)	2009 (N=1062)	2010 (N=1062)	2011 (N=955)
A.B. Miller	100%	69%	42%	86%	44%
Arroyo Valley	76%	70%	79%	75%	68%
Barstow	70%	72%	87%	80%	92%
Bloomington	66%	84%	79%	93%	78%
Cajon	84%	82%	94%	85%	77%
Chaffey	90%	84%	95%	100%	82%
Don Lugo	92%	80%	77%	86%	99%
Fontana	88%	74%	79%	76%	82%
Palm Springs	86%	86%	71%	84%	91%
Redlands	83%	89%	91%	89%	87%
<b>Average</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>78%</b>

Source: Public Works Inc.

*Student Surveys*

In order to collect student opinions and information about their experiences in high school, students were surveyed with regard to their expectations for learning, classroom instruction, counseling and guidance, and personalization. Students were also asked to identify if they participated in a SLC, as well as 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, PW administered the surveys to 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Response rates for this survey are provided in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2: 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Survey Response Rates, 2007-2011**

High School	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade – Response Rates				
	2007 (N=5996)	2008 (N=6186)	2009 (N=6048)	2010 (N=5896)	2011 (N=5314)
A.B. Miller	71%	79%	70%	91%	79%
Arroyo Valley	60%	83%	79%	61%	37%
Barstow	73%	81%	85%	65%	75%
Bloomington	74%	91%	66%	99%	96%
Cajon	79%	80%	87%	30%	85%
Chaffey	82%	85%	71%	87%	84%
Don Lugo	63%	84%	89%	88%	93%
Fontana	74%	75%	53%	77%	84%
Palm Springs	60%	81%	87%	86%	84%
Redlands	78%	71%	85%	85%	69%
<b>Average</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>79%</b>

Source: Public Works Inc.

**Table 3: 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Survey Response Rates, 2007-2011**

High School	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade – Response Rates				
	2007 (N=3865)	2008 (N=4592)	2009 (N=3911)	2010 (N=4578)	2011 (N=4507)
A.B. Miller	61%	73%	37%	86%	84%
Arroyo Valley	75%	64%	93%	76%	71%
Barstow	45%	68%	54%	74%	60%
Bloomington	59%	73%	60%	94%	92%
Cajon	79%	95%	97%	62%	76%
Chaffey	70%	73%	64%	80%	77%
Don Lugo	70%	74%	68%	87%	80%
Fontana	72%	63%	44%	74%	84%
Palm Springs	56%	71%	79%	72%	72%
Redlands	70%	65%	68%	83%	89%
<b>Average</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>79%</b>

Source: Public Works Inc.

To collect data on student postsecondary outcomes of students and meet federal reporting requirements, PW administered a follow-up telephone survey each Fall to seniors providing contact information during the Spring student survey. In 2011, the response rate across the ten high schools was 76%. This was approximately 33% of total seniors enrolled in 2010-11 as reported by CDE (Table 4).

Table 4: Graduate Follow-up Survey Response Rates, 2007-2011

High School	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade – Response Rates				
	2007 (N=1698)	2008 (N=2448)	2009 (N=2097)	2010 (N=2371)	2011 (N=1913)
A.B. Miller	83%	86%	68%	71%	80%
Arroyo Valley	79%	102%	70%	70%	88%
Barstow	93%	80%	88%	70%	75%
Bloomington	63%	89%	70%	72%	77%
Cajon	79%	77%	71%	74%	72%
Chaffey	75%	91%	68%	82%	84%
Don Lugo	73%	90%	80%	64%	83%
Fontana	61%	77%	81%	73%	72%
Palm Springs	71%	84%	81%	70%	74%
Redlands	71%	79%	71%	70%	78%
Average	75%	86%	75%	72%	78%

Source: Public Works Inc.

## Site Visits

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

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

PW prepared a demographic and data profile of each school in order to understand the school’s enrollment and staffing statistics (see **Appendix D**). PW held training for the site visit team prior to the site visits, which included a review of the overall goals for the site visits, background information and a review of the protocols developed specifically for the site visits.

## Quantitative Data Collection

In order to assess the impact of SLC on student achievement, this report presents 2006-07 (Year 1), 2007-08 (Year 2), 2008 –09 (Year 3), 2009-10 (Year 4) and 2010-11 (Year 5) student achievement data for the high schools participating in the Cohort VI grant. Most of the aggregate school level data was collected through the CDE Website. Participating school districts also provided standardized test and attendance data at the individual student level that has been disaggregated by demographic characteristics (e.g., ethnicity,

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English language status, and socio-economic status). The student and school outcome analysis includes:

<b>Student Level Indicators</b>	<b>School Level Indicators</b>
Student demographics	High School Graduation Rate
SLC participation/enrollment	UC/CSU eligibility
California Standards Tests (CSTs)	Academic Performance Index (API)
California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)	Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
Pupil attendance	

Complete tables of all quantitative data have been included in **Appendix E** of this report.

## PART III—STATUS OF SLC IMPLEMENTATION

This part of the report provides an analysis of SLC program implementation across the ten schools organized by the five original grant goals:

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

Where appropriate, examples of strategies employed by individual schools are described to illustrate the variety of approaches and to provide an opportunity to share information among the schools, drawing on site visit, survey, and student/school outcome data where appropriate.

### Goal 1: Decentralize and Personalize Schools & Classrooms

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

### SLC Enrollment and Participation

Over the course of the grant, CASLE schools were more likely to embrace SLCs at 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade than at upper grade levels (see Table 5). In general, schools concentrated on establishing house SLC structures for grade 9 and 10. These houses did not distinguish groups of students by interest, instead placing incoming students with a team of 3-4 teachers for personalization.

Table 5: SLCs Structures in place in 2010-11 (Year 5)

School	9 <sup>th</sup> grade House	10 <sup>th</sup> grade House	11 <sup>th</sup> /12 <sup>th</sup> Grade House	Career Pathway SLC	Other Themed SLC
A.B Miller	✓			✓	
Arroyo Valley	✓	✓		✓	✓
Barstow	✓	✓		✓	✓
Bloomington	✓	✓		✓	
Cajon	✓	✓			
Chaffey	✓	✓			✓
Don Lugo	✓	✓	✓		
Fontana	✓	✓			
Palm Springs	✓	✓		✓	
Redlands	✓	✓		✓	✓

Source: Public Works Inc.

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While grantee schools have made considerable progress in implementing SLC structures at the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade and have expanded SLCs in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, an analysis of SLC enrollment and student rosters demonstrate that, on average, only 28% of students met the 50% threshold (i.e., three or more courses in a typical six-period course schedule) for scheduling by SLC in 2010-11. The analysis of student rosters collected for this evaluation indicated that schools varied widely in terms of level of SLC participation, from 0% to 81% (see Table 6). It is important to note that this was a significant decrease from Years 3 where a majority (56%) of students were “cored” in SLCs.

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

School	Year 1 2006-07	Year 2 2007-08	Year 3 2008-09	Year 4 2009-10	Year 5 2010-11
A.B. Miller	8%	25%	45%	4%	1%
Arroyo Valley	32%	36%	63%	39%	26%
Barstow	58%	56%	51%	34%	0% <sup>5</sup>
Bloomington	5%	43%	79%	31%	34%
Cajon	30%	42%	49%	40%	14%
Chaffey	1%	48%	46%	49%	68%
Don Lugo	0%	17%	34%	37%	25%
Fontana	23%	23%	43%	21%	11%
Palm Springs	5%	28%	41%	30%	20%
Redlands	32%	58%	99%	67%	81%
<i>All Sites</i>	18%	37%	56%	35%	28%

Source: Public Works based on school-provided rosters of students.

Based on surveys where students were asked to identify which SLC they belonged to, it is clear that schools were able to implement freshman houses much better than they were able to expand to upper grades. While 74% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders identified an SLC in 2011 (Table 7), only 44% of seniors identified themselves as part of an SLC in 2011 (Table 8).

**Table 7: % 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Self-Reporting Assignment to SLC**

School	Year 1 2006-07 (N = 5996)	Year 2 2007-08 (N = 6186)	Year 3 2008-09 (N = 6048)	Year 4 2009-10 (N = 5896)	Year 5 2010-11 (N=5314)
A.B. Miller	19%	28%	56%	4%	13%
Arroyo Valley	56%	71%	55%	49%	92%
Barstow	77%	73%	79%	49%	99%
Bloomington	37%	57%	21%	48%	53%
Cajon	30%	42%	56%	3%	50%
Chaffey	12%	83%	84%	99%	90%
Don Lugo	29%	31%	47%	42%	82%
Fontana	22%	21%	15%	78%	89%
Palm Springs	20%	67%	64%	96%	88%
Redlands	63%	37%	18%	67%	86%
<i>All Sites</i>	36%	50%	50%	57%	74%

Source: Public Works.

<sup>5</sup> Barstow High “cores” students in two, not three, common courses.



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However, 12th grade involvement in SLCs did improve markedly in 2010-11 compared to the previous two years. In addition, only 46% of staff across the sites said that they were assigned to a SLC (Table 9). Schools varied from 19% to 81% on staff self-identification by SLC at the end of the grant.

**Table 8: % 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Self-Reporting Assignment to SLC**

School	Year 1 2006-07 (N =3,865)	Year 2 2007-08 (N =4,592)	Year 3 2008-09 (N=3,911)	Year 4 2009-10 (N=4,578)	Year 5 2010-11 (N=4,507)
A.B. Miller	36%	38%	13%	1%	28%
Arroyo Valley	50%	45%	15%	13%	54%
Barstow	42%	59%	29%	52%	98%
Bloomington	57%	67%	27%	5%	14%
Cajon	26%	28%	5%	0%	14%
Chaffey	38%	36%	69%	53%	92%
Don Lugo	26%	31%	3%	0%	2%
Fontana	37%	40%	5%	0%	21%
Palm Springs	34%	42%	10%	4%	33%
Redlands	58%	55%	21%	88%	82%
<i>All Sites</i>	<b>41%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>44%</b>

Source: Public Works.

**Table 9: % Staff Self-Reporting Assignment to SLC**

School	Year 1 2006-07 (N=1,130)	Year 2 2007-08 (N=1,090)	Year 3 2008-09 (N=1,062)	Year 4 2009-10 (N=1,062)	Year 5 2010-11 (N=955)
A.B. Miller	16%	31%	31%	20%	19%
Arroyo Valley	30%	38%	39%	46%	35%
Barstow	56%	63%	48%	66%	75%
Bloomington	10%	51%	77%	76%	45%
Cajon	29%	36%	42%	33%	21%
Chaffey	19%	65%	62%	86%	81%
Don Lugo	13%	21%	31%	53%	38%
Fontana	9%	17%	28%	38%	21%
Palm Springs	20%	22%	39%	45%	40%
Redlands	38%	98%	90%	96%	80%
<i>All Sites</i>	<b>24%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>46%</b>

Source: Public Works.

Beginning in Year 4 of the grant, PW collected rosters from Cohort VI sites to confirm that students were being enrolled in three common cored classes (i.e., 50% of course schedule). Table 10 below shows that sites were more likely to core 9th and 10th graders than upperclassmen according to the 50% definition.

Indeed, changing the school master schedule to prioritize and align with SLC principles (e.g., coring students by SLC at least half the time) has been one of the largest barriers to SLC implementation. Only about half of staff survey agreed that their master schedule supported SLC (see Table 12 below) and the master schedule was identified by 39% of staff survey respondents as the largest barrier to SLC implementation, an increase of 8% since

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Year 1. Fewer (29%) of staff identified “resistance to change” as a barrier to SLC implementation, a decrease of 8% over the five-year grant period.

**Table 10: SLC Percentage 50% SLC involvement by grade, Year 4 and 5**

School	2009-10 (Year 4) N=10,525				2010-11 (Year 5) N=8535			
	9th N=4635	10th N=2965	11th N=1611	12th N=1314	9th N=3413	10th N=1955	11th N=1808	12th N=1359
A.B. Miller	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	2%
Arroyo Valley	85%	35%	12%	6%	64%	14%	11%	9%
Barstow	64%	62%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Bloomington	17%	9%	54%	52%	22%	22%	53%	41%
Cajon	71%	69%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Chaffey	58%	51%	49%	38%	71%	77%	61%	61%
Don Lugo	78%	59%	0%	0%	54%	49%	4%	1%
Fontana	67%	8%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Palm Springs	60%	46%	6%	3%	36%	12%	15%	12%
Redlands	62%	68%	74%	62%	87%	89%	85%	64%
<i>All Sites</i>	<b>55%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>20%</b>

Staff survey data suggest more equity and access in student assignment to SLCs over the course of the grant (see Table 11). The majority (66%) of staff reported that admission to SLCs was open and inclusive, an 11% increase from 48% in Year 1. Similarly, 57% agreed that SLCs include heterogeneous groupings of students and are not tracked by student ability in 2010-11, an increase of 17% from Year 1.

**Table 11: Staff perceptions SLC equity and access**

Survey Item	SBCSS C6 Staff Survey Data – Across Years					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Net Change
	(N=1,130)	(N=1,090)	(N=1,062)	(N=1,062)	(N=955)	(N=-175)
Admission to small learning communities is open and inclusive.	48%	60%	64%	66%	59%	<b>11%</b>
Small learning communities include heterogeneous groupings of students and are not tracked by student ability.	40%	55%	61%	66%	57%	<b>17%</b>

**SLC Identity and Autonomy**

In general, the development of clear SLC Identity was slow to take hold at CASLE schools. As shown in Table 12 below, roughly half of staff surveyed agreed that SLCs had a shared educational philosophy and a unique academic identity. Although staff agreement to these survey items grew 15%-19% over the grant, the fact that only half agreed suggests that

school-wide SLC implementation did not penetrate deeply after five years. Across the cohort, there were low levels of staff agreement on the extent of SLC decision-making and autonomy. For example, only 38% of staff (10% increase from Year 1) agreed that SLCs make decisions related to the master schedule and student programming. Likewise, only 45% agreed that SLCs made decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment after five years of SLC implementation.

**Table 12: Staff perceptions of SLC Identity**

Survey Item	SBCSS C6 Staff Survey Data – Across Years					
	2007 (N=1,130)	2008 (N=1,090)	2009 (N=1,062)	2010 (N=1,062)	2011 (N=955)	Net (N=175)
Small learning communities at this school have an educational philosophy that is shared by students, staff, families, and community partners.	30%	48%	51%	52%	49%	19%
Small learning communities have unique academic identities.	37%	50%	52%	56%	52%	15%
Small learning communities make decisions related to the master schedule and student programming.	28%	37%	40%	42%	38%	10%
The school’s master schedule supports small learning communities.	38%	60%	60%	62%	53%	15%
Small learning communities make decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment.	31%	47%	44%	47%	45%	14%
Small learning communities make decisions regarding budget, personnel, and facilities.	20%	24%	27%	27%	29%	9%
Small learning communities have administrators or teacher-directors who lead a cohesive faculty.	34%	54%	55%	61%	54%	20%
Small learning communities have distinct physical boundaries.	23%	30%	33%	30%	29%	6%
The architectural design and/or use of space at this school support the implementation of small learning communities.	32%	42%	44%	44%	43%	11%

Site visits generally confirmed these findings, with staff at many schools reporting that the master schedule did not take SLC coring or teaming into account. With less SLC “purity” teachers were less inclined to adapt curriculum or instruction to align with SLC themes or pathways. Similarly, many teachers indicated that SLCs did not have access to discretionary SLC budgets, instead having to request funds on an ad hoc basis. In their view, this limited their ability to enact SLC-wide activities. While some schools were able to build a distinct SLC identity (particularly in 9th and 10th grade houses), staff at about half the schools linked the lack of strong SLC identity to the nature of the SLC design itself pointing to generic labeling of SLC such as “House 1” or “Freshman House.”

***Personalized Student Guidance and Monitoring***

Personalization, in the sense of more individualized oversight and guidance, did improve as part of SLC implementation. In particular, counseling and administrative responsibilities became more aligned with the SLC initiative over the course of the grant. For example, two schools have counselors and administrators assigned to SLCs. Another five schools have counselors assigned to SLCs in addition to their alphabetical assignments. A few

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schools reported that counselors, and in some cases, administrators, looped with students, following them from freshman to senior year. More than half (59%) of staff surveyed agreed that students have opportunities to work with one or more teachers over multiple years (see Table 13), a 16% increase from Year 1.

In 2011, more than half (58%) of staff surveyed agreed that students complete a written educational plan that encompasses goals for high school and postsecondary education with teachers and/or counselors. Similarly, 79% of staff agreed that students receive verbal counseling regarding their secondary and postsecondary course plan from teachers and/or counselors. Responses to both these survey items grew 6%-12% over the five-year SLC grant. Almost half (49%) of staff surveyed agreed that there was sufficient time for teachers to support students' academic and personal needs and to help them plan for the future. This was a 19% increase since the Year 1 of the grant. In addition, more than half (59%) of staff surveyed in 2011 agreed that all students at this school have an adult advocating for their academic and personal needs, a 21% increase from Year 1.

**Table 13: Staff perceptions of SLC personalization**

SBCSS C6 Staff Survey Data – Across Years						
Survey Item	2007 (N=1,130)	2008 (N=1,090)	2009 (N=1,062)	2010 (N=1,062)	2011 (N=955)	Net Change (N=-175)
Students have opportunities to work with one or more teachers over multiple years (e.g., “looping” and “student advisories”).	43%	52%	56%	58%	59%	16%
There is sufficient time for teachers to support students' academic and personal needs and to help them plan for the future.	30%	42%	45%	51%	49%	19%
Students complete a written educational plan that encompasses goals for high school and postsecondary education with teachers and/or counselors.	46%	52%	57%	61%	58%	12%
Students receive verbal counseling regarding their secondary and postsecondary course plan from teachers and/or counselors.	73%	77%	79%	82%	79%	6%

However, student surveys seem to reveal that the counseling models in place continued to prioritize services for seniors rather than shifting toward a more proactive model based on early intervention with 9<sup>th</sup> graders (see Table 14). In 2011, 42% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders compared to 54% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported that they were assigned to a teacher, counselor or other staff member to help them plan their education after their graduate. Similarly, seniors were much more likely to agree that they had worked with either a counselor or teacher on a written educational plan that reflects their needs and interests. In addition, only 32% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders agreed that they talk to their teachers or a counselor regularly about their high school educational plan. By contrast, around half (53%) of seniors reported talking to teachers or counselors regularly about their high school plan. Counselors at most CASLE schools reported that all freshmen were met with at least once to discuss four-year plans, but that students might not view these meetings as “plan” for graduation and beyond.

In 2011, 48% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders (a decrease of 7% since Year 1) and 52% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders (an 8% decrease from Year 1) rated teachers as most helpful to them in planning for high school and life after high school, while only 43% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 44% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders rated

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counselors as most helpful. While this does seem to show that students are closer to the their teachers, a possible effect of the house model in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade, it also suggests that counselors may not be taking as active a role in the SLC model as they could. Counselors at some schools did report that the SLC model was difficult to manage, while other counselors were enthused that teachers were doing more “counseling” in classrooms. The latter group were motivated by the idea that with students receiving “counseling” in multiple settings they would be more likely to succeed.

Freshman focus groups revealed that freshmen did not recall sitting down with counselors to fill out four-year education plans, despite every school stating that students do fill them out towards the beginning of the school year. While seniors were more likely to report filling out four-year plans over their career, most focus groups still reported that they only saw counselors once or twice a year. Furthermore, many student focus groups reported that they preferred talking to teachers because teachers were simply easier to get access to.

Site visits also showed that schools also took many different approaches to counseling. For example, Redlands High embedded counselors in SLC teams, with the intention that they sit in on team meetings and bring an additional viewpoint when discussing students. Many other schools instead kept the counseling model as it already was, either alphabetical or grade level assignation. Some split the difference between the two models, keeping counselors in their original model, but also giving them responsibilities to certain houses if necessary.

**Table 14: Students’ perceptions of personalization and decentralization**

Survey Item	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Response					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Net Change
	(N = 5996)	(N = 6186)	(N = 6048)	(N = 5896)	(N=5314)	(N=-682)
I have worked with a counselor to develop a written educational plan that reflects my needs and interests.	37%	42%	43%	34%	34%	-3%
I have worked with a teacher to develop a written educational plan that reflects my needs and interests.	30%	34%	29%	32%	26%	-4%
I talk to my teachers or a counselor regularly about my high school educational plan.	21%	25%	31%	29%	32%	11%
My teachers know something about my goals and aspirations for the future.	N.A.	N.A.	39%	46%	43%	4%
I have worked with a counselor to develop a written educational plan that reflects my needs and interests.	53%	54%	46%	54%	53%	0%
I have worked with a teacher to develop a written educational plan that reflects my needs and interests.	45%	44%	38%	41%	37%	-8%
I talk to my teachers or a counselor regularly about my high school educational plan.	45%	45%	48%	49%	52%	7%
My teachers know something about my goals and aspirations for the future.	N.A.	N.A.	59%	59%	57%	-2%

**SLC Impact on Personalized Learning Environments**

At least four schools mentioned during site visits that they had noticed decreased discipline issues and increased attendance since SLCs were established. Only 44% of staff surveyed agreed that student discipline is not a major problem area at their school, but this has improved 12% since Year 1 (see Table 15). However, the vast majority (82%) of staff agreed that students experience a safe learning environment, representing a 7% increase from Year 1. Students also experienced a 5%-11% increase in perceptions of safety and 5%-9% increase in perceptions of community, as seen in Table 16.

**Table 15: Staff perceptions of discipline and safety**

SBCSS C6 Staff Survey Data – Across Years						
Survey Item	2007 (N=1,130)	2008 (N=1,090)	2009 (N=1,062)	2010 (N=1,062)	2011 (N=955)	Net (N=-175)
Student discipline is not a major problem area at this school.	32%	38%	43%	42%	44%	12%
Students experience a safe learning environment.	75%	78%	80%	83%	82%	7%

**Table 16: Student perceptions of safety**

SBCSS C6 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Survey Data – Across Years						
Survey Item	2007 (N=3865)	2008 (N=4592)	2009 (N=3911)	2010 (N=4578)	2011 (N=4501)	Net (N=713)
I feel that I belong to a school-wide community.	61%	61%	66%	69%	66%	5%
I feel safe when I am at school.	65%	73%	71%	78%	76%	11%
SBCSS C6 9 <sup>th</sup> grade Survey Data – Across Years						
	(N=5996)	(N=6186)	(N=6048)	(N=5896)	(N=5314)	(N=-682)
I feel that I belong to a school-wide community.	56%	56%	64%	65%	65%	9%
I feel safe when I am at school.	61%	61%	62%	67%	66%	5%

Student perceptions may be shaped by the fact that CASLE schools have been successful in providing support for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students on transitions and mentoring (e.g. Link Crew, etc.). These new structures and schools have placed a stronger emphasis on “college going” culture. Support for all students is evidenced in early intervention programs including CASHSEE prep, emphasis on the importance of CSTs, credit recovery and tutoring. In addition, several schools have formal Freshmen Success classes, and special advising activities for freshmen. Two schools have dedicated intervention/crisis counselors. Counselors at several schools conduct presentations to students on effective study habits, drug and anger workshops, college awareness, etc.

Another proxy for personalization is attendance. If students feel more connected to the school, they will be more likely to attend. Table 17 below compares baseline attendance data to attendance data from Year 5 of the grant. Cohort average attendance remained unchanged at 94% for the cohort as a whole, with five schools improving, three schools showing decreases, one school unchanged, and one school missing 2010-11 data. The lack

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of pronounced changes in attendance rates is likely linked to the fact that these were typically (seven of ten schools) around 94%-95% at the beginning of the grant.

**Table 17: School-wide Pupil Attendance, Baseline vs. Year 5**

School-wide 9-12	Baseline (2005-06)		Year 5 (2010-11)	
	%	N	%	N
A.B. Miller	94%	4,088	95%	3,075
Arroyo Valley	99%	2,701	92%	3,431
Barstow	92%	1,778	91%	1,655
Bloomington	94%	2,756	93%	3,147
Cajon	94%	2,433	95%	3,257
Chaffey	95%	2,998	96%	3,405
Don Lugo	95%	2,269	--	--
Fontana	95%	3,721	96%	3,755
Palm Springs	95%	2,175	95%	2,350
Redlands	91%	2,944	93%	2,631
<b>All Sites</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>27,863</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>26,706</b>

Source: Public Works, Inc.

## Goal 2: Improve quality of curriculum and instruction

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

### Instructional Program

Site visits at the ten cohort sites revealed that there was not a single, common approach to school improvement at the sites over the course of the grant. In general, schools used a mix of different programs and initiatives to address quality of curriculum and instruction. One common approach was a focus on using data. Redlands High, for example, was perhaps the most data-driven school, choosing to provide teachers with “data binders” containing strategies and programs for different issues that might come up with students. Other schools focused on professional development as a vehicle for changing pedagogy. For example, Chaffey High moved toward implementation of Marzano strategies in all classes.

Staff perceptions of instruction improved in all areas of the survey over the course of the USDE SLC grant (see Table 18). Improvements were greatest in terms of adapting instruction for English Language Learners (14% increase) and personalizing instruction to address diverse learning styles and multiple intelligences (14% increase). By the end of the grant, staff were most satisfied with the cultural responsiveness of instruction (86% agreement) and the attention paid to English Language Learners (85%).

**Table 18: Staff perceptions of instruction**

SBCSS C6 Staff Survey Data – Across Years						
Survey Item	2007 (N=1,130)	2008 (N=1,090)	2009 (N=1,062)	2010 (N=1,062)	2011 (N=955)	Net Change (N=-175)
Instruction is culturally responsive and accommodates diverse student interests, learning styles and educational needs.	77%	80%	84%	87%	86%	9%
School-wide instructional decisions usually take into account the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students.	71%	77%	83%	82%	85%	14%
Students experience personalized instruction that is based on diverse learning styles and multiple intelligences.	62%	67%	73%	73%	76%	14%
Students experience personalized instruction that blends academic rigor with projects that reflect students’ interests, life experiences, and culture.	62%	66%	72%	73%	75%	13%

As shown in Table 19, students were most positive about teachers encouraging them to become a higher-achieving student (85% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 78% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders). Moreover, student responses improved the most (9% and 6%, respectively) on this survey item. Student surveys also showed that 70% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders (4% increase from Year 1) and 77% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders (6% increase from Year 1), agreed that their teachers were willing to



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alter or modify how they teach in order to make sure that all or nearly all students understand what is being taught.

Students were less positive about other aspects of the instructional program. For example, 64% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 73% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders agreed that they have the opportunity to do assignments and projects about interesting topics in class (no change from Year 1 responses). Moreover, only 57% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 71% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders agreed that the assignments and activities in their classes show them that teachers want to connect learning to students’ life experiences and culture, decreases of 6% in both groups.

**Table 19: 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade student perceptions of instruction**

Survey Item	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Response					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Net Change
	(N=5996)	(N=6186)	(N=6048)	(N=5896)	(N=5314)	(N=-682)
My teachers are willing to alter or modify how they teach in order to make sure that all or nearly all students understand what is being taught.	N.A.	N.A.	66%	74%	70%	4%
I have the opportunity to do assignments and projects about interesting topics in class.	64%	64%	69%	64%	64%	0%
The assignments and activities in my classes show me that teachers want to connect learning to students' life experiences and culture.	N.A.	N.A.	63%	59%	57%	-6%
My teachers provide me with information on how I can become a higher achieving student.	N.A.	N.A.	72%	81%	78%	6%
My teachers know my academic strengths and where I could improve academically.	N.A.	N.A.	69%	70%	67%	-2%
Survey Item	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Response					
	(N = 3865)	(N = 4592)	(N = 3911)	(N = 4578)	(N=4507)	(N=-642)
My teachers are willing to alter or modify how they teach in order to make sure that all or nearly all students understand what is being taught.	N.A.	N.A.	71%	77%	77%	6%
I have the opportunity to do assignments and projects about interesting topics in class.	73%	74%	77%	73%	71%	-3%
The assignments and activities in my classes show me that teachers want to connect learning to students' life experiences and culture.	N.A.	N.A.	72%	67%	66%	-6%
My teachers provide me with information on how I can become a higher achieving student.	N.A.	N.A.	76%	84%	85%	9%
My teachers know my academic strengths and where I could improve academically.	N.A.	N.A.	69%	74%	72%	3%

**Staff Collaboration and Professional Development**

During 2011 site visits, regular SLC collaboration time was reported at eight of the ten CASLE schools. Six schools provided all the SLC houses and/or teams with a common conference period or “family conference period” as one school called it. Two schools assigned common periods to some SLCs and/or teachers. The remaining two sites did not provide a common conference period to any extent.

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While structured time was provided through the master schedule for some schools, staff reported that actual SLC/House/Academy team meeting and collaboration time varied widely across and even within schools. At many schools, team meeting and collaboration time decreased in Year 5 of the grant as compared to the previous years. At some schools, teams reported meeting on a formal, frequent and consistent basis, while some teams at other schools met less frequently and with less formal organization. This variation was even found within schools, with some teams at a school meeting more often than other teams at the same school. At some schools time for meeting was almost entirely informal, and not scheduled on the calendar. Staff at some schools reported that meetings were as irregular as meeting in the hallways during lunch.

Schools reported different areas of professional development focus such as: improving the school’s Freshmen Success class curriculum, Cornell Notes, topics from staff surveys, and how to use data effectively. However, a large minority of schools reported that SLC time was drastically cut during the final year of the grant, with much more meeting time being organized around department meetings.

There were a few different reasons why schools cut SLC meeting time. In some cases, state accountability requirements (i.e., District Assistance Intervention Teams or DAIT) and district policies regarding services for low-performing students led to the changes. At other schools, principal turnover meant that new leadership wanted to move in a different direction, away from the SLC initiative. At yet other schools, cutbacks in budget led to reductions in SLC meeting time due to losses of personnel. Despite the many reasons articulated, it was acknowledged across most schools that SLCs were de-emphasized in the final year of the grant.

To some extent the de-emphasis on SLCs was linked to the rise of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Typically organized by department or course-alike groups at the CASLE schools, PLCs primarily focused on development and use of common formative assessments. Time in PLCs and the focus of these forums on content-specific topics appears to have reduced the time and emphasis accorded to furthering an interdisciplinary agenda through SLCs. Put another way, schools were unwilling or unable to integrate departmental efforts with interdisciplinary SLC collaboration.

**Table 20: Staff perceptions of SLC professional development and collaboration**

SBCSS C6 Staff Survey Data – Across Years						
Survey Item	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Net Change
	(N=1130)	(N=1090)	(N=1062)	(N=1062)	(N=955)	(N=-175)
Small learning community team members meet regularly for planning, curriculum, and activities.	46%	64%	64%	68%	56%	10%
There is sufficient time for teachers to discuss and analyze student work in small learning community team meetings.	25%	39%	43%	46%	43%	18%
Teachers are part of a professional community of practice that is collaborative and public.	55%	64%	67%	74%	70%	15%
Professional development for the SLC initiative is designed by teachers and is specific for our school.	36%	48%	49%	55%	49%	13%
Professional development promotes greater alignment of instruction with academic standards and accountability requirements.	60%	66%	66%	73%	73%	13%

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Examination of disaggregated student data is a regular part of school planning and assessment.	57%	65%	72%	76%	78%	21%
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lightly more than half (56%) of staff agreed that SLC team members met regularly for planning, curriculum, and activities. This was an increase of 10% over the grant but a decline of 12% from the prior year. Staff were most positive (73%) regarding the alignment of professional development with academic standards and accountability requirements, increasing 13% from Year 1. Similarly, there was a large increase (15%) in the percentage of staff who saw professional development and public and collaborative. Despite gains over the grant, staff were least positive about the amount of time for analyzing student work by SLC team (43%) and teacher design of professional development agenda (49%). Twenty-five percent of staff rated “collaboration among staff” as a big barrier to implementation in Year 5, a decrease of 4% from Year 1.

### Data Use

Across the cohort, 78% of staff surveyed agreed that examination of student data is a regular part of school planning and assessment, an increase of 21% since the first year of the grant. In general, principals expressed satisfaction with the fact that data is more openly discussed among teachers now than before the grant.

The use of data to inform instruction across the cohort varied across the ten schools. In site visits, the six highest-achieving sites reported having data provided to and used by staff. One of these schools had trained its teachers in the use of Data Director to focus on their lowest five students in each class period, and the teachers had data talks during a certain period of the day. Another school provided student grades by SLC to the teams of teachers. Another school had departmental data teams identify students for interventions. Another school provided all teachers with their own data folders which included state and school test results for their subjects.

### County Support

CASLE provided various professional development opportunities throughout the course of the grant. These opportunities varied from professional development on how to craft an SLC-friendly master schedule to various professional development opportunities related to using data and tying data to instruction. In addition, CASLE provided opportunities for the cohort to come together on retreat and spend time looking at their data and achievement results.

Schools appreciated the efforts of the CASLE office over the course of the grant, and the feedback from the interviews indicated that many of the schools wanted additional professional development. The most common request of the sites for the CASLE office was for more input on the professional development agenda, particularly how to move beyond 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade houses as many SLC teams and advocates at the sites felt that they had stalled at that level of implementation.

In general, CASLE schools were very positive about the county’s efforts to improve professional development and coordination/communication among participating grantee

schools. Some schools expressed a greater desire for more intra-cohort communication over the course of the grant, stating that it had helped to see what other schools were doing and gathering best practices for their own purposes. Two of the schools that were farthest away from the county office expressed regret at not being able to attend more often, as the realities of the distance made attendance impossible at some meetings.

### ***District Support***

Overwhelmingly, administrators and SLC staff indicated a need for more district support related to SLCs. Although the SLC grant helped leverage changes, districts were either unaware of the grant goals or simply did not take them into account. In most cases, this led to conflicting messages from the district, and did not allow the sites to implement SLCs in an effective manner.

In addition, several schools had other accountability requirements and mandates (e.g., DAIT, SAIT, Tier I or Tier II, PI, etc.). In some cases, district mandates were in conflict with SLC principles and priorities. In these cases, schools had to choose which mandates to follow, and district priorities tended to take precedence.

Three key aspects of SLC implementation that were compromised by lack of district support or conflicting direction were:

1. Master Schedule: Lack of purity in terms of SLC teaming was a common problem across grantee schools. Many SLC teams complained of “singletons”, students who were only in one class instead of two or three core classes. At many sites over the course of the grant, the main complaint was that there was no support for SLCs built into the master schedule, and that it was nearly impossible to have any purity with that hindrance. In addition, there was no clear district push for involving 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in SLCs.
2. Interdisciplinary Curricula and Instruction: There was limited evidence of interdisciplinary or thematic instruction. Indeed, six of the ten schools reported little or no use of interdisciplinary projects. To a large extent, the development of an interdisciplinary instructional agenda was hampered by district desires for strengthening course-alike and departmental groups.
3. Academic Intervention: Many schools struggled to integrate SLC priorities for common course scheduling by SLC with efforts to provide academic intervention during the regular school day. Schools were challenged to reconcile SLC “purity” with requirement for “double-blocking” underperforming students in English or Mathematics. Changes to the master schedule to expand credit recovery options and provide additional instructional minutes to struggling students with alternative bell schedules were largely not utilized.

### Goal 3: Connect students to college, career, and technical development

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

#### Graduation Rates

The California Department of Education changed the methodology used to compute this indicator in 2006-07. As such, data from Cohort IV's baseline (2005-06) is an inappropriate point of comparison. Table 21 demonstrates that the cohort experienced a decrease of 2.2% in graduation rates between Year 1 and Year 4 of the grant (most recent available data). Three of the ten schools showed a decrease in graduation rate as compared to Year 1, ranging from a decrease of 9.8% to a decrease of 0.2%. Three schools showed an increase in the graduation rate over the same period, ranging from an increase of 1.1% to an increase of 7.1%.

Table 21: School Graduation Rates, Year 1 to Year 4\*

	2006-07 Year 1	2007-08 Year 2	2008-09 Year 3	2009-10 Year 4	Net Change
A.B. Miller	86.0%	86.9%	83.6%	88.7%	2.7%
Arroyo Valley	78.5%	81.5%	73.7%	77.3%	-1.2%
Barstow	78.4%	68.2%	67.0%	85.5%	7.1%
Bloomington	78.8%	79.9%	78.6%	86.2%	7.4%
Cajon	87.0%	86.6%	81.3%	81.3%	-5.7%
Chaffey	81.3%	76.8%	70.8%	72.1%	-9.2%
Don Lugo	92.0%	88.0%	90.3%	94.4%	2.4%
Fontana	75.0%	76.6%	76.6%	81.9%	6.9%
Palm Springs	79.5%	84.4%	89.7%	93.8%	14.3%
Redlands	89.0%	87.8%	90.4%	91.3%	2.3%
<i>Cohort Average</i>	<b>82.6%</b>	<b>81.7%</b>	<b>80.2%</b>	<b>84.8%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
<b>State Total</b>	<b>80.6%</b>	<b>80.2%</b>	<b>78.4%</b>	<b>80.5%</b>	<b>-2.9%</b>

Source: California Department of Education

\*2010-11 data not yet available

#### College Readiness & Career Preparation

University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) eligibility requirements are a guiding principle in the development of curricular practices and in programming courses for students at high schools throughout California. To some extent, the proportion of students meeting these A-G requirements functions as a proxy for academic rigor and college readiness.

Table 22 provides the percentage of seniors who completed UC/CSU courses in the participating schools in Baseline through Year 4 (Year 5 data is not yet available) of the grant. There was substantial variation (range of 13%-37%) across the schools in 2009-10, the last year for which data is available.

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Three of the ten participating schools experienced a net increase in the percentage of students meeting UC/CSU eligibility requirements upon graduation compared to baseline (see Table 20). Across the ten schools, 1,064 of 4,841 graduating students (22%) met the A-G criteria, substantially lower compared to statewide averages (only two schools approximated the state average). These statistics suggest that the majority of 12th grade students are not prepared for transition to a four-year college or university upon graduation.

**Table 22: UC/CSU Graduate Eligibility, 2005-06 to 2009-10 (A-G Requirements)<sup>6</sup>**

School	Baseline: 2005-06	Year 1: 2006-07	Year 2: 2007-08	Year 3: 2008-09	Year 4: 2009-10
	UC/CSU	UC/CSU	UC/CSU	UC/CSU	UC/CSU
A.B. Miller	15.1%	26.2%	7.8%	16.5%	13.1%
Arroyo Valley	24.5%	29.3%	27.2%	17.2%	12.8%
Barstow	29.1%	33.7%	39.5%	n.a.	26.9%
Bloomington	56.1%	45.0%	46.0%	26.3%	34.5%
Cajon	26.2%	29.3%	31.5%	17.8%	18.5%
Chaffey	18.8%	15.5%	20.5%	16.3%	14.5%
Don Lugo	6.2%	16.7%	17.6%	27.1%	16.2%
Fontana	11.3%	34.3%	10.4%	14.4%	12.9%
Palm Springs	36.4%	29.2%	33.2%	35.0%	31.6%
Redlands	26.2%	28.1%	35.9%	38.1%	36.5%
<b>All Sites</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>28.7%</b>	<b>27.0%</b>	<b>22.9%</b>	<b>21.8%</b>
<b>STATE</b>	<b>36.1%</b>	<b>35.5%</b>	<b>33.9%</b>	<b>35.3%</b>	<b>36.3%</b>

Source: California Department of Education

Surveys also asked students about participation in a variety of extracurricular activities, particularly those tied to postsecondary and career preparation. For example, 8% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 24% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported participating in a college class. Seniors were more likely to report participation compared to 9<sup>th</sup> graders in all the other categories surveyed: internships (8% vs. 2%); community service (24% vs. 16%); career/interest inventories (9% vs. 7%); college fairs (24% vs. 5%); work experience (22% vs. 7%); job shadowing (6% vs. 4%); career fairs (15% vs. 11%); and, field trips (35% vs. 29%).

**Table 23: 2010-11 Student Participation in College/Career Readiness Activities**

Activity	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade (N=5,314)	12 <sup>th</sup> grade (N=4,501)
Guest Speakers in Class	31%	51%
Field Trip	29%	35%
Community Service Project	16%	24%
Career Fair	11%	15%
College Class	8%	14%
College Fair	5%	24%
Work Experience	7%	22%
Career/Interest Inventory	7%	9%
Job Shadowing	4%	6%
Internship	2%	8%

<sup>6</sup> 2010-11 UC/CSU Data not available on CDE.

In light of the student survey data, it is interesting to note that the vast majority (70%) of staff surveyed agreed that students receive career planning and guidance in the form of career inventories and assessments, job shadowing opportunities, field trips, and career fairs. Similarly, 77% of staff agreed that students have opportunities for learning that extend beyond the instructional day including after-school programs, college courses, internships, etc (increased from 71%). These percentages conflict with data gleaned from the student surveys. For example, career inventories were completed in Freshmen Success classes in only two schools. This could imply that students have many more opportunities than they take advantage of, or it could imply that there are simply less opportunities available for students than staff believes.

Staff focus groups seemed to corroborate these results, with focus groups at all sites stating that students had ample opportunities to learn outside the school day. Most sites focused on after-school tutoring opportunities, but some schools did mention opportunities for job-shadowing and external programs they had with partners. Barstow staff, for example, mentioned the partnerships that they have with community colleges in the area, while Chaffey mentioned the school’s relationship with a Toyota automobile program. However, few students, mostly in Academies or upperclassmen, knew that these venues were available to them, aside from after-school tutoring.

**Table 24: Staff perceptions of guidance and extra-curricular activities**

SBCSS C6 Staff Survey Data – Across Years						
Survey Item	2007 (N=1,130)	2008 (N=1,090)	2009 (N=1,062)	2010 (N=1,062)	2011 (N=955)	Net Change (N=-175)
Students receive career planning and guidance in the form of career inventories and assessments, job shadowing opportunities, field trips, and career fairs.	65%	66%	71%	72%	70%	5%
Students have opportunities for learning that extend beyond the Instructional day including after-school programs, college courses, Internships, etc.	71%	77%	78%	82%	77%	6%

2011 survey data also show marked difference in students’ reported plans after high school graduation between 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. For example, 3% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders reported plans to attend a trade or vocational school, compared to 7% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Similarly, 16% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders planned on attending a two-year college, compared to 45% of seniors. More than half (64%) of 9<sup>th</sup> graders planned on attending four-year postsecondary institutions compared to 49% of seniors. Those planning to find a part-time job increased from 33% among 9<sup>th</sup> graders to 40% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders. In sum, the optimism of 9<sup>th</sup> graders is tempered significantly by the time they are seniors.

**Table 25: Student intentions for life after high school (Fall 2011)**

<b>What are your plans after high school?</b>	<b>9th (N=5,314)</b>	<b>12th (N=4,501)</b>
Attend a four-year college or university	64%	49%
Attend a two-year college	16%	45%
Attend a trade or vocational school	3%	7%
Join the military	10%	8%
Become an apprentice	2%	2%
Find a full-time job	15%	14%
Find a part-time job	33%	40%
Other	10%	7%

Student responses tied to perceptions of curricular relevance and college preparation were more equal. For example, 71% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders surveyed and 74% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders agreed that their classes demonstrate how what they are learning will be useful and beneficial in future education or in a future career. Similarly, 78% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 86% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders agreed that their classes have encouraged them to consider further education after high school.

Site visits revealed that only three of the ten CASLE schools have CTE courses associated with pathways or SLCs developed under the grant. More often, CTE courses were embedded in schools’ pre-existing California Partnership Academies (CPAs). Indeed, site visits showed that integration of career education into core classes is limited to some efforts in CPAs. In some cases, Regional Occupational Program (ROP) programs included a CTE component that could be linked to traditional core academic courses in an SLC.

***Postsecondary and Career Placement***

As shown in Figure 2, California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) data for the entire cohort indicate that postsecondary enrollment decreased from baseline (41%) through Year 4 (35%).<sup>7</sup> While postsecondary enrollment had been increasing steadily and peaked at 61% in 2007-08, it dropped precipitously thereafter. In 2010, 5% of graduates enrolled in an UC, 10% at a CSU and 20 % at a California Community College. One reasonable hypothesis is that the economic recession had an immediate impact on students’ choices after high school. However, as shown in Table 22, the proportion of graduates eligible for UC/CSU admission has been declining which undoubtedly affected the rates of postsecondary attendance.

<sup>7</sup> Data for 2010-11 not available at time of report publication.



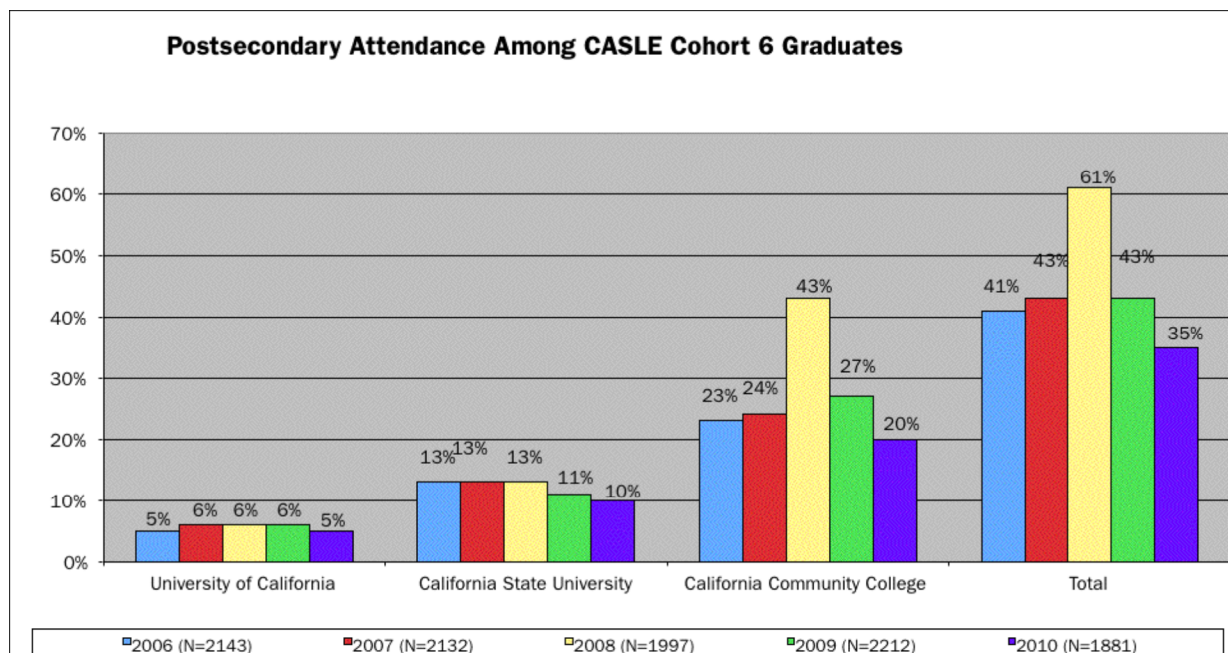


Figure 2: Cohort-wide Post Secondary Enrollment, Baseline (2005-06) – Year 4 (2009-10)  
Source: California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC)

Table 26: Graduate follow-up survey of students’ postsecondary activities

Survey Item	Answer	2007 (N=1698)	2008 (N=2448)	2009 (N=2097)	2010 (N=2371)	2011 (N=1913)
Are you currently enrolled in any school?	Yes	75%	76%	77%	73%	69%
In what type of school are you enrolled?	Four-year college or university	39%	37%	30%	35%	38%
	Public community college	54%	58%	64%	58%	54%
	Less than 2-year private or public vocational or technical school	7%	5%	6%	8%	7%
Are you attending school full-time or part-time?	Full-time	84%	84%	77%	80%	78%
	Part-time	16%	16%	23%	20%	23%
Are you in the military?	Yes	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Are you in an apprenticeship program?	Yes	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%

The evaluation’s graduate follow-up survey conducted with graduates from the class of 2011 in the Fall of 2011 revealed a more optimistic picture of postsecondary enrollment. Namely, 69% of the graduates who provided contact information and were successfully contacted (representing approximately 39% of the graduating seniors in the cohort) reported being currently enrolled in postsecondary education. Of this group of graduates, 54% reported enrollment in a public community college and 38% were in a four-year college or university. Nearly all (77%) reported attending school full-time, with 78%

working part-time (less than 35 hours per week). Very few of the graduates reported placement into the military (2%) or apprenticeship programs (1%). Apart from the overall percentage of students reporting enrollment in postsecondary which showed a decline, the results obtained from graduates via the follow-up survey were largely unchanged over the course of the grant.

## Goal 4: Improve academic achievement for all students

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

### School-wide Performance Measures

#### Academic Performance Index (API)

The Academic Performance Index<sup>8</sup> (API) was developed by California to rank schools by their performance. API is mainly based on a formula composed of students' performance on California Standards Tests (CSTs) and to a lesser extent other measures.

Table 27 displays API Growth scores by school from 2006 (baseline) to 2011. In 2010-11, eight of the ten CASLE schools met their school-wide API growth target. Redlands (the school with the highest proportion of students enrolled in three or more SLC courses) received the highest 2011 Growth API scores of all ten schools. API scores in 2010-11 ranged from 655 to 801.

Table 27: API Growth Scores, 2006-2011

High School	2006 Growth API	2007 Growth API	2008 Growth API	2009 Growth API	2010 Growth API	2011 Growth API	Net Change from Baseline
A.B. Miller	637	645	645	639	687	707	70
Arroyo Valley	590	595	597	615	656	655	65
Barstow	615	--	618	636	665	677	62
Bloomington	604	596	681	661	671	675	71
Cajon	686	683	692	692	687	711	25
Chaffey	673	666	681	702	715	719	46
Don Lugo	679	670	674	698	710	717	38
Fontana	646	626	653	677	688	698	52
Palm Springs	709	685	716	747	750	767	56
Redlands	735	742	734	740	766	801	66
<b>Cohort Average</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>State-wide (9-11<sup>th</sup> Grade)</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>27</b>

Source: California Department of Education

<sup>8</sup> The API was created in 1999 to hold schools accountable for progress in improving student achievement relative to state standards in core academic areas. For high schools, the API is a composite measure based largely on the CSTs in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies. It also includes achievement from the ELA and Math portions of CAHSEE. Schools are accountable for closing 5% distance annually between their current API score and the threshold of 800 established by the State. The 5% goal includes both school-wide and subgroup targets.

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In 2010-11, the statewide average API for SLC grantee high schools was measured at 707. Six schools met or exceeded this score. On average, the cohort has managed 56 points of growth from the baseline year, and all but one school outpaced the statewide average of 27.

**Table 28: Schools Meeting API Growth Targets, 2005-06 (Baseline) and 2010-11 (Year 5)**

2006- Baseline	School-wide	Hispanic	Economically Disadvantaged	English Learners	Students w/ Disabilities
A.B. Miller					
Arroyo Valley			√		
Barstow				Not Significant	√
Bloomington					√
Cajon	√	√	√	√	√
Chaffey	√	√	√		
Don Lugo	√	√	√	√	√
Fontana			√		
Palm Springs	√		√		√
Redlands	√	√	√		
<b>2011- Year 5</b>					
A.B. Miller	√	√	√	√	√
Arroyo Valley					
Barstow	√	√	√		
Bloomington			√		
Cajon	√	√	√	√	
Chaffey	√		√		
Don Lugo	√	√	√	√	
Fontana	√	√		√	√
Palm Springs	√	√	√	√	Not Significant
Redlands	√	√	√	√	√

√ = Met API

Source: California Department of Education

Table 28 above shows that more schools met API targets, both school-wide and for the numerically significant subgroups, over the life of the grant. Although the number of schools meeting API targets has fluctuated, in 2010-11, eight of the ten CASLE schools met their school-wide target in 2011. Six schools (A.B. Miller, Cajon, Don Lugo, Fontana, Palm Springs and Redlands) met their subgroup growth targets for Hispanic, English Learner and Economically Disadvantaged (NSLP) students. Unfortunately, most schools struggled to meet the target for students with disabilities (SWD). In 2010-11, only three schools (A.B. Miller, Fontana and Redlands) met the API Growth target for SWD. Interestingly, none of those schools met their target for SWD in 2006, while the five schools that met SWD targets in 2006 did not meet them in 2010-11.

*Adequate Yearly Progress*

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is the federal accountability measure, which came out of the NCLB legislation. It is a series of annual academic performance goals established for

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each school.<sup>9</sup> To meet the AYP in California, schools and LEAs are required to meet or exceed requirements in test participation rate, percent proficient and advanced, API, and graduation rate requirements. In addition, schools and their subgroups are required to meet percent proficient targets, Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) in ELA and Mathematics.

In the 2006 (baseline), six of the ten CASLE schools met the AYP criteria tied to 10<sup>th</sup> grade proficiency on the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in both English/Language Arts and Mathematics. In 2010-11, Year 5 of the grant, state targets were set at 66.7% (ELA) and 66.1% (Mathematics). Only one school, Redlands, met the AYP targets in 2010-11 (again, this was the school with the highest levels of SLC participation). On average the cohort has improved proficiency in both Mathematics and ELA by 12% since the baseline year, as shown in Table 29 below. No schools have shown a decline in scores, although in ELA, the range of improvement ranges from 5% to 17%, while in Mathematics the range is 7% to 26% since baseline.

As the AYP target has risen over time<sup>10</sup>, the number of schools meeting AYP has declined from four schools in Year 1, two schools in Year 2, none in Years 3 or 4, and one school in Year 5. The two main reasons schools did not pass the AYP include: (1) at least one subgroup did not meet the performance level as required and/or (2) at least one subgroup did not meet the participation rate.

**Table 29: Adequate Yearly Progress by School and Cohort, Baseline – Year 5**

<i>AYP – AMOs % Proficient or Advanced</i>														
School	Baseline: 2005-06		Year 1: 2006-07		Year 2: 2007-08		Year 3: 2008-09		Year 4: 2009-10		Year 5: 2010-11		Net Change	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
A.B. Miller	37%	29%	33%	37%	41%	41%	36%	32%	41%	40%	53%	46%	16%	17%
Arroyo Valley	27%	31%	30%	33%	34%	32%	32%	37%	38%	36%	43%	38%	16%	7%
Barstow	40%	32%	36%	37%	39%	40%	44%	38%	45%	32%	46%	43%	6%	11%
Bloomington	38%	25%	34%	29%	38%	34%	41%	40%	43%	44%	53%	51%	15%	26%
Cajon	54%	46%	48%	48%	52%	47%	50%	49%	49%	44%	59%	53%	5%	7%
Chaffey	38%	36%	34%	38%	39%	37%	41%	45%	46%	46%	50%	45%	12%	9%
Don Lugo	44%	35%	51%	40%	47%	38%	43%	43%	54%	46%	58%	47%	14%	12%
Fontana	35%	33%	32%	38%	40%	41%	38%	43%	41%	44%	46%	43%	11%	10%
Palm Springs	50%	45%	45%	46%	48%	46%	52%	58%	57%	60%	59%	58%	9%	13%
Redlands	61%	60%	55%	63%	58%	58%	59%	58%	69%	62%	78%	69%	17%	9%
<b>Cohort Average</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Federal Target</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>45%</b>

Source: California Department of Education

<sup>9</sup> The possible values are "Yes," "No," or "Pending." The report displays a "Yes" only if the school, LEA, or state met all of its AYP criteria, including requirements for numerically significant subgroups. "No" means results for at least one or more criteria were below the targets. "Pending" means that the school or LEA with grade twelve students met all AYP criteria other than the graduation rate on the September report. A final determination for these schools will be posted after the graduation data become available.

<sup>10</sup> The state-negotiated federal targets were consistently increased during this time period. For two consecutive years (2004-05 through 2006-07) the state expected schools to obtain 22.3% proficient or advanced in ELA and 20.9% in Mathematics on the CAHSEE for first-time (i.e., 10<sup>th</sup> grade) students. By Year 5 of the grant (2010-11), the state's proficient or advanced targets essentially tripled to 66.7% in ELA and 66.1% in Mathematics.

**CASLE SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES EVALUATION, 2010-11**

*California Standards Test (CST)*

Over the course of the grant, the percentage of 9th and 10th grade students (the focus of SLC reforms at most schools) scoring Proficient or Advanced in ELA on the CST went up at every site in the cohort, ranging from 8% to 16%. The cohort averaged a 12% increase over the five-year grant period. In Year 5, two schools had over 50% student proficiency, with one school above 60%

**Table 30: 9th and 10th Grade CST Proficiency in ELA, Baseline to Year 5**

CST ELA Proficiency	Baseline: 2005-06		Year 1: 2006-07		Year 2: 2007-08		Year 3: 2008-09		Year 4: 2009-10		Year 5: 2010-11		Net Change
	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	
All Sites	15,952	32%	14,797	33%	14,754	36%	14,837	39%	14,238	42%	12,728	44%	12%

Overall, scores in Algebra I were not as high, nor did they typically increase as much as scores in ELA. Overall, the cohort had an average increase of 6%, although this average is slightly skewed by one school that increased 29% over the course of the grant. Two schools experienced no change in proficiency; only one school showed a decrease over the grant period. It is important to note that the number of 9th and 10th grade students tested in Algebra I declined by 1,373 students (approximately 19% fewer students) since baseline. This is likely due to both declines in overall enrollment and the fact that many more students are taking and passing Algebra I as 8th graders.

**Table 31a: 9th and 10th Grade CST Proficiency in Algebra I, Baseline to Year 5**

CST Algebra I Proficiency	Baseline: 2005-06		Year 1: 2006-07		Year 2: 2007-08		Year 3: 2008-09		Year 4: 2009-10		Year 5: 2010-11		Net Change
	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	
All Sites	8,631	8%	7,333	6%	6,990	9%	7,750	11%	6,885	11%	5,960	14%	6%

The cohort experienced a similar average increase (8%) in Geometry over the course of the grant. However, the results were again skewed by a school which experienced an increase of 50% over the course of the grant. Four schools experienced a decrease in proficiency rates, while experienced increases ranging from 2% to 50%.

**Table 31b: 9th and 10th Grade CST Proficiency in Geometry, Baseline to Year 5**

CST Geometry Proficiency	Baseline: 2005-06		Year 1: 2006-07		Year 2: 2007-08		Year 3: 2008-09		Year 4: 2009-10		Year 5: 2010-11		Net Change
	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	Total # Tested	% Advanced or Proficient	
All Sites	4,275	19%	4,201	17%	4,212	16%	4,351	20%	4,760	18%	3,936	27%	8%

*California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)*

CAHSEE ELA pass rates increased 7%, on average, throughout the cohort (for a school by school breakdown, see **Appendix E**). Across CASLE sites, 79% of 10th graders passed the CAHSEE ELA on their first try. However, the English Learner and Special Education subgroups did not close the achievement gap and remain far below school-wide pass rates. The average pass-rate among English Learners increased 4% over the five-year period, and only increased 1% among Special Education students over the same period.

**Table 32: 10th Grade CAHSEE Pass Rate ELA and Math, School-wide And Subgroups**

ELA	Baseline: 2005-06	Year 1: 2006-07	Year 2: 2007-08	Year 3: 2008-09	Year 4: 2009-10	Year 5: 2010-11	Net Change
<i>School-wide</i>							
All Sites	72%	71%	74%	74%	77%	79%	7%
<i>English Learners</i>							
All Sites	43%	39%	42%	44%	48%	47%	4%
<i>Economically Disadvantaged</i>							
All Sites	66%	63%	68%	69%	73%	76%	10%
<i>Special Education</i>							
All Sites	26%	24%	28%	25%	29%	27%	1%
Mathematics	Baseline: 2005-06	Year 1: 2006-07	Year 2: 2007-08	Year 3: 2008-09	Year 4: 2009-10	Year 5: 2009-10	Net Change
<i>School-wide</i>							
Cohort Total	70%	71%	75%	80%	76%	78%	8%
<i>English Learners</i>							
Cohort Total	48%	49%	49%	55%	52%	52%	4%
<i>Economically Disadvantaged</i>							
Cohort Total	65%	66%	72%	78%	73%	75%	10%
<i>Special Education</i>							
Cohort Total	25%	31%	25%	34%	31%	29%	4%

Source: California Department of Education

In Mathematics, CAHSEE pass rates increased 8%, on average, throughout the cohort (for a school by school breakdown, see **Appendix E**). Across CASLE sites, 78% of 10th graders passed the CAHSEE Math on their first try. However, the English Learner and Special Education subgroups did not close the achievement gap and remain far below school-wide pass rates. The average pass-rate among both English Learners and Special Education students increased 4% over the five-year period.

*Survey Data*

Survey data (see Table 33 below) also point towards progress in improving academic achievement. Across the cohort, 88% of staff surveyed agreed that students understood classroom academic expectations in Year 5, increasing 12% from Year 1. Another 85% of staff agreed that curriculum and instruction is organized so that all students are expected to learn and perform at high levels in the final year, up 11% from Year 1, and 80% (12% increase from Year 1) agreed that most staff at their school are committed to the principle that “all children can learn.”

Table 33: Staff perceptions of instruction

	2007 (N=1130)	2008 (N=1090)	2009 (N=1062)	2010 (N=1062)	2011 (N=955)	Net Change (N=-175)
Students understand classroom academic expectations (i.e., they understand what standard they are being held accountable for).	76%	82%	85%	91%	88%	12%
Curriculum and instruction is organized so that all students are expected to learn and perform at high levels.	74%	76%	87%	87%	85%	11%
Most staff at this school are committed to the principle that “all children can learn.”	68%	76%	80%	83%	80%	12%

In 2010-11, 78% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders surveyed and 83% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders surveyed agreed that teachers teach academic subject matter at a high level, increasing 5% and 7%, respectively, from Year 1. Most (69%) of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 82% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders agreed that teachers are fair about how they grade them. However, student responses to this question did not improve greatly over the course of the grant, increasing 2% for 12<sup>th</sup> graders and decreasing 1% among 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Only 49% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 55% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders agreed that they were encouraged to take Advanced Placement (AP) and Honors courses in Year 5. In both grades, this measure increased 6% over the course of the grant.

Table 34: 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade perceptions of academic instruction

Survey Item	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Response					
	2007 (N = 5996)	2008 (N = 6186)	2009 (N = 6048)	2010 (N = 5896)	2011 (N=5314)	Net Change (N=-682)
Teachers teach academic subject matter at a high level	73%	70%	80%	81%	78%	5%
My teachers are fair about how they grade	70%	70%	70%	71%	69%	-1%
I have been encouraged to take Advanced Placement (AP) and Honors courses.	43%	39%	50%	49%	49%	6%
Survey Item	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Response					
	(N = 3,865)	(N = 4,592)	(N=3,911)	(N=4,578)	(N=4,507)	(N=642)
Teachers teach academic subject matter at a high level	76%	78%	83%	84%	83%	7%
My teachers are fair about how they grade	80%	82%	81%	83%	82%	2%
I have been encouraged to take Advanced Placement (AP) and Honors courses.	49%	48%	50%	53%	55%	6%

Most staff focus groups commented on an increase in rigor. All sites reported an increased focus on student achievement scores. Redlands uses the aforementioned data binders to increase awareness among teachers of how to deal with certain academic issues. Chaffey has their API score printed on their brochures and on banners around the school. Palm Springs students knew the school’s API score when asked what it was. Student focus groups at most sites stated that classes were taught at a high level.



## Academic Intervention

For most schools, there was increased emphasis on providing in-school and extended day intervention services and programs to struggling students, especially preparation for the CAHSEE, CSTs and CELDT assessments. While structured intervention opportunities have increased generally, SLCs themselves have provided limited direct intervention designed to meet their particular SLC students. Rather, intervention was more likely to be organized at the school or department (subject area) level.

- Credit Recovery: The most common intervention component at the CASLE schools was a credit recovery program or option. At least seven of the ten schools offer either an online or in-class credit recovery option for failing and credit deficient students in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The credit recovery programs/software included *Nova Net*, *A Plus*, *PLATO*, *APEX*, as well as one self-developed Science credit recovery class. In addition, three schools offered double-block periods in Math and English/Language Arts for students performing Far Below Basic and Below Basic on the CSTs and who struggle in both or either content areas. Many of these English support classes utilized the REACH/READ 180 program. One of the three schools is under State audit requirements requiring a double-block in ELA for targeted students. This school refers struggling readers with the need for additional assistance to a reading program at the local California State University campus, within walking distance of the school.
- CAHSEE/CST Preparation: Many of the CASLE grantee schools embed CAHSEE prep time and CST prep time in the school day. One school provides a CAHSEE boot camp for sophomores in preparation for their first test taken in the month of February, which includes four six-hour long Saturday sessions with teachers focused on the Math and ELA skills, which are tested on the exam. At least two of the CASLE schools have instituted a Saturday school or expanded their existing model, including CAHSEE and CST prep. Another grantee school similarly placed great emphasis on preparing students the exam via boot camps and collaborating in conjunction with Math and English Department to review key concepts, skills and test-taking strategies. Their English Department utilizes students' journals to assess student performance and provide individualized feedback on a timely manner. Students at this school begin preparing for the CASHEE beginning freshman year through a mock CAHSEE, and daily class warm-ups.
- Other Intervention Support: House teams at two schools keyed in on specific struggling students and focused on directly assisting them. One school created a "watch list", in which each SLC team focused on students who received two or more fails. Three schools had formal freshmen support classes or programs. AVID strategies and formal peer mentoring programs were in place at a few schools, with one school recognized as an AVID demonstration school. Two schools have a dedicated an intervention counselor for struggling students. One school has students come in for Saturday Extravaganzas in order to complete missing assignments, which avoids students receiving zeros on their assignments. The program is held multiple times a year and has been very successful.

## **CASLE SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES EVALUATION, 2010-11**

The emphasis on freshmen and sophomores under SLC implementation has resulted in a broader recognition of the need to intervene early on and to focus on data and outcomes to make these decisions. Across the cohort, 77% of staff surveyed agreed that there was a clear, connected and comprehensive model for monitoring student progress, increasing 16% from Year 1. Across the cohort, 66% staff surveyed agreed that there is a clear process for referring a student for academic intervention, increasing 12% from Year 1. Over 90% of 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders surveyed across the cohort agreed that they could get tutoring and other help if they are having trouble in school (91% and 92%, respectively). This represents a 3% increase from Year 1 for both grades.

**Goal 5: Increase parent and community involvement.**

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

**Parent Involvement**

Every CASLE school struggled to meet this goal. No sites were ever able to elicit a strong or widespread parent response in the planning or implementation of SLCs. Nonetheless, many of the sites did increase their general parent outreach over the course of the grant. Most often, this outreach took the form of reporting and informing parents about their child’s progress.

*Tele-parent*, an automated phone system, was the most common method of contacting parent across the grantee schools. Schools used the system to contact parents about attendance, grades, events, and special announcement. One school reported offering multiple-teacher conferences, where parents were able to meet with all the student’s house or SLC teachers at one time. Some other schools reported doing something similar, with house or SLC team teachers calling home as one unit when a call was necessary. One other school recently began doing progress report “handouts”, where teachers are available to hand out progress reports after school in order to increase teacher and parent interactions.

At the end of the USDE grant, the majority (53%) of staff surveyed agreed that SLCs provide information and outreach about their programs to high school students and parents, increasing 14% since Year 1 of the grant (see Table 35). Additionally, 38% of staff agreed that SLCs provide information and outreach about their programs to middle school students and parents, an 8% increase since Year 1. Similarly, the proportion of staff who viewed parents as “key collaborators” with the school increased only 9% over the grant, to 56% of staff by Year 5.

**Table 35: Staff perceptions of parent involvement and outreach**

SBCSS C6 Staff Survey Data – Across Years						
Survey Item	2007 (N=1,130)	2008 (N=1,090)	2009 (N=1,062)	2010 (N=1,062)	2011 (N=955)	Net Change (N=-175)
Small learning communities provide information and outreach about their programs to <i>high school</i> students and parents.	39%	54%	58%	60%	53%	14%
Small learning communities provide information and outreach about their programs to <i>middle school</i> students and parents.	30%	35%	38%	41%	38%	8%
Parents are considered key collaborators and contributing members to the school community.	47%	50%	55%	53%	56%	9%

Interestingly, parent and community involvement (40%) were perceived as the second largest barrier in implementing SLCs on the staff survey in 2011 (an increase of 5% from Year 1), although the site visits did not reflect this barrier. There was no evidence from the site visits that parents or communities are actively opposed to SLC reform. That so many staff feel that they are likely reflects a view by school staff that engagement of parents/community is a large barrier for all efforts, including SLC implementation.

**Community Involvement**

Few sites established new links to businesses or community organizations through existing SLC and career technical programs. Partnerships between SLCs and local businesses and community organizations have only expanded at three schools and the number of SLC students involved is small.

One school partnered up with local community college, chamber of commerce and Marine base, providing job shadowing and field trip opportunities. Three schools reported some degree of involvement with local hospitals, with some students in health-themed SLCs able to intern at the institutions. Local community colleges and four-year postsecondary institutions have begun to become involved with some grantee schools providing additional assistance for struggling students and mentorship to a limited amount of students.

Staff survey data validate the modest impact of SLC grant implementation on community involvement and engagement (Table 36). While 52% of staff agreed that their school encourages partnerships with employers, postsecondary institutions, and others necessary to implement SLCs (a 16% increase from Year 1), only 37% of staff agreed that community partners, employers, and businesses are involved in the development of SLCs (12% increase compared to Year 1).

**Table 36: Staff perceptions of community involvement and outreach**

SBCSS C6 Staff Survey Data – Across Years						
Survey Item	2007 (N=1,130)	2008 (N=1,090)	2009 (N=1,062)	2010 (N=1,062)	2011 (N=955)	Net Change (N=-175)
This school encourages partnerships with employers, postsecondary institutions, and others necessary to implement small learning communities.	41%	46%	56%	57%	52%	11%
Community partners, employers, and businesses are involved in the development of small learning communities.	22%	30%	36%	34%	37%	15%

## Part V—Conclusions and Recommendations

In San Bernardino County’s Center for the Advancement of Smaller Learning Environments (CASLE) initiative, the grantee schools have made progress in implementing SLC structures at the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade and some schools begun to further implemented career pathways/ academies at the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. This final part of the report concludes with a summary of key accomplishments and challenges across the participating schools over the five-year grant, which has been granted a one-year no cost extension for 2011-12.

### Key Accomplishments

#### *Academic Intervention*

Grantee schools have expanded intervention services and have adapted pieces of the SLC initiative to better and more comprehensively support students academic needs and help them successfully transition to high school. Several schools now offer double blocks of English/Language Arts (ELA) interventions and Mathematics interventions. The grantee schools have provided support specialized in assisting and preparing students for the CAHSEE, CSTs and CELDT assessments. The majority of schools also offered credit recovery options (e.g. *Nova Net, A Plus, PLATO, APEX*). Several SLCs reported specific strategies they had implemented to make sure that their students are on track with their grades and academic progress.

#### *Personalization*

CASLE schools have focused on improving personalization and enhancing adult relationships with students through the creation of SLC structures, particularly those focused on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Many grantee schools have mentoring programs in place (e.g. Link Crew, Freshman Mentoring Programs, Intervention / Crisis Counselors). In addition, more students “loop” with their counselors over multiple years, which providing deeper connections with teachers and counselors. Survey data also indicated positive changes in regards to personalization. For example, both 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students were more likely to say that they regularly talked with either a teacher or counselor about their high school educational plan. In addition, more students reported feeling safe at school and connected to a school community.

#### *Achievement Outcomes*

Academic Performance Index (API) growth scores improved an average of 56 points over the five-year grant period. More schools met API growth targets school-wide and for all student subgroups (except Students with Disabilities) in 2011 compared to baseline (2006). In addition, first time (10<sup>th</sup> grade) CAHSEE pass rates improved 7%-8% in both English/Language Arts and Mathematics. On average, 12% more students met the higher threshold for proficiency on the CAHSEE (the definition of Adequate Yearly Progress or AYP in California) as 10<sup>th</sup> graders in 2011 compared to 2006. In addition, the percentage

of students scoring Advanced on Proficient on the CSTs in grades 9-10 improved 12% in English/Language Arts, 7% in Algebra, and 8% in Geometry.

## **Key Issues and Challenges**

### *Master Schedule*

CASLE schools struggled to adapt the master schedule to prioritize SLC enrollment. Most schools continued to organize the master schedule by department, rather than placing students to maximize “purity” of course rosters by SLC. In 2010-11, only 28% of students were enrolled in SLC courses for at least half their course load (i.e., three or more courses). Even among 9th graders in SLC houses, less than half (44%) spent 50% or more of their time at school with others from the same SLC. Staff survey results validate these findings with only about half (53%) in agreement that school master schedules supported SLCs. Indeed, “adapting the master schedule” and “resistance to change” were identified as the most significant barriers to SLC implementation by staff survey respondents.

### *Staff Collaboration*

Prioritizing staff development and collaboration in interdisciplinary SLC teams of teachers declined in importance in the last two years of the grant. With the official grant period ending, many schools seemed to shift back to pre-grant models of collaboration which prioritize teachers meeting by common course and/or subject area department. In very few cases did teams coordinate cross-curricular projects or lesson plans. SLC identity was slow to emerge and less than half of staff agreed that SLCs exercised decisions over curriculum, instruction, or assessment by the end of the five-year USDE grant.

### *College Readiness*

Quantitative indicators of college readiness showed declines among CASLE schools in the past five years. The four-year graduation rate declined, on average, 2.2%. At the same time, the proportion of graduates meeting the criteria for admission to public, four-year colleges and universities in California (i.e., A-G requirements) declined 3.2%. Postsecondary enrollment in public colleges and universities also decreased 6%. In sum, during the SLC grant period fewer students graduated, became college eligible, and enrolled in college.

### *Parent and Community Engagement*

All CASLE schools struggled to meet goals for increasing parent and community involvement. While schools endeavored to conduct outreach and dissemination on SLCs, few parents or community partners were directly involved in SLC development or implementation efforts.

## Recommendations to Schools

At the school level, the SLC initiative was unable to spur adequate commitment to structural changes and support necessary to change the direction and content of school improvement. At risk of oversimplification, SLC reforms were competing with other school improvement priorities rather than an umbrella movement for educational change. In order to provide direction following the end of the grant, Public Works, Inc. makes the following recommendations to the CASLE schools from the standpoint of sustainability for aspects of SLC implementation that can assist them beyond the grant.

- *Sustain existing SLC house models to further develop personalization which link to academic intervention strategies and support.* Over the course of the five-year grant, there has been much progress made in development and implementation of a support system for 9th and 10th grade students. Simultaneously, a system of academic intervention and support is beginning to emerge. Students will likely benefit from sustaining these SLC structures beyond the life of the grant, and then linking SLC-style personalization more concretely to an academic intervention agenda. To accomplish this, schools will need to clarify and communicate to all stakeholders the details (i.e., structural and strategic) for continued staff and student involvement.
- *Use what has been learned from SLCs to promote equity and college eligibility in school master schedules.* Most schools have not made comprehensive efforts to overhaul their master schedules in order to promote heterogeneous groupings of students, at all grade levels, who are grouped into classes that share students/staff from their assigned SLC. In addition, student placement into college preparation courses (i.e., the A-G sequence) has not resulted in more students graduating college. Put another way, expanding student choice has not been a sufficient mechanism for achieving school-wide equity or academic excellence. Restructuring requires “de-tracking” to ensure that the master schedule process adequately distributes staff and students to SLC in ways that do not unfairly give preference regarding staff assignments, student placement, class size, access to Advanced Placement and/or Honors programs, etc. Moreover, the “de-tracking” must be accompanied by a wholesale effort to address the academic needs of this diverse student body.
- *Connect the SLC initiative’s emphasis on personalized instruction to a broader delivery of counseling and guidance.* Student survey results collected as part of this evaluation indicate irregular access to personalized counseling and guidance during high school from both teachers and counselors. Student surveys suggest a need for improving the systems for ensuring that students a) develop a written four-year plan for high school graduation and beyond that reflects their needs and interests and b) meet regularly with teachers and counselors to review, modify, and adjust this plan based on changing conditions. Schools can and should address the lack of adequate proactive counseling and guidance by providing personalized instruction and regular interactions between students and faculty and other staff regarding high school success, postsecondary planning, and career preparation.

## Recommendations to the Districts and County

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

- *Assist schools in the alignment of school improvement plans and accountability mandates.* Many schools function with multiple school plans, mandated by a variety of funding sources that do not coherently communicate a unified instructional vision for school improvement. It is increasingly necessary that schools map out reform efforts across these plans in order to create coherency and communication of a vision for instructional improvement that cuts across multiple compliance mandates and reporting structures. In this way, what is best about how SLCs were implemented can function more as an “umbrella” for ongoing high school reforms. District and/or County leaders should work with site-based leadership teams to effectively “filter” and “translate” external mandates for change into a coherent instructional improvement plan that makes sense to the classroom teacher.
- *Assist schools in designing and allocating professional development time to support school improvement priorities.* Schools that have taken the time to sequence and connect professional development topics have been more successful at maximizing the time and providing faculty with a coherent message about school reform efforts. Districts and the County could play a valuable role in helping schools strategically identify professional development and common planning time topics, sequencing how these topics are delivered, and then choosing the most appropriate group for this to occur. For example, outside assistance would likely be beneficial in bringing together course-alike and departmental collaboration in PLCs with interdisciplinary efforts through SLZcs. The district and/or County might also provide schools with training, templates, facilitation, and/or data needed to effectively diagnose student needs and strategize efforts around improved academic achievement.
- *Assist schools in organizing information data systems to allow schools to extract and examine data.* While all can agree that educators should make decisions that are informed by student achievement data, easily identifying and disaggregating data by SLC proved to be a challenge over the past five years of the grant. This highlights a need for additional flexibility in data systems to allow “flagging” of students to identify how subgroups of students are performing and the instructional support they need. Moreover, unless data of this sort is available, school decision-makers may be hard-pressed to differentiate instruction and deliver academic intervention.